

Connecting the Dots (Healthy Lifestyle)

Som R. Soni, PhD
AdTech Systems Research Inc.
1342 North Fairfield Road,
Beavercreek, Ohio 45432 USA
somrsoni@gmail.com

Abstract

This article contains the efficacy of Heartfulness meditation leading to inner transformation toward facing the challenges of life and treading the path to honorable exit from any situation. Personal examples are provided as to how revelations might appear in mind to unravel the knot. Thoughts came to me to get health checkup done to receive timely medical aid. I came across a medium that connected me to a healthy lifestyle coach, guiding me to follow plant based whole food (PBWF) diet and intermittent fasting (IF). Complete details of health issues, food as medicine, required fasting, autophagy and outcome are provided in this article. The diet and lifestyle changes are such that, if followed correctly, it takes care of most of the health issues.

Keywords

Plant based whole food, Intermittent fasting, Healthy lifestyle, Autophagy, and Fasting.

1. Introduction

I have been practicing Heartfulness meditation (also known as HFN) for more than 30 years. *Heartfulness is a simple practical method to experience heart's unlimited resources. It includes guided relaxation, and meditation techniques with yogic transmission [1,2] Visit: www.heartfulness.org* Some recent personal experiences are given to reveal the path I had taken and correlating outcomes. The following are two self-explanatory visual illustrations of outcomes from sincere HFN meditation practice. The Plant Based Whole Food Diet has emerged as a synergy in the process. The PBWF coach, Mr. Lalit M. Kapoor also has meditated for more than 30 years.

1.1 Benefits of Meditation

Heart based meditation helps develop discernment, will power and discipline in the conduct of individual's life. A picture speaks more than a thousand words; this is shown in Figure 1. Sincere practice with faith in the system goes long way in leading a purposeful life. Success will require determined persistence of practiced surrender to discernment. In today's competitive environment, one comes across different challenges; and the practice guides one to provide an honorable exit from the situation trap.

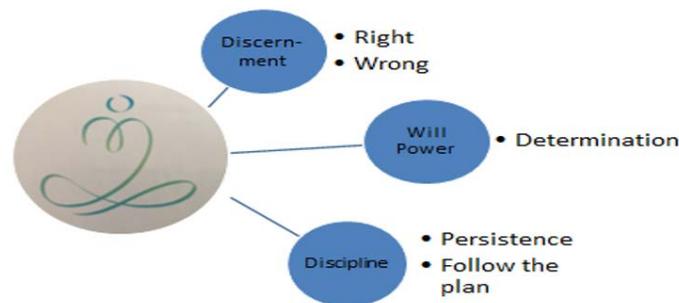


Figure 1: Meditation helps the practitioner hone these traits.

1.2 Continued Meditation Benefits

Consequent to these traits, one develops inner strength to transform oneself to flow with the prevailing situation, develop character inspired by quiet reflections and performs services in conformity with 10 maxims of Sahaj Marg [1,2] (Figure 2). Like most of you, I had my own mixed bag of challenges. The challenges given in section 2 illustrate the route I went through; and the traits nurtured through Heartfulness meditation widened the view.

