



Meditation & the Wisdom of the East

Brother Craig Marshall, a Meditation Master
details his journey to self-realization and
shares his profound experience using NuCalm.

by Larry Trivieri Jr.

The Beginning of a Journey to Self-Realization

Few people can claim to have had as varied, distinguished, and interesting life journey as the one Brother Craig Marshall continues to have. From his time as a child actor who forged friendships with Ronald Reagan, Donna Reed, and Shirley Temple, to serving in the U.S. Army Security Agency, to his 35 years living as a monk in a monastery mastering and teaching meditation, to his friendships with such luminaries as Steve Jobs and George Harrison, to his current career as a public speaker, workshop leader, and transformational life coach and “business bodhisattva” within the corporate world, Craig has lived his life guided by his commitment to self-discovery and his dedication to serving others and helping them to discover and fulfill their unique life purpose.



In recent years, Craig has also become an advocate of NuCalm® because of how quickly, easily, and predictably it enables him to access a state of consciousness or awareness, which typically takes a long and regular practice of meditation to achieve. To that end, Craig also wrote the Preface for the book *A New Calm*, which tells the story of NuCalm’s development and explains its many benefits.

In reflecting on his life journey, Craig says, “I’ve lived many lives in this life! I’ve been an actor, baseball player, Boy Scout, army recruit, photographer and film director – before I was a yoga monk, minister, public speaker, consultant, life-coach, ghostwriter, and now a householder. Through all these roles I’ve navigated a process of self-realization, learning and un-learning, experiencing a deeper understanding that I am something greater than anything and everything I was seeking. Behind it all, there was always my deeper self and my unique life-purpose.”

Craig's quest to know more about himself, and about life, began at an early age. "I always questioned things," he says. When he was ten years old, he attended the funeral for a friend of his family. That experience powerfully moved him to seek the answers to life's biggest questions. "I grew up in Los Angeles and my parents were very balanced, healthy people. They were married for their entire adult lives and were actually childhood sweethearts from Kentucky. Thanks to them, I grew up in a very loving, supportive nest. My parents were very happy. They were living the lives that they wanted, yet I wanted something more. I didn't know what it was at the time, but I just had the sense that there is more to this game of life than I saw most people getting."

Craig's desire to know more about the answers to life's biggest questions only grew deeper during his time as a successful child actor in Hollywood. "I was on



hundreds of television programs and commercials, so I grew up around dynamic and creative people and a lot of celebrities. I enjoyed that because it was fun and certainly beat going to school, but I saw that there were a lot of people in that industry who were kind of insecure. That spooked me a bit and fed my own desire to seek what I would just call 'something else.'"

During this time, Craig met his first three mentors, all of whom he credits with having a deep and positive influence on him. "The first one was Ronald Reagan," he recounts. "I met him when I was 13. He was president of the Screen Actors Guild at the time. I had some problems with the union, so I got to know him and his family and

he sort of took me under his wing. He was one of the kindest people that I have ever met, a real gentleman and a very caring person.

"I then did a number of live television shows with Shirley Temple, who was by then an adult and a very accomplished, mature, and what I would call conscious person. She later went on to become a U.S. ambassador and had a very dynamic life. I also was on *The Donna Reed Show* a number of times and I knew her and her husband, Tony Owen. In real life, Donna was just like she was on TV or in that fabulous movie *It's A Wonderful Life*. She was like the perfect mom.

"Those three people were really a contrast to all of the Hollywood wannabes. They had a depth to them and a maturity that was very appealing to me," Craig says. In part because of their influence, he decided to attend film school at the University of Southern California (USC), and graduated with a degree in public relations and film production. During this time, he enlisted in the Army and was on active duty in the Army Security Agency during the Vietnam War.

It was at that point in his life that Craig knew he had some important conscious decisions to make about his life and career, yet he felt incapable of making them. "I saw myself as a sort of restless, superficial person without any motivation, depth, or clarity about my life," he admits.

