



## The Centered Place Newsletter

April 2020

*Namaste*

In these difficult times, there is a bright silver lining. The challenges we face are making us stronger. As lifting weights builds our physical muscles, challenging times can build our spiritual muscles: including those of perseverance, faith and character. Challenging times can bring us closer together, even as we observe social distancing. We maintain that distance in solidarity, for the good of all.

And the greatest of all silver linings? These difficult times can bring us closer to our own Self: the depth of our being from where we gain the greatest strength. Swami Nirmalananda says:



*Sameer Sethi Photography, [c1.staticflickr.com](https://www.staticflickr.com/1000/5011111111_12345678901_12345678901.jpg)*

“You really have to be deeply grounded in order to manage what’s coming at you. Yoga’s teachings give you that inner strength and peace, so you can handle anything.”

This kind of strength and resilience won’t come from lifting dumbbells. It won’t come from someone else. It comes from within you. And when you dig deeper within to find the ground of your Infinite Beingness — the depth and divinity of your own true Self — you then stand with a greater sense of certitude, stability, inner balance and peace. Love flows from your heart more easily and abundantly. You become fearless and unshakeable. You can weather anything. You become immune to dis-ease; you are at complete, blissful ease. You become a spiritual warrior.



This month, the pose of the month is [Warrior 1](#). But before getting to Warrior 1 and standing your ground, you must first learn how to stand on the ground. You practice that in Tadasana, the starting position for all standing poses. Tadasana is often called the Mountain pose. You stand sturdily and firmly but without effort. A mountain stands tall but doesn’t work at it. It’s effortless. The literal translation of Tadasana is “the pose of

**T**hat” — standing in and for your Self, in your Totality. When you abide in your Self, you become a mountain of strength and a fountain of love.

Stand strong. Stay centered. Rise courageously to the occasion. Know and experience the Supreme in you. You are a mountain of strength, a fountain of love. Put a beacon on top and let it shine.

### Topics in this newsletter:

- [Contemplation of the Month](#)
- [Pose of the Month](#)
- [Charity of the Month: Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center](#)

- [Class Schedule and April Calendar](#)
- [Birthdays This Month](#)
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- [Extras](#)
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  - [EnLighten up!](#)
  - [More Wisdom to Ponder](#)

## Contemplation of the Month

April's contemplation article is titled "[Pathways to Bliss](#)." Swami Nirmalananda says:

"In the last few weeks, with the pandemic still expanding, you've lost some of your external pathways to bliss. The people, places and things you're used to focusing on are not so easily available, perhaps not available at all. ... Though you're currently in seclusion, you're probably looking forward to the time when you get out in the world and reinstate your old pathways to bliss. Instead, I want to help you find new pathways, ones that work for you, both while you are homebound as well as when your life gets going again. They'll work better for you than anything else you've ever tried."



*Warrior 1  
(but back foot should be pointing forward, with toes slightly inward as in Tadasana, and heel on the floor)*

Read to understand and access your pathways to bliss.

## Poses of the Month

To help you maintain peace of mind and fierce strength at the same time, add these poses to your daily practice: Tadasana (mountain pose, or pose of That) followed by Virabhadrasana 1 (Warrior 1).

These poses teach you how to take yoga into the midst of your life. Learn to stand without compressing your spine. Tadasana teaches you how to take the qualities of Shavasana (the relaxation pose) into standing. It also improves your balance (physical, mental and emotional) and develops your stamina. Virabhadrasana 1 teaches you how to develop your overall strength and balance. It also develops your stamina.

For instructions, see [Warrior1 Instructions](#)

## Charity of the Month: Direct Relief COVID-19 Relief Activities



DirectRelief was rated as best of all charities in 2019 by CharityWatch and was also recognized by The Center for High Impact Philanthropy at University of Pennsylvania. CharityWatch gave Direct Relief a 100%

score in fundraising efficiency (percent of private donations remaining after fundraising expenses) and 99% for its charitable commitment (charitable services as a percent of total expenses).

In the current battle against the coronavirus, Direct Relief is coordinating with public health authorities, nonprofit organizations and businesses in the U.S., China and globally to provide personal protective equipment and essential medical items to health workers responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the U.S., Direct Relief is delivering protective masks, exam gloves, and isolation gowns to health care organizations in areas with confirmed COVID-19 cases.

To donate, you can go to [The Centered Place's Facebook page](#) (scroll down to the March 31 post) or go directly to our [Facebook Direct Relief Fundraiser](#).

**Last month**, we (you!) raised \$168 for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Our [online fundraising page](#) for this charity remains available so that you can still contribute.

## Class Schedule and April Calendar

We will remain closed as long as necessary, standing at a distance in solidarity with you and all the many other clubs, businesses and organizations striving to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

We plan to offer online classes soon. *Thanks to Linda LaBaire for her inspiration. She visits three people every day (at a distance) to check on them. She parked in our driveway and called us from her mobile phone. She urged us to offer online classes.*

We immediately ordered a webcam online and are awaiting for its delivery (webcams are sold out in most stores and online retailers). When that camera arrives, we will send out a schedule in a separate announcement.

