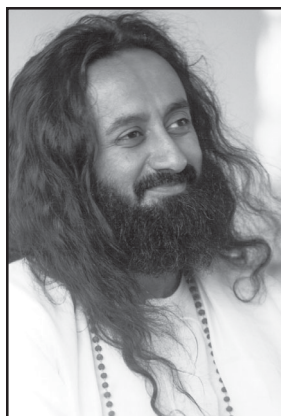


Conversations With Sri Sri



His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is the founder of the Art of Living Foundation, a multi-faceted organization that offers a wide array of educational and humanitarian programs that uplift individuals, make a difference in local communities, and foster global change. To learn more, please visit www.artofliving.org/atlanta or contact us at 877-AOLIVING or atlanta@us.artofliving.org.

The following is excerpted from a question and answer session held at the Art of Living Foundation's International Ashram

in Bad Antogast, Germany.

Guruji, how can we get the best out of ourselves? How can we help to make the world better?

You can get the best out of yourself when you are aware of your lethargy, your laziness, and you get over it; then it will automatically happen. The only enemy to talent is laziness, nothing else. Two things: patience and getting out of laziness.

In difficult situations, sometimes it's hard to know if I am running away, or retreating strategically. How to resolve this conflict?

When you see your strength is less, you cannot face the fight, that's when you want to run away. So when you see that, you have to bring more strength to yourself. You should take time. When you are clear about this, "OK, I should do more, I should meditate, I should strengthen myself, and at the right time I will strike, I will tackle the problem." That is one way.

Second one is prayer. Your worries dominate you if your emotions are dry. When you have pain, you have no worry. When you have worry, you are stuck in the head. There are no emotions. If you are in emotion, you laugh, cry, pray and you get over it. Worry is wanting to win and having no strength to win. When you realize, "I don't have any strength and I can't do anything about it" then you pray. Prayer is with emotions, feelings.

Guruji, what is the purpose of creation?

Well... I don't know the purpose of creation, but before asking the purpose of creation, you should ask: "What is the purpose of your life, human life?" You will have to find that out. You can find that out. Your purpose of life is to enjoy the creation. What is the purpose of creation? Is it to bring joy to you? I have no idea! The purpose of your life is to bring joy and happiness to the maximum number of people around you.

When there is a problem in life and you don't see a solution to this problem and time is running out, what should one do?

A problem can be in different dimensions. If it is financial, you have to take action. It is not good to simply sit and wait for money to come from somewhere or run to an astrologer. You have to take alternative precautions. Don't be too choosy about your job. Take whatever job is available and move on. This is very important. You should have positive thinking and attention and then move ahead. Similarly, where a relationship is concerned, you don't sit and wait, not doing anything. In Sanskrit there is a saying "One who puts effort, one who is industrial, and who is courageous, towards such a one, the wealth runs."

But when we are concerned with enlightenment, we cannot just do, do and do. Relax. Do nothing. Pray. Then knowledge comes.

How are we able to get rid of very old patterns?

You have to make an effort and change it. Serve, serve and serve. In serving you are giving, when you are in the trip of only getting, then you cannot get over your patterns. But if you say: "I don't want to be like that, I only want to give, I want to serve," when you make that big shift, everything changes.

I know you have a vision how in big corporations there can be spirituality. The corporate culture and spirituality conference is happening in only two weeks. I work for one such a big corporation and I struggle from the inside because when the times are tough, those values don't seem to matter.

Don't get frustrated. At least you be strong. Have hope. Things will change. Last night I was watching on CNN about a problem on how young girls and children are being sold in Nepal and India and all these places. Why don't we all do something? We already freed 600 girls from going to Bombay for prostitution - teaching them and making them economically strong. I think we can duplicate that in all these places. We can raise more funds in that direction and help so many women and save them from financial crises. We should all focus on doing something about that problem.

What went wrong that so many people lack self-esteem and what can we do to lessen this effect?

