

Profile

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Since as far back as I can remember, the human experience has felt a bit convoluted and rather boring. Don't get me wrong, I've always gone through the motions fairly well, attaining satisfactory degrees of success scholastically, socially and at play but doing so more from a place of aversion to the consequences of not playing the game well than an effortless pull from inspiration.

My family is as kind, loving and wise as one could ever hope for and I'm fairly certain I have the best friends in the world. I've had a privileged life full of richness in opportunity and abundance and yet always have had a sense of profound longing and loneliness, but for what? None of my peers and acquaintances seemed to be conflicted in this way; so, I wondered if there was something fundamentally wrong with me? The heavy feelings never disappeared and instead grew strong, drawing me into the pursuit of exploring consciousness. These feelings of lack, along with the TV show Kung Fu inspired and

When I was a child (early elementary school years), my mother had a profound spiritual awakening akin to what one might read about in so many over the top spiritual books. She gave me the opportunity to opt out of Sunday school and stay home with her to learn about and experiment with eastern philosophy, metaphysics and New Age stuff. We'd at times sit under a wooden pyramid structure with a copper apex, aligned just so with the stars, holding flash cards in an attempt to read each other's minds. She'd tell me about the energetic shift that would happen in the years to come and the exponential rate at which human consciousness was expanding. She shared so many of her own sacred experiences with me about past lives, remote viewing and conversations with astral beings and explained to me the significance of my generation and the generations to follow in facilitating and "awakening from the dream... Yep, coolest mom ever!

Around middle school, it seemed as if the stars were aligning in such a way that I'd really tapped into some source of courage and strength. I felt driven to challenge myself to be the best I could be. I got straight A's in my marks at school for the first time, and I was placed in honors classes, excelled athletically and mastered the art of flirtation. Each Monday morning I'd challenge myself to make it through the school week without being less than impeccable with my words or fail to maintain a positive attitude/ treat others, as I would like to be treated... Good times!

Just as I was hitting what seemed to be 'my stride', my mom picked me up from school and took me to a fast food restaurant (a very rare occurrence in my family). Although my intuition told me something weird was about to happen, I was sufficiently distracted (and probably dulled by the french fries and beef and cheddar sandwich). I was completely shocked by my mom's words... "Edmund, your father and I are getting a divorce." At first I thought it was a joke; I mean, my parents had never fought and our

family dynamic was the envy of my friends and I came to learn much of the community in which we lived. Next thing I knew, I was driving to the east coast with my father and enrolled and boarded in the staunch prep school, which ironically, was where my parents had met. The east coast vibration was incredibly abrasive to my west coast sensibilities.

After a year in prep school hell, I reached my limit of tolerance for all of the nerdiness and spoiled rich-kidness there, and moved back to live with my mother and hopefully dive back into the flow that I'd left behind a year earlier. What a surprise! The high school I ended up in 'back home' was akin to a prison - guns, knives, drugs, violence... a non-academic environment to say the least. I learned very little in the remaining three years of high school.

It wasn't until after high school, on a drive up to Boulder, Colorado to visit an old friend recruited to play football at the University of Colorado that I fell in love and at home again with a town and culture. The peace, nature, fun and live reggae of Boulder reminded me of the warmest part of my childhood.

Having a less than stellar academic record from high school, I hustled my way into the University as a full time student, choosing Biology as my major. Little did I know when choosing this field of study that at that time CU was one of the top pre-medical schools in the nation; and so, found myself surrounded by students who took academic studies very seriously. With my lack of discipline in high school, I didn't have it easy getting through the high level university curriculum.

In 1998, somewhere around my third year at the university, a new, neo-hippy friend turned me on to a book called the Autobiography of a Yogi. When I saw the cover, I knew I'd seen the book before. It had been on my mom's bookshelf and available to me over those early years of initiation into metaphysics. And, needless to say, Autobiography of a Yogi single-handedly shook me out of much of my prolonged teenaged angst and re-awakened a relationship between my "higher self" and who I'd come to identify with. The same friend who gave me the book, found Satchidananda in an advertisement on the back of a yoga magazine and was shortly thereafter initiated. Hearing his feedback I got initiated.

During this first initiation, I remember feeling the emotional twinges indicative of what my mom had trained me to be indicators of truth and recorded in my notes 'this is the real deal, (ie.authentic). Don't mess it up. Three other major points Satchidananda made really hit home:

1. We are all dreaming with our eyes open.
2. The amount of happiness in one's life, is directly proportional to one's discipline.
3. If you don't give up, you're bound to succeed.

