

## You & Your Body:

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### Just **Listen** & be **Friends**, Yeah!

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Suresh Sivaraman



Piyush Sharma



"Your body is precious. It is our vehicle for awakening. Treat it with care."

*Budhha*

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## **Listen to the Body & Develop a Friendship with it!**

Many people use the term "listen to the body". How many of us understand it fully? Not that it is something radically new. At one level, it is about taking responsibility for one's wellness and thereby, wellbeing. Getting it just right is also good. Some of us can overdo it too!

And, how about taking it a few steps further, and actually treating your body like a close buddy? How does one do that? What are the benefits of such companionship? Let's explore!

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Nature has given this ability to many inhabitants on our planet. For instance, haven't you noticed how diligently cats stretch out their bodies after catnaps?

They're making sure:

- Their muscles are ready to move again
- There's better blood circulation, and some vital detox too!
- The joints get lubricated well
- They are more alert

This wisdom is in-built, and cats pass on this understanding from generation to generation.

In the same way, we human beings have also been given the ability to sense discomfort in the body and take actions to alleviate the same. Our human body has this amazing and sophisticated signaling system that alerts us about hunger, thirst, pain, and so much more.

Most of this signaling and listening is luckily happening automatically. For instance, as soon as your glycogen and blood sugar levels start dropping, a robust signaling process is set in motion activating your appetite. Imagine if we had to do all that consciously! The body trusts you to take necessary action thereafter, and most of us rush to grab that plate of good yummy food!

"It is better to travel well than to arrive."

*Buddha*

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When we say listen to your body, that's what we need to do. Recognize the signals, and do what we can. And also have an understanding about the consequences of not doing what we are supposed to.

### Obvious Examples include:

- Drink the right fluids when we are thirsty
- Eat healthy food while hungry
- Take a break and get some rest when feeling exhausted
- Relax and allow your mind to calm down when agitated
- Ensure better blood circulation after sitting for a long time

"Think with your whole body."

*Taisen Deshimaru*

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As you can see from this list, there's no rocket science here. All these five points are pretty simple and obvious. And there are many more we can come up with. So, if they are so obvious and too simple, what's there to discuss? We'll come back to it shortly!

Go to any hospital, clinic, health resort, or even glance through the "ask your doctor" columns in magazines and online forums. Spend some time reflecting on what you'd notice. Do you think we are listening enough to our bodies? Especially in the midst of our busy urban lives?

One thing stands out in this age of instant gratification and "living it up". We tend to prioritize convenience over the needs of the body. Let's look at what happens in the life of a busy (24X7) working professional.

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Somewhere in a BUSY city, it's the start of a brand new day:

No more energy to press the snooze button again! Time to get up after all.

Is that a signal for some food? Maybe, the body genuinely wants it? After all that sleeping and fasting.

Never mind!

Let's give it some coffee and tea. How about a few cigarette puffs to smoke it all up in style! Maybe... Not a bad idea, think some.

"Coffee helps yaaa, big time! Yesterday, I did manage to push myself a bit more, even though I felt exhausted after 14 hours of staring at the monitor"!

Or just chuck it. Just skip everything and make a mad rush to the workplace.

Lunch will do, right?

A little water at least? Maybe once in a while?

Oh! Who wants to walk down till the water cooler? Maybe later...

"Are these muscles really sore, or am I just imagining stuff? These joints seem stiff for ages".

Thank Goodness for these ointments and pain killers. Walking and stretching can wait.

"Not happening, Yaaa"!

Food at frequent intervals is a good idea, that's what the body thinks. "Huh! Reading too much of health column mumbo jumbo, I tell you"!

Large gaps are best avoided. "Yeah, right, keep dreaming about indulgence".

"I just skipped breakfast, and postponed lunch till 4 PM; Did it every single day this week".

Nothing happens, okays?!

"Cookies and chips are there for emergencies, na? Sleepy? Groggy? Who, me? Get me that Espresso, please"!

Let's eat away to glory, like there's no tomorrow, at dinner time!

"It is **Health** that is real Wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."

*Gandhi*

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“Oh! So, now you’re telling me there’s this excess gas formation and all”?  
Agreed, there is some burning sensation with all that acidity build-up. Not a problem, we’ll reach out for the antacid.  
“I’ve got two more telecons lined up, no?”

The body gives you all indications of exhaustion with overworked nerves and excess tiredness. So, we go out for a session of binge drinking. It’s hoping you’ll call it a day and hit the bed maybe. Instead, we’re slouching in front of the T.V., popcorn on one hand and a smartphone on the other!

Not that everyone’s clueless. Some of us do hit the gym whenever we can. But then again, the eagerness and excitement can get the better of us sometimes. Overworked muscles, ‘ubercool’ fad diets, one-size-fits all routines... we just push our body for more and more. The body tries to tell us “enough, not now”, “don’t bend that far”, “Puhleeze! pick a few lighter weights for now, till next week”, but hey, really listening, are we?

Sure, we’ve learnt the answers in our school biology classes. But there’s many slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip. The body tries to be our friend, and we’re like: “You know what, I like you alright, but I am not that into you, dear”!

Can we train ourselves to do it right? And actually develop a trusting relationship that enhances the quality of our lives?

We believe it is possible. There are three important aspects to secure to get going.

- Intention
- Understanding
- Commitment

Check the Practice Sheet to work with them, listen and befriend your body:

[Practice Chart to Listen & be Friends with ur Body](#)

“The body never lies”

**Martha Graham**

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