Tuning into inner joy
A spiritual pathway for contemporary times

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A positive story in a business daily, a promotion with a fat pay-
cheque, a century from Sachin, or ‘well-behaved’ spouse and
children — if you think only these things can be your source of joy, talk to
this man for a few minutes and expect to be surprised. According to him, one cannot
source joy from outside all the time, and each individual is a joy industry in himself. Ask
him how to manage stress, he replies, “Why should one manage stress in the first place,
when you have better things such as money and time to manage?”

Jaggi Vasudev, ‘Sadhguru’ to many, is a spiritual leader with a contemporary ap-
proach to life. His articulation, understanding of human nature and incredible sense of
humour make an impression.

Fresh from lecturing at an ‘executive education programme on global leadership’ in
Chennai, he sat down for a chat that ranged over many things — from Karl Marx and
capitalism to the current economic meltdown and terror attacks — but the focus
remained on the ‘inner transformation’ of human beings.

Explaining why inner transformation is important for every individual, he says one
normally feels miserable when external things do not happen the way one wants. The
fear and anxiety over this makes one even more miserable and stressed. So, especially
when external developments impacted by the economic meltdown or other factors are
not good, one must keep the inside joyful.

Choosing Joy
If people understand that they are either joyful or miserable only by choice, they
wouldn’t be miserable anymore. One needs to do a bit of inner engineering for that trans-
formation. “If you are joyful, this will perco-
te into whatever you do.”

Capability is impaired when a person is in a state of unhappiness, frustration or depres-
sion, he explains. “If you are a joyful person,
no matter what you do, you would put your
heart into it. For example, you go to office
because you really want to contribute to
what’s happening there. If you do it lovingly
and joyfully, whatever you do will be very
good, and you will also get salary at the end
of the month. But for 30 days, if you keep
chanting salary... salary... salary... you will be
miserable the whole month, hoping for that
one day to come. And on that day, you will be
even more miserable because no matter how
much salary you get it’s never enough. That’s
because as your salary increases, your lif-
estyle is already two steps ahead of it.”

Isha Foundation, a non-religious, public ser-
vice organisation, is set in lush rainforest at
the base of the Velliangiri Mountains in
Coimbatore. The Isha Yoga Centre offers
programmes aimed at ensuring physical,
mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Simple Beginning
The beginner’s programme called ‘Shamb-
havi Mahamudra’ aims to make one’s body,
mind, emotions and energy heed instruc-
tions from the self. “Only if you gain control
over these things, can you keep yourself joy-
ful,” he says.

“We are not asking you to stand on your
head or twist your body. It’s something very
simple to practise... including some simple
asanas and pranayama (breathing exercises).
It works. Millions of people have benefited
from it.” It is also believed to be beneficial for
conditions such as asthma, migraine and
backaches.

Vasudev adds that the first and foremost
effect of the programme is that it sets your
digestive system in order. People generally
eat much more than what is required, which
burdens the system, making it inefficient.
Hence it cannot absorb necessary minerals,
vitamins and energy from the food eaten.

“Just give me one week’s time. I will tell
you a few simple things to practise... you will
notice that with just half the food, your sys-
tem will become more efficient, produce
more energy, and you can maintain your
weight too,” he says confidently.