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Michelle ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to the finding refuge podcast. My name is Michelle Cassandra Johnson. I am an author yoga teacher, healer, social worker, dismantling racism, trainer activist, and grief worker. This podcast emerged from work-based and the exploration of collective grief and liberation. It exists to remind us about all the ways we can find refuge during unsettling and uncertain times. And to remind us about the resilience and joy that comes from allowing ourselves to find refuge

Michelle ([00:52](#)):

Today's interview is with Mirabelle Dcunha, Mirabelle supports committed yoga lovers to save her the luxury of inner experience and find purpose, pleasure, and joy in life through breath. She provides a loving space for them to unplug from urgency into deep trust and allowing her signature offerings are sudden club and online sanctuary. That brings grace, clarity and community to yoga teachers and practitioners as well as her radiant You private mentoring program for healing through breath. Mirabelle is in an intimate relationship with yoga as a breath breathing experience and has been on the path of living yoga for 19 years, studying with swamis and teachers from the Shivananda Saraswati lineage and at Mumbai university, Mirabelle has taught yoga at ashrams and studios in India, the USA, Canada, Bahamas Bermuda, and the Cayman islands, and as a guest teacher on yoga teacher training on pranayama, Bhakti, yoga, and deeper nuances of yoga as a living practice, she has also been a speaker and panelist for yoga Alliance.

Michelle ([02:01](#)):

I hope you enjoy this interview with Mirabelle Dcunha. welcome Mirabelle. I am glad you're here. Thank you so much.

Mirabelle

I'm so grateful and I am just feeling so much energy. I'm not finding the word that I'm grateful to be here.

Michelle

Yeah, me too. I'm grateful. You're here and to connect with you in this way. So first thank you for agreeing to be a guest Finding Refuge and for making time for our connection and conversation today. It's an honor. Thank you. And I would love for you to share some about who you are, the work you do in the world, your practice, whatever you would like for listeners to know about who you are.

Mirabelle ([03:04](#)):

I think I'm a lover of life, the excitement and the simplicity of connecting with breath and all of the potential for the entire human and spiritual experience. And that's the answer. I think I'm like a dance with breath and life and accepting all parts of my human and everybody's human and divine existence. However, that is how I feel about my soul in this moment, more than practically committed and yoga lovers, defined purpose and joy and intimacy, and just like a delicious savoring of this essential spiritual experience and breath and delegates, compassionate self inquiry to find freedom to sadhana and daily spiritual practice as a way not to just discipline, but instead of the DM and sees like the deliciousness in every moment, whether it's grief or this joy, that sense of having connection with the life as it constantly

bumbling, constantly growing constantly shifting, dancing, seeing experience, I think in a nutshell, yeah, that's neat.

Michelle ([04:23](#)):

I love how you describe what you do in the world and who you are and how you center the breath. And I'm curious to know if you've always centered the breath or talked about it in the way you just did. Is that inherent to who you are? It sounds like it is, or that in some way, did something teach you to connect with the breath and the way you're talking about and then to teach others?

Mirabelle ([04:46](#)):

Yeah, I know. I didn't always have this connection with breath, Michelle. I don't think I had any connection with it. I had a strong connection because I was always anxious, always a sensitive little child. I felt like they were anxious, buzzes in my buddy, kind of like, and it never stopped except when I was done. And so I checked my stuff from my room when I said that it wasn't necessarily because something was happening. It was just something that would kind of like this, this, that like when someone goes to this level where you can handle it and you kind of feel, I read like you can still, and you can be in the moment. And so I found dance as a grief process and release and imagination and escape and creativity and everything. But then when I was about 25, I had an, if I slipped this and that led to me being unable to move.

Mirabelle ([05:50](#)):

And the only thing I could do was write, which is another one of my sort of inherent expressions, but it wasn't quite the same. And that's when I had, I was born and raised in India. So yoga has been part of my cultural living sort of day-to-day heritage. And I trained quite intensively. I was at Bombay university for two years, studying yoga philosophy and on the way to college equity and going to the yoga Institute and attending class. And so it was fine like my upbringing, but I just never gave any importance or relevance to breath. I was just too kind of disembodied and like, I couldn't connect with it. It didn't get it. I got it in theory, but I didn't have any experience of it. And it was when I was doing, when I had the advice and the bisque. And then I discovered I had condemned scoliosis and use of vertebrae.