Meanwhile, there are numerous online Svaroopa® yoga classes already being taught and that you can join:

- Kris Curran has these classes. She also offers private Vichara sessions on the phone (if you have questions, contact her at [joyfullivingyoga16@gmail.com](mailto:joyfullivingyoga16@gmail.com)):

Sunday 4/5 10am: class, \$10

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJMsd-CprijotxltIKGxQvQy2uGEyEdQ2Wg>

Wednesdays 4/8-4/29 7:30p: class, \$10

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/vpctc--vqT8spGtrGC81jaOe2mQdSXMvGg>

Sundays 4/12-5/3 10 am: class, \$10

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/vJAvdOmrgzwi6wgMarWmpfKWixYusvyX7A>

Thursdays 4/9-4/30 6:30 pm: guided awareness and ujjayi, free

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/v5Aoc-Corj00aX2EwUn7J9NC3sHVmq-V4w>

- Carol Waite has several classes and offers this information (if you have questions, contact her at [yogawithcarol@gmail.com](mailto:yogawithcarol@gmail.com)):

All you need to attend class through zoom is a lap top, Ipad or phone you click on the link (see below) and you will be in. You don't even need your own zoom account.

You do need to buy a Svaroopaa Class Card at [www.sohum.org](http://www.sohum.org) or you can call me and I can help you do that (508-662-3763). When you buy a pass you get a 10% discount with the code WEGOTTHIS (note all caps and only 1 T). Be sure to buy the Svaroopaa 8 Card Class pass (regularly price is \$152 10% savings with the code).

My online classes are being offered:

Monday 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Wednesday 10:30 AM - 12:00 Noon

Friday 8:45 AM - 10:15 AM

The link will open about 10 minutes before class time this will give us time to socialize a little and especially when it is your first class go over how it all works.

- Michelle (Kamala) Gross at Westborough Yoga offers several yoga classes as well as 30-minute Shavasana/Ujjayi sessions a week. See her schedule at [www.westboroughyoga.com](http://www.westboroughyoga.com).
- The Svaroopaa Vidya Ashram has numerous yoga classes and other services available online as well. See <https://svaroopaa.org/online/>.

## Birthdays This Month

We wish the following active students and friends a very happy birthday.

Cheryl Dauksewich (2<sup>nd</sup>), Nora Pennington (4<sup>th</sup>), Denise (Devapriyaa) Hills (7<sup>th</sup>), Jamie Cieslak (11<sup>th</sup>), Candy Galonek (11<sup>th</sup>), Tara Opalinski (14<sup>th</sup>), Jane Young (17<sup>th</sup>), Rita Bennett (18<sup>th</sup>), Gayle Aroian (19<sup>th</sup>), Sonia Sieger (19<sup>th</sup>), Maureen Blake (20<sup>th</sup>), Linda Higgins (20<sup>th</sup>), Shirley Ellis (21<sup>st</sup>), Paul Paradis (23<sup>rd</sup>), Judy Kohn (25<sup>th</sup>), Donna Roberts (25<sup>th</sup>), Nancy Gray (26<sup>th</sup>), JoAnn Kass (26<sup>th</sup>), Amy Ouellette (26<sup>th</sup>), Patty (Yashoda) Sayre (26<sup>th</sup>), Jackie Korzec (29<sup>th</sup>)



*If you have a birthday in March and were omitted from this list, either we haven't seen you in a long time or we didn't have your birth information. If the former, come back! Renew your commitment! We'll be happy to receive you. If the latter, let us know the missing information. Thank you!*

## Flu: Don't Get Bugged [repeated and revised from the last newsletter]

Fortunately, the virus is not running rampant in our immediate area. Let's keep it that way by following the advice of the medical experts.

Keep your immune system strong. Don't let anxiety and stress wear you down. Let go of worrying. Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch woman who, along with her family, helped Jews escape the Nazis from the Holocaust during WWII, said:

**"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."**





Instead of worrying, be vigilant and do what you can now to protect yourself and to address the needs of others. While keeping a distance, you can still connect to others in so many ways. Check by phone or email on those who cannot risk going out to shop: see if they need anything. Ask how you can be of help. Another way to connect with others is to donate to charities and homeless shelters and other services. Support them so they can connect with those who are in need. We are all interconnected. We are all one!

As for taking care of yourself, this is no time to abandon your practices. It's time to dive into them more devotedly. Turn inward. Be quiet. Rest in your Self. You can practice Ujjayi Pranayama, the breathing exercise we always start classes with. It boosts your nervous system and calms your nerves. (Michelle [Kamala] Gross offers several 30-minute Shavasana/Ujjayi online sessions a week; see her schedule on [www.westboroughyoga.com](http://www.westboroughyoga.com)).

