Who Inspires You? Honoring Your Guru Today

Guru is a Sanskrit word that means remover of darkness. Buddhists and Hindus hold festivals and elaborate ceremonies on a holiday called [Guru Purnima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru_Purnima), which happened this week, in fact. This significant holiday is an opportunity for students to honor teachers and express gratitude for those who have taught important lessons, removed shadows of doubt, and shined a light on blinding ignorance.

Here’s the story of meeting my guru.

**Am I Enlightened?**

It was 2006 and I was in a 200-hour yoga teacher training class learning about anatomy, yoga psychology, adjustments on students, and how to structure a yoga class. But in between classes, I was not exactly the picture of health. (Unless you count getting into bendy poses or standing on my head every morning.)

Though I wasn’t exactly unhealthy by society’s definition, I felt empty in a sort of “is this is it?” kind of feeling. I had hoped this yoga teacher training would be a panacea to make me feel like my life had some sort of greater purpose.

One of the teacher training modules was Ayurveda where, instead of learning about proper hip alignment, I learned the true definition health. True health isn’t lack of disease or being thin, rather it’s inner joy experienced by our entire being. It’s like a buzz that never wears off--not just momentary elation from eating a cookie or getting a promotion. (Those are nice, though.) When health is missing, we feel empty, lacking, and any joy we do feel is fleeting.

So you could imagine what sort of mental bombs were going off in my head as this teacher talked about health, true peace, and inner stillness. I remember just sitting there listening with rapt attention as she talked about Ayurveda’s principles--food and its impact on the body and the mind; about the doshas vata, pitta, and kapha; and the fact that we can use food as medicine. It was only then, when I found my guru, that I could truly understand how my mind had been terrorizing me all those years.

Shunya Pratichi Mathur became my guru that very first class and I followed her around to attend her other classes until she opened a school where I’ve been a student for four years learning to practice Ayurveda as a healer.

**Mind Is Not the Enemy**

After years of depression--brought on not by any particular circumstance, but from my own mind, lifestyle, diet, and who knows what else--I learned that I could watch my mind as I would a TV show (just not Walking Dead because zombies really freak me out).

Over the years, Shunya and Vedika Global (the school she opened) have taught me practices, dietary guidelines, medicines, herbs, meditation and breathwork I can do every day to ensure that I could be balanced and move beyond the cranky toddler self that was ruining my life to embrace a larger understanding of purpose. (If you read through this blog, nearly all of the wisdom I share is directly learned from Shunya’s teachings, learned from her grandfather and great grandfather.)

The light Shunya brought to my life is something I can never repay, only by bringing her teachings to others who can benefit can I ensure that her wisdom can reach others who need it.

You should definitely listen to her teachings by visiting the [Vedika Global channel on You Tube](http://www.youtube.com/user/vedikaglobal). Give this one a watch:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TSB8zaBApE&feature=share&list=PLkpR1TQMei4XQVsP2aHAXq21Z0q2-8KN0

I’d like to thank many more people I call gurus – my mother and father who have patiently guided and nurtured me since I was a zygote; my sister who has taught me the value of sharing and not putting gum in other people’s hair; my husband who has taught me that love is what’s really important; my mentor and friend Nilofer who has inspired me and always offers such wise career advice, fashion advice, and guidance through countless tough job decisions. Thank you for being my gurus!

Who is your guru?