Mirabelle ([06:48](#)):

And there was a little hope of me sort of going back to where I was before after surgery. I really felt called to yoga. And I felt like I can't have surgery because I know from yoga practices and just kind of growing up in India, that all the channeling happens to the energy and the spine. And so as far as possible, we don't want to say more or instead of manipulate anything in the spine. And so I went off to the failures to the ship and I'm not sure and signed up for a teacher training course, but actually had signed up for it before I was in transition feeling like the, all the success I had was not, it wasn't filling my soul like it personally, but that part of that journey was done. And I showed up for this teacher training. And on the first day, everyone was in a headstand and I was like, why aren't you to teach a training?

Mirabelle ([07:45](#)):

There were just three of us that weren't in a headstand and it was three Indian people, the only three Indian people in the course, and it was depressing. And the guru came up to me and he assisted me into or supported headstand. I'd never done, had done in my life. And I looked at him like, are you crazy? For some reason, I, he looked at my eyes and I felt like I can trust this moment. And something, if you think

out of the ordinary happened, when I was putting that support is headstand breath, just suspended sentence. And I lost or awareness of time of pain of the physical body. And I was lost then truly lost. But away that I was lost, it was like, I had only one part I'm lost, like I'm everywhere or something like that. That was just one part.

Mirabelle ([08:43](#)):

And then the experience, and it must've been a few seconds, perhaps like an extended sort of dream or deep sleep or like something that was really prolonged and with a lot of debt. And when I came out, I felt this exhilaration because I felt like, wow, if this broken body can be in this state, whatever that state was, I have no clue at that time. Then imagine what possibilities I then, like I could fly like superman if I had to, I really felt like actually, honestly, do you like that? If push comes to shove and there is this sort of calling to say, I'll fly, like nothing is impossible. And that's when this connection would breath really sort of took over me. And most of my healing, it took about two years for the slip disc to heal. And I would say that 90% of my learning happened during the practice of planning and that's sort of what has me addicted or all these years, the breath, or rather to the force.

Mirabelle ([09:52](#)):

And I force even feels like a very masculine word. The way I experience breath is actually in as the divine feminine, not without the masculine, but you smoked predominantly in that gentle and nurturing nonjudgmental way. And yeah. And so how can you not go back to something that doesn't judge you and is always available for you? And there's no forgiveness needed because there's only compassion. So where is the question of forgiveness? I think that's what keeps me kind of hooked to bread. That's a really powerful story of how you came to the breath and also how you describe the sensation of being lost, but being aware you were lost and trying to figure out what is this right? The mindfulness. So are you really lost? That's what I was thinking because there's awareness there. And the trust, you also talked about connected with the guru and trusting that you would be okay, and that moment, and then connecting that with the breath and how you teach others to breathe in.

Michelle ([10:58](#)):

And I would love for you to share some about your teaching, your offering, how you set up space and hold it centered on pranayama or the breath.

Mirabelle

Pranayam is a state. And it's a practice. It's both my relationship with it as a mechanical practice is a practice you do because you do nadi shodhana or anuloma viloma because it cleanses the nineties and that brings you more peace cleansing, all of that. So it was the selling point that it was a short bio, a way to get results. I was very ambitious and they were interested in results. That was my initial relationship with the discipline. But over the years, when you speak about owning space, what I truly feel is that there is nothing to hold and drag when I'm with the student, it is just allowing the purity of that desire and my desire to be of assistance, to be, for lack of a word in English, can be offered into allowing like the action of offering, like anjali mudra and then just like putting something into a fire, like swaha, just that action, it allows like there is no other word it's just allowing what is already present that I don't have to hold space because there is no boundary to how much is, and now, or available to grace in any moment, the boundaries are only in my mind and in my ego, which of course comes out to think that, or this

student couldn't do without me, or I'm the best person to do this, or all these and like stories that come and go in the moments of experience.

