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# The flawless mirror

By Nandini Sarkar

April 2017

The spiritual moorings provided by her guru and his lineage have blessed her with all the success she enjoys, says Nandini Sarkar



This year, I am going to turn 48. Am I the same person that I was in my childhood or teens or youth? No way! I am at least four different persons by now. Each transformation has propelled me to greater happiness and a greater sense of security, so I'm kind of good to keep going on this track. It really intrigues me to think how many more transformations I will undergo by the time I'm 60. Will I be able to sleep alone at night, without the lights on? Will I be alone but not lonely? Will I be able to enter the silence at will? Will I still be in business? So many transformative possibilities to look forward to. And if, by chance, Yama, the God of Death, summons me at this moment, telling me my time is up, how would I like my epitaph to read? Easy: "So much love experienced. So much contentment. Every question answered. Every wish fulfilled. I thank my inner voice. It was the flawless mirror that showed me who I was and what I had the potential to become."

Spirited enquiry

I hate status quo. I can't live with the mundane. I believe it is strictly up to me to define my boundaries and not for others to set. If my objective is dharmic, my will strong, and I am not hurting anyone, I will always be helped by unseen forces. I have never been influenced by trends or what people will say. From a young age, I started questioning my life and its purpose. This was the time when my inner voice first spoke to me. It asked me why I was so timid, and commanded me to stand up for myself. The voice was so distinct that even today, I remember it. I was very shy and prone to being bullied. This advice to be spirited brought about a fundamental shift in my personality. I did very well in school, in various competitions and multiple activities; enjoyed the love of my teachers and friends, and went on to become the Head Girl of one of the largest schools in Delhi. The school gave me the Most Outstanding Head Girl award. In my final year, my beloved teacher, Jaya Ganzu, gifted me the famed classic by Paramahansa Yogananda, Autobiography of a Yogi. The first time, I read it casually and it did not impact me. Then, my inner voice surfaced and literally pushed me to read it a second time. Bingo! this is what I was looking for. The book, the Kriya Yoga path and the Masters became my life's anchors. All the confidence, mojo, business success, happiness in family life and help that has flowed into my life, has emerged from this inexhaustible divine source.

Dharma and the power of dynamic will

I was very fortunate to be born to my mother. She would speak to us frequently about karma, good and bad, and about following dharma. Her great inspiration was to instill in us the faith that if we followed dharma, we would

be protected and amply rewarded. Soon, my repeated prayers and strong desire led me to my spiritual Master, who was 17. A 17-year-old had a habit that had me in its grip. I was full of awe and fear. Master's powerful message on how to develop discipline will to fight bad habits, struck a deep chord; one that stayed with me lifelong. Master's advice and grace also led me to the love of my life: my husband. In my husband, I have my best friend, romantic lover, mentor and wise business guide. Master said that when the desire to marry arises in the heart, we should pray to God to choose for us. After all He can see the total picture, which we can't. I never



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would help me and I remember praying for six months before meeting my husband. When I first met him at the workplace, my inner voice suddenly chirped: what a nice person! His aura was wonderful and it attracted me instantly. Ironically, before meeting him, I had contemplated leading the life of a nun. Again, my inner voice dissuaded me. I was on a Delhi University Special, returning home from college, when the inner voice spoke: "Are you sure you don't want to be a nun just because you want to escape the exams at the Delhi School of Economics?" She was right, of course. I was too caught up with all things spiritual in my MA days, and had neglected my studies. Escape from the tough Delhi School exams was surely the prime reason for wanting to be a nun! In business life too, when difficulties came and I just wanted to chuck everything and run away, Sri Yuktेशwar's sage advice kept me grounded: look fear in the face and it will cease to trouble you.

### Duty first, duty last

This experience also taught me a lesson I have never forgotten: spirituality is no excuse to run away from earthly duties. Duty first! Duty last! It has given me enormous satisfaction to play multiple roles as wife, mother, businesswoman, community worker, wannabe writer and to accept responsibility in each role. It has given purpose and ever new joy to my life. I remember being mentored by a very rich businessman at the start of my journey with C-Quel. At any given time, he would have idle crores lying in his savings account. But he had duodenal ulcer and couldn't eat anything except rice and curd. He was depressed and had a string of failed relationships. I never saw him as successful even though he had a lot of money. The practice of Kriya Yoga has given me good health (touch wood!) and unflagging energy (ditto!). Being genuinely concerned about my extended joint family, friends and colleagues at the workplace has given me peace of mind and amazing fellow feeling. Running my business ethically and with self-respect has given me a clean conscience. A strong commitment to our clients' expectations and constant efforts to innovate on business practices has given C-Quel a great market reputation. On the success barometer, I want to continue learning to be a better person and to give back more. Money has never been the motivation. However, I am blessed that it has come without asking.

### Love, serve and leave the rest to God

My husband and I co-founded C-Quel, the company we run together, in 2001. For us, C-Quel is the Divine Mother. Through C-Quel, we have been granted the boon of constructive work that serves thousands and has given us life-transforming lessons in patience, perseverance, respect for the team and a spirit of service to others. My husband and I were in jobs when the entrepreneurial bug bit us. What business should we get into? This was the constant churn in our minds since we were not from a business background and had never been to business school. Service! be serviceful, said my inner voice, very forcefully. So, we started looking at opportunities in the services industry. Soon, we developed our business model of offering Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) services to corporates, in the retirements and legal compliance space. I wrote to Daya Mata, the then President of SRF, telling her about C-Quel and she graciously responded. I have always remembered what she said: Love, serve and leave the rest to God. This really took the pressure off chasing business revenue mindlessly and blindly. From the very start, at C-Quel we have been driven by a service mindset. Revenue has followed, by grace and hard, committed work. In the initial years, there was a desperate rush to meet deadlines and extremely long working hours, even if that meant riding roughshod over the team's personal lives. Sorry, that doesn't work! We learnt that while the human brain can, should and must learn to multi-task, the best performance happens when we are calmly active and actively calm. My greatest success in this life has been my discovery that God loves me, without any full stops. He is ever with me as my inner voice, holding up a flawless mirror for me to check on myself and evolve to the next stage of being. Nirvana is mine, because the knowledge that really matters, is now mine.

Bio: Nandini Sarkar is Co-founder, C-Quel, a management services company. A lover of the spiritual Masters she is a follower in the Kriya Yoga tradition.

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## CONTACT US

LifePositive  
📍 F-1/9, 1st floor, Opp. Honda showroom, Okhla Phase 1, New Delhi – 110020  
For Magazine related queries : 📞 +91-11-49563777  
For Healing session and others : 📞 +91-9821905370  
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