

Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

April 2017

DR. KEESHA EWERS: Hi, everybody. Welcome back to the Women's Vitality Summit, Caring for Yourself Body and Soul. I've got a special treat for you right now. I have Ajayan Borys, who is an internationally respected meditation instructor and founder of Effortless Mind Meditation. He is the author of Effortless Mind: Meditate with Ease, and The Way of Marriage, and The Sacred Fire, and numerous articles on meditation and relationships as a spiritual path. He's also the host of Mind Matters radio on KKNW, 1150 AM in the Puget Sound area, and is a Reiki master, hypnotherapist and certified Enneagram coach. Welcome to the Women's Vitality Summit, Ajayan.

AJAYAN BORYS: Thank you, Keesha.

DR. KEESHA: For those of you that don't know, this is actually my husband so we get to sit cozy on the couch as we do this interview because we're in the same room. What we're going to be talking about here then is vitality; it's the Women's Vitality Summit, and our viewers know that I start off every interview asking about what the word vitality means to you. So what does the word vitality mean to you?

AJAYAN BORYS: I think of it in terms of my background in meditation. We each have infinite vitality in our being, at the core of our being. That infinite vitality is simply pure consciousness, that source, our innermost essence. That manifests in the body as energy, as vitality, in terms of Shakti, which is the foundation for all the, now this is talking in Indian terms, the prana, which is just the life force, different impulses or aspects of life force that basically fill us and allow us to express our creativity, our activity. Everything that we do is based on that life force. That's vitality and we have an infinite reservoir of that. Unfortunately, we don't always have the ability to access that and we can talk about that as we continue.

DR. KEESHA: Let's break that down a little bit and maybe take some of these Sanskrit terms that people may or may not have heard before and interpret them. One of the things that you said is that Shakti is like prana. Prana is a word that perhaps people that have taken yoga will have heard before, and they've heard me talk about it in terms of that Sanskrit terminology from Ayurvedic medicine in terms of the panchakoshas. In other words, we're more than just our physical body; we have five different layers to us in this framework of medicine, which is really fantastic to think about because, as you were talking about this infinite reservoir of vitality and energy that's

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

contained in us, we don't get access to it if we're toxic in any of those five layers.

The prana layer is the second layer of us, it's our energy body, it's what also Chinese medicine called chi, or Japanese medicine calls qi, or what Western science calls your electromagnetic energy field. You can see it on Kirlian photography now, so we know it exists. When you say prana and you say vitality, you're actually, in Shakti, you're saying it's the next layer of us, yes?

AJAYAN BORYS: Exactly. And that's what empowers your being, that's what gives you energy to get out of bed and the creativity and just the energy to go about your life. Of course, in most of us, that is blocked in various ways for various reasons. By releasing that vitality, meditation is one way, but honestly, one thing I've found, and I've been looking at this for many years with a passion, studying meditation, and that is that meditation alone, as a mental technique, is not necessarily the most effective way to really access that energy.

DR. KEESHA: Hold the phone because I never thought I'd ever hear you say that. I never thought I'd ever hear you say that meditation is not the only way because that's something that you've been practicing for 45 years, you're a meditation master and an instructor and you've written books about it to. Say more about that; that's pretty interesting.

AJAYAN BORYS: All right, and I qualify it - as a mental technique. Because the mental side of us, as you know, it's one aspect of our being. But if you just try to access that energy from the mental perspective, it's a narrow avenue, you might say, to access that. One thing I love about the traditional, spiritual culture of India is that they have researched many different means of accessing that energy. There is a whole technology for doing that and it is related to meditation. I'm talking about, for instance, breathing exercises, pranayama. You've heard of the different types of pranayama, there's many different types, bandhas, which are locks, and they basically are a means of awaking that subtle energy, and mudras, for directing the energy. You can do combinations of these techniques and it makes a much more dynamic access of that subtle energy.