While in the midst of this quandary, he discovered and read the spiritual classic *Autobiography of A Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF), who was one of the first yogis from India to popularize yoga and meditation in the United States. After reading the book, Craig visited the SRF temple in Hollywood, where he soon began to work for the organization. "There was a restaurant there at the time, and there were a lot of young people there then. It was a very dynamic and popular watering hole for spiritual seekers and new thought leaders," he says. "I began toying with the idea of becoming a monk, but then I thought, 'I don't have the discipline or maturity to lead that kind of life.'"

By then, Craig had already started to meditate, and that is where he found the guidance he was looking for. "In meditation one time I had this proverbial turning on of the light bulb experience," he recalls. "I gained a sudden clarity of absolute truth as I heard this inner voice say, 'Just this once, don't do what you want to do, but do what you know you should do.' And that decided me. Though I still didn't think I wanted to be a monk because it seemed like a struggle and something over my head, I nonetheless felt like I should do it, and that it would be good for me because of the discipline, structure, and support I would find living in the SRF monastery."



Discovery & Commitment

There was only one problem - Craig was still active in the Army Reserve at the time and had four more years to go before he fulfilled his obligation. "The people at SRF told me they didn't think I could become a monk at that time because of this," he says. "Yet this vision and guidance I had received while meditating told me I was supposed to be a monk and I was committed to doing that."

That was when Craig started to discover what can happen when you discover and commit to following your inner guidance. "I went down to my Army unit and walked into the office of my commanding officer and told him, 'I'm sorry, sir, but I'm going to have to leave your unit,'" he says. "He asked me, 'Why is that?' and I told him I was going to be a monk and would no longer be able to attend weekend meetings,

and summer trainings, and so forth. This was in 1969, during the height of the Vietnam War, so I was surprised when, instead of denying my request, he simply wrote up an application for my discharge, which I received three weeks later. It was a total left turn from what I expected, and soon thereafter I entered the SRF ashram [monastery]."

This phase of Craig's life began when he was 23 years old. He lived as a monk for the next 35 years. "In the ashram, I learned more about meditation and concentration and lived a life of service," he explains.

"I was mentored by an inspired and saintly monk. After a dozen years, I was ordained a swami and was given the name Brother Mitrananda, which means 'bliss through friendship'. For 15 years I was responsible for training the youngest monks, and became a minister and public speaker, addressing large audiences around the world."

As a result of the training Craig received as a monk, today he is recognized as a leading authority on meditation. He estimates that he has spent 50,000 hours of his life meditating, both privately and in group settings. "Meditation really changed my life," he says, "because, over time, I began to experience states of consciousness that deeply informed my core sense of self. I had never felt such peace, love and joy."



Stilling the Mind With Meditation

Although he is no longer a monk, Craig remains a strong proponent of meditation.

In recent decades, scientific research has uncovered many positive physical and psychological benefits that meditation can provide, in addition to its millennia-long stature as a spiritual practice of self-discovery that it holds within all major religions around the world. According to Craig, yogis teach that, on average, most people think one thousand thoughts each hour. "That's a thought every two and two-thirds of a second," he says. "It's like thought, one Mississippi, thought, two Mississippi, and so on. That's the tempo. We think all of these thoughts, yet we don't even know where our thoughts come from. They're like champagne bubbles that bubble up from our subconscious mind, or from outer stimulation or circumstances."

"For thousands of years, the yogis have recognized that the mind cannot control itself directly. That's why they developed these concentration and meditation techniques, which act indirectly. You don't start off trying to will your mind to concentrate because it won't work. The mind is as much our enemy as our friend, at that stage. That's why breathing exercises are used as a starting point."

There are many different types of breathing exercises, Craig explains, and many of them are ancient and still practiced today because of how effective they are. For beginners, though, Craig suggests simply breathing normally and observing your breath.