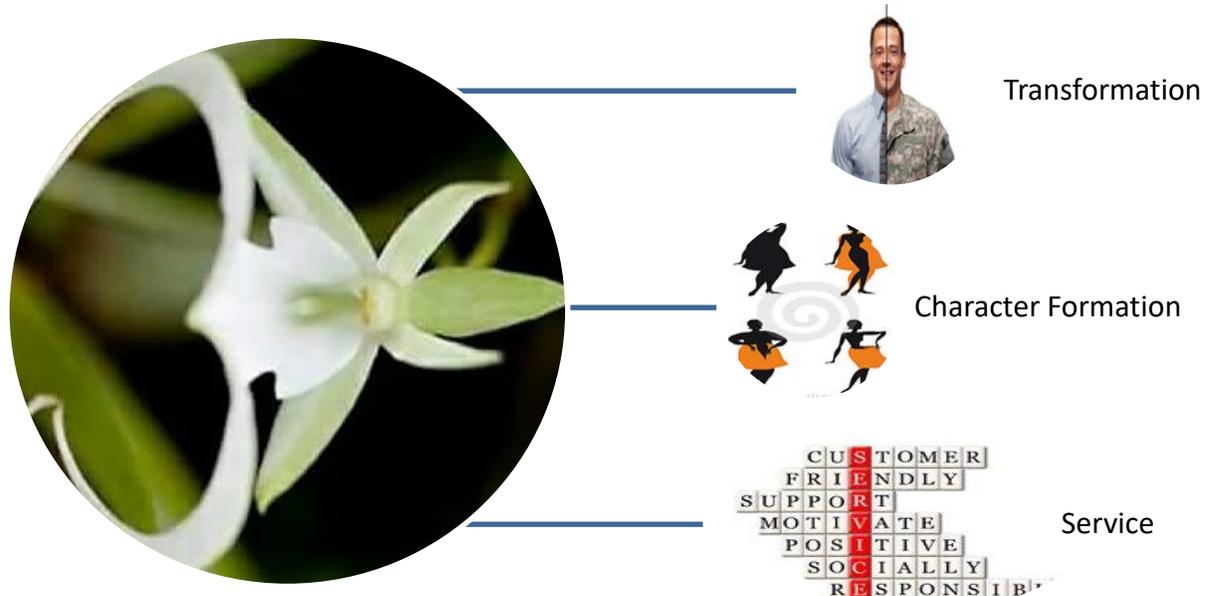


Figure 2: Sincere meditation further, cultivates inner strength for transformation, character formation and service for the divine.

2. Challenges

Three different cases are given to show the benefits of PBWF diet led by HFN meditation.

2.1 Challenge 1

I had Diabetes Type-2 from 30 + years; that led to cardio vascular disease. In April 2019, during my quarterly medical checkup, I reported to my family physician about some pressure in my heart. My doctor suggested me to have an appointment with my cardiologist. In July, I had appointment with the cardiologist. After some tests a cardiogram, he recommended a stress test and nuclear scan of my heart.

Further investigations showed that I have a multiple blockages in my heart arteries. I was advised that stents would not solve the problem; only open heart surgery was the solution. I was surprised of the outcome but not too much concerned. My wife, Gita Soni, and I talked with our daughter, Alpana Soni, who is a general surgeon in Kaiser Permanente in San Francisco area. She consulted her Cardiac Surgeon friend, who suggested her to contact a good surgeon in the area instead of going to reputable institution such as Stanford University. Thus she asked us to come to El Cerrito and to have the procedure done there. We did not want to wait any more and fixed that date .

I informed beloved Daaji, our Global HFN leader, about this situation and requested for his advice. He was sad to see me go through surgery. He said, “If this is the only option, we have no choice. I am sure you will be well looked after. Good to see dear Alpana is looking after you. With Prayers to Beloved Master for His Love and Blessings”. As a result, I had a triple bypass surgery done in Sutter Medical Center in Oakland, California on October 16, 2019.

On the day of my surgery, technical staff there did preliminary tests on my heart and made a comment that my heart behaves like a young man’s heart. I asked him if they are going to cancel my surgery appointment. He was very funny and made a comment, “No, surgeon has to pay the bills”. I took it in same spirit. Later they took me to surgery room where the surgery team was introduced to me. I surrendered to divine will. In a few minutes, I was out and was not aware of anything going on with my body. After the surgery, I was taken to ICU.

On a follow up appointment, I asked my surgeon about his unique experience when they did surgery on me. He said that they do many surgeries every day. He can't say anything except the surgery went very smoothly without any complications. The attending cardiologist was very much impressed the way my condition improved. Later he told me that he also has been meditating for more than 20 years.

My meditation practice had prepared me to undergo all these physical and mental challenges without too much pressure on my mind. My recovery was fast and meditation helped me to weather the storm without much difficulty. In the ICU I could divert my mind away from health issues and think about positive aspects of the challenge including conducting HFN meditation. After about 5 days stay in ICU and a private room, I was released from the hospital.

After release from hospital I was moved to El Cerrito and stayed with my daughter. My daughter provided me all the comforts needed. During a visit to my Cardiologist, I was told that I have to take most of my medications rest of my life. **These medicines included glimepiride, metformin, atorvastatin, metoprolol and levothyroxine.** I did not want to take so many medicines, for concern of side effects.

From mid-November onward I started attending cardiac rehabilitation attached to Sutter Health Center in Berkeley CA. I tried to introduce HFN meditation to other participants in the Rehab Center; probably they were not ready for this yet.