Mirabelle ([13:16](#)):

And so my beautiful mantra is more like a sloka, it ends- that's the feeling that I feel like it's not mine. It's not my students. We offer to your grace, however it's meant to come. And that's the beauty of all the work I do. A lot of one-on-one work with people. I have a program called breathing into a radiant you, and it's like a nine session program. And we work only through pranayama and kriya. I have some kind of structure, but most of the time it's really sometimes what we hold intention for. It does not manifest because there's something that is more urgent or the divine to pour into us. And in that there is trust in that there is a discovery actually, Michelle, where do I place my trust? Because if I don't want to know what results are going to come, and if I'm going to receive the results that I desire, can I be with my desire and the purity of this human longing, karma? And can I also be with the trust that whatever I meant to see is inevitably going to come to me? So I don't know if that answers your question, but in a non-technical way, this is sort of how it unfolds most of the day. I mean,

Michelle ([14:52](#)):

I think people say that all the time. I don't know if I answered your question and I'm like, I think you gave the answer that was supposed to come through. That's an answer. So, and you're in the moment, right? You're speaking what needs to be spoken instead of intellectualizing the question. I can tell that process is going on. So thank you for bringing the answer for that. You did. Yeah. You mentioned earlier when you went to the training, you were one of three South Asian folks, I think in the training and do a fair amount of work around the intersection of justice and yoga in the U S because I haven't lived anywhere else and really practiced anywhere else. And a lot of people are, I think now centering on cultural appropriation in a way that feels different and new to me here, because it feels like more and more people are talking about it and more Desi or South Asian folks are talking about it. And so I'm just curious to hear your thoughts about this practice of yoga and how it is being practiced. I mean, you're teaching people from all over the world, so how it's being practiced. And maybe if there's something you understand about how those of us who are not directly connected to the lineage of the practice can move more closely to the essence of the practice.

Mirabelle ([16:15](#)):

The essence of the practice is ensconced, in the techniques, techniques are very precise and technique allows for freedom. The techniques have been honed and actually, you know, the induction as even they haven't been constructed. The techniques in yoga, tapping into existing laws of energy. They haven't been designed by humans. They have been noticed across different elements in nature and the manifestation physical. And how do I say it? Like you can feel energy like the sort of proprioception for, to use a very kind of, I don't think that completely conveys where I'm trying to see and sort of the essence to move is in the technique in commitment to the technique and in terms of cultural appropriation, I sort of sit in a very interesting place because I was born and raised in Mumbai. I was raised in a Catholic family. My ancestors were Hindu Brahmins before the Portuguese colonization.

Mirabelle ([17:31](#)):

My great-grandfather worked for the Portuguese government. My grandfather was a freedom fighter fighting for justice of the Adivasis or the original inhabitants. They're sort of, again, it's hard to translate

Adivasis, they were the ones that lived before. So like the native Americans will be like sort of the Adivasis. And so he was, he was doing that. And so there were lots of conversations in my home growing up about justice, and it could never be black await because of, I own family be like my grandfather. My great grandfather disowned my grandfather because he went against the Portuguese and his job and still a lot of that. And in terms of culture as well, in terms of cultural appropriation and like being from India, I got chill and I was a practicing yoga, such an amalgam in terms of the ritualistic practices. They're also extremely diverse across different, again, for lack of better word to use set of practicing within whether it's Hinduism, but it's not really, it's the law of the universe law of living in hiding, or what could I say this?

Mirabelle ([18:56](#)):

Or when the Muslims in India, like they're reading, they're doing, but just naturally they're doing child's, they're inhaling, exhaling, they're engaging with directions. And so there are so many flavors of practicing yoga because it is not a religious practice. It is compatible with all religions and even with religion, with any belief system. And especially if we come to it from a space of engaging with the breath, because the breath does not belong to us, we cannot own it. We cannot choose when it should come and when it should go. And so I find, and then in the West now there's this big conversation on cultural appropriation, which everything has its place. So I'm just watching the unfolding and understanding that there is a reason why this is coming up at this time. There are ancestral reasons that are present time reasons. There's a blooming of shame, the need for belonging and acceptance, which previous generations, both in India and Southeast Asians in the West did not have, because if you don't have economic security, it's a very high tide to be able to voice what matters to you because you are hugely dependent to on dominant culture.

