

DEVOTION AND DISCIPLINE

The Structure
That Hold Love

Dharma
in Daily Life

Rituals
and Rhythms

Parenting
as Devotion

Building Stability
in Uncertain Times

Emotional Regulation
and Nervous System Grounding

Permaculture Principles
Produce No Waste

Devotion & Discipline:
Motherhood as a Path of Love

Retreats Made For Your Soul
Our Curated Journeys

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Suddha Prem

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Conscious Living & Travel





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Suddha Prem



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FROM THE EDITOR

The Structures That Hold Love

Spring is here, yet it already feels like summer in California—bringing triple-digit, record-breaking heat in the middle of March. This is not normal. And yet, we are learning to adapt to a new normal.

This past winter, I have been fortunate to guide children through meaningful experiences, witnessing their resilience, adaptability, and the love with which they meet change. What they remind me, again and again, is simple: all we need to do as adults is provide the structure and security for them to bloom—like flowers in spring.

Teaching mindfulness to children, and helping them to remember that they belong to the Earth, has been a dream come true.

This March issue explores **the structures that hold and sustain love**—how daily acts of devotion create stability, and how the simple, nourishing experience of loving, serving, and caring for others becomes a natural expression of who we are.

We explore the meaning of **Dharma in daily life**, and how living with purpose, integrity, and presence can guide our actions. We reflect on **rituals, rhythms, and systems** as anchors that bring balance and intention into our everyday lives. We dive into **parenting as devotion**, where love becomes a daily practice of presence, guidance, and growth—for both parent and child. We also explore **how to build stability in uncertain times**, returning to what we can control: our actions, our habits, and our inner world. Through emotional regulation and nervous system grounding, we are reminded that peace is not something we find outside of us, but something we cultivate within.

Through the lens of permaculture, we revisit the principle of **producing no waste**—honoring the cycles of nature and recognizing that nothing is wasted when we live consciously and in relationship with the Earth.

Within these pages, you are invited to revisit your personal journey and commitment through two guiding questions:

- **What am I truly here to build?**
- **How can my personal path serve myself, my community, and the planet?**

These questions, held together, can guide us toward love, peace, and purpose.

May these stories meet you gently, wherever you are. May they remind you that love is not something we possess, but something we build and practice daily—with commitment, patience, intention, and grace.

May this season awaken a warmth within you—a quiet force that invites you to love more deeply, more consciously, more fully.

And may you remember: **you belong to this Earth.** Care for her, as you care for yourself, and for one another.



Gabriela & Haku. Rituals: Every Sunday during winter, a hike to the Observatory.

For 20+ years my approach has been a blend of permaculture design, Ayurveda, sustainable tourism, ecological practices, ancestral wisdom, and creative storytelling.

Do you have a story to share?

Drop me a line — or apply to be part of our Conscious Living Directory.

With love and presence,

Gabriela
Rocha Caballero
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



THE STRUCTURES THAT HOLD LOVE



Love is an active verb. It is practiced, remembered, and shared. It is our deepest heart's desire, and what keeps us alive.

Around 16 years ago, I had the fortune of attending a few coaching and therapy sessions with Cliff Ishigaki. At the time, I was navigating a long and challenging divorce. Those sessions became more than therapy—they were creative spaces where I explored the stories I was telling myself, uncovered patterns in my life, and learned to take responsibility for my own truth. Most importantly, they helped me reclaim my power.

Defining Love

One of the most profound lessons I remember from those sessions was Cliff guiding me to define and explain the love I felt—and the love I spoke about. For some, saying “I love you” takes time. For me, it came naturally because it’s an expression from the heart. To me, it literally means: “I care for you as much as I care for myself.”

Back then, I couldn’t fully define it. I knew it was a powerful feeling, but I had to peel it back, layer by layer, like an onion. Cliff’s guidance was simple yet transformative: “Define the why. Understand what love is beneath the projections, and you will understand yourself.”

I feel love for you because you make me laugh.

I feel love for you because look into my eyes.

I feel love for you because you remember my stories.

The feeling of love has a positive action attached.

When we feel love for someone because we have a specific dream, and we want that special other to work for it with us. That is not love, those kind of feelings are projections, mirroring our own desires, not the action of love.



THE STRUCTURES THAT HOLD LOVE



Structuring a Daily Love Practice

So how do we cultivate love daily? How do we structure it as a practice?

We practice love through:

Caring – showing up for others and ourselves.

Presence – listening, seeing, and being fully attentive.

Remembering – recalling what matters and cherishing it.

We can even schedule it—because love is one of our deepest heart desires. It keeps us alive, grounded, and focused. Loving ourselves and others is a personal responsibility: to care, provide, and show up.

Reflective question: How can I intentionally bring love into my daily routine?

Love, Dharma, and Bhakti

For me, love is the path of presence. My healing deepened when I stopped forcing change—or expecting others to walk my path—and instead devoted myself to truth: my own truth.

This is where dharma comes in. Dharma is our individual moral responsibility or duty. The dharma of a farmer differs from the dharma of a soldier. Dharma shows us our path. Bhakti teaches us how to walk it. **“Bhakti is the invisible thread of love—or Prem—that binds the heart of a devotee with the lotus feet of the universe.”** – Traditional Sanskrit teaching. I named my company Suddha Prem around the time I took those sessions with Cliff. I am forever grateful for his guidance and friendship.

Seventeen years ago, I chose two Sanskrit words that defined the love I felt and the path I wanted to live:

Suddha – pure: pure mind, pure wisdom

Prem – divine love: unconditional, devotional

These words became my compass, guiding me on a path that sometimes didn't make sense. Yet with discipline, patience, and focus, it has borne fruit through dedication, tenacity, and clarity.

Reflective question: Which words or practices define the love I want to live by?



THE STRUCTURES THAT HOLD LOVE



The Earth is not a place, the Earth is a process.” – Larry Santoyo

Reflective question:

How can my love serve the world around me today?
Rituals and rhythm, scheduling and doing.

FREE COWS. MARIN COUNTY, CA.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABRIELA ROCHA CABALLERO

Serving Others as a Natural Consequence of Love

I began my journey with two guiding questions:

1. What am I truly here to build?
2. How can my personal path serve myself, my communities, and the planet?

When love longs for a higher purpose, devotion to serve others and give back becomes a natural consequence. After all, we are part of the Earth. We are all connected. And the Earth is not just a place—it is a process. Love, when structured, practiced, and embodied, becomes both our guide and our offering to the world.



