

Yoyoga with Joan

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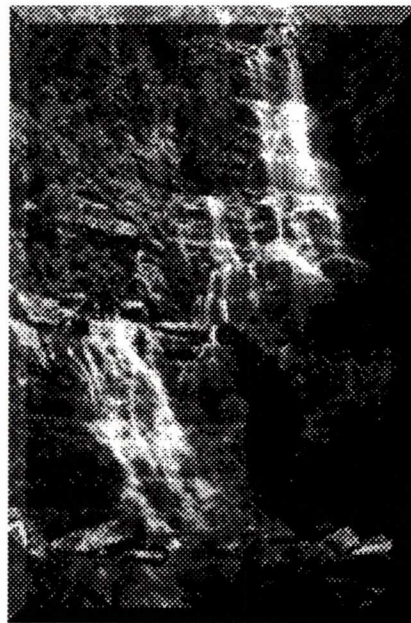
About Joan

January 1, 2000

Issue 74

A blessed new year!

**"For each experience
that comes our way,
there is within us a
corresponding divine
potential for victory --
a potential that has been
waiting only for the
sanction of our will
power to become a
dynamic source of
blessing in our lives."**



**-----Sri Daya Mata
Self-Realization
Fellowship**

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Web Site Awards:

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Yoga Tips

Your breath is my breath

The air you breathe out, I breathe in. You are extremely important to me. In the same way, the air I breathe out, you breathe in. And so it goes that my life is intimately connected with yours.

Now, you might be thinking, but we live so many miles away! And, that very well may be true. But eventually, we will connect...we most certainly will.



The yoga philosophy teaches the importance of a non-judgmental mind. Forgiveness is an important part of becoming less judgmental. Forgiveness not only toward your fellow human being, but also toward yourself. If we pause for a moment to reflect on the intimate nature of our shared breath, we see that there is no reason to harbor ill will toward anyone. The more we can purify and deepen our breath, in yoga terms this practice is called "pranayama," the more we can bring a clearer essence to the world around us. In turn, the world becomes richer, your life becomes richer, the life force deepens.

Everyone together now....take a deep breath....sloooooooow exhale.

Thank you so very much!

Vishing you a truly blessed and merry millennium.

Yoga Tips

Karma is as karma does

How are your new year resolutions going? Tough? That's karma. Karma pulls and tugs at the decisions we make in our lives. Let me give you an example of how karma works.

Suppose you decide to give up drinking coffee for new years. If there is a part of you that still desires your coffee (your karma), you can be assured there will be a coffee shop around every corner, you will receive gifts of coffee, and the



beckoning smells of coffee will engulf your senses everywhere you turn. Not giving into the urge to drink the aromatic, warm, rich coffee is tough. If you fight the urge, emotions might swing into gear. Perhaps you will get angry, sullen, or annoyed. Emotions are simply extensions of the karma. So, a decision is made to either give into the coffee and/or emotions (your karma), or not. If you change your coffee addiction to tea addiction, the face changes - but the karma does not.

We all come into this world on wheels of karma. People and situations do change in our lives. But, if you look closely, you will see the same themes playing out over and over again. Until one fine day you say, "Hey! I learned this one!" And then the wheel goes to a new level, and new lessons come on board - over and over again. Until one day you scratch your head and say, "Hey! Bingo!! Been there, done that. New lesson, please."

So, whether it's your love life, your career, your finances, or your coffee. It is possible

for you to rise to new levels. It is possible to drive your own karma. The first step is to hold onto the steering wheel and discover what karma you are driving. Different karmas require different handling. Breathe deeply. Through a consistent yoga practice, you learn to recognize and soften karma. Eventually karma is released. Does this mean you drive with no hands? No, no, no. That would be dangerous. After much study and practice, you will learn to use your hands, your heart, and your mind to build your very own karma.

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Yoga Tips

Coffee Karma

I first started drinking coffee in grade school. The wonderful early morning smells of eggs, bacon, and coffee awakened my senses.

Breakfast always included 'half and half' - a cup of half coffee and half milk. After our warm and soothing breakfast, my sister and I had a long walk to school. In those days, even in the dead of winter, we wore mini skirts and go-go boots. Totally freezing yet totally hip, we made our 3/4 mile walk/run to grade school as



fast as possible. We usually made it to school early. I credit our freezing legs and the 'half and half' for our extra zip in the mornings. We did not use backpacks then, so we jostled our basic arithmetic book between our stack of Bobby Sherman and Davy Jones fan magazines as best we could. Although I struggled through basic arithmetic, I memorized the fractioned body measurements of Davy and Bobby effortlessly. For some reason almost every body part was specifically measured and reported in these magazines. At recess, we traded magazines with friends, "I'll give you two Davys for one Bobby." Wait a second, I am now tracing the root of a different passion...back to coffee.

