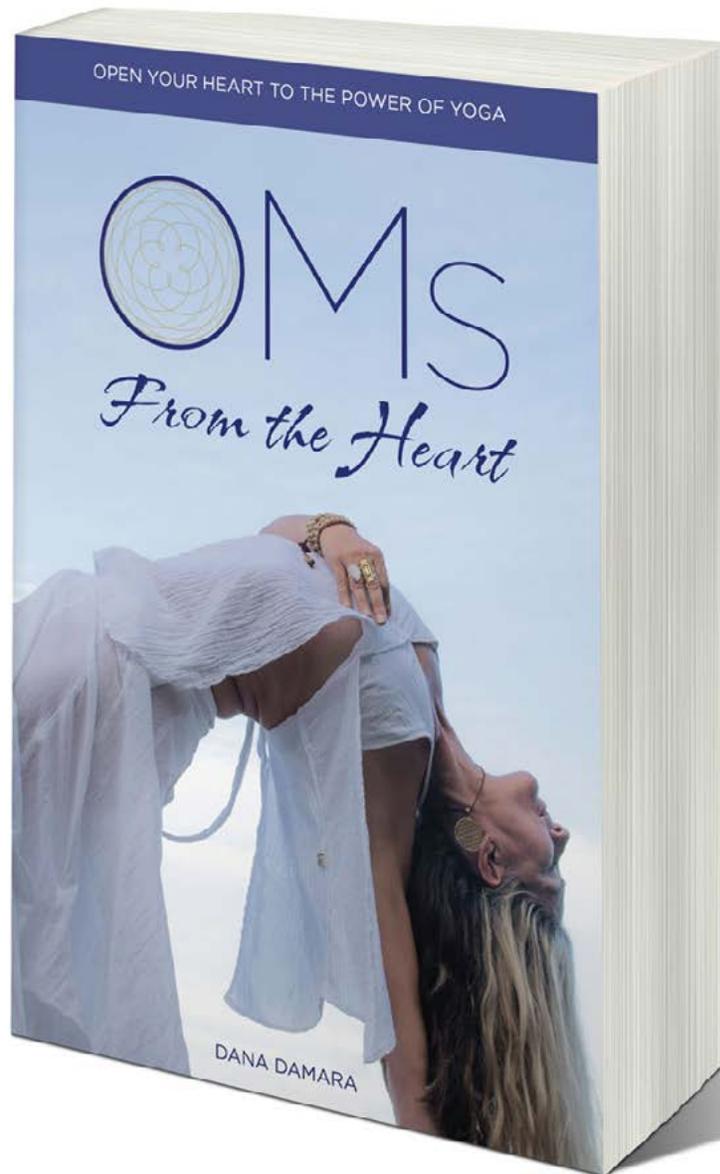




Dana Damara
EVOLUTION



On Grounding: Muladhara Chakra

TRIBE

I've been thinking a lot about the word tribe over the past week. I just got back from my annual trip to Wanderlust in Squaw Valley and that word simply encompasses how I feel the minute I step foot into that festival.

Tribe: "Any aggregate of people united by ties of descent from a common ancestor, community of customs and traditions."

My blood family raised me and for that, I am beyond grateful. My yoga tribe, on the other hand, remembers me. The knowing of tribe members is unexplainable and may show up as synchronicities or mystical encounters. While I agree that some of us may feel that with our blood family, others do not. When I arrive at Wanderlust every year I can't help but feel like I'm with my family.

We travel to each other and gather with a common interest and passion of making sustainable change with our various forms of art, music, dance and yoga. We know that, when we come together, the energy creates a vortex that is mystical and magical. We know that in one breath, big change can be made. We know that bringing other like-minded individuals into our tribe makes our vortex bigger and more powerful, so there is support and unconditional love.

And it's as if no time has passed - as though we have been together all year long even though there are in some cases, thousands of miles between us. I saw a friend of mine this last time and we both hugged for what seemed like hours, heart to heart. Then he looked me in the eye, said nothing and then looked at my daughters who are now ten and twelve. He said, "Dana, it's like I've watched them grow up. I've been witness to them becoming little women." There were tears in his eyes.

It's so true. You feel bonded with your tribe ... over distance, time and life circumstance. You have definitely walked paths together before, and you can feel it the moment you embrace.