Mirabelle ([20:20](#)):

And I find that we can sort of shed the attachment, the culture not the need to denigrate it or to make less of it. But to recognize that they cannot be a homogenous way to practice, it was never part of yoga to have a homogenous cultural practice. Or when we talk about yoga, it's another one of my passions. And I did the summit. There's like 13th century women, Dalits and Adivasi women writing the same minority. I want to be slut to you. But at the same time, we have the practices where they're saying cover yourself and be modest. And there is as much devotion in the woman that says I don't care if the world calls me slut, I want to be one with you, which is the practice as seeing the Divine as your lover, which is a form of Bhakti. Then another practice, which is I want to lose attachment To this body and be wearing all these clothes, be disrobed of that attachment to body and be one with you. And so I just find it interesting, because as an Indian, I don't take offense to, I definitely people putting their legs on books or waiting like the deities is different like leggings and things like that. I find it uncomfortable. And this is, again, I notice this is like conditioning, just like in India. Like the first time I came to the West actually, we used to watch Miss America or Miss USA. This is the way we saw the world. And the Americans would be wearing bikinis and with the flag. And in India like, the flag is so sacred, like you, you don't want to touch the flag. Like it's so sacred. Like you never wear it on Yeah. Much less than a bikini. And it was like just, it was so hard to watch it. But as I feel the discomfort, I also notice that it is part of my conditioning and it's a fight of how I'm limiting experience as a practice, just like I did with beer yoga And go to yoga. And it's not my preferred way to practice. And I have had a really hard journey with coming to where I am now, which is who I am to decide how the divine chooses to manifest in somebody's life. If the divine has no boundaries and no judgment and is ever compassionate and all ways to grief and anger and loss and human beings inviting me deeper into healing and compassion. Thank you. Divine, can you let me lose

these boundaries? Because what does it matter if I say Namaste or not because in my country, people say different things at different times. I think being from India, I know this, having traveled across the country, I know this. But it would be hard for someone that's just Indian origin or South Asian origin born in another part, as it is for my daughter to understand these months are the culture. But I know that if the technique is practiced Michelle, if the technique is practiced the way it is recommended, and like you we have guidance, then the results everyone will come to a space of maybe for lack of a better word cultural appreciation and celebration, it becomes natural to us. This is not a me. I recognized that I used to be the most judgemental person can be on debates, love, to argue and validate my point of view. And I haven't done anything except do my side, not everyday to have the shift. And I know there's still a lot more shifting.

Michelle ([24:26](#)):

I appreciate everything you named and just listening to you, receiving what you named. And I think one thing I really appreciate out of the many is what you named about the techniques and the practice, because it left me thinking, what are we practicing? Why are we practicing? And your, what you named about how the divine manifest and what the actual intention is here for us as humanity and for the planet, like where are we going and trusting inherent in what you said is trusting the divine, but it took work for you to get there. And part of the work was the practice, commitment, to practice. And I also want to say, as people have different opinions about this, and you very clearly named this is how I relate to this. And you also named in your own experience and reflection and probably through self study and practice, who am I to judge someone else? And if I'm actually practicing, then I won't necessarily be in a place of judgment. And I just wanted to say that because I heard it, I understand some about the cultural context and why people who have experienced erasure would be saying, stop harming us. Because you are also named, these are the ways in which I've been harmed. It makes me deeply uncomfortable. I imagine it's painful at times, right? So you're not negating that. You're just saying, I'm putting my energy here and other folks may put their energy somewhere else. And the overall goal is like union. Like we're going to end up hopefully in this place of union and integration and wholeness and a lack of a ratio and our fullness. And these are my words. You didn't name that. It's just what, how I'm relating to it.

