



## **LOVE NINJA LEADERSHIP CIRCLE NOTES AND SUGGESTED PRACTICES**

**The Intention of this group is to: LEARN. GROW. CONNECT. SERVE.**

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**January 4th, 2018: Life Purpose**

**Host: Gina Murdock**

**Guest: Yogarupa Rod Stryker**

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**[NEXT SESSION Feb. 1 12-1pm mtn. with Stephen Mcghee!](#)**

### **Yogarupa Rod Stryker:**

Yogarupa Rod Stryker is the founder of [ParaYoga®](#) and the author of *The Four Desires: Creating a Life of Purpose, Happiness, Prosperity, and Freedom*. He has taught for more than 35 years, dedicating his life to improving lives through his lectures, writing, creativity, leadership, service and family life.

### **Gina Murdock:**

Gina is the founder of [Aspen City of Wellbeing](#), [Lead with Love](#) and [Aspen Yoga Society](#). She is a writer, speaker, teacher and community organizer. More [HERE](#)

### **Suggested Reading:**

**[The Four Desires: Creating a Life of Purpose, Happiness, Prosperity, and Freedom](#)**

### **Quotes Shared:**

“We must let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for us.

The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come.

If we fix on the old, we get stuck. When we hang onto any form, we are in danger of putrefaction.

Hell is life drying up.” - Joseph Campbell



### **Key Takeaways:**

Rather than ask “Who Am I?”, ask “What Am I?”

### **LOOK BACK AND BECOME CONSCIOUS OF WHERE YOU ARE REPEATING PRACTICES THAT ARE SELF DEFEATING.**

- 1) Where did I lose my way in 2017 to live the very best way?
- 2) What can my feelings/suffering teach me about me? Where have I stepped out of sync with my inner conscience/my inner voice?
- 3) What assumptions about myself or about the world do I make that may in fact not be correct or that may not be helpful to me? Where are they causing suffering?
- 4) The cause of all of our troubles is about carelessness. Reflect about where we have been careless, not thoughtful or as skillful as we can be.

### **TRY THIS:**

**Homework from Gina:** Wake up everyday with the simple prayer “Thank You”. Try to really pause and feel a sensation of gratitude for another day to begin again and the excitement of the infinite possibilities that lay ahead. Second step, have the courage to let go of who you think you are to become what the Universe has in store for you. Everyday. Make this part of the prayer or morning invocation. Be open to feelings, sensations and thoughts (less on the thoughts and more on the feelings and sensations) that lead you in the direction of your highest self - These feelings might feel like a sense of lightness, humor, joy, optimism, expansion. Notice when you feel those feelings, who you are around and what you are doing, and also notice the opposite. Move towards the people and things that bring you joy!

### **NOTES FROM THE CALL:**

#### **Participants (100)**

#### **Explanation of what YogaRupa means.**

It is a name Rod received about 15 years ago from his teacher, unexpectedly. It is not a title but simply a name. **Yoga** means awareness, linkage, **Rupa** means essence, embodiment. The reason Rod was bestowed this name was because his teacher felt that he embodies yoga. As time has passed, Rod felt that the name was authentic and began using it more often.



Rod leads The Circle in an opening Smile Meditation and then begins to consider the significance of a new year and new intentions.

As the calendar turns, should we dial into a new intention? Lots of us try but then stop because we've been unsuccessful in the past. Our patterns have more power than our resolutions. Research has shown that not only do we become emotionally invested in our patterns but that they also affect our neural pathways.

We must learn or acknowledge what we get out of our own suffering. Every moment is in fact an opportunity. If you see what you have gotten out of a negative pattern in the past, you can say it is time for you to break free, you have gotten to a new place in your life. You are literally seeing yourself as a different person, who doesn't need the same things as when the pattern was created.

**Gina: Who Am I? What does that question mean to you?**

**Rod:** I remember many many years ago in Los Angeles, going to a party and noticing the attendees (former power players and businessmen) dressed in dark robes with mala beads meditating before a picture of their guru. They were replacing one ego identity with another. So, in the process of asking "Who am I?" it is easy to step into a new ego and a new role. In a way what meditation offers us is a place where we bring to an end where we end a role with a ego. Depending on what we are we occupy this space. True meditation gives us this opportunity to step beyond that. It allows you to step into a place where you are not confined by these roles. We are using the rules to execute or discharge the duty in the world. None of those things are really present when we are in that place in the depth of meditation.

Rather than ask "Who Am I?", ask "What Am I?"

"Who Am I" steps into "Well, I am a meditator, a spiritual being." However, that is just another role, another identity.