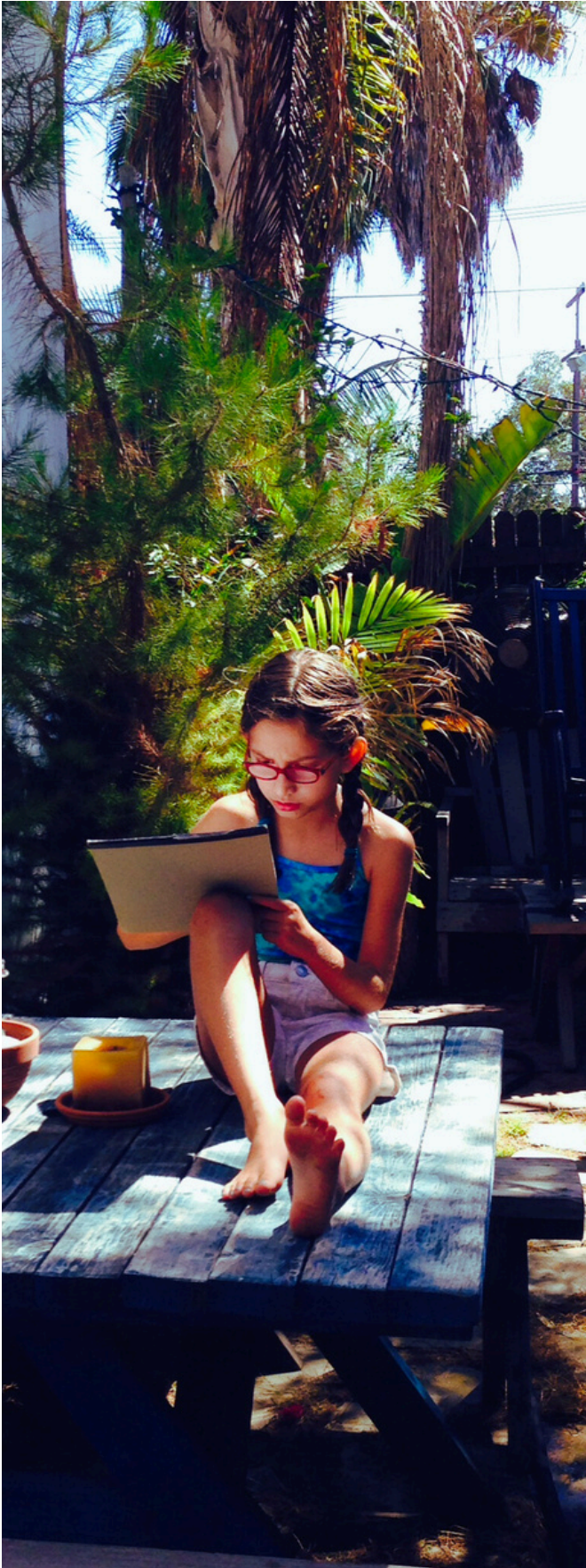
DHARMA IN DAILY LIFE



How do we apply the Dharma concept in daily life?

FAMILY RETREAT. UXMAL, YUCATAN.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABRIELA ROCHA CABALLERO
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Using the Dharma concept in our daily life means living ethically, with mindfulness, and in harmony with your true purpose (svadharma). It involves cultivating kindness, compassion, and non-violence in all actions, reducing ego-centric behavior, and performing duties without attachment to outcomes, treating every moment as an opportunity to grow in a long term in a sustainable way, and for spiritual growth as a full complete daily lifestyle and practice rather than just formal meditation.



DHARMA IN DAILY LIFE

Here is how to create a Dharma based lifestyle based on the teachings:

- **Set Daily Intentions:** Before bedtime plan ahead your sleep and program your thoughts to connect to a higher vibration. Upon waking, journal your dreams, set a positive intention to focus, to be present, to act with kindness, avoid harming others, and be of service to the world.
- **Practice Ethical Conduct (Non-Violence/Ahimsa):** Act with integrity, honesty, and respect. Treat others the same way you want to be treated. Avoid exploiting and abusing others, and live a conscious lifestyle in a way that minimizes harm to the environment and other beings.
- **Mindfulness in Daily Tasks:** Don't limit practice to meditation. Take that meditation energy with you wherever you go. Apply stop and think before doing – presence, awe and awareness to routine tasks like washing dishes, walking, or working, which helps integrate the mind, body and soul in the present moment.
- **Cultivate Emotional Balance:** Avoid distractions, and practice feeling your heart, which will help you develop compassion, patience, and equanimity, especially when dealing with difficult people or challenging situations. Practice presence, attention, looking in the eye, forgiving, and accept what you cannot control.
- **Act without Attachment (Karma Yoga):** Perform your daily responsibilities (work, family care) to the best of your ability without being obsessed with the results, praise, or rewards. Karma Yoga is the "yoga of action" or "selfless service" one of the main paths to spiritual liberation in Hinduism, emphasizing performing one's duty with 100% effort while remaining detached from the results or rewards. It involves offering actions as a spiritual service, aimed at purifying the heart, reducing ego, and serving humanity.
- **Study, Journal and Reflection:** Read spiritual texts like the Bhagavad Gita or Dhammapada. Embrace books that offer companionship and guidance like *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Yogananda, *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, or the *Journey Home* by Radhanath Swami, or listen to teachings to keep your purpose in mind. Reflect on your daily actions, intentions, and results.
- **Service to Others (Seva):** Actively look for ways to help others in your own home, and community, which reduces self-centeredness and fosters a sense of unity. Participating in helping others—through volunteering or acts of kindness—significantly improves mental and physical health by reducing stress, boosting mood, and lowering risks of depression.



RITUALS AND RHYTHM

Rituals, rhythm, and systems enhance life by reducing decision making that creates fatigue, lowering stress, and fostering intentionality, transforming mundane tasks into a meaningful, sustainable lifestyle.

By establishing consistent daily patterns (rhythms) and meaningful actions (rituals), you create a structured, calmer, and more productive life, while boosting, emotional well-being and strengthening relationships.