As I grew up, coffee continued as a comfort drink. "Let's meet for a cup of coffee!" was a favorite term I often used. Coffee was a regular and important part of my life. I missed it when it was not there. A morning without coffee was like a day without sunshine. Coffee energized me, got me movin' and groovin' to the city beat! I used it to

its full advantage. If I was tired - a cup of coffee. Seeking consolation - a cup of coffee. Meeting friends - a pot of coffee. Coffee here, coffee there, coffee everywhere. And none of this de-caf stuff....I preferred it strong, black, cream, and lots of caf-f-feine!

As the law of karma would have it, my yoga practice increased. My coffee habit became more of an irritation than a comfort. As my body and mind began the long and winding road of purification, I began to clearly see the relationship between coffee and my emotional swings. I'd find myself agitated before a cup and even more agitated after a cup. Just when I would decide to kick the coffee habit, a well meaning friend offered a new coffee flavor to entice my senses. Restrictions and resolutions are so downward dog somber, after all. Second cup? Sure!

By now you are probably wondering, ok, yogini, tell me how you did it. How did you kick this habit? Did you kick this habit? Well, I fasted for three days. I drank organic vegetable juice and fruit juices. In my mind, and most probably in my body, I detoxified. This is not a pleasant site, by the way. An agitated happy person does not a pretty picture make. This detoxing thing takes time ... lifetimes.

What this story is meant to say, is how strong the pull of karma can be. Even if we know with every apparent fiber of our being that something or someone is not helping us in realizing our fullest, brightest potential, there can be an overlooked fiber somewhere that pulls us by a small thread into a karmic wheel of reoccurrence. Perhaps I kick coffee and instead start every morning with an agitation of another sort. Good morning, 'heartache?

So, if perchance, you find me someday reading a yoga book in some coffee shop somewhere, sipping a cup of herbal tea, seated next to a man who looks strangely like Bobby Sherman, you can be assured I drove my own karma there. You and I, and Bobby too, are in the midst of a fantastic road trip on this wheel of life. And how appropriate that Valentines Day corresponds with this Yoga Tip. No coincidence really, since I am driving this tip and parked it on this date.

Happy Valentine's Day, Bobby, Davy, and all my good friends at the karmic coffee shop!

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Yoga Tips

Peace Mantra

"Shanti" is the Sanskrit word for "Peace." It is pronounced as "shawn - tee." The next time you feel anxious, depressed, angry, happy, content, or excited. In fact, the next time you feel anything at all...As you inhale think "shan," as you exhale think "ti." Inhale (shan), Exhale (ti). Inhale (shan), Exhale (ti).



Shan.....ti
Shan....ti
Shan....ti.
Peace
Peace
Peace.



Yoga Tips

Battery Powered

As you may know, I teach a series of courses at the College of Dupage in yoga. Hatha Yoga 1 covers the basics of the yamas, niyamas and postures. Hatha 2 covers the basics of the chakra system related to postures. The chakra system is the energy system in the body. Each week we cover a different chakra and how the hatha yoga poses relate to the functioning of the chakra.



This week, one of my wonderful students, Kathleen Dean, told the class something she discovered. It happened as she was helping her toddler son put batteries in a flashlight. She realized the battery set-up was very similar to how the chakras function. If one battery is out or not connected properly, the light does not shine. And so it goes with the chakras.

What a wonderful and beautiful analogy! It's great to be in a yoga class, exploring and growing with like-minded souls. Are you going to one?

Yoga tip for this week - take a class

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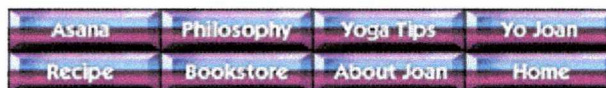
Angels

Angels are big business. We see them in paintings, drawings, trinkets, and all forms of artwork. But angels are not purely artwork or beautiful figments of imagination - they are real. To see one, all you need to do is look in the eyes of a four year old. Or watch young children at play. It takes a little longer to spot angels as adults. They are there though. Look closely into the eyes of a senior. Let their quiet wisdom look into your eyes.



