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Breathing Room:

Kripalu's monthly exploration of body, mind and spirit

Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health

Lenox, Massachusetts

...a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a more conscious and compassionate world

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"Do not fight the dark, just turn on your light. Let go and breathe into the goodness that you are."

--Swami Kripalu

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JAI BHAGWAN ... I honor the light within you.

In a recent yoga class the teacher ended the session by leading us in the chant of "OM." As our voices rose, the reverberation spiraled around the room and resonated to the center of my body. Through the magic of shared sound, I could feel the bond that was being created between each person in the class. In this simple act, we were engaged in a profound endeavor – the creation of community.

Community is the theme of this month's edition of Breathing Room and community is at the heart of Kripalu's mission. We asked Kripalu President, Sudhir Jonathan Foust, to share his insights on community (see below). We also spoke with members of one of the most boisterous communities within the myriad diverse groups that make Kripalu what it is: KDZ – The Kripalu Drummerz. Their joy and energy ignite the weekly DansKinetics® classes and add an exotic backbeat to the Kripalu melting pot.

And, we heard back from you, our community at large. The response to our inaugural issue was outstanding, and overwhelmingly positive. Thank you for your comments and suggestions – keep them coming.

Namaste!

Anne Sasso

Editor

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INSIGHT: COMMUNITY (SANGHA)

Wisdom to inspire your practice

Sangha: a community of like-minded people supporting one another in their spiritual development

“Consciousness is transmitted in relationships. We seek friends, lovers, communities, who can see us, hold us, bear us. ...we construct our circle of friends and our communities and then they construct us – precisely by how they see us into being.”

--Stephen Cope, *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self* (Bantam Books, 1999)

Drop a handful of stones into the still surface of a lake and ripples flow outward from each point of impact. The small waves intersect, coalesce, grow and create a wondrous pattern on the water’s surface. Like the handful of pebbles, Kripalu consists of a large number of communities – some overlap, some are completely separate, all are intrinsic to Kripalu’s mission to create a more conscious and compassionate world.

Being part of community is an active dance of relationship, of participation. When Kripalu President Sudhir Jonathan Foust arrived at Kripalu twenty-one years ago, he sensed the promise of engaging in this type of supportive relationship. “Kripalu community members were not just talking about what was possible in their lives, they were actually practicing, experimenting, and testing their edges,” he says. “The sense of supportive community is what has kept me so engaged over the years.”

Yogic sages have long counseled the cultivation of friendships with like-minded and like-hearted people. Sudhir agrees. If you seek change in your life, he suggests teaming up with someone who shares the same goals. Create a community that fosters change for the good. “By aligning myself with someone who is

walking a similar path, I can offer inspiration when they slip and they return the favor when I need support.”

Our communities affect how we view the world. “Being with like-minded and inspiring people keeps my cup full,” says Sudhir. “It nourishes me so I can serve from a wellspring of abundance.”

Cultivate the communities and relationships that nourish you and, in so doing, may you reap the rewards of joy, fellowship and abundance.

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KRIPALU NEWS: FOCUS ON KDZ - THE KRIPALU DRUMMERZ

The six drummers of KDZ (the Kripalu Drummerz) form one of the many communities that make up the kaleidoscope of Kripalu. Every Saturday they provide the ecstatic beat to Kripalu’s DansKinetics® class (see Programs below). They also perform an evening concert the first Saturday of each month. They have their own CD (see Inspiration below) and, beginning this year, they’re introducing a monthly open community drum circle where anyone at Kripalu is encouraged to pick up a drum and join in the fun.

Shaun Laframboise, Kripalu Programs Assistant and one of the drummers, explains that KDZ and playing at the DansKinetics® classes is what keeps him engaged and inspired. “Drumming with the group is about living the best truth that I can. When I can get to that point and when I see that the dancers are also expressing their best truth in their movements. That interplay is really exciting. That’s why I’m here.”

“I’ve never seen so many people smile like that,” says Adrian Bennett, Kripalu’s Head Chef and KDZ member, about the DansKinetics® classes. Adrian explains the magical interplay that ensues as the drummers inspire a dancer, and the dancers inspire a drummer, and the whole builds into an ecstatic feedback-loop-fusion of sound and movement touching everyone in the room. “It’s a conversation of energy,” says Adrian. “We’re showing it through sound and they’re expressing it through physical movement. It’s real rootsy, spontaneous, uninhibited, raw energy. That’s what makes it so exciting. That’s what does it for me.”

Shaun used to work at the front desk. Checking guests into Kripalu on Friday afternoons, he often noticed how stressed they were. “Then I would see them after a DansKinetics® class and they were relaxed, smiling, completely different.” They were at home in their bodies again, connected and flowing. “Knowing that we contributed to that transformation through our drumming is incredible,” says Shaun.