"Just become aware of your breath coming in and out through your nostrils," he instructs, "sitting comfortably with your spine straight and your eyes closed and gently raised upward to the point between and slightly above your eyebrows. As you observe yourself breathing, your breath will slow down relatively quickly."

It is this slowing down of the breath that provides the first possibility for self-discovery that meditation affords, according to Craig. “As the breath slows down,” he explains, “the intervals, or gaps, between inhalation and exhalation, and exhalation and inhalation start to widen. In those gaps, there is an opportunity to go to a deeper level, which I would call your higher or inner self, or your intuition, allowing you to tap into your inner guidance. You can’t do that in the midst of the thousand thoughts per hour drumbeat. That’s the first stage of meditation, slowing things down and de-stressing.



“After that comes a state of concentration of focus, and then after that meditation proper begins, where you rise above what you might call the mediocrity of average human consciousness. I think throughout history this is what the saints and the masters and the heroes and geniuses have been able to do. This state of awareness and focus is really the launch pad for creative and innovative ideas that are the breakthroughs that people are looking for, both in their personal and professional lives. It starts

with slowing down the bubble machine of thoughts and then learning to focus and getting a very clear picture of what you want on a deeper level. And what we find out intuitively is that what we want are not things or outer circumstances.

“Most people live what I would call circumstantial lives. They have a belief system that says to them, ‘When I accomplish this, whatever it is, then I’ll be happy.’

This postponement of happiness and dependence on external things and events to be happy reminds me of when I was a freshman in college taking a course in

Economics 101. In the preface of the textbook, in italics, was the definition of economics. It said, ‘Economics is the study of man’s attempt to satisfy unlimited desires with limited means.’ When I read that, I thought to myself, ‘Damn, this game is impossible by definition.’ That fed into my suspicion of normal living. I wanted something more. I didn’t know what it was at the time, but I had a sense that there’s more to life. What I wanted to do with meditation, yoga, and being a monk was to sort of offload my programming, if you will, and explore



Craig with Ringo Star and his wife Barbara Bach

new ground and really be creative and figure out who I was and what I really wanted on the deepest level. Through meditation, I learned to go deep. I’m not a deep person, yet now I’m able to unplug from all these mind games and limitations.”

Brother Craig's New Beginning

"After 35 years living as a monk, my life took a second left turn," Craig says, explaining how he has come to be a highly regarded transformational coach, public speaker, and business consultant. "My karma and dharma thrust me back into the world, which led me to develop a new life, a new role, and new sense of Self." In his new life, he also met his wife and today is happily married and, as he calls it, "a householder". He still continues to meditate, yet in recent years he has added the regular use of NuCalm to his ongoing adventure in self-discovery, mindfulness, and greater awareness.

How Craig became aware of NuCalm dovetails with his exploration and practice of what is often referred to as the law of attraction. "As I've gotten clearer on how life works and what I wanted and didn't want," he says, "I realized the primary law of life is that you get what you think about, whether you want it or not – meaning thoughts are proto-things. Even in quantum physics it's a law. What you focus on expands. Now that I understand that a little bit more, I'm much more disciplined about what I think."

Another guiding principle for Craig is a quote from Deepak Chopra that his wife shared with him: "According to Vedanta [the study of the Vedas, considered to be the oldest written records in the world], there are only two symptoms of enlightenment, just two indications that a transformation is taking place within you toward a higher consciousness. The first symptom is that you stop worrying. Things don't bother you anymore. You become light-hearted and full of joy. The second symptom is that you encounter more and more meaningful coincidences in your life, more and more synchronicities. And this accelerates to the point where you actually experience the miraculous."



“When I first read that quote about three years ago, I thought that is exactly what is happening in my life,” Craig says. “I’m lightening up, I’m not worrying, I’m ten times more joyous than I was even five years ago, and these synchronicities are starting to really happen more frequently.”