Your tribe holds space for you while you grow, while you stumble, and while you thrive. They hold space without judgment and without expectation. They do their thing in life and quietly applaud you while you do yours. There is unspoken gratitude for each other. The gratitude isn't about anything you have "done for them," it's an appreciation for them living their passion because that gives you permission to live yours. You definitely are never off the hook in your tribe.

Your life could be similar or very, very different. It doesn't matter ... because you only see one person. You recognize the oneness in it all. It doesn't matter where you've come from, what path you have walked, together or apart ... there is only one.

The most potent thing a tribe does is remind you of who you are, where you came from, and why you are here. So when you leave that tribe, others who are not in your tribe or don't "get" your tribe, cannot vibrate in your field. Meaning that if you have been swayed in the past toward anything that is less than your highest light, you can no longer do that... comfortably. Your light grows stronger and more vibrant ... it's as if you are fueled by the light of your tribe.

There is nothing more powerful than a tribe. If you haven't found yours yet, my advice is to stop, drop and look in the mirror. Don't look outside ... look in your own heart.

One love ... one heart ... one tribe.

Creative Passion: Svadhisthana Chakra

EMPTY PRESENCE

“Empty presence can be said to be a mind without thought to clutter it; spaciousness, a sense of profound resting in non-doing.” - Ariel Splisbury

It's moments when the mind is clear of thought and there is nothing but nothingness. And I say moments because when you realize you are in (or have achieved) empty presence, you have then dropped out of it.

It's a higher state of consciousness where you are open to receive, which goes against the very way we humans “do” things. The paradox of those moments is that in that nothingness, there is everything. You see, we have it all wrong. Our society would like us to believe that we have to do, prove, accumulate and achieve in order to BE, but that is not truth. Truth is being is just that ... BE-ing.

Thankfully, we have this amazing mind that judges, categorizes and filters our thoughts daily. However, the mind is not the least bit concerned with the evolution of our soul. It is instead focused on survival, fitting in, and making things happen.

Did you know that we receive more information in a day than people received in their lifetime just 100 years ago? That's crazy! How can you possibly make any decision based on truth when you are getting pummeled, yes pummeled by stuff!

Everything you could ever want or need is a click away and you better get yours! With this type of instant access to the Internet and social media, it's easy to fall into the old paradigm of “not-enoughness”. Pssst.. you are enough already....

This practice of empty presence is one that is important for anyone on the spiritual path. Why? Because you are no longer interested in “surface” skimming life. You are no longer involved in wallowing in everyone else's drama. You are no longer adamant in “charging ahead” to get what you want.

No, you are ready to dig deeper – into the sediment of your life. You are ready to use your power in difficult situations instead of giving it away. You are ready to siphon the sediment out and be completely clean and clear to receive whatever messages you are supposed to hear.

And, as I see it, we are bombarded with everyone else's drama, ideas and beliefs with one click. We are giving away our power left and right because we are subject to so much distraction that we couldn't possibly discern truth in a moment. We are so busy being busy that we don't have a moment to get to sediment, even though the sediment is what is driving every important decision in our life.

Empty presence brings us to the stillness, the quiet, the spaciousness and vastness of all that is. It brings us to the nothingness that holds everything. It drops us out of our heads and into our hearts. It illuminates truth immediately.

And yes, it rustles up the sediment. The question remains, do you want to siphon it or do you want to keep sitting on it?

In empty presence we are aware of our breath, we are aware of other's breath, we are aware of the consciousness that connects us, we become aware that we are part of all that is. We fall into this amazing matrix of connection between us all. We see with our hearts and we realize that is all that matters.

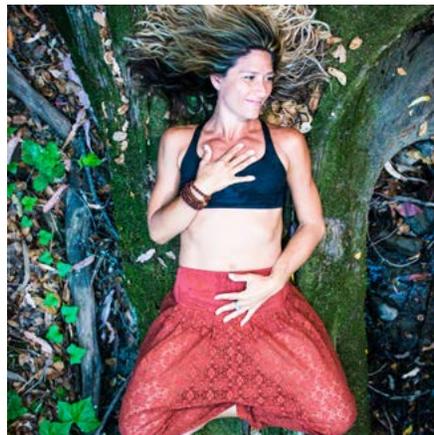
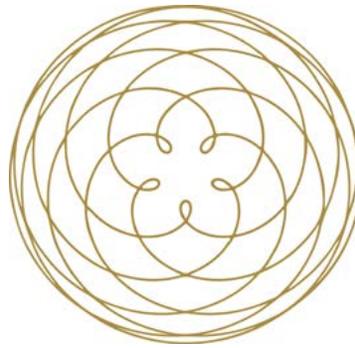
In empty presence we hear: we hear the call of our soul. We see ourselves as a part of the whole and experience that Oneness... for real.

