

**From:** "Yogasandhan"

**Date:** Sunday, 9 March 2014 10:34:16 PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time

**To:** REDACTED

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Making contact

Hello APV

Thank you for making contact. I'm sorry you didn't see the message sent to you initially (it will be in your "other" messages next to the "inbox".) The message was intended to address immediate questions and open up a channel for you and others to contact me, Suryamitra or Gurubhakta if you wanted to speak with someone privately rather than publicly. This is why it was sent individually but it was written with you all in mind. Between each of your stories there were many questions or requests that we felt everyone needed to hear the answers to. This is the simple reason for sending the same message to each of you.

Your scepticism is of course understandable given the treatment and lack of recognition you have received in the past. All I can offer on this is to let you know that as the person who wrote the message I promise you it was not done in haste or with the intent to fob you off. From the day your brother left his post, and we decided that the past had to be addressed, we all knew it would be a long and emotionally taxing journey for everyone involved. In drafting the letter I read, re-read and re-read every account that had been added to the facebook page and tried to answer everything that had been asked clearly and honestly according to what we knew at the time.

We know it is important that your story is not only told but is also heard by us. This attitude may seem incomprehensible in the context of the ashram you knew. Your experience of the ashram is as foreign to me as my experience possibly is to you. To give you a little of the picture of current ashram culture, in my ten years at Mangrove the ashram has provided me with training in

- emotional intelligence,
- non-violent communication,
- student support skills,
- mental health first aid,
- understanding conditions of child abuse and how to recognise indicators and how to report concerns,
- how to address or prevent bullying in the work place,
- leadership training,
- healthy attitudes to sexuality in spiritual life,
- how to develop a workplace/ashram environment where each person is personally responsible and accountable for their behaviour and interactions with others

That doesn't make me or anyone else here and expert in these things, but the ongoing training is a conscious effort to instill and maintain a healthy ashram culture. It is also an ongoing response to the abuse you and the other ashram children were subjected to and the abuse of power at that time. The training sannyasins receive now is based on living an integrated and balanced yogic lifestyle that can be an example to others. We aim to walk the walk as best as each of us can manage.

As mentioned in the group message I have always been aware of the history. Not the details and not in such a personal way as now but that these things happened has always been acknowledged to me by ashram management and those who lived here at the time. In light of this I have also understood why the ashram operates the way it does now and the importance of

the management structure and other checks and balances that are in place. In turn as a teacher and manager of the ashram I answer people's questions in the same open way. The shock or rather the disappointment for me is that other people have not have their questions answered in the same way. I don't doubt them at all, the fact that this has not been formally acknowledged has kept it in the shadows. The most challenging part now is, through your stories, realising the ongoing impact this lack of recognition has had on all your lives. We are sorry for this and hope to right this added wrong that you have experienced through this process.

I know these are just words and will remain just that until you see or experience the change for yourself. I just wanted to give you an idea of the culture in which your story will be received. The ashram and the sannyasins living here are dedicated to the teachings and practices of Satyananda Yoga. You know it, we know it, it's a fact we all recognise but that dedication does not need to deny you, your story or that of your family's.

In regard to other questions raised that have not yet been responded to, they have all been recorded and answers will come once we have a full account of events and their sequence from yourself and others. This will include Swami Satyananda's response to the events which we appreciate is critical to this process.

With warm regards and respect to you,  
Yogasandhan

"Each day watch the colours of your mind,  
until the light shines clearly" ~ SSS

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