When you access the energy in that way, it opens up the experience of meditation tremendously. Whereas, if you just used meditation as a mental technique, it might take years to really awaken those energies and see some real substantial progress of clearing the channels for that flow of energy, the nadis they call it, and really feeling that vitality in a big way. Whereas this other means, this technology, allows you to access that much

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

more quickly and then that opens your meditation to be much deeper. So it is all related to meditation, it's the same theme, but it's just making that distinction of mental versus the whole set of possibilities.

DR. KEESHA: Once again, just to translate what you're saying, actually pranayama means conscious breathing techniques. For those of you that haven't heard of that before, that's what he's talking about. If we want to talk about bandhas as locks, as ways of moving that energy or having control over it, and how it's express or held and then channeling it. These are tools that are studied from thousands of years ago that do that. A lot of people, again, that practice yoga have heard a lot of these terms before.

Let's given example because you've drawn a line in the sand between meditation as a mental technique and that meditation as a vitality booster and those two things look quite different from what you're saying to me. What do you mean by meditation as a mental technique?

AJAYAN BORYS: I mean, for instance, as an example, mantra meditation. That's where I started years ago, transcendental meditation, TM program, very simple but accessible technique that's on mantra meditation. A mantra is just a simple syllable or two that becomes a vehicle for transcendence, you might say. I taught that form of medication for many years. It's really nice, it's a good beginning point and it definitely has a calming effect and can take you into a nice, deep state of relaxation. Combined with these other practices that I've talked about - the bandhas, mudras, pranayama - it just vastly accelerants. Of course, you'd have to approach it in the right way, but when you do, it can greatly accelerate your progress. So it's just hitting it from not just one of the koshas, like you were talking about.

DR. KEESHA: Layers of the body.

AJAYAN BORYS: Exactly, just that mental kosha as a mental technique, but also hitting it from the energetic body, which is really the meeting point of mind and body. The energetic body is the meeting point of those two, and when you can function on that level and really hit it from that level, it has a very powerful effect because you're working at an energetic level; it's a subtle level. It's just like working at the subatomic level of your being, you might say. You can create a huge effect whereas, if you're just looking at the physical level by doing exercise or the yoga positions, it has an effect, of course, but it's a much less effect. Using just the mind, it's a little abstract; there's a gap between mind and body.

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

So to really integrate that energy into your body, meditation is not necessarily the most effective as just a mental technique. So you hit it from all of these angles together and then you get the best result.

DR. KEESHA: This is very much like when I wrote Solving the Autoimmune Puzzle, which is coming out. What I talk about are the panchakoshas and that, if you get toxic in any of those five layers, you don't access to what's known as your bliss sheath, or the part of you that has access to the divine, to your connection to universal consciousness. The inspiration that you can get in the shower or while you're out running or in yoga or in meditation, you don't get free access to that if you're toxic in these physical, mental, emotional layers. It sounds like that's what you're talking about, is cleaning out those layers using a series of techniques that go beyond just thinking of a word to keep your mind from having thoughts, which is the way a lot of people think about meditation and its benefits, that you're just keeping yourself clear of thoughts.

AJAYAN BORYS: Yes. There's so much we could say about meditation, but one thing I've always been interested, because I am passionate about meditation, it's been a primary path for me for many decades, but I'm also in the world and have a job, have a wife, have a family, so you have to make that time spent on the cushion really get the most punch per minute that you're sitting there; have it be effective time.

That's why I've explored all these different techniques and spend a lot of time in India with yogis and getting different instruction. I've just honed it down to a program that's really effective and powerful.

DR. KEESHA: People can check out your book, Effortless Mind Meditation, and see that program that. You also have a website that's got a membership component to it where they can look at videos and follow you through some of these different techniques and really go as deeply as they want to on that. You can go ahead and give your URL.

AJAYAN BORYS: Sure. It's just ajayan.com. On the membership site, there's a couple of levels. One is very simple, it's just a level for those who want to learn to meditate, to relax, to feel peace, to chill out, get rid of stress. There's that and then there's a deeper level for those who really want to dive deeply into this.

DR. KEESHA: Let's give people a little sample of a meditation that you can do that incorporates one simple breathing technique.

AJAYAN BORYS: Okay, sure. In other words, you want me to guide a meditation right now?

