

january podcast: introduction to meditation, with david nichtern



Curious about developing a meditation practice? In this edition of Kripalu Perspectives,

David Nichtern, senior teacher in the Shambhala Buddhist lineage and director of Buddhist Studies and Practice at OM Yoga Center, discusses the principles of mindfulness meditation, or *shamatha*. He describes the three major benefits of meditation, basic steps for beginning meditators, and tips on how to handle strong emotions when they arise during meditation.

January 2012 podcast: [Introduction to Meditation](#) (listen now, download as an mp3, or subscribe via iTunes or RSS feed). [David Nichtern teaches at Kripalu February 3–5.](#)

new year, new you



Want to learn to cook more healthful meals? Ready to quit smoking? Kick off this year by

transforming yourself from the inside out. We offer programs that could make 2012 the year you find your calling, your spirit, or your hidden talent. Yoga, art, music, dance, nutrition—there's something for everyone. It's a whole new year; take steps toward a new you.

Ready to take action? [Find the program that's right for you.](#)

guest words



In a constantly changing world, Kripalu's presence is reliably

welcome

Happy 2012! The new year brings with it a new name for this publication: Kripalu Compass. We like it because it expresses our goal to bring you inspiration and guidance for your journey, whatever path you're on. This is especially true in January, when we celebrate what's come to pass, assess where we are now, and revel in the unknown. This month's Kripalu Compass is bursting with ways to look ahead at 2012 with confidence and clarity, beginning with our feature article by visionary author and career coach Tama J. Kieves. Meanwhile, we bequeath our former name—Kripalu Online—to Kripalu's newest offering, a series of online and blended-learning opportunities. Learn more about our upcoming Kripalu Online course, a certificate program in Positive Psychology with Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar, at kripalu.org/cipp.



set your life on fire: follow your heart instead of your head

by Tama J. Kieves

This year, why not try something new? Don't just rearrange the furniture in your life or lose weight. Lose the weight in your life. Do something you love. Love changes everything. Want the best year of your life? Then get out of your mind and into your passion. Get affected. It's where you long to go and where you belong. This year, follow your heart instead of your head.

Most of us have been taught that it's safer and more practical to listen to our heads instead of our hearts. I'll tell you otherwise.

The mind makes rational decisions based on memory. The heart connects to something mystical and dynamic. As we enter changing times in the world, it's wiser to listen to a guide that does not require stasis. Love can blast past facts and provide a security that transcends all circumstances.

Believe me, I know what it's like to make "rational" decisions and ignore

reassuring.

—Rosanna L., retired social worker, New York, New York

kripalu welcomes new faculty



Lisa Nelson, MD, has joined Kripalu as Director of Medical Education, and she will be involved in several

of our Healthy Living immersion programs. Lisa graduated from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and completed her residency at Boston Medical Center. A longtime advocate for community wellness, she serves as medical director of the nonprofit Nutrition Center in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and has led numerous public workshops that underscore the connection between food and health.



Susan B. Lord, MD, is now our Healthy Living Mind/Body Specialist. Susan graduated from

Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, completing her residency in family practice. From 1996 to 2007, she worked at the Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington DC, where she developed and participated in professional training programs in mind-body medicine and nutrition.

turning point: joe dispenza



After a horrific accident, neuroscientist and chiropractor Joe Dispenza was told he would likely

never walk again. Less than three months later, he was not only walking, but also seeing patients again. The process Joe used to heal himself has become the focus of his life's work.

[➔ Read the interview.](#)

your “irrational” heart.

I ached to be a writer. I loved expressing my joy through words. But I made a “practical” decision and chose to be a lawyer, going all the way, earning honors from Harvard Law School. I practiced law because I thought it could provide a stable income and allow me greater freedom. This made sense on paper. but that’s because, on paper, I had no emotions or needs. Yet in daily life—where I lived out my mind’s tidy plan—chaos prevailed.

I was a young litigator in a huge law firm and I billed my life in six-minute intervals. I worked 80 hours a week, and lived on Diet Pepsi and adrenaline. Senior partners would dump case files on my desk on late Friday afternoon and casually scribble, “Get this to me by Monday morning.” My knees would buckle with frustration. I had never been less free. Then, at home, my personal life assaulted me like a neglected garden, rampant with decay and weeds. I was so tired I’d sit and stare into space.

When it finally got to the point of true depression and even, secretly, not wanting to live anymore, I knew this was not a “practical” path. I had thought that my real desires were unsafe. It turns out that living a life without real desires is unsafe. I left the law to save my life.

When I started to follow my spirit, I began to see the shocking limitations of the mind. I realized I had negated my most holy desires, merely based on thoughts I’d had about how life worked. I had chosen everything I did in my life based on filtered information. I trusted ideas I’d heard all my life, about how “creative people don’t make money,” “it’s too hard to start a business,” and lots more along those lines. But my spirit urged me to discover my own life and information. My heart compelled me to step beyond my mental ideas of life and discover the reality of my own possibilities and even destiny.