No, I do not think by asking by "Who" you are do you get to break free of the patterns. Explore Vircharga- to reason to look at life and deconstruct it so you can be free.

How free we are in the those roles doesn't happen because we go deep into meditation, rather we must ask questions:

- 1) Think about a time in your life where there was a game changer. Through your own self effort you reshaped your life, or you reshaped the way you lived your life. In order to do this, something must have been so painful for so long, and you finally got the cue of the pain and made through your own self effort, a change in the trajectory of your life. For example, the moment an individual got sober and began the process of recovery. Addiction was too painful to maintain. Part of it is really understanding at some point in your life, everyone has been able to change and has done this more than once. It requires a link to the clarity, the courage, necessary to make significant changes.
- 2) For what am I grateful? As you wake up before you shift into your day, say “Thank You. Thank You for another day. Today I will let go of who I have been to become what I can be.” Start the day with gratitude but then take it a step further by committing to let go of what you have been to become WHAT you can be, which is a mystery. “What am I” becomes so much for expansive than “who”. When you say “what” that is beyond you. The answer isn’t derived from intellect. It is MORE expansive than that. This line of thinking gets us into the miracle (from the Tantric tradition) of “being”. And, at any moment, we are “becoming”. In just seven years, 99% of the cells in our body will provide a reflection of what we are “becoming”.

**Gina:** Meditation moment led by Gina to have a visualization of connection with the 100 people on the call. Posing the question: “What am I?”

**Rod:** “What am I” in respect to a group. It is easier to connect, if the question is “what am I” versus “who am I”. 1 Spirit occupied in 100 different bodies.

IN the context of bringing it to a collective the “what” is what we have in common. Fundamentally and beyond words. This reinforces the value of asking “what”, as opposed to “who” am I?

**Gina:** How can a person identify a life lesson that they keep learning/repeating.

**Rod:** One way is through the conscience. When using the word “conscience”, we are often referring to an alignment with morality, but in this context, the word really speaks to your inner wisdom and inner guidance.

My teacher said, “The only sin is to not respond to your inner conscience.”

The voice of the conscience will guide us to live our very best life.

For instance, pain is an experience I have when something heavy falls on my foot.



Suffering is the the story I create out of my painful sensations and the story gives rise to further suffering. Because I have this story and that story causes me suffering, the origin on suffering is when we don't listen to our conscience. It creates other pains. We have to become as attentive to our suffering as we do to the great glories of meditation and prayer and spiritual activities. This will help us become clear about where we are deviating from our source or where we are separating ourselves from inner guidance. Our suffering is a sign that we have gotten disconnected. So, where can we come into greater alignment with the divine? Where we can come into greater alignment with satisfaction and pleasure?

The sooner that we come to fact that life is a spiritual journey, our job in life is not to get all of our wants satisfied, but our job is to fulfill our purpose and to ultimately know **what we are**. It is about self-realization and bringing greater beauty into and uplifting the world.

That is the basis of suffering; a loss of clear understanding of what we are and our disconnection of expressing it to the world as a loving and wise being that is consistently aware of **what we are**.

The aim is to become aligned with conscience. To give up what you have been to become what you can be!

**A practical application:**

First identify the ways that you exercise self criticism. What are 1-3 things you consistently tell yourself about yourself that has a negative effect?

The average human being exercises self criticism. We become what we think regularly. We become the very thing we are being critical about.

Isolate the 1-3 things that you tell yourself on an ongoing basis.

**LOOK BACK AND BECOME CONSCIOUS OF WHERE YOU ARE REPEATING PRACTICES THAT ARE SELF DEFEATING.**

- 5) Where did I lose my way in 2017 to live the very best way?
- 6) What can my feelings/suffering teach me about me? Where have I stepped out of sync with my inner conscience/my inner voice?
- 7) What assumptions about myself or about the world do I make that may in fact not be correct or that may not be helpful to me? Where are they causing suffering?



- 8) The cause of all of our troubles is about carelessness. Reflect about where we have been careless, not thoughtful or as skillful as we can be.

If you could isolate one desire, one intention that would send you on your road to being as constructive and positive and effective as possible what would that desire be?

You make a commitment to fulfill that intention every day.

Ex: My intention is to be loving to myself

My intention is to express my gratitude.

Find that singular intention!

Spend more time reflecting on the past than you do on a new future. If we learn the lessons the past is offering to us, the future will get a lot easier. Do the work to break free of the past and the future will happen.

“Your future is your past modified by your present.”

Choose a different present moment-to-moment. If we want to make changes we have to make changes on what we do on a daily basis.

**Rod:** My singular desire was the desire to live with fearless abandon.