One such synchronicity occurred when Craig met Jim Poole, the CEO of Solace Lifesciences, Inc, the makers of NuCalm. The meeting occurred in a hotel in Los Angeles. “When I met Jim, I just knew he was meant to be in my life,” Craig recalls. “And when I met his brother David [David Poole, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing for Solace Lifesciences, Inc.], it was the same thing. I immediately felt like these are my people. It wasn’t NuCalm that interested me, although I was certainly interested in it. It was more like there was a field of energy and Jim, David, and I were all a part of it, and so was Blake [Dr. Blake Holloway, the inventor of NuCalm] and the other people that are part of the NuCalm family. I regard them as part of my tribe. They’re very cool and conscious people, integrated in a way that I respect. That’s really what drew me to them.”



Jim Poole, CEO of Solace Lifesciences, Craig's wife, Carina, and Craig

Becoming A NuCalm Believer

After Jim explained that NuCalm is the world’s only patented technology clinically proven to quickly and effectively reduce stress and improve performance without drugs, he presented Craig with a NuCalm unit. “I went home and tried it out,” Craig continues. “I didn’t have any expectations except that I believed what Jim had told me was true and I thought it could be valuable. I lay down in bed, put NuCalm on and it got me almost immediately into a state that I would not be able to define because it was somewhere between sleep and wakefulness.

“I’m not a scientist, so I don’t care how NuCalm works from that perspective. I’m not really interested in the vibratory frequencies of beta, alpha, and theta brain waves. I don’t know what NuCalm does on a vibrational level, but I know it has to do with vibrations because everything does. Everybody’s energy, energy moves, and we call that movement vibration. Those moving vibrations have certain frequencies and certain frequencies can combine with other frequencies to create either resonance or dissonance. That’s about as far as the science goes that I want to understand. I do know that NuCalm makes a shift state in me almost immediately. That’s what I really love about NuCalm. When I use it, there is no lag time in getting me out of my normal thousand thoughts per hour, senses-bound mind.”

Comparing NuCalm to meditation, Craig says, “When you meditate, you are starting to knock on the door to another realm, which I think the saints and masters and other deep people through the ages realized is the beginning of opening new vistas of experience, and therefore you are able to touch your intuition. When you start to access that realm you get incredible insights. You get clarity and out of that clarity comes confidence. When you’re clear and confident, that sets up a magnetic field around you that can draw you to people and new opportunities. Things start to happen and you really start to speed up your ability to create and innovate.

“I think NuCalm is a launch pad for starting that process. It doesn’t take the place of meditation, it doesn’t make you more conscious by itself, but it is most definitely a de-stressor and a state shifter that allows me to almost effortlessly go into meditation, or think more creatively, or to focus on a deeper level. All three of those benefits are worth all the tea in China.”

Because of the many benefits he’s derived from NuCalm, Craig uses it regularly. “Most of the time, I use it every day,” he says. “Sometimes, when I’m traveling or get distracted I use it a little bit less. I always beat myself up when I don’t use it. I say to myself, ‘I’ve got this tool, this magic genie’s bottle, so why am I not using it?’ I still meditate on a regular basis and I still do things like reflection and journaling and other creative things, but NuCalm is a big tool in my tool kit now, and whenever I use it I get the same results, that quick shift into what I call state of calmness and clarity. My family uses it, as well, and I’ve turned some of my friends onto it. I think in the future the science behind NuCalm will be much more understood, and what excites me about NuCalm is not just its proven de-stressing capability, but its ability to help people quickly and predictably access that state of deeper awareness. This state that NuCalm produces is a platform from which people who use it can start to meditate and think and act more creatively.”

Pointing out another difference between meditation and NuCalm, Craig explains, “Meditation presupposes concentration, and concentration is a discipline. It takes will power and discipline to be able to concentrate and meditate. With NuCalm you don’t need those things because it just takes over. NuCalm gets you to that first state of peace by itself. I see NuCalm as a great gift for people who are restless, or who have limited attention spans or limited time. If I just sit down to meditate without NuCalm, sometimes it takes me 15 to 20 minutes to get to that null point where I move beyond my day-to-day thoughts and memories to be able to really focus on what I want to focus on. NuCalm gets me there much faster. I think NuCalm is a great entry point for anyone who wants to experience those deeper states of mind but doesn’t have the discipline or the time to devote to meditation.”