How do we establish a consistent daily pattern?

Steps to Establish Consistent Daily Patterns:

- **First Things First - Analyze Your Current Habits:**

List your daily routines chronologically to identify which behaviors align with your goals and which do not. Start with small, manageable, and realistic goals rather than a total lifestyle overhaul.

Observe what habit is already working, then as a key strategy, include habit stacking (linking new habits to the existing ones), designing your environment for ease, and maintaining flexibility to adapt to setbacks. (e.g., meditating for 2 minutes right after you wake up -instead of grabbing the phone) or immediately after brushing teeth).

- **Start Small & Build Momentum:**

Begin with tiny habits that feel almost effortless to prevent overwhelm.

- **Plan & Prioritize:**

Define clear goals, then structure your day by blocking out specific 15–30 minute time slots for tasks, including rest.

- **Optimize Environment:**

Arrange your surroundings to make desired behaviors easier to perform, such as prepping outfits or meals the night before.

- **Use Accountability:**

Track progress through checklists, and use accountability partners or groups to stay motivated when willpower fades.

- **Maintain Consistency:**

Focus on repeating the action at the same time and place daily.

- **Prioritize Sleep:**

Maintain a consistent sleep schedule to regulate emotions and energy, which facilitates other habits.

- **Be Flexible:**

Expect and plan for disruptions; don't abandon the routine due to one missed day.

- **Reward Yourself:**

Celebrate small victories to reinforce positive behavior. Focus on 'Why': Understand your core values to ensure your routine supports what is actually important to you.



RITUALS AND RHYTHM

Having a Positive Mission-Centered Routine Will Benefit Your Life:

- **Reduced Stress and Anxiety:** Routines and rituals signal safety to the brain, lowering cortisol levels and providing a sense of control and predictability.
- **Increased Productivity and Focus:** Systems (like planning or cleaning) and routines remove the need to constantly decide what to do, saving mental energy for important tasks.
- **Improved Health and Well-being:** Regular, rhythmic habits—like, consistent sleep schedules or morning routines—directly support physical and mental health.
- **Meaning and Joy:** Turning daily tasks into rituals (e.g., preparing tea or coffee mindfully, family dinner gratitude, lovingly feeding your pets) adds pleasure and purpose to the ordinary.
- **Greater Stability:** A structured system provides a solid foundation, making it easier to handle unexpected challenges.

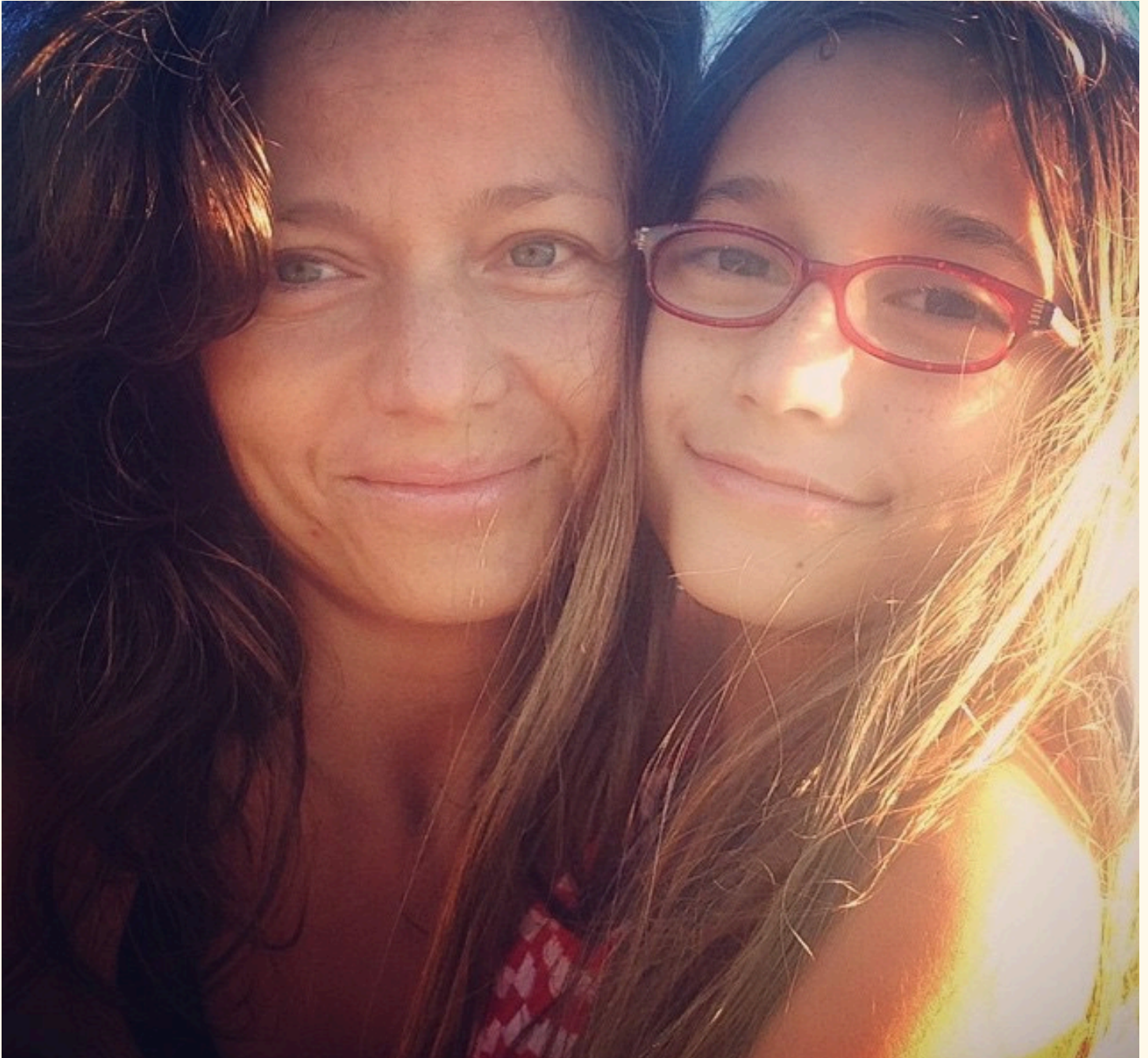
Designing Your Personal Lifestyle Understanding these three concepts:

1. **Rhythm (Flow):** Create a consistent, daily flow (e.g., morning, noon, evening routines, seasonal) to maintain efficiency and balance, such as incorporating 10-minute workouts, resets, meditations, etc.
2. **Rituals (Meaning):** The concept of rituals or ceremony add intention and emotion to activities, making them special rather than just, functional (e.g., lighting a candle or listening to spiritual music while working, dedicated evening in the garden to wind-down).
3. **Systems (Structure):** Implement, reliable, procedures (e.g., setting out clothes, meal prepping) that prevent mistakes and streamline daily operations for the success of a long term outcome.