Yoga Tip: You have the beauty of a child, an angel, within you.

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Yoga Tips

On Meditation...

*Practicing a balanced series of yoga postures puts one in a meditative state by balancing the body and breath. This state is a perfect state to begin meditation.

*Breath can calm the nervous system for meditation.

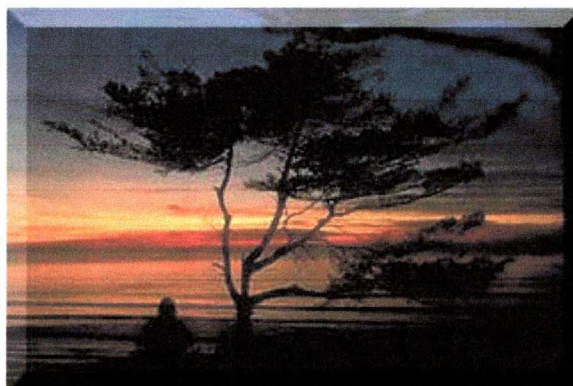
*Meditation can make one more intimately aware. Formerly hidden experiences, or hurtful emotions and memories may surface during meditation. Some suggestions on how to deal with these difficult experiences/emotions are:

- write them down
- work them out in personal therapy
- hatha yoga
- exercise

*Past experiences must be resolved in one's mind to unlayer deeper states of consciousness. Once the past is released, the now can be found.

*Feeling blue, try a sun-salute or two.

*Feeling great, sit right down, and meditate!





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Yoga Tips

On Stages of Meditation...

So you got yourself to actually sit down for awhile. Here's some cliff notes as to what may happen for you as you sit in meditation. The mind moves along into....

Me, me, me, me, me...

I hurt, I need to make a phone call, I need to scratch my nose...



I'm happy, I'm sad....

At this point, one often falls asleep. IF you stay awake, on to next stage...

Disengage. Not "I disengage," but simply watching the "I-ing" as it moves along. The way to release the "I" is to make the observer of the "I" so sturdy that all the muck and yuck of the past can be brought up through the observer.

For example, "This image angers me." changes to:
"This image is associated with anger"

Next step:

"I release the image, the anger releases."

Out of this release emerges either the expansion of ego, or the loss of ego.

As the ego expands, the meditation begins again at the top. Altho the ego emerges as a protection by releasing to us what we can handle, it ultimately becomes a barrier to deeper experiences of meditation. What starts as a protective shield becomes a wall of stone. Keep your chin up for there is always hope. Even stone eventually erodes. The beautiful thing about yoga is that if you do not experience samadhi this time around, there's always next lifetime.

The loss of ego leads one to deeper experiences of consciousness.

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Yoga Tips

Ghostbuster to Stressbuster

I worked as an actress on the original "Ghostbusters" movie in the mid 1980's. I was an extra in it, which means, I was one of scores of actors and actresses used for background filming. I remember one evening of the filming in particular. We were on the rivershore near the beautiful Statue of Liberty in New York City. It was a cold and rainy night. People were getting grumpy from the long hours we were spending outside in the rain. The director finally yelled,



"One more take!" Over the loud speakers played a song recorded by Rita Coolidge, "Your love is taking me higher". Out of pure exhaustion, we started singing and kicking our heels up into the air. Laughter overtook us. The music became like a mantra. I became absorbed in it as I sang and danced in the freezing rain. Soon, I did not notice the cold or the rain. I remember looking at one actress, Patricia, and seeing pure joy on her face as she kicked her heels up alongside me. I don't remember how long this "ecstatic dance" lasted, but it definitely reduced stress levels.

From Ghostbusters to Stressbusters, movement is very important in relieving stress. The hatha yoga postures lead one into a meditative state. Holding the yoga pose for an extended period of time helps one to become calm amidst adversity. The more difficult the pose, the more intense the challenge becomes. Just as the more difficult life challenges become, the more difficult it is to walk the path of peace and joy. It is easy to sing and smile when the sun is shining and life appears harmonious. But when dark

clouds appear, health wains, fair weather friends leave, how does one find peace?

Hatha yoga, meditation, massage.... inroads on the path of peace.

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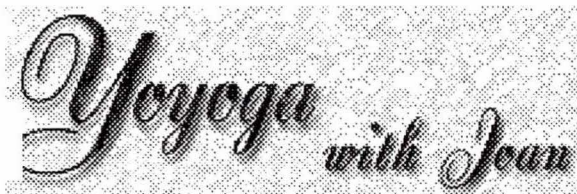
Dear Dean,

Yoga Tip: Read Dr. Dean Ornish's best-selling book, "Program for Reversing Heart Disease."