Of course, do more yoga and meditate. These practices will support you and, ultimately, maintain your immune system's ability to fight back against any disease.

### Free Audio Recordings of Sadguru Nirmalananda and All Online Services

Free audio recordings of Swami Nirmalananda discourses online. Listen from home or during your travels. Listen from your cell phone or PC. <https://svaroopa.org/audio-recording>  
Swami's new book *A Yogic Lifestyle* is now available on amazon or at the ashram's [online site](#).

All online services now being offered by the ashram – including yoga classes, meditation classes, discussion groups – are available here: <https://svaroopa.org/online/>  
These are not necessarily free. The ashram needs to cover costs.

### Enlighten Up!

Paul Anka sings a social distancing version of one of his hits, titled “(Don’t) Put Your Head on My Shoulder”; it will put a smile on your face and touch your heart (from a distance):  
[https://youtu.be/Sfw\\_RwmEGSk](https://youtu.be/Sfw_RwmEGSk)

Be smart, safe, and considerate of others:



Art students from Berklee Music School send their love, from a safe distance:  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/24/821041006/virtual-love-sweet-love-from-quarantined-berklee-college-of-music-students>

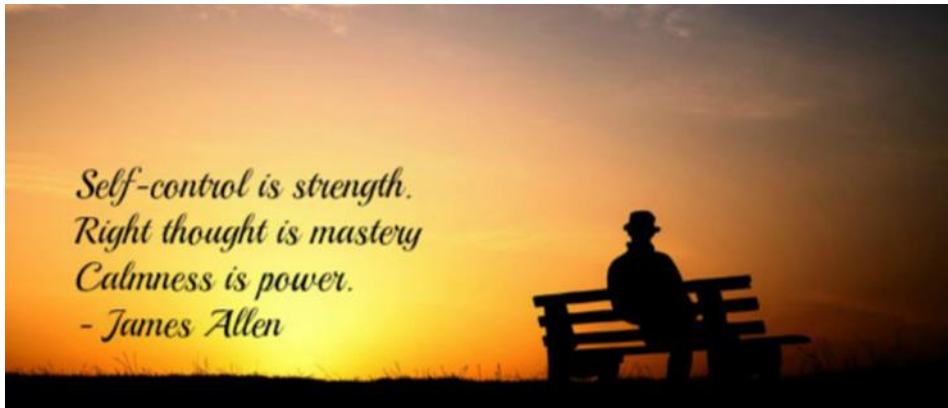
What does a snail say while riding on a turtle's back?

“Wheeeeeeee!!!!”

Be patient. This, too shall pass!

### Wisdom to Ponder

Our innate capacity for empathy is the source of the most precious of all human qualities. ~ His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama



[empowermentmomentsblog.files.wordpress.com](http://empowermentmomentsblog.files.wordpress.com)

“It is only in our darkest hours that we may discover the true strength of the brilliant light within ourselves that can never, ever, be dimmed.” ~ Doe Zantamata

“Prosperity is a great teacher; adversity is a greater. Possession pampers the mind; privation trains and strengthens it.” – William Hazlitt



“I learned there are troubles of more than one kind. Some come from ahead, others from behind.

But I've bought a big bat. I'm all ready, you see.  
Now my troubles are going to have trouble with me." ~ Dr. Seuss

For an inspiring message about these times and the opportunities they bring, click: [Change by Make Magic Productions](#)

This is rich with suggestions for helping you through:  
[Spiritual Practices for the Coronavirus](#) (from the [Spirituality & Practice website](#))

An inspiring poem:

### **"History Will Remember"**

History will remember when the world stopped  
And the flights stayed on the ground  
And the cars parked in the street  
And the trains didn't run.

History will remember when the schools closed  
and the children stayed indoors  
And the medical staff walked towards the fire  
And they didn't run.

History will remember when the people sang  
On their balconies, in isolation  
But so very much together  
In courage and song.\*

History will remember when the people fought  
for their old and their weak  
Protected the vulnerable  
By doing nothing at all.

History will remember when the virus left  
And the houses opened  
And the people came out  
And hugged and kissed  
And started again.

Kinder than before.

– Donna Ashworth

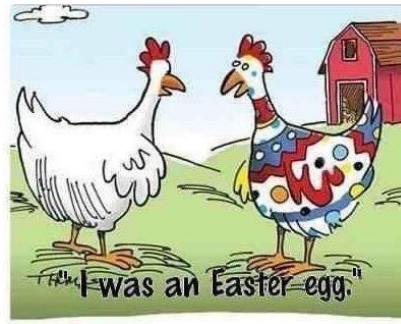
\* Italians sing on their balconies under lockdown:  
<https://www.reuters.com/video/?videoId=OVC514LS1&jwsourc=cl>

<https://twitter.com/valemercurii/status/1238234518508777473>

Keep your eye on our [blog](#) for more inspiration.



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*Happy Easter, Passover, and everything else to celebrate!*

*Giving thanks to you, for giving us the opportunity to teach and support you! Love from us.*

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