Mirabelle ([26:04](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And it just, I've had little journey with some of the things that South Asian people that weren't born and raised in and you see, they just seem completely like, what are you saying? But I recognize they're pain. Like I've experienced discrimination among different communities in India and different shades of skin color in India because it exists. And my daughter is being raised here in the West where there is also, maybe it's not as much or maybe I don't see it as much. I don't know. Maybe I'm thinking, am I not aware of it enough? Or like, why do I not feel well, I do feel discriminated against, but I also feel like it's not that important because my trust or my, I inhaled by something that I go back to every morning in my sadhana, that is like a bosom or something that is so accepting of everything.

Mirabelle ([27:00](#)):

That's how I find refuge. Right? Like this is your and there are so many things that people, I think it's also like the ignorance that all of us possess about different things that causes people to do things like chai. It doesn't have anything to do with yoga per se, but it's just like an Indian thing. And then like chai tea and chai means tea. So if you're saying chai, you're saying tea, but the person didn't know and why don't you come over? And I'd love to make you a cup of tea and this is the way I make it. But you know, somebody



else will make it completely different and on different days. I will make it differently. And just things like Christmas are around the corner. And many times the best people say to me, so do you celebrate Christmas? Because they assume that because I'm from India, I must be Hindu.

Mirabelle ([27:47](#)):

And it used to make me very irritated, but now I recognize that they just don't know enough about India. And then I share with them like Portuguese roots before that. And like all of this, in spite of all of my religions like all of the religions and the festivals of India, I find of my inheritance. And I find that when I share from that, they warm up so much. Like they don't feel like I'm attacking them because how can you not know, like we have more than eight religions. Like really don't know anything about India. Like, you should know what you should find out about one of the countries that has the largest population of the world. Like you should really know. It's just that, that, and everybody is healing and we are all asking for healing whether it's anger or to whatever we're doing. And it's beautiful. Yeah.

Michelle ([28:38](#)):

I love what you just named about what we're asking for is healing. And we express that differently. And I also want to say, just for folks listening that as a black person in the us practicing yoga, profiting from teaching yoga, I do feel a responsibility to learn about cultural preparations, to do something, to respond to the harm that has happened because of a ratio and the ways in which I'm participating in that. Not because I want to, but because of the cultural context, so our positionality is different related to that because of our identity. So I wanted to just name that for folks like what you're naming does it feel like, and what I named doesn't feel like a pass. I actually need to do work as I hold and received everything you named. And I just want folks to think about that for themselves based on where they're from their identities, their relationship with yoga, what they know about it, because I certainly know I have a lot more to learn and I will learn.

Michelle ([29:34](#)):

I always say, I will learn like learn, 1/100th of what I need to know about yoga in this lifetime. And maybe not even that 1/1000th of what I need to know. So thank you for naming that. And you mentioned refuge and where you go and feeling hell, which resonated deeply with me. And I have a question about what I'm witnessing right now, just in spaces I'm moving through. And co-creating is a lot of fatigue, a lot of grief, a lot of overwhelm confusion, despair, resilience, creating joy. And I'm wondering this moment, and the moment we're in is for folks who are listening to know is we're in the middle of COVID. We've been here for almost a year, if not a year, because I think it was around in December. It wasn't necessarily here and politically in the U S we're in a space where the administration is about to shift. And that's been a huge, it's a huge transition and it's been painful. And we're in a cultural moment where people are really trying to dismantle systems and structures that have been in place for a long time. And there may be 15 other things going on for you, where you are. And I'm just wondering how you're making meaning of this moment. How do you understand this based on what you understand about who you are and, and the practice and everything you've named?

Mirabelle ([30:55](#)):

I fully feel like this is there's a word in Sanskrit I'm going to say it and then I'll try to translate it. It is Jangran. There a "gra" to it. It is like Jangran. It is a sound and also has like an energy of action. Like it is like an awakening, but not in the sense it is like a shocking awakening. And I think it's a dime of no

compromising on what want to do and how I can be the change that I want to see in the world. And to me feeling this in the context of the divine feminine, because I feel her very strongly, you have to say started my journey and my ishta deva to Shiva but, you know, I've had these experiences, divine mother just come on over, always see like I'm abducted.