You do not have to have heart disease to read it. He originally wanted to call his research studies that led to this book, "Effects of Yoga and a Vegetarian Diet on Coronary Heart Disease." He did not get the kind of support he wanted from the medical community with this title, so he changed it to, "Effects of Stress Management Techniques and Dietary Changes on Coronary Heart Disease." He then got enthusiastic support for his research.



This book describes a comprehensive life style program based in yogic principles. Dr. Ornish studied extensively with Swami Satchidananda (Integral Yoga), and considered Swami Satchidananda to be a leading resource for his studies. I highly recommend that you read this book to see the scientific support of a yogic lifestyle. This book also guides you into bringing yoga principles into your life in ways that are simple, meaningful, healing, and life enforcing.



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Yoga Tips

Wise Yogi Tells Us from 'The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga' by Joan Budilovsky and Eve Adamson

If you're feeling depressed or even just a little blue, which should you do: meditation or postures? If you guessed postures, you're right! The action of the postures is designed to move impurities and negativity out of the body. Meditation, on the other hand, involves stillness and concentration. If you are filled with negative feelings, meditation could actually concentrate them and make you feel worse. Meditation is best practiced in a positive frame of mind. Here's a rhyme to help you remember:

If you're down, move around.
Feeling great? Meditate!



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APPEARED ON
ONE DAY -
BOUGHT BY
YOGA INTERNATI
MAGAZINE WIT
FIRST SERIAL
RIGHTS

The Wicked Witch of the West Wing

I follow the yellow-lined road to the emergency room and enter the land of the hospital. It is a foreign land that makes me quickly long for home. I rush to my mother's bedside in intensive care. I am shocked to find her in such poor health. A nurse briskly tells me I can't stay long. Her stern words turn into a blur. I hold my mother's hand. I am not going anywhere. The nurse tells me again I must leave. I look at her. She oddly begins to resemble the wicked witch of the west. I stand firm. Another nurse comes by and through her gentle coaching, I reluctantly move to the waiting room.



While in the waiting room, I observe the large paintings of men in charge of the hospital. Which one is the real Wizard? Which intensive care curtain is he hiding behind? I remember back a year ago when my loved one was in another life and death struggle. We were at this very same hospital. There was a beautiful kind nurse who comforted us then. I even wrote a letter of recommendation of her to the President of the hospital. Perhaps this kind nurse is here tonight! I pick up the hospital phone and try to locate this nurse. I am told she will be working from 11-6 the next day. A deep breath follows in knowing I will be seeing her gentle face tomorrow in this foreign land. Tired and scared, I slowly drift away into a deep sleep in the waiting room chair.

Upon awakening, the beautiful kind nurse from my past walks up. I am so truly happy to

see her gentle face. Her eyes shining brightly.

I jump up from my seat, "Remember Me?"

Of course I remember you!" she replies.

I give her the biggest heart-felt hug I can remember. It is such a relief to see her steady presence amidst all the turmoil of personalities around me and in me. I feel true love for this kind nurse. She starts telling me that my mother is doing much better and that she is sorry she appeared cold last night. She was under a lot of stress....

AAAAAAAH! It's the WICKED WITCH! In my exhausted, delusional state, I thought she was the good nurse from the past! I begin to sob.

"I'm sorry, I c-c-can't help it," I sputter through my tears, embarrassed by my obvious weakness.

She quickly comforts me and tells me she understands how concerned and exhausted I must be. She does not know that I am so exhausted I thought she was someone else! She hugs me. Not a phoney hug, but a hug that radiates sincere warmth and kindness. My fears, my defenses, melt away.

From that point on, the nurse of the west wing went out of her way to answer questions and concerns. She continued to be caring to my sick loved one. Her eyes met mine as a kindred spirit. I am thinking of writing a letter of recommendation....

**Removing veils of illusions.
Uncovering satya.**

There's no place like om.

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Yoga Tips

Your finger on the pulse

Try this exercise for increasing your self-awareness through movement:

Stand in the middle of a room. Close your eyes. Feel where your body exists in space:

Your feet, your legs, your hips, your stomach and back, your chest, your arms and hands, your neck, and your head.

Notice everything, but don't move until you feel an inner impulse to move.

Then, notice how the movement feels.