All these years later, I am floored, humbled, and awed by my experience. I tentatively dared to walk past limiting thoughts in my own life, and my desires evolved into a calling and a ride I could never have imagined. I wrote the book I longed to write, *This Time I Dance! Creating the Work You Love*, and got it published by my dream publisher, Tarcher/Penguin. I began teaching at world-class retreat centers. And through my writing, facilitating, and coaching, I have opened the door for tens of thousands of others to experience excitement and fulfill their mission on earth.

My heart led me to walk past every limitation and fear that had ever held me back. I found courage sliding down the rabbit hole through the portals of a meaningful life. I had no idea that meaning could change everything. I suppose it’s what seekers feel who sit with gurus in India or walk mesas with a shaman. I thought I was just giving myself permission to write in this lifetime. I didn’t realize I was changing the axis of my earth, the pivot of my moon, the way I breathed and how I spoke my name. My life will never be the same again, because I dared to pursue my passion. I want this for you. I want you to taste your real life, the life that awakens your powers. I want you—this very year—to step into a life that makes sense.

➔ Also read a [Turning Point Q&A with Sharon Salzberg](#).

did you know?

Kripalu's Healthy Living immersion programs make it possible for countless individuals to discover positive lifestyle changes that create physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

Support Kripalu initiatives like this:

➔ www.kripalu.org/makeagift

losing ground, gaining altitude, by amy weintraub



Both my parents are gone now. Their journey homeward was a steady loss of ground for them

both but, in the loss of ground, my father gained altitude of a different sort, an ultimate sense of gratitude for the smallest of pleasures. My mother did not.

➔ [Read more.](#)

kripalu at home: gentle yoga class



Join Kripalu Yoga teacher Megha (Nancy Buttenheim) as she leads you through an hour-

long gentle yoga class. This is a great class for beginners—and for everyone interested in exploring a gentle practice. Megha offers basic breathing exercises as well as a variety of foundational postures (standing, seated, and on the floor).

➔ [Join Megha for a gentle yoga experience.](#)

healthy living recipes

What do you really want this new year? Don't pick a packaged goal, a homogenized dream, or a safe desire. You may not have time for accommodation. Choose what you really want. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. You don't have to quit your job or marriage today, or pack your bags for Paris. Following your heart can start with your toes. Dip one in the water. Write on Wednesday nights. Take a weekend retreat. Leave the office early and walk your basset hound. I've had clients who stayed at their jobs and pursued their passions on the side. Following your heart isn't about taking unnecessary risks—it's about taking necessary ones. It's about inviting the real into your life and organically taking the steps that arise.

Choose to listen to your heart and obey it with your intelligence. Choose to experience a life on fire. If your goal is to make a difference, your experience will be different. You were born to be so much more than someone who writes down safe little goals on a list of paper. Let this be the year you return to yourself. Let this be the year you heed your heart. Let this be the year you hunt, chase, and dive into what you really love.

➔ **Tama J. Kieves**, a graduate of Harvard Law School, left law to write and help others realize their true calling. She is the best-selling author of *This Time I Dance! Creating the Work You Love*, and a sought-after speaker and career and success coach. ➔ www.tamakieves.com

Don't miss Tama J. Kieves at Kripalu ➔ [Unleash Your Calling: Creating the Work and Life You Love](#), January 6–8.

spreading the word...

Living in the Light

Best-selling author and Kripalu presenter Shakti Gawain has released a newly updated 25th-anniversary edition of her book, *Living in the Light: Follow Your Inner Guidance to Create a New Life and a New World*. Each chapter covers a different aspect of conscious living, with exercises on creativity, relationships, child-rearing, money, health, and more.

➔ [Watch a trailer for *Living in the Light*.](#)

Yoga Journal Conference: San Francisco

Yoga Journal Conference: San Francisco, January 12–16, brings together more than 45 master teachers for 100+ classes. Workshops are divided into four tracks: beginners, contemplative, therapeutic, and CET (continue your education). The five-day conference at the Hyatt Regency also includes a kirtan with Krishna Das.

➔ [Find out more.](#)

quote of the month

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

—Confucius

share this issue





Packed with fiber and plant protein, this month's recipe is ideal for cold nights when you want something

that satisfies—without empty calories. Serve it as a main course with crusty bread, or as a side dish with pasta. Kripalu's Executive Chef, Deb Morgan, and Lead Nutritionist, Annie B. Kay, have the details.

➔ **Healthy Living Recipe of the Month**
Beans, Greens, and Butternut

desktop wallpaper



Enjoy the beauty of the Berkshires every day with Kripalu's desktop wallpaper. Available with and without a calendar.

➔ **Easy to download.**

we love to hear from you

Kripalu Compass feedback

➔ editor@kripalu.org

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Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to teach the art and science of yoga to produce thriving and health in individuals and society.

➔ **Visit Kripalu's website.**

Corrections We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of our information; however, errors do occasionally occur.