

From: [Bert Franzen](#)
To: [Yogasandhan](#)
Cc: [Bert Franzen](#); [Gurubhatka](#)
Subject: Re: Creating a transparent culture
Date: Wednesday, 4 December 2013 8:38:46 PM

Hello Yogasandhan and Gurubhatka

Our discussions today were wide and far ranging. I thought therefore I'd document my views so that they're a little more focused and crystalline.

Big Picture:

The big picture objective is to protect the work and legacy of Satyananda. If these matters are handled poorly then the backlash could do immeasurable damage to the brand. Protecting the brand must take priority over legal expediency.

Immediate Approach

Strategy for Protection of Students

I suggest that we develop a policy which states that any student who leverages an accusation of inappropriate sexual behaviour, harassment or bullying will be given access to the Ashram's Grievance Policy to lodge a complaint, have complete confidentiality, the ashram will investigate and advise as to outcome. That if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome that they can take further action in relevant legal jurisdiction.

The strength of this approach is that if they do go legal, the process can be used as a defence.

Public Communication

I suggest that we consider placing a tab on our Website that leads to a statement of the Ashram's Transparency in Dealings, This page should contain statements to the effect of:

- A policy of zero tolerance
- willingness and history of referring offenders to the police
- Compassionate dealings with and support for victims.
- Current measures in place to protect individuals from risk
- 100% compliance with child protection guidelines.
- other

Dealings with Historic Victims and new Complainants

New complainants are dealt with on the basis that their issues are taken serious, confidentially and in according with the Grievance Policy.

Historic Complainants must be approached head-on and be treated with compassion irrespective of whether the experience was real or not. From the victim's perspective the experience is 'real' and we are not in a position to judge.

The goal is to genuinely provide a forum for these individuals to be heard, for the ashram to recognise and acknowledge their suffering. In so doing the negative social media statements may be minimised. The 'victim' should be offered to have a support person present, have no legal caveats imposed and have no confidentiality consideration

imposed. I suspect that there are no residual legal issues that are relevant anymore anyway.

The advantage of this approach is twofold, a) its offers the victim support and caring; b) it protects the Ashram in this approach can be used to defend ourselves because we 'did the right thing'.

Legal options

I have not spoken to my legal associate but am very confident that the ashram has a right to issue a 'cease and desist' order and also take legal action for defamation and damaging the brand.

This is not a preferred option in that, even though legally appropriate, could be a PR disaster and damage the brand.

hopes this makes sense.

Cheers

Bert

On Tuesday, December 3, 2013, Yogasandhan wrote:I suspect that there are no residual legal issues that are relevant anymore.

Hi Bert,

How's 2013 winding up for you?

Something we'd like your advice and insights on; below is a post someone put on FB. He lived here as a teenager and is obviously still scarred by it. In the past the ashrams policy seems to have been one of just ignore it but now given the power of social media that game plan may not be so effective. The same man left comments alongside Family Yoga posts to the effect of don't take your children there it's a cult full based on pedophilia. The teacher who reported it to us said around 900 people had viewed it before she removed the comments.

Aside from dealing directly with him I'm interested in what steps we need to take on a P&P level not only to safe guard against misconduct in the future but how we respond to overhanging issues from the past. Some of the past being only a couple of years old.

Mangrove is having it's 40th next year and we are inviting all old resident back for an Easter celebration. Potentially this could be quite hairy and it would be good to have it right by then so we can truly say the culture has changed.

look forward to hearing from you. If you're free for a visit or a skype with GB and I that would be great.

om om om
yoga

"Each day watch the colours of your mind,

until the light shines clearly" ~ SSS

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