

Leaps & Bounds

2019 Year-Long Programme
By Sadguru Nirmalananda Saraswati
excerpt



Growth spurts

It was always a delight to see how much my children had grown over the summer. They lived in swimsuits and play clothes all summer long, then tried on the school clothes that had fit them just 10 weeks before. High water pants, too short shirts and tight waistbands — how did that happen?



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I hadn't seen them growing like weeds, but they were. It wasn't merely physical growth, for they stood in their own shoes more confidently. They'd grown into themselves a bit more.

Just like the veggies in the garden, they sprouted up and out. Growth spurts. It's a life-long pattern, not only for the earth but for every human being.

In between growth spurts, it's day-by-day, month-by-month, even year-by-year. The daily-ness of life is, well, daily. Everything you do is mostly the same or you try to keep it that way as much as possible.

Then something happens. It could be something wonderful like a promotion, a wedding, a new baby or addition to your home. It could be something scary or sad: a loss of something or of someone dear to you, or maybe a threat of something life-changing. Events often trigger growth. Growing into yourself is a life-long process of mental and emotional growth as well as spiritual discovery. It happens in spurts.

Theoretically, you should be growing and learning a little every day. Especially seniors are urged to keep learning. Developing technological skills helps their mind stay young; it's a proven strategy for longevity. Other strategies for all ages include learning a new word every day, taking up a musical instrument, working through the levels in video games — so many ways to sharpen your mind as well as your life skills. You could take up square dancing or do yoga to improve your physical condition and get a big boost in your mental capacities. Though these day-by-day strategies are important, most people dedicate their life's effort to avoiding challenges.

You probably like living in your comfort zone. The reality is that your comfort zone gets smaller and smaller when you try to stay inside of it. I saw it happen with an elder in my family. She ate only her favorite foods for the last year of her life: lunch meats and ice cream. She complained frequently about having digestion and elimination problems but wouldn't consider changing her diet.

Too many people are waiting for life to force them to talk about the hard stuff, to grow, to give more of themselves and to find the inner resources that get them through challenges. If you were challenging yourself (called "tapas" in Sanskrit), you'd be growing day-by-day and could meet life's difficulties with an open heart, a clear mind and the inner reserves that power you through.



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Most growth spurts happen because you've been holding yourself back. Worse, you may be lazy. After a busy day, you come home and simply want to chill. It's time to do nothing, to put your brain on ice until tomorrow. You have favorite ways of shutting down and numbing out. Pursuing your pleasures, fulfilling your desires, avoiding your blind spots — it's a well-recognized, widely-supported lifestyle. It's called "the good life." "Good" means pleasurable but you won't get enlightened.

Shaktipat is a Jump-Start

When you choose to come to a Shaktipat Retreat, you're choosing to grow. The "shakti" (energy) that is "pat" (injected) in you is like a jump start, getting your own source of spiritual energy going — Kundalini. Whether it's your first or your hundredth Shaktipat Retreat, the energy boost propels you to a new level within. This is a spiritual growth spurt.

This spiritual boost affects all the levels of your existence. Profound physical changes occur as Kundalini moves through your spine. Insights about your life change the way you understand your relationships as well as your life's purpose. Your decisions and follow-through are empowered in a new way, fueling your growth both mentally and emotionally.

This means that spiritual growth leads to physical healing, emotional maturity and an increase in your intelligence. Wow! What a growth spurt! Best of all, it's happening from the inside out.

Most people try to do it the other way around. Even many yogis are still trapped in trying to fix their life or heal their emotions so they can get enlightened. With Shaktipat, first you dive deep within, then you bring it into your life. The change comes from the inside out. It means you don't have to have a perfect life in order to get enlightened. This is the good news.

Think of it like a messy living room. When you arrive home, you don't have to clean the living room in order to go to bed. You can walk straight on through and get the rest you need. I suspect you already know how to do this.

It works the same way with meditation. Even if something has been frustrating or disturbing you, you can meditate. You simply dive deeper within, a depth that is available due to Grace. Though your living room still needs cleaning after a night of sleep, after meditation, your life is amazingly better, even if nothing external has changed.

Don't confuse these extraordinary benefits with the goal. The improvement in your life is a great benefit, but it is not the goal of meditation. The goal is...



Nirmalananda giving Shaktipat

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