2.1.1 Meeting Dr. Lamba

We met Dr. and Mrs. Lamba in the Montessori school in Kensington, where their grandson attends with our younger grandson. On 25th January, 2020, we visited Mrs. and Dr. Hari Lamba in their house, in Richmond, CA. During conversation, Dr. Lamba, an IIT graduate, told me that Mr. Lalit M Kapoor, an IIT graduate, living in Berkeley, CA was setting up a WhatsApp group regarding 4MakeMyHealth [3] for IIT graduates. I am also a graduate of IIT Roorkee; I gave Dr. Lamba my contact information so I could join the group. I started getting messages on 25th January, 2020 regarding efficacy of a Plant Based Whole Food (PBWF) diet.



Figure 3: Juice/smoothie ingredients.

The information was very appealing. Beginning Monday, February 3, my wife and I started following the diet regiment, which are given in sections 3 to 5. Accordingly, I stopped drinking morning and evening milk. We started drinking juice and smoothie made from greens such as kale, spinach, mixed greens, apple, beet root, celery, grapes and orange (Figure 3). Juice ingredients and times can be chosen according to the individuals' taste and convenience. We started intermittent fasting (IF) with smoothie and later changed to juice. We added 24 hours fasting after one month of intermittent fasting. Other than this change, our diet followed

Mr. Kapoor’s guidelines with a few rearrangements. A comparison, of our diet, between before and after starting PBWF/IF is given in Table 1. The timings are approximate and can be modified for the individual. Meal times and ingredient mix can be chosen according to circumstances and convenience.

2.1.1 Weight Changes:

From November 2019, I was doing cardio rehab practice in Berkeley, which included exercises and tread mill etc. I am 75 years of age. Before Surgery my weight was about 150 pounds. On February 12, 2020, my weight was 143.5 lb. before exercise and 141.6 lb. after exercise. This was the healthiest weight I have ever had in my adult life. I have seen further changes in my weight reducing to 139 pounds on March 9, 2020 and 138 pounds on March 12, 2020. It has reduced to 127 pounds and now settled at about 130 pounds.

2.1.2 Covid - 19:

On March 13, 2020; because of Corona virus our cardio rehab practice was stopped. Our return ticket to Dayton was about March 17, 2020; but because of Corona virus, it was postponed many times till June 27, 2020. Our daughter did not allow us to go out. We made the best use of our time by giving remote sittings using HeartsApp. Because of my keen interest in gardening a vegetable garden was developed. We had started harvesting vegetables when we were there. After we left for Dayton, the garden gave lot of vegetables and the family enjoyed the produce. Alpana, Vinod (son-in-law) and grandkids took care of the garden with regular watering; and are working on gardening project this year. We continued Plant Based Whole Food diet. I used to make 4 glasses of smoothie everyday (one each for Gita, Alpana, Vinod and me; refer Figure 3). Alpana and Vinod also follow PBWF/IF diet (which doctors are aware of) and are happy with the results.

2.1.3 Neuropathy:

I used to have neuropathy in my feet. One of the side effects was shooting pains in my feet. Diabetes had caused all the complications leading to multiple blockages in my heart arteries. After about a month of my starting PBWF diet and lifestyle changes, my neuropathy problem reduced. Further, after about 3 months, shooting pains had almost subsided. There was a progressive improvement in my health. Dr. Anthony Lim [4] has shown an illustration (Figure 6) of the benefits of diluting impurities from our body by continuous use of pure liquid. It takes time to get rid of all the ill effects of undesirable stuff we have eaten whole our life. PBWF/IF/10k steps walk is a lifestyle change, not a short time fix. As mentioned above, as we keep following the lifestyle, combined with meditation, I expect continued healing. I say this realizing that a time may come when health problems may resurface temporarily. This is because of the residual effects of a lifetime of unhealthy habits. It takes time to clean up what has taken years to create; the symptoms will disappear with continuation of the lifestyle adopted.

