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REFLECT & EMBRACE PEACE

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SUCCESS IN MEDITATION
AJAHN LEE

SAMADHI WATERCOLOURS

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DEMENTIA

TEACHERS & THEIR TEACHERS

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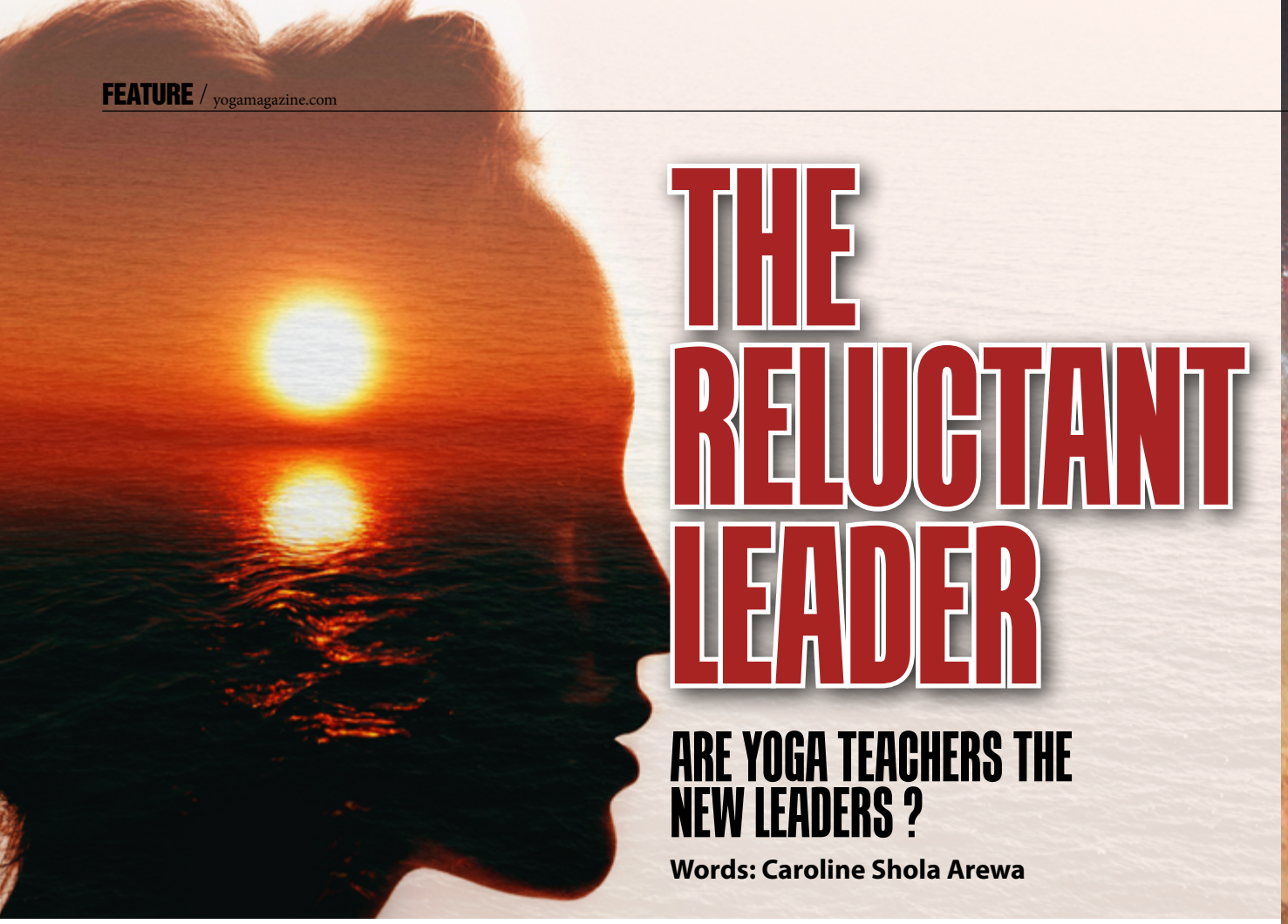

THE RELUCTANT LEADER

ARE YOGA TEACHERS THE NEW LEADERS ?