In empty presence we trust: we trust what we hear and we act on that trust and intuition, even when it goes against the ideas and concepts of others.

In empty presence we know: we know that we are supported and that we can fly when we are ready; we know that we are held by the Universe and that it is safe to let go.

In empty presence we receive: we receive all the grace, beauty and awareness that we will ever “need” in this moment.

Sit ... sit with that for a moment. And then sit with it longer ... especially if it's uncomfortable.



Power and Transformation: Manipura Chakra

POWER

I love this word, power. Powerful, powerless, powering through, empowered ... it's so versatile and strong and, well, powerful.

As always, I looked up power and one definition was: the capacity or ability to influence the behavior of others or direct the course of events.

This definition resonated big time. And it got me thinking a lot about the way we humans use our power. Because the truth is that we all hold such great, great power...

But the question is how do we use it?

I've seen it used so many ways: Empowerment of others. Advancement of an idea. Transformation of a situation. Influencing the growth of an individual as well as a community. I've also seen power used to instill fear and create guilt. I've witnessed people using their power to get what they want without any regard for anyone else. And I've seen power being abused in many inequitable relationships.

And this type of behavior isn't just employed in big corporations or political offices; no, this type of behavior is exemplified in yoga communities, small companies, school yards, on the Internet, in relationships, and behind closed doors.

The truth is, the reason behind every single disagreement in every single relationship, is an imbalance of power. Power over another can ruin and rule a lot of our relationships.

I mean, we are very powerful beings, flinging our power all over the place, in any one given moment. Are we conscious when we use this God given power? Are we using it for the benefit of all individuals involved?

Best to know what you want and then discern if that desire for power is coming from a conscious place or an egoic need. Making the wrong decision could mean cleaning up lots of karma later.

Are we consciously utilizing our power in a way that is compassionate, admirable, and yet beneficial? And is it in balance with just how much power we are allowing others to express?

Power over money, power over decisions, power over sex, power of earning capability, power over the community, power to make the final choice.

On the flip side of expressing our power is examining how often and how easily we give our power away. Because that is such an easy thing to do, without even knowing we're doing it.

Saying yes when you mean no. Avoiding confrontation to keep the peace. Allowing someone to speak on your behalf. Not standing up for what you believe in just because you're afraid of something that is probably irrational anyway.

I hear people say, "he/she took my power away" or "he/she wouldn't let me be myself" or "he/she made me feel this way." And now, this whole bullying thing that has become an epidemic in our schools, at work, and on the Internet has gotten me thinking about power.

The truth is this:

You were born with power and you are in charge. Period.
You are the one who has to learn how to use it in a kind, beneficial way.
And no one, I mean no one, can take it away. Ever.

We willingly give our power away and we manage just how we use it. Period.

I know some of you out there are saying, “Oh really? What about war? What about rape? What about divorce? What about adultery? What about terrorism? What about sex trafficking? What about these horrific things that go on every day that some of us in our bubble don’t even pay attention to?”

I get it. It hurts my heart, some of these things that are happening around the globe that we have absolutely no control over. And we sometimes feel powerless to do anything.

I get it.

But here’s the deal... We can manage ourselves and only ourselves. We can choose how we use our internal power to make things right, to ignore, or to pray. We can stand up for what we believe is true and right and just, and we can pray that our efforts create something different.

I tell my girls, all the time – no one can make you do anything, ever. Not even me. I can only suggest, challenge and redirect. At some point they have to make their own decisions on how best to use their power.

And that of course, led me to the idea that if this were indeed true, well than, you can never be a victim. And that in actuality, every single time that you have felt powerless, you have given it away. Unconsciously or consciously.

When you sit in that ... potentially uncomfortable-ness for a little bit, you realize that in and of itself is such a powerful place to be. When you recognize that you have complete responsibility and jurisdiction over your power, life takes on a whole new meaning.

Why?

Because if you gave it away, you can get it back. Anytime you want.
You can get it back.

And that is power.

Love and Compassion: Anahata Chakra

COMPASSION IS AN INSIDE JOB

“Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It’s a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.”