-----Excerpt from the book, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage" by Joan Budilovsky and Eve Adamson

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Yoga Tips

Bliss Byte

Sometimes stress is purely a matter of mismanaged time. When you spend too much time dwelling in the past or worrying about the future, you waste a lot of time in the present. Meditation helps to bring your awareness back to the present, opening up an eternity in the now. That's why it's so important to let go of your worries, fears, and even hopes and joys when you meditate. Focus only on the present in its calm "hereness."



-----Excerpt from the book, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Meditation" by Joan Budilovsky and Eve Adamson

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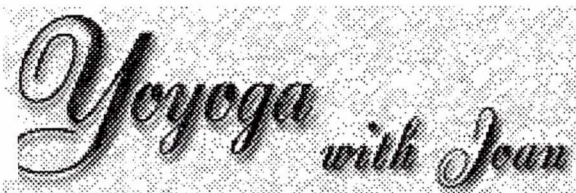
Meditation Marvel

"Before you judge someone, walk in their shoes for a day." You've probably heard this expression, said in various ways. "If you were me, you'd understand." Certainly these expressions make sense, but when one is in the throws of a negative emotion, it is very hard to dislodge the momentum and "walk in the other person's shoes." When you are angry with another person, or even hateful towards them, why the heck would you want to walk in their shoes anyway? This is where a regular meditation practice can be most helpful.



Meditation helps one to observe one's own emotions and not become too attached to them. It helps one to alter the expression "I am angry," to "I am feeling angry." Meditation helps you to realize that you are not the emotion. The emotion is passing through you. You have the ability to remove yourself from the emotion and to realize that you have the control to change it and consequently your perceptions. Pantajali defines yoga as the "quieting of the constant fluctuations of the mind."

Yoga Tip: Meditation leads to compassionate liberation.



Yoga Tips

Vegetarians Combine!

It is amazing that we live in a world that "grows" thinking, sensitive, feeling animals to slaughter and eat. In yoga, we develop a sensitivity to the "oneness" of life. The mantra of "om" refers to this. As we move along the yoga path, we begin to see how truly senseless and incredibly cruel this slaughter of animals is. There is absolutely no need for it. We can live well and even healthier on a vegetarian diet. However, and this is a BIG however, it would take a personal effort in re-education to learn how to eat well as a vegetarian.



What happens to most people as they transition into vegetarianism, is that they cut meat out of their diet and continue everything else the same. The point is, the rest of the meal is usually not healthy by itself. People eat "side dishes" with their meat that eaten alone are often incomplete. So, the key word for vegetarians is...COMBINATIONS! The right combinations of food is what a healthy vegetarian diet consists of. Beans with rice or pasta with peas, or other assorted combinations of ingredients are needed to supply adequate nutrition. French fries and a milkshake are not enough for a complete meal...in fact, not enough for anything.

If your life is evolving into a vegetarian way, I encourage you to read the book I am currently reading by Dr. Rudolph Ballentine called, "Transition to Vegetarianism." It will take you through a step-by-step process of eliminating meat from your diet; a

process that is gradual and long lasting. It took a long time to build to the slaughterhouse mentality we are enculturated in. We, each one of us as individuals, have the capacity to alter our existence into one that is truly reflective of ahimsa (non violence). We are living in the computer age. An age where our minds are making incredible technological advances. Let's use our minds compassionately towards all of life. We are all in this together.

Om shanti, shanti, shanti.

All,
every sentient creature,
all of creation,
peace, peace, peace.

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Pause, Listen

Compliment someone today that you do not know. If you are a male, compliment another male. If you are a female, compliment another female. (I recommend this so that it is not for flirtatious reasons that the compliment occurs.) Notice someone and remark about their impressive voice, their kindness in opening a door, their calming expression. Say it with sincerity. Do not just make up something to say. Notice. Look. Observe. The complements are there just waiting to be discovered. All it takes is for you to pause, listen, notice.



Namaste = honoring the divinity within.

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Yoga Tips

Shhhh...listen

It's that time of the year in the midwest when the crickets sing at night. It's an incredibly beautiful sound. The crickets all get together at night and have a big party, but if you go outside, you can't really see them. You hear them loud and clear...but where are they? Their beautiful voices surround you, but they seem mysteriously out of sight.



There is so much in this world that is very real, but out of our sight. There are dimensions to reality that our dreams sometimes catch a glimpse of, but as soon as the conscious mind gets involved...poof! What happened? There are dimensions to reality that a meditation practice can uncover. It takes time. And it happens while we are fully conscious! When these dimensions are uncovered, they do not disappear. They become a part of reality. They are reality. They are new dimensions to our consciousness. They have always been there...but now they are seen.

