

# Nandita Das

Actor

## 'You learn by letting go'

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**Nandita Das, Actor & Social Activist.**

### **What does spirituality mean to you?**

If I had to summarize the quest, I would say it is about two things: being as genuine and authentic as possible –in touch with my real self; and finding the right balance between attachment –commitment, caring– and detachment –often feeling that "I am in it, and not of it". Of course, it is a life-long process, to be constantly worked on.

### **Do you believe you are guided and protected by a superior force?**

I feel that nothing is random and that there is a pattern in things. I do not want to give that force a form or a name but it is an awareness I carry with me all along. This force just is, as a part of us all, and it creates a magic of its own.

### **Do you believe you have a special mission or purpose in this life?**

I definitely feel there is a purpose in life – if only because otherwise everything would seem so futile and meaningless. In my case, if I had to use one word, though I very much dislike defining such things, I would say it is about being a "communicator" – sharing, whether through a film or a workshop or

simple words. I am not a one-project person, I engage in things as they come if they feel right, good and meant to be, as part of the general purpose.

**What is spirituality for you in your day to day life?**

It is trying to constantly stay centered and connected within – not by thinking or talking about it, but by doing and being it, through small things, on my own, or with music, or through a wonderful encounter.

**What is the role of spirituality in your action in the world?**

My spiritual journey is fully connected to my social or film work. I cannot see inner and outer change as two separate things. One of my favourite quotes is Gandhiji's "be the change that you want to see in the world". Change yourself, and in doing so you automatically change the world, while engaging with it. Social work for instance can be so draining, and also a source of anger. Centering myself, connecting within, are therefore so important – otherwise how can I keep working and besides, who needs more anger in the world?

**Can you tell us about a unique experience that changed or shaped your spiritual beliefs?**

I can share a symbolic experience. Some time ago I took a pottery class and first experienced much frustration as the more I would try to make a round pot, the more deformed it would be. Over time I understood that only if I was centered, the pot would be as well. Then when I finally made a "perfect one", the teacher broke it: first because I should not be attached to it, and second to show me how uneven the pot was inside. This meant that only by letting go of it I could learn how to make it even – only that way I could grow.

**What are your spiritual inspirations?**

I did not grow up in a religious atmosphere, but there definitely was a spiritual approach. At times of exams for instance, when I would be stressed out, my father would tell me not to pray for good results, but instead for peace in the world. Back then I did not understand the full meaning of this approach, but it has become a part of me. Of course, I have had many inspirations since then, but most importantly I know there are no coincidences and I have been noticing how people show up whenever I am ready, and help me grow on my path.

**If you were to be reincarnated, what would you like to be reincarnated as?**

Whatever is meant to, but whether it is a lizard or a tree or a human, the quality of life is what matters, not the nature of incarnation itself.

**If there was one question you could ask God, what would it be?**

Where is Your sense of fairness? I would not ask why so many "bad" people are so successful because they may be miserable inside, but why so many "good" people, who have surrendered to God, suffer so much.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

It is something transient and not as ultimate as bliss. But hopefully it does not depend too much on outside circumstances –otherwise it is necessarily followed by unhappiness– and very much on how centered I am.