

[Europe's Gandhian](#)

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PEOPLE

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Energetic Kenya born peace maker charts an introspective path to obtaining outer results

Mansukh Patel, born of Indian parents in Kenya in 1955, was deeply affected by the murderous Mau Mau uprising and its aftermath, which occurred during his youth. At age of twelve he moved with his family to England. There he studied biochemistry and qualified as an osteopath. In his twenties he began teaching yoga, health and philosophy. In 1978 he founded the Life Foundation School of Therapeutics, a group of international aid workers who use body-heart-mind medicine to treat care-givers and refugees in war zones. Mansukh currently leads peace flame marches (left) across Europe. He and his British wife Radhika have three children, Arjuna, Krishna and Radha. He has a large following in the Netherlands, where he was interviewed for Hinduism Today by Amrita Sivanand.

His message to the world

You cannot be at peace with people around you unless you are at peace with yourself. Make an appointment with yourself to get to know who and what you are. Find out what you came

here to do. Once you discover the answers to these questions you will be a great instrument of peace, to yourself, your family, friends and the whole society.

Hindus and world peace

I think that every person who is following the Sanatana Dharma should first realize that you have at your disposal some of the most ancient powerful truths available to mankind. Secondly, you should recognize that there is no crisis or problem at any level for which the solution has not already practically, psychologically and spiritually been given to us in the texts, tradition and upbringing of the Hindu culture. All that one has to do to make this a living reality is to follow the simple rules that the great yogi Patanjali has set in motion, the yamas and niyamas, the restraints and observances of an ethical life. As Gandhi would say, "There is enough for everybody's need in this world, but not enough for everybody's greed." Study the ancient scriptures on a regular basis. Implement them in your life. Hinduism offers one of the most fascinating keys to human freedom, the parampara, the teacher-student lineage. I invite all the people in the Sanatana Dharma tradition to at least once a week go to people who are ahead of us on the path of unraveling the mystery of spiritual consciousness.

On world conflict

First of all, every community in the world has to learn to communicate, to understand the positions of different people

and different races. Then the decisions that you make will not create problems for others. Take an interest in understanding your neighboring people and countries, and you will soon realize that they have the same interest in their heart as you do. Gandhi said, "An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind."

On higher things

Whatever we teach children at school creates the rest of their life. The school curriculum should include not just the topical subjects, but the subjective matter of a human being. Who are we? Let's investigate the mind, the intellect, the human heart and soul, the levels of human consciousness, to teach the children who they are. By the discovery of who they are, they will discover that within the nature of a human heart and soul, what they are is embraced by compassion, kindness, joy, celebration and by the presence of a pure light. There is just a pure light that is present, which is what we are. We call it the Atman. Introduce them early to beautiful stories. As they grow older, teach them about the beautiful things that happen in the world, the good things done by people. Give them a vision, a dream, a goal; something that is so inspirational that it is powerful. They would be excited about their life and would not turn to addictions, or be lured.

His upbringing in Kenya

One of the most moving things that catalyzed my transformation in living the truths of the ancient Indian culture

came as a result of being in the middle of the suffering during the Mau Mau uprising [in the mid- and late fifties] when I grew up. Young children, mothers--all innocent--were being massacred by two opposing forces, both trying to survive. Some of my friends and their families got killed, and it moved me so much, made me so sad, broken and betrayed. How could somebody do this? My parents used to teach me from the Hindu scriptures and used teachings from their Gandhian upbringing to transform the experience of suffering into a power of courage and commitment. Seeing so much suffering, pain and killing could have destroyed me as a child, but my parents' background helped me to transform the experience, so that now I am a peacemaker.

On his parents' influence

My father had a background of Saivism and my mother loved Krishna. The influence of my father was a very practical influence. He always said, "Remember to have your head up in the stars and look towards that, but at the same time, have your feet firmly on the earth." My mother said, "Make sure that as you unravel the spiritual journey and the ambiance of spiritual truth, that it is filled with celebration, joy and laughter, and communicate it in that way."

On his mother

My Mother became almost my witness of God on this Earth. My mother became my hero. She understood that the living example of parents is a teacher children learn by, and became

a living example of patience, kindness, love and tolerance. She was a mirror to reflect my anxiety, anger or upset, helping me to transform negative emotions into positive emotions. She did that by singing, storytelling, telling me to meditate and to worship. She said, "Bhakti is the crucial aspect of development." By all these different tools I could transform and refine my consciousness, and become a person who could be a gift to myself and to the world.