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

DR. KEESHA: Yeah, let's have you guide a meditation right now that's meant to boost vitality.

AJAYAN BORYS: Actually there is, on my website, if you go, there will be a little longer version of this. There's a bit, about a 10-minute version. I'll just do a few minutes of this. What I want to integrate into this meditation some simple technique for awakening the subtle energy and directing it upwards along a primary channel in the spine called Sushumna. The technique for awakening the energy is very simple and this is called mula bandha. "Mula" means root, and "bandha" means lock. Anyone who's had a child in natural childbirth will be actually familiar with this because it's very similar to the Kegel exercise. The Kegel exercise, of course, has no intent of waking subtle energies, it's a completely different application, but the yogis were doing this for probably thousands of years before Dr. Kegel came along and discovered it. The yogis consider this simple exercise to be a key to unlocking that subtle energy and it really is quite effective.

Just close your eyes and maybe take a breath or two, a deep breath or two. Have your attention just rest in the area of the perineum. The perineum is in the area of the root chakra, and that's between the anus and the genitals. There is a muscle group there that you can contract, just squeeze. You don't have to clench it, but just squeeze firmly and relax. Squeeze on the in breath, relax on the out breath. Do that for several breaths. Now we can add a simple mantra to this. As you squeeze on the in breath, feel a subtle flow of attention going up the spine to the crown of the head, and on the out breath, feel that flow of attention coming back to the perineum. On the in breath, add a subtle, gentle thought of the mantra "so" and on the out breath, as you relax the perineum, "hum," still with that up and down. "So" on the up, "hum" on the down. Your breathing may slow and that's fine. Just let it be very natural. Now you can cease mula bandha, cease squeezing the perineum, and just being. You don't have to think the mantra, no up or down, just being. And then you can open the eyes.

The simple addition of that mula bandha adds to the effectiveness of the meditation. Hopefully, you felt going into a deeper state of rest and relaxation in just that couple of minutes; that mula bandha actually assists that. Of course, that's just scratching the surface. The yogis, as I say, are great researchers of all this, they've unfolded many wonderful practices, and Effortless Mind Meditation is really like a whole system of those practices.

DR. KEESHA: One of the reasons that I brought Ajayan into the Summit and wanted you to hear from him is because you can see how easy this is. Actually, you'll

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

find Ajayan doing this in movie theaters and restaurants and his car at stop lights. Wherever you go, you can do it because it's just requiring your own breath and your own musculature and your own intentional thought patterns. The title of your talk is "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" and it's a spinoff from the song obviously, but the point of that is that so often people will say A, "I don't have time to meditate," B, "I can't make my thoughts stop," and C, "I don't really notice any difference from it." A lot of times yogis have said that it will take thousands and thousands and thousands of hours to attain certain levels of growth through meditation. But, by accelerating it with some of these very easy to use methodologies and techniques, then you can take it little further.

You and I have the same teacher that has been teaching us some of those things and your commentary back and forth has always been, "Wow, that technique really was amazing and it really accentuated this," or, "My energy is so much better," or all of these different things. So meditation is not the same across the board. People use that word meditation and think it means one thing that's generic. I think that this is helpful for people to understand that there are all kinds of techniques that are under the heading of meditation, yes?

AJAYAN BORYS: Right. It's interesting, I'm also a Reiki master, as you are as well, and I have to say, lately, when people come to me and want a Reiki treatment, I first encourage them to learn to meditate because, actually, it's all within you, that is the thing. You can access it at any time, as you were just saying, and it's so easy to do that you don't need to really be dependent on somebody else. I'm not saying anything about against Reiki; it's wonderful. If you need that kind of treatment, that's fine.

But you do have it all with you, it's easy to access, and it's a wonderful thing to explore yourself that way. There's a saying that, in yoga, that unfolding the different layers of realization through yoga just brings great joy and is; it's a wonderful exploration. It's your own being, why not access it and own it and really unfolded your whole vitality in that way? And it doesn't take a lot of time.

AJAYAN BORYS: We're not talking about yoga as in postures.

DR. KEESHA: No, the whole approach.