~Pema Chödrön, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*

I love this quote. So much so that I have been reading it in class all week long, in the morning when I wake up and before I go to bed. The world needs more compassion. I know how prophetic that sounds, but it’s true. And, despite what you might think, compassion has to be an inside job.

Compassion is not “needing to understand” anything about or even why anyone does anything that they do. We can judge all we want. We can make assumptions. We can project our own ideas about why ... but guess what? We know nothing. We have not walked a minute in anyone else’s shoes so we know nothing. Best to just hold space.

The other thing is ... you are perfect. Which means, so is everyone else. You are not here to fix anyone. You are only here to love them. In all their imperfections, you are here to love them unconditionally. And oh, by the way, no one needs to fix you either, so stop looking for that outside help. Remember, compassion is an inside job.

I love that she says, “Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others.” This is so important. Know thyself. Know what you love, what you live for, what you’d die for, and what triggers the shit out of you. Because your trigger is your greatest gift. It’s the key to compassion. If it’s still triggering you, it’s something to look at with the eyes of compassion. FYI, if it’s triggering you, it’s not outside of you. It’s inside.

You know, to be completely transparent, I spent this whole week not sitting in loving compassion for the amazing life I get to participate in. No, I spent it being triggered for a moment, and yes only a moment by my mother, my ex-husband and my former lover. I spent it looking into the mirror asking the question,

“Where am I exhibiting this behavior? How can I shift my reality? What is real for me? How can I still love this person? And what is beautiful about this relationship that has evolved me?”

Here is what I found: You can experience deep love and compassion while still being able to carry on a relationship; even if it looks different than what you want.

It is possible to see the bigger picture and make decisions from that place as opposed to reacting in a moment. And sometimes, you just have to let go in deep love for yourself because their energy field just didn’t resonate with you any longer.

Personally, self-compassion and self-love won, and propelled me into creating boundaries for myself that had to be established in response to this shift in my own reality. They didn’t need to change, my response had to change is all.

One of my favorite teachers says, “There is nothing you can do to make me love you any more than I already do. And there is nothing you can do that can make me love you less. I simply love you.” You know where you start reciting that? Yup, in the mirror ... today. Start there.

Expression and Truth: Vissuddha Chakra

SOVEREIGNTY

Sovereignty: having supreme authority over oneself. From a very young age, we tend to look outside ourselves for validation, guidance and information. I witness this every day with my two daughters. And as a parent, I know it's okay to validate and respond with praise but, at the same time, it's just as important if not MORE important, to allow them to make their own decisions (even though I'm cringing inside), so they can learn to gain that sense of sovereignty.

Turning to outside sources is pertinent for learning, growing and expanding. However, the end result will always be the same and that is that growth is an inside job.

This can be quite scary if you have any smidgen of self-doubt, fear of failure, or decision-making issues. I've experienced all three, to be quite honest, and obtaining that sense of sovereignty has been quite a journey.

Self-sustaining action can be intimidating because, when we empower ourselves from the inside out, we truly have no one else to "blame" when things go unlike we planned. Not only that, but we also have to take complete ownership and responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions.

Complete ownership of our thoughts, words and actions.

That means that whatever we decide to be, do and contribute in this lifetime is ours to claim ... regardless of how it "turns out." But what I'm learning is ... when we rely on the inner calling of our soul; we blaze our own trail and magnetize others that uplift our goals.

So then, can we confidently say that when we sit in meditation or dedication, and expand our innocence and vulnerability to learning for the sole purpose of elevating our soul's calling, that we connect to our inner pulse and experience sovereignty?

Can we admit then that our external gaze actually inhibits our personal growth and may even restrict our intellect when it comes to making autonomous choices?

Would you agree then, that relying on the projections (not the opinions), of others, can potentially take us down a path that is not our own?

I think that listening to the whisper of our own divinity and following that unique voice is the only way to gain the empowerment that we crave in this lifetime. I think we know on a deep level that we hold this power within ourselves to create what is uniquely yours, we just rely on the judgment of others and that then becomes the pattern.

Sovereignty is knowing your truth, standing in your truth and then expressing your truth in everything you do. Not just some of the time, all of the time.

Intuition and New Beginnings: Ajna Chakra

UP LEVELING

We are offered countless opportunities to up level our vibration on any given day. And this doesn't mean:

1. We are perfect;
2. We are better than anyone else; or
3. We have achieved something in our life.

No. Actually, up leveling means that we are now more aware.

More aware of our thoughts, our actions, our words and more aware of how we function in the world. We are more aware of how we show up in relationship, what we want in life and how to get there. We look outside ourselves and witness the reality and truth of what IS.