Words: Caroline Shola Arewa

I first became a Yoga Teacher in 1985, It is one of the best decisions I have ever made. In a world of constant chaos and change, yoga provided me a still place to rest. It has given me a timeless philosophy for life, and as my teacher always said the numerous benefits of yoga, such as improved health and wellbeing are simply side effects. Yoga offers such richness in a world where spiritual and moral poverty abounds. Can new and conscious leaders be created on the yoga mat?

Leadership Challenges

We live in a dynamic, fast changing world. Shifts accelerated post COVID, which brought complex and ofttimes painful challenges. Challenges that highlighted the need for balance, wellness and different ways of working. Staying at home made people appreciate what had been missing, in terms of wellbeing, greater ease, and improved relationships with family.

Other challenges we are witnessing, are changes in our climate and environment. Many of us have been concerned about this for decades. There are also political tensions and fears for the future. Our political leaders are not always worthy of our trust. Amidst all this change, new and more conscious leaders are emerging.

Technological Take Over

Consider the rapid pace of technological innovation, what was taught in the first year of university could to be obsolete by the third year. Regardless of how much we try to hold onto what we know; our societies and industries are changing fast. New careers such as, social media manager, influencer, digital nomad, yoga teacher and retreat facilitators are being created every moment, as old careers in media, banking, retail and administration are falling by the wayside. It's a technological take over. Robots serve us at restaurants. And robots ask us to proof 'we' are human in order to make transactions online. Reaching the voice of a human for support will soon be a thing of the past. Hence, we are becoming increasingly disconnected. We need leaders who provide, connection, empathy and help us to reduce anxiety, uncertainty and stress. Leaders who can help us adapt and develop resilience.

Unity in Diversity

The world is shrinking and we are becoming more diverse. Different cultures and traditions, including once secret societies are now more openly shared. Yoga is part of this shift, once practiced only by priests and initiates in the mountains of India and ancient Temples of Egypt. Today we see Yoga studios in main cities, worldwide.

Yoga is practised in workplaces and, prescribed by physicians. Mindfulness is in our schools as teachers become aware of its many benefits.

A melting pot of people and cultures, requires leaders who embrace unity, inclusivity and diversity. This supports the creation of spaces where people from all walks of life, feel valued and empowered to be their unique selves. Spaces where people expand into their potential, in body, mind and spirit. Spaces where people come together to find rest and rejuvenation. As this transformation continues to unfold, the need for new and conscious leaders becomes more apparent. We need leaders who possess an integral and holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of our world. Leaders who are cultivating within themselves qualities such as compassion, empathy, resilience and visionary thinking. In order to navigate the challenges of our time we must look in unlikely places, to find, and also to become new paradigm leaders. The first place we must look is within.

New Paradigm Leaders

Leadership manifests in various forms for differing purposes and goes beyond what we think of and expect from the traditional leader. I define leadership in this way: *"Leadership is becoming the best version of yourself so you can help others be the best version of themselves."* Great leaders inspire others to reach their highest potential, not through authority and control but through inner wisdom and mindfulness. It is time for a new kind of leader. Hierarchical and patriarchal styles of leadership no longer serve our needs. Instead, we need leaders who embrace the Divine Feminine and lead with higher levels of consciousness.

Yoga helps us cultivate awareness and elevated consciousness. Through yoga we come to appreciate the universal oneness that connects us all. We have a greater sense of the things in life that are truly important, like wellness and relationships.

I am not talking about yoga as exercise or asana, as the movements are called. I am talking about yoga in its broader, spiritual and philosophical context. Yoga as a way of life, a journey of self-discovery and inner peace. Not just physical flexibility, but an open, flexible mind and spirit. It is the principles yoga offers, such as: *Ahimsa*, which is non-violence, *Satya*, which is truthfulness, also known as *Maat* in Ancient Egypt, the principle of balance, harmony and order; and also *Jnana*, which is the cultivation of knowledge and wisdom. Although these principles are ancient, they also belong to a new paradigm of thinking. And it is those who embrace this new paradigm; such as yoga teachers, practitioners of yoga, and conscious thought leaders, who are creating change in this moment.