By blending these three elements or concepts, you will build a predictable yet meaningful life, allowing you to live intentionally rather than reactively. This is what I like to call the art of loving yourself and others. Because when you are emotionally grounded, proudly organized, focused and fully present, in charge of your mind, body and soul, you love yourself, and naturally want to be part of the world, with a sense of belonging and participation.



PARENTING AS DEVOTION



**“Children are mirrors; they will always show you exactly what is going on inside of you. Each phase of their growth is an opportunity to heal your own pain, to go deeper inside yourself and become more truly human”
— Vimala McClure, *The Tao of Motherhood***

GABRIELA & TERESA
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Motherhood has taken me to places I never expected to be.

I always dreamed of having my own children, as I felt maternal instinct from a very young age, growing up surrounded by a dozen nieces and nephews whom I love with all my heart.

But becoming a mother pushes you to profound levels of surrender. When my daughter was two years old, I trained in Ayurveda and completed my teacher training, while also studying the Bhagavad Gita. Through these teaching, I had the opportunity to explore the different forms of devotion – and it finally clicked in my mind: my mother’s unconditional love and devotion towards me and my six siblings.



PARENTING AS DEVOTION



Raising children is, without a doubt, a spiritual practice – one that transforms daily care, the creation of setting of systems, the rhythms of positive habits, teaching, and sacrifice into acts of love and service, and this is for many, a true calling. Parenting should be rooted in intentional presence, because we are nurturing a child's character through example, rather than striving for perfection or falling into neglect by placing everything else before them. I understand the difficulty of parenting, especially as we navigate the responsibility of providing for our families.

Sharing our lives with children often requires letting go of self-focus in order to prioritize their emotional and spiritual well-being.

But we don't have to choose between neglect or full presence. I believe the key is to see parenting – and life itself – as a path of personal growth and maturity, where we learn to find true balance through rhythm, daily rituals and commitment, and a sense of flow and peace. In this way, parenting becomes a devotional act.

GABRIELA & HAKU



PARENTING AS A DEVOTIONAL ACT:

- **Spiritual Discipline and Stewardship:**

Parenting is seen as a high calling where parents are stewards responsible for guiding children, which involves prayer or meditation, protecting their innocence, and teaching them moral values through daily life and example.

- **Character and Transformation:**

Instead of aiming for perfection or the perfect children, the goal is mindful transformation—fostering patience, unconditional love, grace, and wisdom in both parent and child. Everyone is learning.

- **Intentional Presence and Connection:**

Devotion is shown through being present, such as using the 15 minutes of focused, uninterrupted blocks of time per day to build deep, meaningful connections. “My child, my eyes are looking at you. I am here. This 15 min we will do whatever you want. I love you.”

- **Letting Go and Trust:**

A major aspect of this devotion is accepting that parents cannot control outcomes, requiring them to trust in a higher power and ultimately release their children into their own lives, and understanding that we as parents will be waiting with our arms wide open to their return. “ I am here for you.”

- **Leading by Example:**

Parents demonstrate their devotion by modeling virtues and faith, recognizing that their actions speak louder than words in nurturing their children's character.

This active and positive approach encourages parenting to become devotional and to find purpose instead of creating an unfocused routine that will only create a heavy monotonous routine especially during the often challenging moments that are hard to do. Finding parenting as its own purpose as a form of sacred service, will increase your relationship with your children and add joy and bliss, building stability in uncertain times.



BUILDING STABILITY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES



To build stability in self, at home, at work and friendships during uncertain times please apply what we discuss in the previous articles but in resume requires focusing on actionable, daily routines (e.g., exercise, sleep), setting small, manageable goals, and fostering emotional resilience through gratitude and social connection. Prioritize self-care, anchor yourself to core values, and limit exposure to stressors to regain a sense of control.

1. **Communicate clearly and often:** To yourself, and others. Keep your mind clean, clear and focused.
2. **Professional Stability:** For leaders, this involves clear, frequent communication, contact, fostering relationships, psychological safety, and reinforcing core company values.
3. **Focus on the Controllable and Create predictability:** Identify what you can control and let go of what you cannot, such as focusing on daily tasks rather than long-term, unpredictable outcomes. Knowing what you are doing, which is the only thing you can control, creates predictability and safety.
4. **Establish Routines:** Maintain regular habits like sleeping, eating, exercising, working and community time at consistent times to create a sense of safety. Apply this to parenting, humans thrive knowing their schedule and what to expect. Start your day with a small routine (e.g., meditation, journaling).
5. **Prioritize Well-being:** Engage in self-care, including exercise, a healthy diet, friends and sufficient rest to build physical and mental resilience. Establish a consistent, calming bedtime routine to improve sleep.
6. **Practice Gratitude and Reflection:** Actively list things that are going well or remain constant in your life.
7. **Seek Connection:** Lean on your community, friends, or family for support. Adopt a pet, help the community, participate in a garden community, cook with your family.
8. **Cultivate Adaptability:** View uncertainty as an opportunity for growth rather than just a threat, which helps in reframing challenges.
9. **Reinforce purpose and values:** Keep in touch with your ethos, dharma and mission to maintain your vision, social and environmental impact and participation. Stay focused.
10. **Recognize and celebrate wins:** Break down large, overwhelming tasks into smaller, achievable daily steps, and celebrate yourself.
11. **Lead by example:** Your example is more important than forcing or imposing.
12. **Practice mindfulness and Ask for Help:** Seek professional counseling if anxiety is overwhelming, even if practicing mindfulness daily.



EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND NERVOUS SYSTEM GROUNDING

Emotional regulation through nervous system grounding involves using sensory, physical, and cognitive techniques to move from a state of distress (fight-or-flight) to a calm, present state. By engaging the senses, breathing deeply, or using physical touch, grounding techniques interrupt the body's alarm system, lower heart rate, and reduce tension.

Grounding Techniques for Regulation:

- **The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique:** Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste.
- **Physical Grounding:** Press feet into the floor, hold onto a chair, use a weighted blanket, or run cold/warm water over your hands. Hold a rock in each hand, sit down and let the feeling of touching the rocks to ground you.
- **Breathing Exercises:** Practice diaphragm breathing, mentally count to 4-7-8 sec breathing, hold the breath for 4-7-8 sec and exhale for 4-7-8 sec.
- **Sensory Stimulation:** Hold an ice cube, smell essential oils, or hum to activate the vagus nerve. Mantra chanting is my favorite practice.
- **Movement:** Stretch, roll your neck, or take a walk while focusing on the sensation of each step.
- **Go outside:** Feel the delicious sun in your skin, touch the grass barefoot.
- **Touch Water:** Place your hands under running lukewarm and cool water in the shower or sink, place a wet cloth on your forehead or go to the beach and touch the sand and feel the ocean. Water your plants. Take deep breaths.
- **Cook a plant-based meal:** Enjoy an old recipe that connects to your memories and let it nurture you, accompany you.
- **Make an art piece:** Art acts as a powerful, accessible grounding tool by engaging the senses and focusing attention on the present moment, which lowers stress, reduces anxiety, aids emotional regulation, and if work with friends, fosters connecting and a sense of belonging. Drawing, painting, or sculpting, individuals can safely process trauma, release tension, and shift focus from overwhelming thoughts to immediate physical sensations by shifting attention away from distressing thoughts and back to the physical body. It strengthens neural pathways associated with resilience and helps move the body out of high stress or numbness into a more balanced "I feel safe and connected" state.
- **Hold your pet:** Take deep breaths as you reconnect with your loving companion. Their gentle presence can help you return to yourself, restoring, connection, and a quiet sense of purpose.





PERMACULTURE PRINCIPLES: PRODUCE NO WASTE



“In nature there is no waste, only resources waiting for their next use.”

One of the most powerful ideas in permaculture is simple: nature produces no waste. In forests, gardens, and ecosystems, everything has a purpose. Leaves that fall from trees become nourishment for the soil. Fruit that drops feeds animals, insects, and microorganisms. What appears to be waste is actually part of a continuous cycle of renewal.

Permaculture invites us to observe these natural systems and ask a simple question: What if our homes and kitchens worked the same way?

PERMACULTURE PRINCIPLES: PRODUCE NO WASTE



Waste as a Design Problem

In modern life, waste is often treated as an inevitable byproduct. Packaging, food scraps, and discarded materials accumulate quickly, creating environmental and economic costs.

Permaculture suggests a different perspective: waste is often a design flaw. When systems are thoughtfully designed, resources flow from one use to another instead of being thrown away.

This principle encourages us to rethink how we grow food, cook, and manage our daily resources.

The Kitchen as an Ecosystem

The kitchen is a perfect place to practice the principle of produce no waste.

Vegetable peels can become broth. Herb stems can flavor oils and sauces. Overripe fruit can transform into smoothies or desserts. Even scraps that cannot be eaten can nourish compost, eventually returning nutrients to the soil.

When we begin to see the kitchen as part of a living cycle, food waste becomes an opportunity for creativity.

Closing the Loop

Permaculture teaches that sustainability comes from closing loops.

In a garden, compost returns nutrients to the soil. In the home, mindful consumption reduces what ends up in landfills. When communities share food, tools, and knowledge, resources circulate rather than disappear. Every small choice—saving scraps for broth, composting, or planning meals thoughtfully—helps create a system where nothing is wasted.

A Culture of Care

At its heart, the principle produce no waste is about respect. It reminds us that every ingredient represents soil, water, sunlight, and human effort.

When we value those resources fully, our kitchens become spaces of awareness rather than excess. In this way, permaculture is not only a gardening method—it is a philosophy of living that encourages us to design our lives with care, creativity, and gratitude for the abundance of the Earth.







Suddha Prem 

Love is a ceremony.

A way of living. A way of listening. A way of being.

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SEASONAL LOVE THE EARTH LOVE YOURSELF

BY GABRIELA ROCHA CABALLERO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUDDHA PREM



MUNG BEAN AND CHICKPEA SOUP AND UN POCO DE JARDIN.

MUNG BEAN AND CHICKPEA SOUP

This delicious soup will nourish your body.

mymamashealingsoups.com

Ingredients:

- 6-8 cups fresh water
- 1 cup sprouted mung beans or dry mung beans
- 1 cup cooked or canned chickpeas
- fresh ginger
- 1 tsp cumin seeds or cumin powder
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp cayenne (optional)
- garlic (optional; avoid if pitta is high)
- leeks
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp fresh oregano
- 1/2 tsp fresh black pepper
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp hing or epazote
- 1 tsp cardamom
- 1-2 cups mixed veggies: kale, broccoli, carrots, greens, or asparagus
- sea salt
- 1 tsp coconut oil (summer), sesame oil, or ghee (winter) (optional)



WHAT IS A JARDIN?

BY GABRIELA ROCHA CABALLERO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUDDHA PREM



A LITTLE KALE GROWING OUR GARDEN.

My auntie Tita's Jardin recipe

This delicious, organic, NON-GMO raw garden is the final touch — the yummy toppings for your warm soups.

mymamashealingsoups.com

The ingredients may include, but are not limited to:

- 2 large ripe, organic avocados, cut into cubes
- Finely chopped kale, chard, spinach, celery, broccoli, Brussels sprouts (lightly cooked or raw)
- Finely chopped herbs like oregano, basil, peppermint, cilantro, dill, and parsley
- Tomato cubes (optional)
- Green onion (optional)
- Lime and/or lemon
- Chili flakes, finely chopped raw serrano or jalapeno, or sautéed in coconut oil for summer, ghee for winter (optional)
- Organic extra-virgin olive oil or ghee
- Sea salt



LOVE NOTE



MUNG BEAN AND CHICKPEA SOUP AND UN POCO DE JARDIN.