Yes!+ and 'Yes We Can' programs are good for that. You know, in companies the big difficulty is the middle people, someone in between the supervisors. They want to gain the favor of the top management, so they complain about people below them. Then people below them complain about the boss and everything becomes messier. Many companies broke down because of that, because of lack of skillful, honest communication. There is no honest and skillful communication. You have to tell your boss your honest opinion and he will appreciate you because of that. First, he may not like it, but later on he will appreciate you. If you tell him lies and one day he discovers that you misled him, then he will be unhappy with you also. So, a skillful presentation of facts, honest, even if it is bitter, and put in nice manners, is needed. These skills come when you become a yogi, skillful in action. Yoga means skill in action. When does this come? It comes when you unite with your Self in meditation.

**YES!+ is Art of Living Foundation's dynamic program for college students and young professionals. It is offered at universities throughout the United States and Canada*

. YES We Can is a youth initiative of the Art of Living Foundation in Europe, wherein youth make a commitment to serve their country for 6 months to a year. For more information about these programs, please visit: www.artofliving.org



WHAT'S COOKING?

BY P.S. LAKSHMI RAO

Variation: You can use celery soup instead of mushroom soup. Cauliflower, green beans, or French cut green beans can be substituted in place of broccoli.

Apple Crisp

6- Apples (golden delicious, gala apples, granny smith apples peeled and cut into two inch pieces (remove center parts). You can mix these one of a kind or 2 each of what ever you have on hand.

1-Cup sugar
Juice from one orange
1 Tablespoon finely chopped orange peel
1 Tablespoon lemon juice
1 Teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 Pinch of ground nutmeg (optional)
1/4 Teaspoon ground clove (optional)
1/4 Teaspoon ground ginger (optional)

2 Teaspoons all purpose flour
1/2 Teaspoon cornstarch (optional)
1 Tablespoon unsalted butter cut into pieces

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine all the above ingredients in a large bowl. Transfer them in to one 8x8 or 8x12 Pyrex dish greased.

Topping

1 Cup all purpose flour or Bisquick
1/2 Stick cold butter cut in to small pieces (4 tablespoons)
1/4 Teaspoon salt (don't use salt if you are using Bisquick)
1 Teaspoon sugar

1/4 Teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

Mix all the above ingredients and sprinkle this flour mixture on top of apples evenly. Bake for 45 minutes to 50 minutes or until the topping gets light brown. Keep checking after 30 minutes. Keep a sheet of aluminum foil or a cookie sheet under the apple crisp dish to catch if any juice drips down.

You can bake this apple crisp in small stainless steel bowls or in small Pyrex bowls for individual servings. Tastes good when eaten warm in winter and refreshing in summer when eaten cold. You can serve with ice cream or whipping cream.

Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving!

Broccoli Casserole

4 cups water
2 10-oz boxes of frozen broccoli crowns thawed or 2 pounds fresh broccoli broken in to small flowerets
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 medium size yellow onion chopped
2 teaspoons oil
1 can cream of mushroom soup (10 3/4 ounces)
1/2 cup milk
1/2 tsp ground white pepper or ground black pepper
1 cups shredded medium cheddar cheese



Topping

3/4 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup crushed crackers
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter

Bring water to boil in a large saucepan. Add salt and broccoli to the water. Cook for three minutes. Wash with ice cold water in a strainer to stop cooking further. Return the pan to the stove, in medium heat. Making sure there is no moisture left in the bottom of the pan, add oil and onions. Fry onions until light brown. Remove from the heat. Whisk cream of mushroom soup, milk, and pepper with onions.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Grease a two quart ovenproof dish with 1/2 teaspoon of butter. Spread 1/3rd of the mushroom soup in the bottom of the buttered dish. Arrange half the broccoli on top of the soup. Pour second 1/3 of the soup on top. Sprinkle 1/2cup cheese on top. Repeat with rest of the broccoli, finishing with soup and cheese on top.

Mix all three toping ingredients together until crumbly texture and sprinkle over broccoli casserole. Bake uncovered for 25 to 30 minutes or until toping gets light brown.

Can be eaten with rice, garlic bread, or any kind of dinner rolls.

