

The Soft Road

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TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR HEARTS

This title comes from a yoga retreat I attended in 2012. Each year, for seven years, I'd travel from Sydney to Bali to both immerse in my practice and reset from city life. And each year my teacher, Caroline Coggins, would choose a theme for our study and reflection.

That year it was "Take Good Care of Your Hearts", based on a recently published article in a magazine about spirituality in daily life.

Intuitively I reached for these well-loved pages a few days ago, called to read and reconnect with my own heart. For sometimes I feel that my heart is being left out and left behind. It waits patiently for attention as I fly through life, super-efficient, so many days filled from dawn to night with tasks, demands and interaction—my energy spent on everything and everyone other than my heart.

It's not that I lack awareness or personal practices to care for my heart. And, the importance of the heart is what I often write about, coach, and teach—how to build our capacity to listen to our hearts, for our personal growth and our experience of life.

For the heart is at the centre of our being. It is the source of the core values of truth, integrity, honesty, love, devotion and beauty.

It is our inner home, a sacred sanctuary, housing our deepest feelings, our hopes and fears, and our courage. Our capacity for compassion springs from the heart, and begins with our capacity to love and forgive ourselves. In this way, the lifelong journey to know and care for ourselves is an inner one, with the heart being our map, compass, and our destination.

What then do we need to take good care of our hearts?

This is not complicated; yet it's the very simplicity that can be daunting if this is new to us. Taking good care of our hearts is all about connection with our feelings, and this is not always a comfortable place to dwell.

Primarily, we make space for our hearts, allowing for our feelings, with time and attention. In honest communion, we look inward and enquire of our heart. What does it need? What would it have us know? And this centre of our being will always respond, without any pretence, disguise or make-believe.

With practice, we come to recognise the "voice" of our heart in amongst all the others. The heart also likes a response. A signal that it has been heard – this is often a choice or action – aligned with the questions we truly asked and the responses we sought.

To take good care of our heart, we give it nourishment. Being in Nature, daily meditation, journaling, prayer, reflection, and periods of quiet solitude are all

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nourishment for the heart. We feed our heart with humour and laughter, imagination and inspiration.

And like every part of us, a strong heart needs stretching. This we experience through the gift of relationships and connection with each other.

This calling to take good care of our hearts is a need of the time, possibly *the* need of the time. It is our hearts that remind us we are not separate from each other, that our lives are linked; and as each one of us does what's needed to care for our own hearts, may we inspire and support each other to do the same.

Melanie Kirkbride is an exceptional coach and master teacher of Vedic meditation who works with people to empower them to unlock their potential and thrive. [Email us](#) to enquire about Melanie's services, and to receive her Teachings.