Mirabelle ([32:03](#)):

And when we see the divine feminine in the context of the archetypes in yoga, there is Kali. And this is Kali Yuga actually speaking, we're only five years into it, I can't remember the numbers right now. And, Kali Yuga, she's naked and she's born and she's unapologetic, actually totally loving. And she sticks her tongue out. And I guess the equivalent would be like, sticking your middle finger. Not like to be like in a way of retaliation or anything, but in a way of, in this moment, I am who I am. And I have nothing to say for it, nothing to take back from what was said, nothing to be apologetic about just to be here in my power, which is not mine alone, it's collective. And that's why I can stand in such steadiness because this power is not dependent on me or anything that can diminish or augment all of us. I've been awakened, smacked into awakening, all of us have been smacked into awakening in different ways. And the sadhana gives me this insight to see over and over again, what is the opportunity here? How must I respond to this in a way that brings me and everybody else ease and compassion, even ease in accessing my angle and my disappointment, because these are present. And to me, that is where the peace exists in the chaos and the thought of something. And just going to share a little story from a couple of years ago. So growing up in India in Bombay, we've had some serious hardcore terrorist attacks and I've lived two, two of them. I almost died in one, and I don't want to even know how to explain the intensity of being in a city with so many million people during a terrorist attack and trying to literally find refuge.

Mirabelle ([34:38](#)):

And I missed the train for the last few minutes. Luckily I still have that plane ticket from 711. And it was only because I was eating a sandwich and I was in a taxi cab on the way to the train station. And I was so hungry. And in a moment of buzz, I said to the taxi driver, can you take me home? Which is quite fine. We lived in several and that will be very expensive because I want to take the sandwich. And so we changed. And if I hadn't said that I would not be nine right now, and I went to a student's house. And after the blast that sort of kind of.. There were several blasts that had kind of subsided or stopped. We went out to see where we can help because we knew there's only that much the government can do, and it was blood and pain and just like the whole body you want to wretch, but you have to stay together and be of assistance. But it was so much. Years later, we were in Barcelona. I didn't want to go. And we landed the morning after the attack and I didn't want to go, we went to Savia going to Barcelona. And my husband said to me, it's unlikely that after this they're going to have another attack. So I think it be really safe. And I said, I don't know how I feel. I feel because we have a little child, like a concern about myself and we got to our hotel and we were walking on the pavement and needed those attacks. Every truck or car I was looking at and thinking, are they terrorists in that truck? And my little one caught on to the energy. We mentioned how that something that had happened, but we didn't get my details cause we didn't want to traumatize. So thankfully she's too young to understand Spanish and to understand when everyone was talking about. And I was so fearful that night, Michelle, I was so fearful and we went back to the hotel and I couldn't sleep. I was tossing and turning. And I thought we are here, there must be a reason. I've been to two terrorists before. This is nothing like Mumbai, like super peaceful compared to Mumbai. And the systems are in place and everything. How can this be an opportunity to transmute to the fear, which is a practice of 50 books I sat, can meditate and I was doing. And when I say meditate, I



mean pranayama because it's a precursor to meditation in the Ashtanga. To meditate in that state of being definitely pranayama is the practice that I wanted to balance.

Mirabelle ([37:52](#)):

And I had this insight during my practice. And so I won't tell you what the insight is, but I tell you what happened the next day. And so we woke up the next morning and always Katie colored papers and stuff so that the little one can always sort of be engaged. And so we cut up these construction papers into little notes and I didn't write anything in it. I messaged a friend in Catalan because that's the kind of Spanish they speak in Barcelona. And he translated it for me. I wrote it down on these papers and my daughter do little squiggles and hearts or whatever she wanted to do. And we put this into my jeans pocket and we walked to whatever tours whenever we needed to do anything, everywhere there was security people. These notes said, thank you for keeping us safe.

