

Geeta Anand

Journalist and Author

'Peace is what I constantly seek and rarely find'

Sat Aug 14 2010



Geeta Anand is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of the book, *The Cure*.

What does spirituality mean to you?

It means what you believe in, what inspires you, what makes you think about a force greater than yourself, what connects on a higher plane with the universe.

So are you connected?

I don't think I would be alive if I weren't ...

What do you mean?

I definitely feel connected to other people, to some higher power, to some force of good in the world. It is not something I can prove or that I have intellectually analyzed. It is just a sense I've always had since I was a child.

My mother is Catholic and my father is a Hindu. I was raised to believe that all religions are a path to some form of salvation but the religion that I knew and grew up in was Catholicism - a very gentle form of it. My mother's father was very religious and spiritual but he also wrote poems making fun of the Pope for being too dogmatic. So anyway, I have always been spiritual.

What is that force?

Just that, a force. Not something you can see. Something that every religion or every yoga group is trying to tap into. Some people have a larger amount of connection to that force, and those are great teachers. Some people misuse that force – many popes, priests, gurus – and because of that religion has received a bad name.

Would you call it God?

Yes, God would be that force. Or my feminist side would say Goddess.

Is it a force that protects and guides you?

It can guide and protect you if you tap into it. It's your choice.

How do you connect to it?

Through yoga, meditation and praying; through standing on a mountain peak; through looking at a beautiful flower or an amazing painting, or a special conversation with a child or any human being.

Does that force also orchestrate your life?

I think it is a mix of that force and human efforts. I don't feel all is preordained. But the more you can tap into it and let things happen, the more good things happen. The more you fight it, the more you create chaos in your life.

Has it happened that when trying to tap into it, it was not there for you?

No, I just think that at times I have forgotten to tap into it. I was too busy driving the car. I have spent too much of my life running around hectically. And if you are too busy, you can forget to tap into it, and even forget that there is a force.

What about the idea that each one of us has a specific purpose in life?

When I finish yoga, I always ask for three things: show me my true path in life; make me kinder and gentler than I want to be; help me make and keep commitments to myself. So I definitely think there is a true path. Do I know that I am on the path I am supposed to be on? I am not entirely sure but I hope that by tapping into this force, if I am not on it, I will find it.

Why did you choose to write?

I was very much the kind of person who wanted to do something good in the world, from the time I was little. I would have loved to be a priest for instance. Then when in college, I worked at Mother Theresa's home for the dying and thought I should be a doctor. But I hated the science and so much more enjoyed history classes and writing. So I decided I should do something I am good at, that I enjoy, that I have a passion for, and in which I could have some positive contribution. I therefore decided to do journalism.

From the start I was drawn to stories on people's struggle and their spiritual quest to find meaning in their lives, to turn their lives around, to save their children, to go on these journeys that taught them about what life meant.

That is what I loved about the book I wrote ["The Cure" - How a father raised \$100 million and bucked the medical Establishment in a quest to save his children]. It was very similar to 50 stories I had written for the newspapers. But it was about how in trying to save their children, this family learnt what is important in life. I do feel that it is in struggle that you discover what is really important. And I have often enjoyed my reporting job because I could experience life through people's vast life experiences and learn from them.

Sharing all this with others through writing is therefore part of your purpose?

Absolutely. I won a Pulitzer Prize for writing about corporate corruption, in particular Martha Stewart and ImClone. And I have done a lot of tough investigative stories. I am not afraid to show how people can do wrong. But when writing a book, I didn't want to focus on the depths to which people can fall; instead, I wanted to write about the heights they can reach so that people reading it could get inspired. There is a lesson in the choices people make. Some of the people I have found to be the wisest are those who really struggled. The struggle to overcome obstacles can crush people's spirit but it can also bring a lot of spiritual growth and wisdom.

Precisely, at times of huge challenge, where do you find your anchor and energy?

Through writing in my journal. And through my journal, I connect to my spiritual side. I only write when going through a tough time, so if I were to look through it, my life would seem to be one huge trauma. When I write, it's almost as if some force in the universe is talking to me and I then manage to find my way out of a problem.

If there were one question you would ask God, what would it be?

What is my path supposed to be in life?

What is your idea of happiness?

Peace. And peace is what I constantly seek and rarely find.

When do you experience it?

When writing in a journal, when climbing a mountain, when doing swimming, yoga, meditation, reading. I also find it in precious moments with the children or some special people.