Up leveling gets you nowhere in particular, but more awake. And, if you're doing it "right," you are always offered the opportunity to up-level; whether or not you take that opportunity is entirely up to you.

Up leveling your vibration is not all that easy. It's actually quite challenging because it requires letting go of old stuff and moving into what you may LABEL as unfamiliar. It's actually easier to get snagged by limiting beliefs, old patterns, and the lower vibration of other people in your path, than it is to raise your own vibration. Now with social media, it's so easy to get distracted by all the publicly announced accomplishments of everyone else than it is to focus on your own stuff. Raising your vibration requires work, there's no doubt about it.

I was laughing this week because well, this theme is so resonate with me right now. I was sitting there, going through my task list for the week and amidst the "blog post, social media training/posts, enter emails, update site" was "prepare for meeting with Dove, get processes outlined for assistant, send grant proposal to Lululemon, prepare for meeting with potential business manager, read through proposal from book publisher."

But wait ... then, on my other post-it pile, there was, "reformat computer, take photos off phone, update and back up phone, complete relocation order for children, and get summer schedule for kids together." Needless to say, I went to Juice Alley, decided to juice this week; and ran up and down the Lyon Street steps all week long just to clear my head and heart.

That is up leveling – having a lot happening at one time and being able to see above it. Noticing the "balls in the air" and recognizing how each one is integral to the other. Becoming extremely aware that something is shifting, noticing that this may have been offered before, but this time, you will do something different to support the elevation. And in all this shifting, you get a bit uncomfortable but you do it anyway. Because in that uncomfortable space, something does shift. It's a release of old patterns; it's a letting go of old beliefs, and it's a trust that this time will be different because you are different. We up level our energy when we:

1. Look at the stillness and locate our distractions;
2. Recognize what is holding us back and sit in the un-comfortableness;

3. Take care of old “business” or “karma” that weighs us down;
4. Acknowledge our greatness and move toward it; and
5. Embrace the truth that we deserve all the amazingness coming our way.

Up leveling, sharing our gifts, learning, growing, letting go and shining anew, is why we’re here.

Renew --- rethink --- realign --- reignite --- rewire

Shift everything you think you know into an up-leveled version, which means, you may think you do not know what you’re doing but on some level, I promise you do. And when you leave the familiarity with no promise of something bigger or better ... you will fall into a flow that is so familiar, you won’t remember what it was like before.



Astral Energy: Sahasrara Chakra

WAKING UP

I was watching the Full Moon the other night with a friend and felt very small. We were sitting on a hill-top, looking over the cities of Tiburon, Sausalito, San Francisco, and Oakland. The bay was shrouded in clouds and fog, but still shone so brightly. The cloud cover added such a sense of majestic mystery to this eclipse that I felt like I should have been paying an admission fee to someone for the show.

This show, that I call my life. This movie that is full of infinite lessons, challenges, initiations, triumphs and epic transitions. This box office blockbuster

I was looking up at the stars, and all the planes flying around in the air, going somewhere. And all the cars driving up and down highway 101, headed somewhere.

Did they know there was an eclipse? Did they know the moon was rising in all her glory? Did they know that there was a really cool event about to happen in the sky that wouldn't happen for another eighteen years? Did they understand just how small their issues were? Did they get it? You know, that we are all one, watching the same moon and the same sky?

Or where they overwhelmed in their own drama? In their own story? In their own capsule of reality going ... somewhere? I sat there staring at the moon and I asked my friend, "If you could wish one thing on this eclipse night, what would it be? What would you like to see on the other side of this moon?" He said simply, "I want more people to wake up. I just want more people to wake up."

My heart stopped, literally. Yes ... that is what the world needs - more people to wake up; to remember that this is but a dream that we are creating; to know that we GET to live this life any way we want; to know that every person on this planet is a soul living their karmic destiny; that everyone is someone to somebody.

The reality is that most people on this planet are sleeping. They are sleeping through their life, through intimate connection, and through their lessons. Sometimes I look around and get so dismayed and sad, I cry. I witness so much unconsciousness and such an obvious loss of connection. I witness entitlement, separation, greed, and an overall sense of lack.

I have to be honest here and say, every single day, I thank God I do what I do. I thank God that I chose to share this love of yoga because in my field, at least people are trying to wake up. I pray, along with my sweet friend, that more people just wake the hell up. Because it's exhausting to hit the snooze button over and over again. It actually messes up your REM, you know.