AJAYAN BORYS: This interpretation that we tend to have in the West, of words like tantra and yoga and meditation, are very simplistic and fairly linear. We do the same thing with medicine, we want to find the active ingredient in the plan and then make a chemical replacement for it. We've gotten into trouble

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

with hundreds, probably thousands, of medication in that way such as Synthroid for thyroid, synthetic T4. It's taking it out of context of what your thyroid actually needs and the conversion of thyroid hormones. Just giving somebody a synthetic T4 is just a Band-Aid and it's not helping the thyroid healing in any way. When we start taking things and distilling it down to just a few things, then we're not doing anyone any good service.

When we talk about yoga, we're actually talking about there are these eight steps in yoga and the first two are basically what are called the yamas and the niyamas, and they're ways of living in life with integrity and those are powerful. They're much akin to what we would say the 10 Commandments in Christianity are. There are five do's and five don'ts of a way to live your life with this beautiful integrity. Then comes the actual physical posture of yoga, the asana it's called. But then we've got this focus on one point of concentration, and we have conscious breathing, and we have meditation as those next three are the next three parts of yoga. Then we have a spiritual study, and then we have union with God. I think that that, taken in a whole, that's a lifetime of study. Instead of saying, "I can't find time to meditate." The yoga of life is actually linking your mind with your body with your spirit with your heart and bringing it all together in these ways of these beautiful techniques that you're outlining right now, and when we get blocked in any of those, we get sick.

AJAYAN BORYS: Exactly. That's just what I was going to say because we're talking about vitality here for women. We have these layers of our being and we can get blocked on any of those layers. You were talking about the yamas and niyamas. That is guidelines for behavior, you might say. If we have behavior that's excessive or imbalanced in some way, that causes repercussions that can block. And also thinking that becomes rigid, you talk about this sometimes, that also has repercussions in this subtle, energetic level and blocks.

DR. KEESHA: Rigid mind equals rigid body.

AJAYAN BORYS: Exactly. So it's all integrated. What I love about yoga, as a total approach, and talking about the totality of it, or tantra, the same thing basically, you could almost equate the two, that it's a systematic approach on all these levels to release your full vitality and that's just a beautiful thing; I love it.

DR. KEESHA: Me too. I appreciate you taking some time to share just a couple of techniques to release that. Of course, the longer version is in the Effortless Mind book and then people can take up study with you on a regular basis with the membership site and really glean so much on each layer as they

Women's Vitality Summit - April 2017 - Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ajayan Borys

work with 50 years almost that you've been working on this. There's a lifetime of study here.

AJAYAN BORYS: Yeah, and there is a free, guided meditation on the website. Go and enjoy that; you can just use that at any time.

DR. KEESHA: It's actually your bonus material that's on the Women's Vitality Summit part of your speaker's bonus page.

AJAYAN BORYS: Great. Thank you for doing this.

DR. KEESHA: It's my heart gift. I see so many women in my office that say they don't have time to take care of themselves and, hopefully, you're seeing and you're hearing these different experts, including Ajayan, that you can do this while you're driving. You don't have to close your eyes, you can actually do this breathing technique with the bandhas, with the Kegel exercises, what you called mula bandha. Doing that in that way actually increases the vaginal tone of your vagina too, which helps with so many other things like holding in urine when you're laughing or sneezing, and with sexual intercourse. So all of these things have layers of benefit when you do them.

AJAYAN BORYS: I would say just try it sometime. Do this Kegel exercise, or mula bandha, on your way to work. You can even just do the breathing and squeeze out and relax, and you can even have that mantra, so-hum. Just keep your eyes open as you're driving and be alert, of course. If you start to be less alert, then just stop it. But I think you'll find you'll get very relaxed and peaceful and feel more energized in your day.

DR. KEESHA: The traffic won't bother you so much. It's minor irritations that can set people off into the stress response, so this will really help.

AJAYAN BORYS: I'm always thankful for heavy traffic because I get to do more meditation. It's wonderful.

DR. KEESHA: You're the anomaly. Thank you, Ajayan, for all of your wisdom and for sharing it with us.

AJAYAN BORYS: Thank you, Keesha.