On his children

First of all, you must learn to look at everything with unconditional love, with such an openness of heart so that when people or children are in front of you, they feel that they are being heard and listened to, that they are allowed to express their creativity and power in your presence. I take my three children out walking in nature on a regular basis. What happens in nature is beautiful between parents and children--the sky, earth, trees, wind, rivers and lakes--everything transforms you and creates a bonding that cannot be created by living in a house. Secondly, I always try to eat with my children. When families stop eating together, they stop praying together. When they stop praying together, they stop living together and stop being in love and in harmony with each other. I tell them stories and take them on my peace walks around the world. We have taught them the most ancient practical rules of Indian culture, from the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavatam, Siva Purana, Vedas and Upanishads. I use parables to explain the teachings, making sure that the children get a chance to ask any question on a regular basis.

Corporal punishment of children

I believe that you shouldn't punish children. You should punish the things that make children disharmonious. What is it that creates disharmony in children? I believe that it is watching television and aggressive films. Why don't we punish the television by switching it off? Reading books that are aggressive and that create lust, desires, anger, fear and greed--why don't you punish the books? Take these books away and give them something else to read that is inspirational and beautiful. Nothing can be accomplished by punishing the person. Instead, punish the sin itself. Get rid of the cause and the effect will harmonize itself.

On domestic violence

Learn to start complimenting. When we start taking things for granted, we are no longer full of gratitude. Go to your wife and say, "Thank you for cooking that lovely meal. You know, I want to thank you for all the thousands of meals you ever cooked for me." Then turn to the children and say, "Thank you for being such a beautiful son or beautiful daughter. Thank you for studying and listening to me." Do it until they're convinced that you mean it. Find out what it is that your spouse or child is stimulated by and then, if they like or love to hear things, say nice things. If they like to be touched, give them a good foot or back massage. If they like to see beautiful things, give them a gift. If they love to eat, give them good meals."

On vegetarianism

Yes, I am a vegetarian, and highly recommend it to people. Without any doubt vegetarians suffer fewer heart attacks and problems. You will be healthier, fitter and probably live longer with a much better outlook if you are a vegetarian.

On religion

I'm first and foremost, a child of God. Of course, because both my parents were of Hindu origin, and my whole upbringing has been based on the teachings of India and the Bhagavad Gita, I do consider myself genetically, as they say, a Hindu. But as I have traveled over the last 25-30 years, taking the message of Sanatana Dharma to different places, I have realized that Sanatana Dharma actually is a living, eternal Dharma: the nature of who you are. That has made me more and more a citizen of the Earth. So I call myself a child of Sanatana Dharma, which embraces the world.

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Mansukh's Five Practical Peace Exercises

In his wonderfully readable book, Your Personal Peace Formula, Mansukh offers chapter upon chapter of practical advice. The chapter, called "The Five Steps to Self-Empowerment," is our

favorite.

1. Commitment to Change

- * Think of an attribute you wish to change and practice introspection.
- * Begin the process by replacing the negative qualities with their polar opposites.
- * Cultivate the habit of imagining the person you want to become and then commitment will arise as naturally as the sun rises in the morning.

2. The Power of the Here and Now

- * Spend time working in a cancer centre, hospice or home for the elderly.
- * Wherever people are dying, it will bring you powerfully into the present moment.

3. The Power of Gratitude

- * Life begins with an inbreath and

ends with an outbreath. Appreciate your breath!

* Practice gratitude before you eat and sleep. Say "three things I am grateful for are..." every day.

* Practice expressing gratitude when you wake up in the morning. Say "thank you" for whatever inspires you in your life.

* Count your blessings daily. Every day remind yourself of how lucky you are. Make a list of all the miracles in your life. To be able to see, feel, walk, talk, laugh, cry, eat, swim, go to the theatre, play with your children... The list will be endless.

4. The Power of Generosity

*Spend a day with a commitment to make at least three spontaneous acts of generosity. Look for opportunities to give. When the moments present themselves--go for it!

* Do not let a day go by without giving something to somebody. You will find that the opportunities to give will always be there.

* Whenever you receive something, make sure you give back more.

5. The Power of Your Personal Dreams

- * Try this for a week or a month
- * Visualize as often as you can that your greatest dream in life has come true and surely in time it will.
- * Think about something you would like to achieve.
- * Think about the kind of person or personality you would like to be. Spend time every day creating these images, especially

before you sleep and just after waking.

* See yourself succeeding and achieving your goal.

* Imagine you are the person you most admire. Feel what it is like to be that person. How do they think, feel and interact with others?