

Evolving Being in Action: Raam Dev



Raam lives by carving his own unique path through life and not living within the status quo. He inspires others to do the same and be true to themselves, following their heart journey. Through his story, Raam embodies the expression “be the change you wish to see” and empowers us to take action our own journeys.

My journey of awakening and personal expansion

I was home schooled throughout my childhood and the wooded backyard of my parents house was my playground and my world of wonders. I explored everything, every twist and turn of the small stream that gushed through the yard, abundant in the spring and trickling through in the winter. There was no stone left unturned and no tree left untouched. I climbed up to reach the clouds, dug down to search for the center of the Earth, and swam under the canopy of lilly pads that dotting the small lake in front of my parents house.

From an early age I began experimenting and tinkering with technology. I loved that technology and science seemed to offer endless potential for exploration and learning and when it came time to decide on a career, I went into the IT field.

In my early twenties I went into real estate (another area to explore!) and over the course of three years purchased three distressed rental properties. Along with running my own computer consulting business and working a full-time job, my life was kept busy by managing twelve rental units, handling all property maintenance, and running around fixing computers and helping people understand technology.

My life was in constant motion, but something was amiss. I would look forward to the days when I could disconnect and forget about all of it. I would treasure the 24-48 hours on the weekends that I would go hiking and camping in the mountains, those times that would give me a taste of the childhood wonder I used to experience turning over rocks and swimming with the fish.

I would look forward to an excuse to be unreachable and during the week I would justify the routine life and the mundane existence by telling myself that I was fortunate to have an abundance of opportunity. I convinced myself that by toughing through it all I was “investing in the future”.

But what was the point if my life didn't feel whole? What was the point if existence didn't feel holistic? My life felt dry and routine and my potential underutilized.

For as long as I could remember, my intuition told me that movement was essential to my continued growth. I needed to be free to move and explore and to set sail at a moments notice. Instead I had rental properties, a full-time job, and a consulting business, none of which was contributing to my physical, emotional, or spiritual growth. What was the point?

This insatiable urge for movement and for experiencing new and different arose not from a dissatisfaction with the present (I wasn't feeling restless, ungrateful, or unloved), but rather from an ever-present awareness that the length of my physical existence on Earth was limited. It arose from an acute understanding that my personal growth, and therefore my capacity to serve and fulfill my human potential, was being severely stunted by staying in one place physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

My Inspirations and Influences

I was sitting at my desk looking out the window at the Boston skyline when a bird flew past and soared off into the distance. I stopped what I was doing and let my eyes and my thoughts follow him. Was this it? Was the rest of my life going to be a repeat of yesterday? Was I going to spend the remainder of my time on Earth playing it safe and making choices based on what society thought was best?

For the first time in my life, I felt something inside giving up hope. All those dreams of extraordinary growth and following my heart, of personal exploration and childhood wonder, all of them were quietly accepting that they may never be realized. They were ready to give up.

The thought of that spark dying inside scared me to death. Not doing anything at all became more risky than risking it all. Later that evening I wrote an email to my boss and told him I was leaving in two months. I proceeded to sell everything I owned and, inspired by many who shared online their stories of nomadic travel, I formulated a rough plan to spend six months traveling through India, Vietnam, and Nepal with all my possessions on my back in a small 32L backpack.

I didn't have a lot of money to spend (I lost the three rental properties to the sub-prime mortgage crisis in 2007 and filed for bankruptcy the following year), so I budgeted \$3,000 for the entire trip. I had no idea how much traveling on a budget would affect the way this journey changed me.

The small budget forced me to stay outside of the big cities and living close to the locals opened my eyes to the inequality, the poverty, and the sheer contrast in reality. The misplaced priorities of many of those living in developed countries, including myself, became blindingly obvious. While I was buying houses, surfing the Internet, and fixing computers, entire families were dying of hunger and living on sidewalks. Children were scrounging for water and sitting in piles of trash. And not just a few people either, but nearly a billion people.

Yet despite all this, most of the people seemed happy. They seemed grateful to just be alive. Their possessions represented necessity, not fluff for simple pleasures or junk for impulsive wants. Stuff in their lives had meaning and purpose.

It became incredibly apparent to me that in terms of 'stuff', I needed very little to live a happy and fulfilled life. 'Things' were simply a distraction from what was real and my ability to make a difference in the world was severely limited by how much physical, emotional, and spiritual baggage I held onto.

I have committed to living a frugal, minimalistic lifestyle in all realms: physical, emotional, and spiritual and the freedom this enables allows me to explore all areas of my life with an open mind, an open heart, and an open soul.

My Positive Life Changes

By focusing on freeing myself from all forms of unnecessary stuff, I've increased my capacity to embrace what is real. Abundance in all forms feels more sustainable and my ability and desire to share with others has increased. Less stuff also opens my life to greater focus and clarity and frees my heart to experience the interconnectedness of all things.

I feel more connected now to our human family than ever before. But with that feeling has come an intense sense of responsibility. I feel happiness for the incredible potential each of us possesses, the huge capacity we have for compassion and love and the insatiable desire our species has to explore, adapt, and evolve. But I also feel an ever-present sadness for the unnecessary suffering that results from misplaced priorities and ignorance.

Every day I think about the 17,000 children who will die of hunger by the time I go to bed later that night and I cannot accept that there's nothing I can do about it. I know that we, as a human species, have the resources, the ingenuity, and the compassion to change something as basic as food distribution. However, I also recognize that the root of this problem, and many other problems, stems from a *lack of global consciousness*, a missing link between our self and all other living things.

When I left for India, I was searching for meaning to my own life. My focus was heavily on what I could get out of the world. Now I fully recognize the completeness of my true self and my focus has made a dramatic shift towards what I can do for the world instead of what the world can do for me.

My Next Steps as an Evolving Being

I believe the best way to change the world is through setting an example that others can follow. Up until now, I've only earned an income through freelance work and regular jobs in the technology industry.

While I don't think there's anything inherently wrong with 'regular' jobs, I recognize that my individual potential lies in my creative work and that my life goals require a focus on more than just money and personal growth. My focus now is to create enough income through my creative work to support a simple lifestyle that will also enable me the freedom to direct all other energy towards creative and charitable work.

I feel that while everyone understands the need for generating income, few of us actually consider or understand the moral and ethical implications of generating income in global society. I am now exploring ways to live and work both ethically and morally, with the intention of setting an example for how we can all be part of a more sustainable world while still allowing ourselves room for physical, emotional, and spiritual growth.

I'm now on a quest for balance between personal growth and finding ways to fulfill my responsibility to serve and share with others. I share about my travels and lessons on my site RaamDev.com.

My Advice to Others

Recognize your completeness and the utter beauty that surrounds you and exists within you. Search for the lesson in each situation and don't allow fear or pressure from the status quo to enslave your life.

Find peace and contentment within each moment and be grateful for everything and

everyone: we are all connected and each person contributes to supporting the existence of everyone else.

Free yourself of attachment to things and learn to recognize universal truths. The most valuable things in the world cannot be bought or sold and you already possess everything you need to obtain them. Ask how you can do more with less.

Look forward, look far into your future, not to create plans or set goals but to anticipate how you will wish you had spent your time. When you die, how do you want the world to look different than today? Is there something that you want to change more than anything else? Go do that. Search for the first step that leads in that direction and then start walking. Ask how your choices affect others and accept responsibility for making the best choice.

It's easy to get distracted and weighed down by time, but it can either be your friend or your enemy. Time can either be a vessel for change and exploration or a prison for a stagnant and lifeless existence. The choice is yours and the responsibility to do something meaningful with your life is also yours.