Mirabelle ([38:43](#)):

And my daughter was afraid of the policemen. And because they were big and armed. Being in the Cayman Islands my daughter, she wasn't used to it. We are not used to policemen at all. I remember this one moment. She was very excited because every time we gave it, she would give it to the police. People like security people and they just be like doing their job. And then they kind of engaged her because she was a little kid. So they weren't as suspicious, but they were going to like, what's this like what is going on? Not really present for it. And then they read this note and that faces the change. And so she got so excited, Michelle, that she was instead on the children's dragon hunting tour, she was most excited about when we going to see the next police. And there was this one big burly guy. I'll never forget this huge big kind of really burly guy. And she goes up to him and gives him this. And he reads the note and he gets down on his knees. And they hug this tiny little being and this big policeman, like I will never forget it for lifetimes. I'm sure to explain something like that. And the reason I'm going to share that is because I could not take refuge in the mind. I could not take refuge in logic. I could not take refuge in I'm going to balance my nervous system now. And I'm going to activate my parasympathetic by breathing slow and deep and like all of that cognitive sort of stuff. But because I have had that background of pranayama practice, I could go back to it as a source of comfort. Like we might come to mashed potatoes or kitchari or whatever it is culturally for us seeking nothing, just going back to, I just need to be in this space.

Mirabelle ([40:27](#)):

And then this came and this transformed this whole experience of fear and terror into one way, I'd like to think in some small way, we were able to be of service to the ones that are left there, incidentally, on the train from Savia to Barcelona we were sitting next to the policeman and he was traveling with his family. And it's funny. And then after all this happened, we met him again and we just, it was just such a beautiful experience. And so I just want to say to whoever's listening that, having a daily sadhana, whatever that looks like for you personally for you, out of my experience, I would say a practice that is rooted in technique because the technique is facilitating results. There is a technique because it saves time. It saves its economy of effort and luxury of inner experience. And to me, that's yoga. It's an economy of effort and initially it feels very effortful.

Mirabelle ([41:28](#)):

It's a very effort and luxury of inner experience that is not dependent on anything outside. It will bring you into a space of refuge where you are in refuge as shadhona, as trust. Now I take refuge because I am afraid. I am afraid, but because almost always, I take refuge out of trust. That same trust, Michelle, that is built into our technology. The fact that we cannot sustain an in-breath for too long, we cannot sustain holding the breath for too long. We cannot sustain the out-breath for too long. We must let go of the out-breath. So there's that gap where there is no in-breath, that is the uncertainty, right? But in the trust we are design to trust that the next breath will arrive, whether we are conscious of it or not. Refuge is trust is built in entire system, whether it's the human system of breathing or the tree shedding, the leads and the trust that they will be spring because it is inherent in the genealogy, the technology, the DNA whatever you want to call it in the laws of the universe, we can all do it. We are designed for it.

Michelle ([42:54](#)):

Thank you for sharing everything you just shared in your story and your practice. And there, the words you shared. And then there's what's between the words. That's what I am always listening for and to, and thank you for the teaching. You just offered. That's what I want to say connected to this moment and beyond, because you are talking about the beyond, beyond, like you're talking about something bigger than this moment and what our responsibility is like, what do we want to do in this moment? I heard we have what we need to respond and we have what we need to experience refuge that we don't always have to seek it out. It's already, it's here. It's present. It's in our genes, our DNA, our energy, our essence it's here. I think I just have one more question for you, even though I feel like I could ask you a lot more questions, many more questions. And that is, I know that you offer a lot. You mentioned that you teach people one-on-one, but you also offer work with group practices with groups of people. And I'm wondering if there's anything coming up that you want people to know about that you're offering or anything just that people can look forward to that you're birthing at this time.