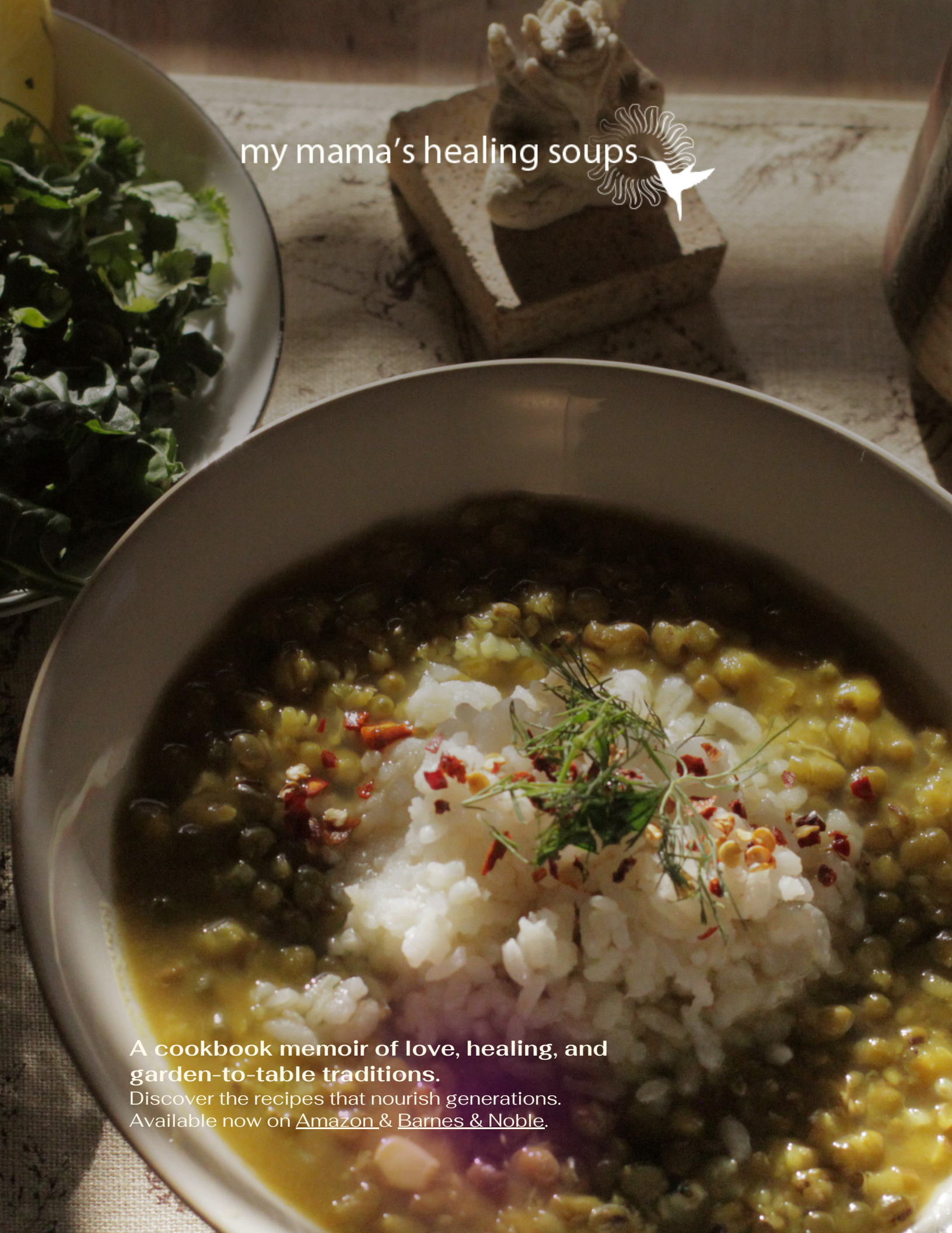
This soup is a tribute to my dear friend, Felicidad, a sister found and chosen, surprisingly, later in life. Despite being born into different families, we share a unique connection, laughing at the same jokes and embracing a 1940s Mexican cinema attitude that feels strangely familiar.

The last time I saw her, Felicidad crafted a delightful soup with organic ingredients, freshly cooked mung beans, veggies, and an abundance of love. I can almost smell the aromas of her home, envisioning the laughter that never ceases until tears stream down our faces. Our voices resonate loudly, and our personalities are so grand that it truly feels like we embody the essence of humanity. When we are together, we belong to the world, floating in the cosmos, anticipating the resolution of a mystery nearby. She is the kind of person who, if someone in our vicinity needs help, always gives it.

I yearn to share this soup with her, sitting across from each other, immersed in her jokes, laughing as if it were the first time, and finding solace for both body and soul in her presence. The bond we share—the love, sisterhood, and friendship—knows no beginning and no end. I wish for nothing more than to relish this soup and life nearby, together, healing and cherishing each moment, forever inseparable, one carcajada at a time.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABRIELA ROCHA CABALLERO
A LOVE NOTE INCLUDED IN
MY MAMA'S HEALING SOUPS | AVAILABLE IN AMAZON
WWW.MYMAMASHEALINGSOUPS.COM



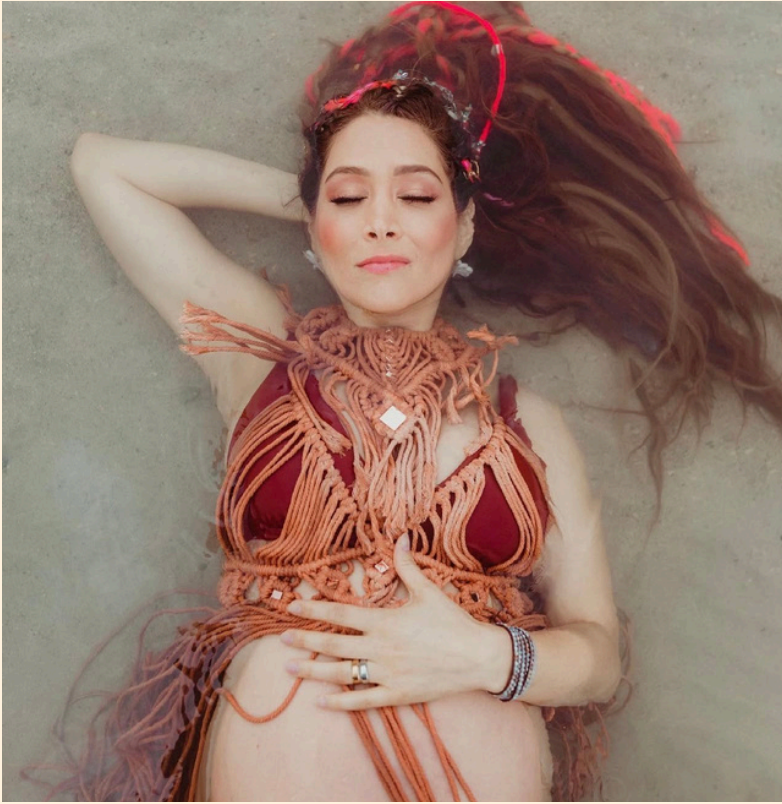


my mama's healing soups



A cookbook memoir of love, healing, and garden-to-table traditions.

