

Lesson 1: Learn to guard your mind with The Heart of the Rose exercise.

The fable Yogi Bhanu, Julian's teacher, tells, takes place in a garden. It's full of beautiful flowers that smell great. Think of it as a calm, serene place where you can refuel your energy whenever you need to.

Imagine if your mind was a garden like that. What a powerful brain! But for most of us, our mind looks like a dumpster, much more than a garden. It's littered with mental clutter, unnecessary information, ungrounded worries and anxious thoughts.

Therefore, the first of the seven virtues of the Sivan system is to control your mind. What you're trying to do here is to control what even comes into your garden in the first place. Think of yourself like a guardian, standing at the gate of your brain, choosing who and what gets in.

One exercise Julian learned to achieve this is The Heart of the Rose. To practice it you need an actual rose and a quiet space to yourself. Then, you simply stare at the center of the rose and try to fill your mind with thoughts about how beautiful it is.

Think of it as a form of basic meditation. At first, you'll have lots of distracting thoughts, but you'll get better at keeping those out of your head over time. That's the goal.

The more disciplined you become in which thoughts you accept into your mind, the easier it'll be to turn it into the beautiful, energizing garden you need.

Lesson 2: The Ten Rituals of Radiant Living are a simple morning routine that covers everything you need.

In the story the Yogi tells, a sumo wrestler also appears. Sumo wrestlers subscribe to an ancient, Japanese idea called kaizen. It means never-ending improvement.

This idea, to always be learning and getting better, is another virtue of the Sivan system.

The sages suggest a 10-step morning routine they call the Ten Rituals of Radiant Living to help you live this virtue.

The Ritual of Early Awakening. Six hours of sleep and seeing the sunrise. Of course, you have to figure out how much you need yourself, but this is what they suggest.

The Ritual of Solitude. Always make a few minutes to practice silence after waking up.

The Ritual of Physicality. Move, get up, do some exercise. Whatever gets the blood flowing.

The Ritual of Live Nourishment. A vegetarian diet based on fresh food is what the sages follow.

The Ritual of Abundant Knowledge. Keep your mind stimulated with a bit of reading or studying.

The Ritual of Personal Reflection. Did you do your best today? What could you have done better?

The Ritual of Music. Listen to music often to never get stuck in a bad mood.

The Ritual of Spoken Word. Write down a short mantra you can repeat to yourself throughout the day.

The Ritual of Congruent Character. Always follow your principles. Write them down, be aware of them and stick to them.

The Ritual of Simplicity. Ruthlessly live your priorities and remove everything else that's unnecessary.

This reminds me a bit of The Miracle Morning, but it's more than that. You can see it extends way beyond your morning but that's the whole point. A good morning leads to a good day, which, ultimately, leads to a good life.

Lesson 3: Selflessly serve others and you'll be better off yourself.

Later in the story, the sumo collapses but then reawakens to the smell of beautiful, yellow roses. These roses represent another virtue, the idea of selflessly serving others. It's beautifully summarized in this ancient, Chinese proverb:

A trace of fragrance always remains on the hands that present you with roses.

It's a metaphor, which says whenever you help someone else, some of the benefits will come back right to you. You rarely know when and how, but karma always comes around. This doesn't mean you have to join the salvation army, small, simple acts of kindness and compassion go a long way.

Every morning, take a few seconds to think about what good you can do today. Whether it's calling your grandma or praising a coworker, it'll bring you one step closer to what the Yogi would call an enlightened life.