Mirabelle ([44:08](#)):

One of the things that I offer that I really enjoy, I think I enjoy everything, but the things that I fought I for awhile, but then sort of just was like, Oh, okay. Which is, it is Sadhana Club, it's an online, like spiritual sanctuary for yoga lovers. I always say you will yoga lovers because in India, yogis we can't, because we were having this downward cultural appropriation conversation where there is a certain you. It's like calling everybody Jesus. So I like to say yoga lovers because I think it brings the human and the desire, which is at the root of our practice and our humanity into do not being holier than thou at like sort of caging us in this sort of romanticized ideal of spiritual there is love and light and sugarcoating. So, yeah, so it seems like it's for yoga lovers and it's an ongoing exploration. There's no beginning or end of the course, like I have a wait list, but you know, when spaces open up, then you can join at any time. And we explore really yoga in the way that I was taught it as a very practical practice as really I'm all about practicality. Even though there is like, obviously a lot of connection with the energetics and grace, but like, you know, some of the things we explore like that do not get explored in teacher trainings, I would be looking at economics. I found that most people in the yoga space went off and they were offering scholarships and sliding scale. And we're not talking about what is your relationship with money as someone who's practicing yoga because there is this, Oh, I have to be so giving that money is a bad thing.

Mirabelle ([46:03](#)):

And we have so much whether we practice yoga or not, we all have so much of it around it. So there's a lot of in svadhyaya. There's a lot of beauty in the text and in the practices on and understanding what the deities stand for and what the mantras really do, what they designed to do. And how do you spend so that we can access the technology that is hidden behind this sort of the facade, the image or the words, and one of those, yes, we can stress on the pronunciation It's important, but there's is more so we've been exploring that and it's been such a healing journey and we're exploring now karma or desire. And when most yoga teacher trainings, it's like usually, Oh, let's look at spiritual desires, but you know, when read human desires, we're looking at sexuality, we're looking at like all these nuances of how we communicate about touch with ourselves, with the people in our life whether they're our pets or partners and we're having a role on this conversations and Sunday, like self inquiry.

Mirabelle ([47:06](#)):

Another thing that I love about Sadhana Club, we have guest teachers. So I truly believe that like, what I know is limited and what I know will come out of my personal experience of truth, it's beautiful, but it's still just mine. So I have guest teachers come and you're going to be on soon. So to come and share about how they experience various practices of yoga and how they can share tools that might invite others into the practice. And I had a Bhakti Yoga Summit that finished. And now I'm working on a pranayama summit. And that should be out the first half of 2021. It should begin in or come by the first half of 2021 COVID has shown that it is like, to me, COVID is about the breath. You either get scared to breath because you're scared of breathing because you don't know what you're going to get, or you develop a different relationship with the breath, with the nasal passages and all those labyrinths inside. And you see how breath can fortify us in not just in terms of immunity and immunity is connected to their kindness, which is a heart chakra and, and just so much deliciousness there. So the divine mother is really kind of like pushing me to the pranayama summit. I don't know how it's going to happen, but yeah, that's definitely something to look forward to. And then I teach pranayama and Bhatki and things like that on teacher training. So that's something you host and I'm looking to have this kind of energy that is available with service to you.

Michelle ([48:45](#)):

Yes, me or value of a lot, but it's moving through, um, of course, in, through you and that you're birthing. And I hope that folks, people listening, connect with you and in the show notes, I'll include how folks can connect with you and stay up to date with your offerings. And I just want to thank you for again, all of the teachings, like every answer had about eight teachings in it. So all of those things and who you are, or the energy of who you are, the essence of who you are, this incarnation of who you are. And at this time I'm happy you're here on the planet at this time. And that we have gotten to connect and are beginning to connect, right, and develop a relationship. And so thank you for who you are and for what you do and what you offer and what you practice and what you teach. And thanks for being a guest on Finding Refuge.

Mirabelle ([49:41](#)):

Thank you for allowing for whatever needed to come and being flowing and spontaneous with your questions. It's beautiful. And of course all that, everything else you do, including your amazing book that I totally love.

Michelle ([49:54](#)):

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Yeah. I like talking in this way instead of planning out all the questions because it allows things to move through. So thanks for flowing with it.

Mirabelle ([50:04](#)):

You're welcome.

Michelle ([50:07](#)):

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