Discover the recipes that nourish generations.
Available now on [Amazon](#) & [Barnes & Noble](#).



A reflection on generational trauma, responsibility, and the transformative devotion of raising daughters. In this heartfelt reflection, journalist and storyteller Felicidad Aveleyra, former anchor for Univision and Telemundo, explores the complex relationship between devotion and discipline through the lens of motherhood. Drawing from her own life experiences—growing up in a family shaped by trauma and later becoming the mother of two beautiful daughters—she reflects on responsibility, generational healing, and the profound transformation that comes with raising children.

Her story reminds us that true devotion is not only an emotion but a daily practice—one that requires presence, boundaries, and love.

BY FELICIDAD AVELEYRA
PHOTOGRAPHS: FELICIDAD'S FAMILY ARCHIVE

DEVOTION & DISCIPLINE: MOTHERHOOD AS A PATH OF LOVE

“A wise mother knows: It is her state of consciousness that matters. Her gentleness and clarity command respect. Her love creates security.” - Vimala McClure, *The Tao of Motherhood*

What is devotion? I ask myself this often, as it is a word I frequently encounter in spiritual practices, books, and even love poems. It is defined as “religious fervor,” as well as “the fact or state of being ardently dedicated and loyal,” and “the act of dedicating something to a cause, enterprise, or activity.”

Skipping the first definition, I would say that you do not have to be religious to be devoted.

Devotion can come from a feeling of responsibility in some of us, thinking that in the great plan of life our devotion to someone might make a difference in their development, their self-assurance, their well-being, and their lives. Other times it comes naturally from the love we feel for others.

For mothers, it often comes both ways: feeling responsible for the ones we love the most and naturally devoting our energy, time, effort, thoughts, and actions to the beings we brought into this world.

I spent most of my life unmarried and without children. I was always responsible with any job I had. I always delivered and always paid my bills on time. Still, I was not someone I would consider disciplined.

Some of our weaknesses and failures come from childhood experiences and trauma. My personality has always leaned toward the artistic, creative, and somewhat messy side, combined with a stressful childhood, a sense of insecurity, and a rebel living inside me. All of that translated into having a difficult relationship with discipline. Habits do not come naturally to me.

My mind flies away every day, and I must make an effort to ground myself and put daily things in order.



DEVOTION & DISCIPLINE: MOTHERHOOD AS A PATH OF LOVE



When I lived in Los Angeles, I had the mornings for myself. I might grab my bike and ride somewhere for breakfast, read a book, cook for myself at home, go to the gym, or walk around Santa Monica before heading to my serious job in the afternoon. There was nothing I truly had to commit to besides my work.

I was already forty when I became pregnant. I had not planned it. I was not expecting it to happen. It troubled me at first. I felt extremely nervous, but I eventually surrendered to what life was presenting—gifting—me.

Part of me knew I was committing to a new human being for life, which is precisely why I had never planned on becoming a mother. I had always loved babies, since I was a baby myself, but I realized that I had never seriously considered motherhood because I had felt responsible for others my entire life.

That realization came one day through a boyfriend I had in Mexico. He had seen all my struggles trying to help my parents, trying to make their lives happier. One day he said to me:

“Feli, I understand now why you don’t want to be a mom. It’s because you have always been one to your parents.”

I froze. I felt goosebumps and a deep sense of humility in hearing his observation.

Wow. He had just pinpointed the reason why I, a caring, fun, and empathetic woman towards children, had never imagined motherhood as my reality.

Suddenly it became clear. What had been unconscious became conscious.

I was tired of mothering.

Having parents who grew up with traumatic experiences sometimes pushes children to become their saviors. Does it have to do with our Moon sign? With astrology? With the soul? With trauma transmitted through DNA?

I do not know.

But since childhood I have been devoted to my mother. I was aware of every feeling she had. If she felt sadness, I felt responsible for transforming it into happiness. If she had a need, I wished I were an adult already so I could provide for it.

I could be playing happily with my brothers when she announced she was going to the market. Even if she didn’t ask me to come, I would immediately leave my playtime and go with her. I felt it was my place to be by her side, to protect her and help her.



DEVOTION & DISCIPLINE: MOTHERHOOD AS A PATH OF LOVE



My devotion to her was present in everything I did:
my good grades at school so she would feel proud and calm about my education;
my waking up at night whenever I heard the apartment door open, fearing trouble between her and my father so I could step in between them;
my daily drawings for her;
my prayers every morning on the way to school so she would be safe.
Later, I even left school as a teenager so I could support our household.
Eventually, this devotion became a struggle—a struggle to convince her of healthier ways of thinking, to help her take better care of herself, to help her see the positive side of things.
During my teenage years, I also devoted myself to trying to understand my father. I tried to talk with him, ask questions about his past, and connect with him—even when he was under the influence of alcohol. I wanted to understand him and help him see that love could be stronger than the absence of love he had experienced growing up, stronger than addiction.
Eventually, I realized it wasn't.
Still, I remained devoted to trying to keep him safe and make him feel appreciated and heard.
Then, in 2020, the first beautiful light of my life was born.
My daughter—my teacher—arrived, revealing to me the greatest power in life: creation.
Naturally, she became the first priority in my list of responsibilities and devotion. For the first time, the person I was caring for actually depended on me to survive, to learn, and to feel safe.
In 2021, my second daughter arrived, multiplying the love and deepening those responsibilities.
With babies at home, if you are not a morning person, you are forced to become one. No matter how little sleep you get or how many times you are awakened at night, their needs do not wait.
That is when my discipline began.
Setting the alarm clock every morning. Waking up to care for them. Planning the meals I will prepare for them and the family. School drop-offs and pick-ups. After-school activities. Showers, hair brushing, nail clipping.

