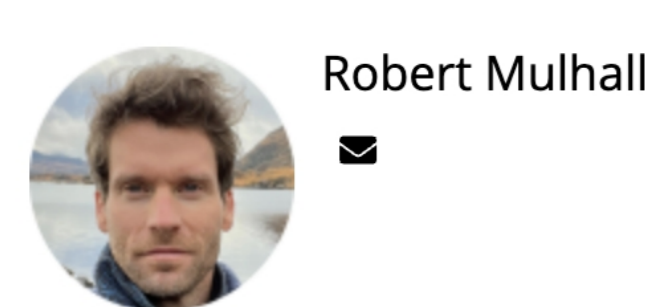


Robert Mulhall: This January, give yourself permission to slow down

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MORE INFORMATION



Flooding damage at Kripalu was more extensive than initially believed. When will the yoga and health center reopen?

Following a major flood caused by a burst pipe last month, the yoga and health center in Stockbridge is spending more than \$100,000 on critical repair and restoration work, especially to waterlogged electrical systems.

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“There is more to life than increasing its speed.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Each January, we get a lot of invitations to change something, to start something, to map out our perfect year. Often, it can feel like this societal pressure to be a different version of ourselves.

Many people ask us about new year resolutions, or if we are joining the gym or giving up alcohol for January. Of course, there is nothing wrong with setting goals, having intentions, wanting to grow, looking to make different decisions in our lives, this is all part of it.



A view from Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health overlooks snow-covered fields, the Stockbridge Bowl and the Berkshire Hills. In the column that accompanies this photo, Kripalu CEO Robert Mulhall invites readers to sync more with the rhythm of the natural world and not feel pressure to change everything about our lives just because we hear “Happy New Year.”
PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARC GORDON

But I see an opportunity for a different perspective. Not something that discounts the dominant sentiment at this time of year, just another way of looking at the timing of things.

When we look around, particularly in the Northeast, we are still deep in winter. The weather is cold, and the days are short, and the other big mammals and most of the plants are hibernating or resting and storing their energy for the warmer months to come.

The plants know that if they shoot up too fast, they will not be able to sustain themselves for the rest of the year. The animals are either nowhere to be seen or are very selective about their movements, optimizing the way they use their energy in these winter days.

Editor's Note

The Eagle debuts a monthly column written by Robert Mulhall, the CEO and president of Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, in Stockbridge. The column aims to share with readers some of the mindfulness-based education upon which Kripalu has built its global reputation.

So, this is an invitation to sync more with the rhythm of the natural world and to give ourselves permission to not have to feel that pressure to change everything about our lives just because we hear the words “Happy New Year.”

What if we were to allow ourselves to stay slow, to keep resting, as much as our lives permit us? What if we didn't just go along with what the rest of the crowd are doing and we paused for a moment and asked ourselves, and our bodies “Does this feel like the natural time for me to start something new?”

If you get a full body yes, then I wouldn't ignore that. For me, I am often getting a “please slow down” message this time of year.

What if we could embody a sense of trust that when nature starts to shift then we too will have more natural energy for making changes in our own lives, and even sustaining them. What I find is that even before the snow has melted, there is an energetic shift within me that I sense in the rest of nature that is starting to call me into a more active and energized way of being.

By mid-February I am often feeling the pull to start making changes or have that full body yes to certain new commitments I want to explore.

At Kripalu, we made a new “rule” for the team last year. No new projects to be launched in January. This is an effort to keep us all at this slower pace until we are ready and resourced to take on new challenges.

Here are a few suggestions that you might find supportive over the coming weeks, until we feel that whisper from Spring:

- Be slow: Find ways to move your body slowly (gentle yoga postures, dance, qigong etc.,) eat your meals slowly allowing yourself to feel gratitude as you taste each bite, slow down your evenings with time reading and fire gazing.
- Reflect: Look back on the past year gone, give yourself time to recognize the ways you have chosen to live, the things you want to celebrate, and the lessons you wish to take forward.
- Boundaries: Remember it's OK to say no to being social, to responding to every message, to endless scrolling on the phone. Keep asking yourself, “Is this what I need right now?”

I look forward to next month when we may all have felt a shift and a desire for more action in our lives, even if the snow is deep and the temperature just as cold.

Robert Mulhall is the CEO and president of Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Stockbridge.

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