The Reluctant Leader

Leadership invokes images of power, masculine energy, strong, assertive individuals commanding attention and offering direction. Yet, there are subtle and profound forms of leadership. I once heard an African Chief being asked to command his people. He responded by saying, *"I cannot, if I tell my people what to do, I will not be the chief."* This wisdom had a powerful impact on me. I realised you can lead from the front or lead from behind, much like the chief; and my own personal preference which I use in my Mentoring. The reluctant leader differs from the conventional archetype of a leader, and instead of leading by force, we lead with purpose, guided by a divine calling, rather than a thirst for power and control.

Reluctant leaders, may not consider ourselves as leaders, yet we hold powerful roles that influence others. We are positioned to contribute to elevating consciousness and making a difference in our world. I think yoga teachers can be conscious leaders, in fact I think we can all embrace the path of conscious leadership.

7 main Qualities of a Conscious Leader

Yoga when not confined to a studio, can permeate all aspects of our lives supporting us to evolve into better versions of ourselves and help others to do the same. Conscious leaders seek to embody qualities that are heart centred

and can empower and elevate others.

Here are seven main qualities conscious leaders seek to embody and share with others. If these qualities resonate with you, maybe you are a reluctant leader, and it is time for you to step up and become more conscious of your Divine Purpose and role as a leader.

Authenticity: A conscious leader, walks an authentic path. It's not always easy, but honouring your unique values and inner truth is important to you. Others admire your commitment to personal development and self-discovery and you always seek to transcend the ordinary in search of the extra-ordinary.

Compassion: Cultivating understanding and compassion for others is fundamental to the conscious leader. Creating heart centred inclusive spaces where individuals of all backgrounds and walks of life feel welcome, safe and valued is your aim. Compassion is a quality you are always seeking to nurture within yourself and others.

Mindfulness: This quality is central to yoga. It is enhanced through practice. Mindfulness arises from generating greater awareness of both one's own self and others. It is the art of being present and experiencing each moment fully. Conscious leaders encourage this quality, and develop intentionality in their actions and decisions.

Quiet Leadership: Rather than seeking praise and recognition, conscious leaders are leading a quiet revolution. They prioritise, health over wealth, balance over stress. They learn to speak less, listen more. Integral well-being is a real consideration. Conscious leaders are not selfish, they advocate for everyone's physical, mental and spiritual health.

Empowerment: Empowerment is a key quality of the conscious leader, who loves to empower others, supporting them to unleash their self-belief and fullest potential. Empowering colleagues, family and friends to explore their inner strength and possibilities. They are not intimidated by other people's success; they thrive on it.

Thought Leaders: Conscious leaders often possess a visionary outlook. Visualising an improved world and better future for everyone in it. They can be charismatic and inspire others to join them in creating a better world, one person at a time. Thought leaders manifest innovative approaches that enhance the way we live and work.

Resilience: Finally, a conscious leader must embody resilience and navigate challenges with kindness and tenacity. We call this *Fierce Grace* in yoga. In the face of adversity, conscious leaders demonstrate adaptability, balance and resilience. Yoga builds patience and acceptance; skills that are needed in a world where change is inevitable.

Becoming a Conscious Leader

Are Yoga Teachers and Practitioners of Yoga the New Leaders? Do we embody the New Paradigm? Remember leadership is not confined to corporate boardrooms or political houses. Each of us possesses the potential to become conscious and lead in our own unique ways. We can be guided by yoga and the timeless qualities it supports us to cultivate. Whether on the mat or in our daily lives, we can embrace authenticity, compassion, mindfulness and empowerment, building a quiet revolution and visioning a better world for us all to live in.

We can contribute to changing the way people think about leadership. We can generate and embody the qualities of a conscious leader paving the way for others to follow. As we cultivate these qualities within ourselves, we create a world, one person at a time, where leaders embrace integrity, empathy, and inner peace. We rise and become the New Leaders.

Caroline Shola Arewa
Known as the Energy Doctor helps you get your Energy back and your Life on track! A leading figure in the worlds of Spirituality and Wellness. Shola has delivered her award-winning Energy-based work internationally for over 3 decades. A psychologist, speaker and author of five books, including bestsellers *Opening to Spirit and Energy 4 Life.*

Shola Mentors and Coaches Yoga Teachers and Wellness Professionals to Energise and up-level your business. Shola's newest programme is Shekem Maat Healing System, based on Kemetic/ Egyptian Healing Arts.

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Radiance is the Light of Enlightenment

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