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DEVOTION & DISCIPLINE: MOTHERHOOD AS A PATH OF LOVE



All the little things that I became disciplined to do because of them.

Through them, I have witnessed the development of human beings: how our parenting appears in their actions and interactions with others, but also how their own instincts emerge—their personalities, preferences, rhythms, humor, thoughts, and questions about life.

Witnessing their existence is a privilege that has deepened my devotion to them. I admire them.

But devotion without discipline can produce unhealthy results.

A parent who is deeply devoted but afraid to set boundaries might become submissive to a child's desires and demands. Instead of raising a confident human being, they risk raising a spoiled one.

The word “spoiled” is quite descriptive. When a child's every wish is fulfilled without guidance or limits, that child becomes a spoiled project. Their behavior eventually becomes a burden not only to parents but to teachers, caregivers, and others around them.

The greatest tragedy is that the child suffers the most, struggling to form friendships and adapt to the real world. When adults carry unresolved issues from their own childhood, those wounds can unconsciously influence their parenting.

That certainly happened with my parents. Both of them had emotionally absent parents.

The result was a misplacement of roles.

I should have been the daughter throughout most of our shared life, but in many ways I became the mother. It was a role that did not belong to me. That created insecurity during my childhood and youth because it was impossible for me to fulfill the needs of my “adult children” while being a child myself.

Even so, despite the trauma and heartache my mother carried since childhood, she did an extraordinary job raising us. She guided us, setting up strong rules. She made us responsible. She was loving and affectionate, and she never abandoned her responsibilities as a mother, even during the most difficult times.

Both discipline and devotion were present.

DEVOTION & DISCIPLINE: MOTHERHOOD AS A PATH OF LOVE



I think that one of the things that has helped in my life is that I have been attracted to the beauty and knowledge of yoga and to different readings that involve psychology. Also observing has allowed me to understand more about our humanity. We need to be watching too because I believe that personal experience plus the lessons learned by others actually help.

Now, as I see our family story more clearly with time and maturity, my deepest wish is that my parenting helps my daughters grow up fearless, able to develop their talents fully, and always feeling loved.

Free to inhabit their true place in our family.

My daughters— the subjects of my profound devotion.



About the Author:

Felicidad Aveleyra is a journalist and storyteller with a distinguished career as a television anchor for Univision and Telemundo. With a deep sensitivity for human experience and personal transformation, her writing explores themes of devotion, motherhood, and emotional healing. She currently dedicates her time to raising her two daughters and reflecting on the profound lessons of love, discipline, and conscious parenting.

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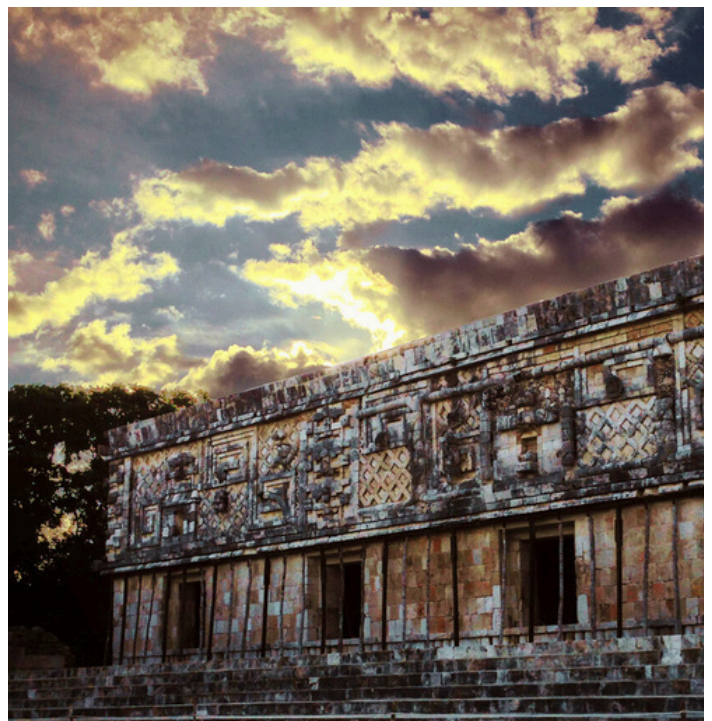
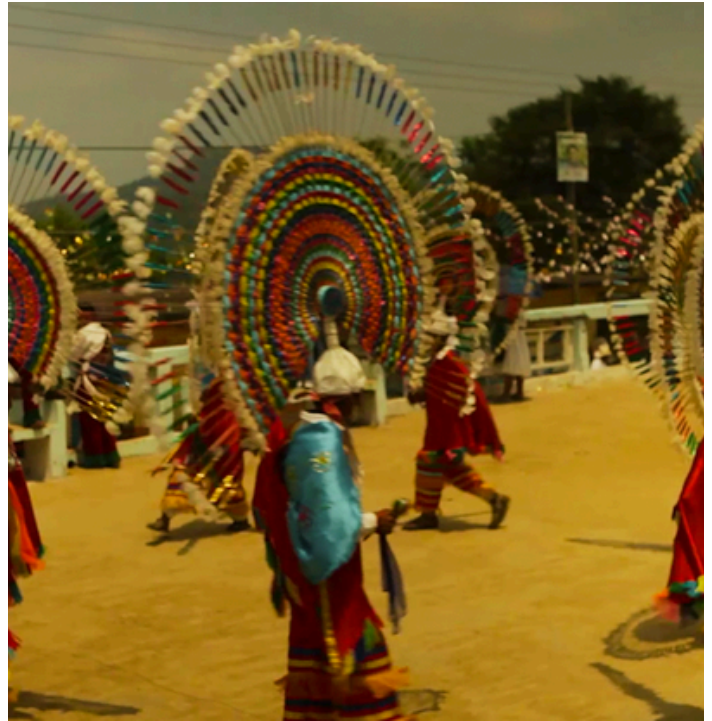


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