

Naresh Trehan

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'I believe in a larger, protective force'

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Naresh Trehan, Cardiologist.

What does spirituality mean to you?

It is an elusive and continuous process. It is both about personal enrichment and connecting with God – not to ask for things, but simply to be in touch and become more humane.

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

I have always felt so and believed in a larger force. It's been a charmed journey so far in many ways, and I do not believe there is anything specific in me which would have brought me here, if it was not for that "protective force". There are many other persistent and resolute doctors, but I have come quite far, so luck or God must have been keeping an eye on me...

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

Well, that makes me think of Elvis' song when he says that "the world is a stage and each must play a part". Of course! Who chose it for me, I have no idea, but here I am, doing it...

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

Regular things like yoga help keeping me centred and feeling stronger inside. It is also about exploring all sorts of ways – workshops, encounters with various "spiritual people", different philosophies and approaches to spirituality.

What is the role of spirituality in your work?

It helps me in a huge way. Being a heart surgeon and running an institution in such a fast-paced and stressful environment could be completely draining. So whatever inner strength and centeredness I derive from a more spiritual side helps me cope with it all. I see the largest variety of human beings, at their rawest and most naked, some of it really rotten, some purer. One's accumulated lifetime experiences actually come out clearly in those extreme moments, which are at times near death. There is a huge difference in the way people behave depending on what and who they have been through life. And no matter how trying patients can be, you cannot remain emotionally detached and must genuinely connect. Otherwise you won't do your utmost for them. So spirituality is of huge help in having the strength to do it all.

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

First of all I experience all the time odd synchronicities and coincidences. For instance I think of someone after months of not being in touch and for sure that person will call within a day. Second, some experiences have tested my strength and centeredness, such as the latest story with Escorts. It was my baby, I created it from scratch and it was taken away from me. I could have been completely shattered, but I am not and my inner soul has not been damaged by it. On the overall, I cannot help but guess that it happened for the best. I had received so many huge offers but could never accept them and leave "my baby", so now they helped me let go of it and grow more ahead.

What are your spiritual inspirations?

My wife Madhu and I have always been explorers, though she has been at the forefront of it. We have explored many different ways whether the Maharishi or Osho or recently Satguru, but if anything, I would say Buddhism is the one stream we feel closest to.

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

As a doctor you are often more sympathetic to the outside world, and harsher to your family, as if you had to compensate somewhere. So I'd say I would do it all over again, with one difference: not short-changing my family so much, especially earlier on, because I feel we lost out much on this. Otherwise, there is not one single human being whose life I would exchange with mine. I feel that blessed.

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

Why one billion people have a good way of life and five don't, why so much misery? There has to be a more balanced way.

What is your idea of happiness?

Of course it is all internal, but being involved with people, their lives, helping – that definitely is happiness for me. And not money, which you can't eat nor take away with you, so why would you obsess so much about it?