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Article

HEALTH / WELLBEING

SECRETS TO SOULFUL SUCCESS:

Lessons from a Business Yogi

By Henrike Schreer

Have you ever found yourself in a conflict between financial necessities and the deeper knowing that life should be about things more meaningful than that? Have you ever wished you would win the lottery so you could finally start doing what you really love? Or are you running a heart centered business but struggling financially?

Living and working in a spiritual, values driven, non-profit community has taught me many valuable lessons. About life, about people, about who I am on a deeper level and – who would have thought? – about money and business. Building and running a spiritual yoga retreat centre is a soulful endeavour way beyond personal gain, and yet we live in a reality that requires financial sustainability – otherwise our highflying ideas are doomed to fail.

So let me share with you a few insights I have gained that have helped me centre myself in the hustle and bustle of day-to-day busy-ness and keep my focus on what truly matters.

• A yogi serves from the heart

Marianne Williamson, one of the most inspiring spiritual leaders of our time, says: "Nothing liberates our greatness like the desire to help, the desire to serve." So as obvious as it might sound, we need to remind ourselves that we are here to serve.

Being a yogi means, first and foremost, to seek the connection to a Higher Source – whether we call it God, Allah, Krishna, or our Higher Self. It means to dedicate our life, our thoughts, our ability to give to something beyond ourselves and to align our thoughts and actions accordingly. To let go of the desire for immediate gratification and look at our clients as fellow spirit souls who we can serve and support. In this, we shift our energy from a purely monetary exchange to an act of kindness; from a need to get to an intention to give.

• A yogi doesn't need much

One of the main impediments for true happiness and fulfillment is to live someone else's dream. Society is teaching us that "success" means to live in a big house, drive a fancy car, buy our kids the latest gadgets and go on overseas holidays at least every 2nd year. And yet, once you get there, you realise that it doesn't feel quite right. You feel empty and depressed, despite having everything you were looking for.

The only solution is to go back and ask yourself what real success would look like – in all areas of your life. What you would see in terms of your relationships, your career/business, your

healing times

health, your contribution to the greater good etc. What would light up your heart and make your soul sing? If you could have a 10/10, what would you ask for? You might find that it doesn't quite look like what TV ads and glossy magazines suggest. And once you get there, you realize that you don't need much "stuff" any more. That there is no desire to fill the emptiness within, because you are fulfilled: fully filled with what your heart was truly longing for.

• A yogi knows how to focus

Once you have clarified your idea of success, you need to hold that vision and start moving towards it – with little incremental steps if necessary. As a yogi, you learn how to meditate: doing your best to achieve a single pointed focus, and if you are getting distracted, gently moving your attention back to your practice. It is no secret that what you focus on is what you get. Where you are steering with your thoughts and deeds, you go. So deciding on an outcome is one thing, but keeping it in mind and pulling yourself back on track is a dedicated daily practice that requires mindfulness and commitment.

• A yogi gives and receives with gratitude

One of the basic principles of yogic living is to keep the wheel turning. Giving and receiving is both equally important and if you refuse either of them, you interrupt the natural flow of energy. Money, in this way, is just another outlet for this principle: an energetic exchange for the value you provide.

As heart centered entrepreneurs, we sometimes forget this simple truth and see money as a necessary evil. We'd much rather share our gifts freely with the world. In doing so, we deprive our clients from offering back though, diminishing the value they can perceive. If we don't value what we give, neither can they. So make sure to honour your gift, allow for a fair exchange and abundantly give and receive. After all, if you can't make a living by sharing your gift, you will eventually have to find another source of income and nobody will benefit at all.

• A yogi embraces the journey

Facing challenges and uphill battles – in yogic practice and business likewise – you can easily get tempted to let it all go and run back to the safety of your comfort zone. And yet, if you are to succeed on your path, you have to develop an "until" attitude. Which means, first and foremost, to embrace your failures and see them as learning opportunities. Keep going until you succeed. Like Edison, who famously found 999 ways of not inventing a light bulb, you need to take failures as feedback and try a different approach, based on what you have learned. One of the simplest yet most profound insights that all successful people have to share is that they didn't start off as a success. They became who they needed to be in the process – not despite of the challenges, but because of them. A true yogi is aware enough to know that the biggest reward lies not in the achievement itself, but in the process of becoming. Or as Marcel Proust pointed out: "The true journey of discovery lies not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

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