I know it can be equally exhausting being awake through your life, too. I know; I get it. Seemingly it is easier to sleep it off, medicate (not meditate), distract and blame outside influence, claiming that there's "nothing we can do." It is so much easier to stay asleep. Yeah, I get it.

But the truth is that once you wake up, yeah, you're in. And the reality is that if you even try and go back to sleep, you're in for a lot of suffering, confusion and unnecessary back peddling. So why don't you just succumb and wake the hell up?

Get off your high horse and get in the game of life where it's messy, and chaotic, and not so timely and epic and magic and completely unpredictable. That's where we wake up. When things get a little hairy. And for once, just once, can you sit in it and be in it? Can you not avoid it, avert from it, distract yourself with some pathetic story of times gone by or fantasy of the future, and just be in it?

Be in the awakesness ... in the reality of awakening. Because, truth be told, being awake is amazing. And lovely, and the best amusement park ride ever. It's twisting and turning and dropping you down to take you right back up.

Even when I close my eyes, I still feel every single bit of this ride. And I love it, every single bit.

I might cry at disappointment, get angry at injustice, and become frustrated and impatient when I think I know better. But I can honestly say I am awake. I might not "get it right" in every moment. I might not speak with my yogi-tongue in every exchange.

But I can honestly say I am awake.

I see.

I feel.

I try.

I practice.

I fall.

I get messy.

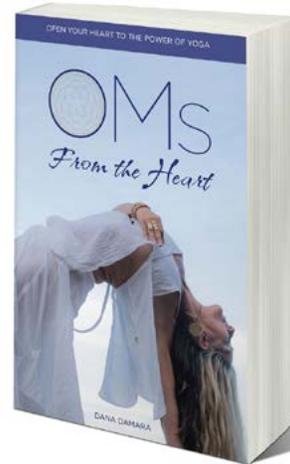
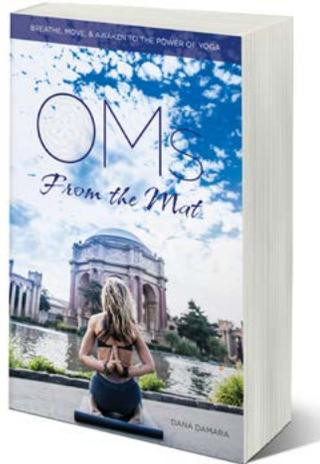
I say, wake up people. Wake up to this epic journey. Step out of your phones, your distractions and other peoples' stories and look up. Look at the stars, at the moon and at the sky. Get up high on a mountaintop and see how small you really are. Look in the mirror and recognize your beauty, your grace, your gifts - this miracle you call you.

Stop wasting your time on sleeping, on blaming, on separating. Wake up to the reality of Oneness. Wake up to the reality of Now. Wake up to the reality of Love.

Period.



AVAILABLE ON
AMAZON
NOW!



COMING
SOON!

Dana Damara's gift of "gab" has evolved into a spiritual sanctuary of relating life lessons off the mat (usually experiences with her two young daughters) to ancient yogic texts. You can find her most recent blogs on www.danadamara.com. She is also a current blogger for www.elephantjournal.com, www.yogitunes.com, www.manduka.com, www.yogadownload.com, www.rebellsociety.com and www.yogiroots.com. She has been featured in *ORIGIN Magazine*, *Mantra Magazine*, *Common Ground* and other online conscious living spiritual publications.

After sending out Weekly Oms for over 5 years, Dana compiled her Oms into her books, *Oms from the Mat* and *Oms from the Heart*. Through the "opportunities" of her life, she relates philosophical yoga principles so that the reader may truly relate and connect with the power and magic of this amazing practice.

You must be advised that the spiritual road isn't smooth. When you read this book and embark on a spiritual journey, be prepared to get your butt kicked. The journey is bumpy, unpredictable and sometimes nauseating. The same static filled radio station keeps playing in the background and there are lots of detours and just as many dead ends. However, along this journey, around every turn, you are rewarded a new version of your Self that is so familiar you can't help but continue the journey for more.

Each chapter offer various "confessions" that will resonate with where you are right now and allow you to journey to the center of your Self. Unblock, shed and release old, stagnate energy so you can be, do and contribute to this world what you were meant to; not what you were expected to. It's your duty to live your most authentic, purposeful life. Start NOW!