Table 1: Meals Schedule Comparison

Before	After
5.30 am 2 glasses of warm water w/o Brush Tea and 7 almonds	5.30 am 2 glasses of warm water (milk and almonds break the fast)
9 to 10 am Oat meal, Milk, Chia seeds and Flex seeds	11.00 am Oat meal, Chia seeds, Flex seeds, Almond powder, Sesame seeds and a Banana
1 to 1.30 pm Salad, Soup and/or Fruit Smoothie	2.00 pm Fruits, Whole Wheat Bread/Chapati and Leafy greens Juice
6.30 pm Legumes, Chapati or Rice (once or twice a week), Vegetables, Yogurt. 10.00 pm sometimes Milk or Apple	7.00 pm Legumes, Chapati or Rice (once or twice a week), Vegetables, Yogurt (Non dairy)

2.1.4 Lipid Results

Below are my lipid results at different times. I believe adjustments in diet correlate to the blood test results. It takes time to reach normal health conditions. In one situation my thyroid results were unacceptable and I had to start taking medicine again.

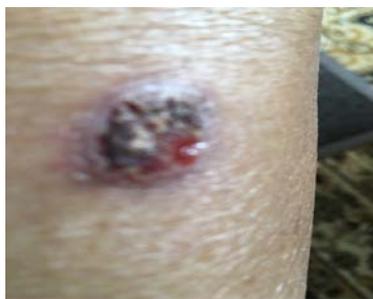
	Date→	10/30/20	7/21/20	2/21/20	10/16/19
Total cholesterol		125	146	77	167
Triglycerides		184	115	83	255
HDL cholesterol		31	37	31	33
LDL cholesterol		57	86	29	83
A1C		5.7	6.2		
THS		5.45	15.7		
Total chol/ HDL ratio		4	4	2.5.	5.5

Cardiologist comments on 2/21/20 : Excellent results. Cardiologists usually see LDL this low with the new injectable cholesterol medications. They used to worry if cholesterol got too low. Not anymore. Recently, after my October 30, 2020 blood tests, my cardiologist said that I should keep on doing what I am doing with regard to my *diet and medications*. Note: Results in red are before surgery

2.2 Challenge 2:

Also, I had a chronic wound from May 2015, on my right leg, as shown in Figure 4. Two pictures are shown to illustrate the difference because of PBWF and intermittent fasting and 24 hour fasting. We have been following the diet for about 14 months (60 weeks). Right picture shows the condition on December 12, 2020 and left picture shows August 2, 2020 condition. The condition is improving with time. This is because of autophagy explained in section 6.

Figure 4: Ulcer on Right Leg from May 2015



August 2, 2020



DEC 12, 2020

2.3 Challenge 3:

On October 30, 2020, I fell from a ladder and had leg injury, resulting into hematoma of the leg and head injury with bleeding in the brain. Because of my PBWF/IF/10kSteps and 24 hours a week fasting, the recovery was fast. Within 2 months' time period I was almost normal. Figure 5 shows the picture of my swollen leg. Autophagy has helped the recovery.

Figure 5: Left Foot Swelling due to Hematoma



3.0 What is a Plant-Based Whole-Food Diet?

Whole food describes natural foods that are not heavily processed. That means whole, unrefined, or minimally refined ingredients.

Plant-based means food that comes from plants and doesn't include animal ingredients such as meat, milk, eggs, or honey.

A **whole-food**, plant-based diet lets you meet your nutritional needs by focusing on natural, minimally-processed plant foods.

4.0 PBWF Intermittent Fasting (IF) Key Elements:

2 glasses of warm water every morning w/o Brushing

Eating Window 6 to 8 hours, Intermittent Fasting

No: meat, sugar, dairy, oil, processed food

Eat green leafy food 1%, fruits 1% of body weight

Eat beans/ legumes/ grains/nuts

add berries to your diet everyday

10k steps walk/day

Do once a week 24 hours Fast

Drink juice/ smoothie once or twice a day extracted from leafy vegetables and fruits

Add Vitamin D-3 and B-12



Figure 6: Sink leaks but the fix used is clean the floor not fix the leak [4].

5. Eating Window 6 to 8 hours

Normally we start eating from morning 7 am till 11pm. This has been shown harmful.

Intermittent fasting (IF) requires shorter eating window (6 to 8 hours). For example eat/drink after 11 am and no eating/ drinking after 7pm. No eating /drinking before 11am (water, black tea/coffee without sugar allowed). If you try this only, you will see lot of changes in your health. Reference [4] shows an Example of Modern medicine, which does not cure disease but works on the symptoms. Figure 6 shows the leak coming from the sink but the problem is addressed by cleaning the floor but not fixing the leak.