I came home committed to not fall asleep' through continuous practice of what I'd learned. Was my practice always perfect? No. Have I fallen off the horse'? You bet! But, I used Arupa Dhyana Kriya to analyze and understand the properties of discipline inside and out (insight #2 above) and held firmly to insight #3 as if my life depended on it.

Fall semester 1999, shortly after taking part in the 2nd initiation and during my senior year at the university, the same friend whom I'd come to Boulder, Colorado to visit several years earlier, invited me to explore Brazil with him and his new Brazilian girlfriend and several of his other buddies. Although I

knew this trip would be intense, as he always tended to take me out of my comfort zone, I knew it'd be a mistake to miss a New Years party in Brazil even though it would be so much easier to just spend it snowboarding in the Colorado Mountains.

I showed up at the airport and there was my friend and the Brazilian girl, but no one else. He explained it would be only the three of us going on this month long trip through Brazil. So I was to be the "3rd wheel!" It took about a day before it became clear that whatever I had to contribute was not going to be appreciated. Moreover, I should really do my best to become invisible. As I did not speak Portuguese, I spent the next three weeks in silence (mouna yoga) and so turned to practicing my new, 2nd initiation mantra (Shiva) continuously.

Here I was in Brazil and basically a thorn in the side of this couple's romance. The trip was pretty much a nightmare despite the awesome beauty of the country and the amazing places we visited. Between the continuous practice of the five-fold path of BKY, mouna yoga, Shiva mantra, tapas and the energetic subversion of my travel companions, my ego was being dismantled on a level I'd yet to experience.

But then it happened... while my friend and his girlfriend frolicked on the beach, a new acquaintance bought me a bowl a mysterious looking, thick purple puree topped with granola, sliced bananas and drizzled with honey. I devoured the concoction. I knew instantly that what I was eating was more than just a delicious treat. I shared some with my friend and he too fell in love with Acai (ah-sigh-ee).

It was days later, on a Brazilian wildlife reserve island, Fernando De Naronha, about 2 hours flight towards Africa, while eating what was likely to be my last bowl of Acai, I had the epiphany! We, my friend and I should import this fruit and start our own acai cafes in the US. I looked at my friend, shared the idea and he immediately agreed. Back on the Brazilian mainland and on the night before my travel companions and I would separate for different flights back to the US, my friend and I shook hands and I said, "let's not give up, until we succeed."

I finished Spring semester 2000. I spent the summer in Boulder, writing a business plan with my friend (and soon to be official business partner). A natural born businessman and having majored in finance, my friend would work with my father (a developer, visiting at the time in Boulder) on financial projections while I researched why (scientifically) acai was considered to be the most powerful fruit in the Amazon.

While working on the business plan, I received a letter in the mail informing me that my friend and I were being called to depose on behalf of a college buddy with whom we'd been skiing a year or two previously and had broken his back after attempting to jump from a chairlift to avoid freezing to death... a long story. I shared my acai story, at lunch with the father of the friend for whom we were testifying. He asked, "so, what's the next step?" I told him that just the night before while reading the *The Art of War*, I had realized we needed to visit the Amazon to do research and gain some control over the supply side of the fruit (*Art of War* style). He responded, "when are you going?" I told him as soon as we can get enough money together for plane tickets. To which he replied... "GO!" "You can pay me back later."

We had a contract for exclusive distribution written, made a bunch of copies and found ourselves in the Amazonian city of Belem playing detective. Lot's of crazy stuff happened... too much to share ... But the most significant event occurred when we took a guided tour into the forest. We learned that the people living in the forest made more money selling acai than they did selling wood and other less sustainable goods. SAMBAZON, an acronym for Sustaining And Managing the Brazilian Amazon was born and fourteen years later Sambazon's extractive reserve has grown from an idea into well over six million acres, i.e., it worked.

BKY sadhana has been integral in giving me the strength, focus, discipline and perhaps most importantly the vision to accomplish all endeavors in my life. I've been holding initiations for about four years now in all kinds of places to all kinds of people. As life goes on and old conceptions dissolve, I don't hold onto much, but life is no longer boring. I have complete faith in Babaji's Kriya Yoga and am committed to sharing the techniques with all sincere seekers.

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