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What is Your Essence?

Coming to meet yourself in stillness and nature

“Who are you?” I asked him in my mind. Such a beautiful, gifted man and healer. “Who am I?” The question shifted, almost immediately to my inner self. The point of this journey. To release and let go. To be me. I was on an open-air porch at Santosha, a retreat center in Phippsburg, Maine. Surrounded by a dew-speckled emerald green forest overlooking the Kennebec River complete with a bald eagle flying overhead.

The name ‘Santosha’ translates to ‘contentment.’ I was fulfilling that mission as I was the lucky one that had the first healing arts appointment on day one. A 90-minute deep tissue massage that integrated breathing meditations and conversations about letting go. “Sometimes what we think we need to let go of isn’t what we actually need to let go of,” said Zeb of Arbor Vitae Wellness. He was the massage therapist and magical use-nature-to-heal-yourself guru. A truly rare individual who made me feel like a brand new person.

“You look so zenned out! And like a weight’s been lifted off of you,” Carol said. Two other women echoed it as I walked past them on my way to journal on the pool deck. That’s how I started my 6-night, 5-day yoga retreat in coastal Maine. I really needed it after teaching one of the toughest school years on record.

This retreat was the turning point of a new phase of my life. I uncovered who I was at the core. My essence. My love for telling stories and my dream to start a writing business. This discovery came from a week of beginning each day with grounding myself through a guided meditation, then flowing through a gentle yoga sequence. I had one scheduled event each day that was optional and an evening reflection circle, then restorative yoga and dinner. Delicious, locally-sourced organic plants and proteins. JB, the founder of Santosha, cooked artistically presented meals with a zero food waste rule. That meant that any leftovers were recycled into the next dinner or breakfast in a new, delectable way.

This healing experience grounded me and got me back into the flow. Literally kayaking on the Kennebec River and mentally in the flow with a newly opened, clear mind. Ready to accept positivity and new opportunities coming to me. Ready to pursue my dreams. I found my core. What is your essence?