6. Autophagy

Taking out the trash is an important chore. Imagine trash overflowing in your kitchen, attracting pests, and inviting mold and bacteria to grow. It's just as important for our cells to clean themselves out and clear away debris. It's a process most of us don't think about—and haven't even heard of—called autophagy (which means *self-eating*). "I'm interested in the idea that fasting once a week might be sufficient and manageable to help you live a longer life or extend your number of healthy years."

6.1 Five Stages of Intermittent Fasting

Ketosis and heavy ketosis, b) Autophagy, c) Growth hormone, d) Insulin reduction, e) Immune cell rejuvenation! These are given below in simple terms:

6.1.1 After 12 hours fasting, you enter the metabolic state called ketosis [11]. In this state, your body starts to break down and burn fat.

6.1.2 By 18 hours, you've switched to fat-burning mode and are generating significant ketones [11]. You can now begin to measure blood ketone levels above your baseline values. Under normal conditions, the concentration of ketones in your plasma ranges between .05 and .1 mM. When you fast or restrict the carbohydrates in your diet this concentration can reach 5-7 mM.

6.1.3 Within 24 hours, your cells are increasingly recycling old components and breaking down misfolded proteins linked to Alzheimer's and other diseases. This is a process called autophagy [12].

6.1.4 By 48 hours without calories or with very few calories, carbs or protein, your growth hormone level is up to five times as high as when you started your fast.

6.1.5 By 54 hours, your insulin has dropped to its lowest level point since you started fasting and your body is becoming increasingly insulin-sensitive.

6.1.6 By 72 hours, your body is breaking down old immune cells and generating new one.

6.2 Breaking Fast

Last and perhaps most important stage of intermittent fasting – the refeeding stage! It's important to break your fast with a nutritious (including plenty of vegetables, plant fibers and plant fats, with healthy proteins and some whole grains or legumes if you choose), balanced meal that will further improve the function of cells and tissues that went through cleanup while you were fasting. Avoid simple sugars and processed/packaged foods. Learn what works best for your body, and what *you* feel best eating following your fasts.

7. Recommended Videos

There are numerous studies about the efficacy of PBWF/IF/10k step walk. Some of the videos are given in references [4-10]. These videos provide a treasure of information comprising of research by leading experts in the field, practical examples and real life experiences. Once you watch these videos, you will understand the efficacy of the system. Please spare your valuable time to watch these videos and educate yourself. Take advantage of this opportunity for good of all. There are many more to watch by using google search of PBWF Diet.

8. Acknowledgements

I owe a heartfelt gratitude to beloved Daaji who is our current global leader of HFN Institute and has emphasized benefits of meditation, fasting and Autophagy [2]; Mr. Lalit M. Kapoor (PBWF/IF/10k Pioneer coach for his

selfless service); Dr. Hari Lamba (connecting me to Mr. Kapoor) and my family (my wife, daughter, son-in-law and 2 grandsons) for nurturing the connections and relevant guidance.

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Biography

Dr. Soni has PhD from University of Roorkee (renamed as IIT Roorkee) India, 1972. Dr. Soni has more than 40 years of experience in teaching and research related to systems engineering design, analytical and experimental mechanics of composite materials and structures. Dr. Soni retired from AFIT in December 2011. Before joining as an Associate Professor in Air Force Institute of Technology in December 2005, Dr. Soni was involved in AdTech Systems Research Inc as President and CEO for more than 20 years (1984- 2005). He has worked as a senior Scientist for the University of Dayton Research Institute (1981- 1984) conducting research in composite materials and structures. Dr. Soni’s recent studies include: a) Cost modeling of composite Aircrafts; b) Systems Engineering Approach to Integrated Health Monitoring System for Aging Aircrafts; c) Ballistic response of co-cured adhesive bonded composite joints; d) Bonded and Bolted Joints which resulted in a fully documented software package called **BBJ**. Dr. Soni is author/ co-author of 100+ research publications in the field of mechanics of solids and structures with special emphasis on composites. Dr. Soni is a Fellow of the American Society for Composites, has been an Associate Fellow of AIAA and a member of SAMPE. He has won numerous awards including Co-author of Air Force Materials Laboratory’s Cleary Award publication, State of Ohio Edison Emerging Technology Award, Enterprise Spirit Award of Kettering Moraine and Oakwood Chamber of Commerce; and Engineering Science Foundation (Affiliate Society Council) Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement for his accomplishments. Dr. Soni is a Heartfulness meditation trainer for more than 30 years.