“In addition to NuCalm’s ability to quickly reduce my stress and engender clarity and peace, I also find that NuCalm produces feelings of rejuvenation. It helps me lighten up. I would call the state of consciousness that I achieve through NuCalm a transcendent state.”



NuCalm as a Tool For Change

Craig also sees NuCalm as a tool to help people become better able to help promote positive change in society. “These days, with all of the things that are going on in the world, I think most people believe that the world is in a fragile state and at risk, and that it really needs to change” he says. “I don’t believe that because I think the function of the world is to be a mirror, and the only way we are going to change what we see in the mirror is to change what we are projecting onto it. I think Gandhi was the extreme example of this, of taking complete personal responsibility. He said, ‘I have three enemies, the British, the Indian people, and myself. I’m by far the worst. But I’m the only one I have potential control over.’

“If we were to draw an evolutionary line between the lowest states of consciousness, which you might call savagery, up to the highest level, which you might call mastery, I think that the through line would be taking more and more personal responsibility. That’s why I use NuCalm. It allows me to become calmer and clearer. That’s the word: Clearer. Because clarity of purpose is the core of every endeavor. When you’re clear that means you’re intuitive. Clarity is magnetic in nature. When you speak about what you really know people are going to listen, and that’s how you can make a contribution. That’s how you can positively influence other people. NuCalm can help you to do that. And I think it is especially beneficial and really helpful for people who struggle to get through the day, or who rely on drugs or some other crutch to cope with life. I think NuCalm can be a complete replacement for those crutches they need, and it certainly is a much healthier way and a more conscious way to tune into who we really are on a deeper level.”

Asked what he would tell people considering trying NuCalm for the first time, Craig says, “First I would ask them what interests them about something like NuCalm and what would they like out of it, so that I addressed their needs and their expectations. I’m happy to share my experience with NuCalm, yet there’s nothing that takes the place of one’s own experience. Because there is science behind NuCalm people who try it are going to have somewhat repeatable responses and experiences with it, but I do think that everybody also has their own unique experiences with it and there is no substitute for that.

“I would also tell people what NuCalm has done for me. In my world, the goal is only three things, and that’s peace, love, and joy. That sounds like a generality on a bumper sticker, but it’s not. If something promises me any one of those three I would check it out, and in my experience NuCalm is an external device that can change your internal consciousness.”



"Before NuCalm, the idea that an external, material device could affect my interior consciousness and speed up that process was totally new to me, yet it has done that every single time that I have used it. I get these predictable, scientific results of being in another state that is calmer and clearer, with more energy, clarity, focus, and depth, and every one of those things is really, really important to me. I know I can count on NuCalm and that it will take me to a deep, fulfilling, nurturing state that allows me to come out on the other side to be more productive. And not to just get more work done, but to get that work done in more profound and meaningful ways. If I had had NuCalm when I was a young adult, I think it would have helped me become a deeper thinker and I would have made even healthier and more creative decisions in my life."

"Finally, I would let people know that there is a four-step process to using NuCalm. The first step is to sit or lie down. The second step is to mentally "shut up" and let go of any mental burdens. The third step is to turn on NuCalm. And the fourth step is to trust that process that will take you within. I believe that each of us has a unique Life-Purpose. We all have a special insight into our innermost core. Despite all the complexities of life, we all still have a deep inspired inner knowing. It's the essence of who we are. When people learn to live in alignment with their personal Life-Purpose, they begin to experience a continuing series of so-called 'miracles'. I see this every day. NuCalm can help foster that alignment. That's what I would tell people and it's why I wholeheartedly recommend and endorse NuCalm."