The crickets sing so beautifully. It is a consistent sound of many colors. Shhhhhh. Listen. Om.

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Yoga Tips

Medical Mania...the 2nd Anniversary

It's important to know who you are dealing with when you seek advice. Just as it is important to know the history of who wrote the history books. I am currently in Ph.D studies in education, amazing how the history of education is flavored by the history of the author. So, here is a little something about a current day or two in my life to keep Yoyoga readers "aware"...



Just another average day...a neurologist visit in the morning, a heart specialist in the afternoon, a DCFS interview for my upcoming foster child a little later, yoga classes in between, reaching out to loved ones and medically trained strangers hoping to find some answers to unanswered medical questions.

Unlike many other choices in my life, I did not want to be involved with the medical profession. My experience with the medical field had been extremely limited. 'If it's not broke, don't fix it' has been my mentality. Preventative health care has been my focus. That was before September 1998 when the damn broke. First my mom had a major stroke, then my brother died shortly later, my dad had major medical concerns, my twin sister's husband was requiring full time nursing care. Medical health care became a sudden priority. My sister's focus, many states away, was on her husband's health care. Mine was on my parents' next door. I, who had stayed as far away from the medical field as possible, now had (and has) a life full of medical questions, struggles, and

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ongoing explorations.

Amidst the seemingly occasional informed and caring medical doctor, I have also dealt with some very insulting and condescending ones...in fact one MD, just yesterday, openly insulted me for asking as many questions as I did. The 10 minute office visit was painful. I openly confronted him on his hostility. He looked away. On more than one occasion in the visit, I visualized a fist fight with him. I left his office confused and angry. I went home and did "Warrior" poses. I called and contacted friends for advice. Obviously, my parents and I will not be returning for more of his medical expertise in his large, leathered, office on Ogden Avenue in Hinsdale. I will continue my search, though, for answers from caring and informed doctors. And in the meantime, I am sending the Doctor from yesterday a little note:

"Dr X:

In a few short years, when you are my parents age, I hope that you will have someone in your life who cares about your health care as much as I care about their's.

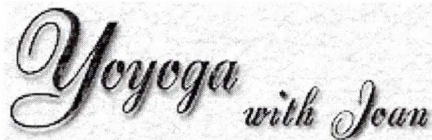
Sincerely,
Joan Budilovsky
Health care Author and Columnist"

Although I never mailed the letter physically, in yogic thought, my note has already been sent, many times. It has played out in my mind often for the last few days. From a yogic perspective, we are more than physical actions, we are also the energy we put forth. I realize I must work to clear my energy. In this way, I can make clearer and wiser choices that are not clouded by shifting emotions - whether these emotions be of mine or others.

A dear friend just wrote to me that, "our personal trials and tribulations affect our professional perspectives." He is so wise. And so, I am sharing a slice of life about me, to you, in this Yoyoga Tip of September 2000. It is the second anniversary of my involvement with medical mania. Perhaps it will help you to understand better the flavors you receive from the writings of this yogini

Wishing you, most sincerely, a healthy day in every way.

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The Power of Non-Violence

Dr. Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and founder of the Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, in his June 9 lecture at the University of Puerto Rico, shared the following story as an example of nonviolence in parenting:

"I was 16 years old and living with my parents at the institute my grandfather had founded 18 miles outside of Durban, South Africa, in middle of the sugar plantations. We were deep in the country and had no neighbors, so my two sisters and I would always look forward to going to town to visit friends or go to the movies. One day, my father asked me to drive him to town for an all-day conference, and I jumped at the chance. Since I was going to town, my mother gave me a list of groceries she needed and, since I had all day in town, my father ask me to take care of several pending chores, such as getting the car serviced.



When I dropped my father off that morning, he said, 'I will meet you here at 5:00 p.m., and we will go home together.'

After hurriedly completing my chores, I went straight to the nearest movie theatre. I got so engrossed in a John Wayne double-feature that I forgot the time. It was 5:30 before I remembered. By the time I ran to the garage and got the car and hurried to where my father was waiting for me, it was almost 6:00.

He anxiously asked me, 'Why were you late?'

I was so ashamed of telling him I was watching a John Wayne western movie that I said, 'The car wasn't ready, so I had to wait,' not realizing that he had already called the garage.

When he caught me in the lie, he said: 'There's something wrong in the way I brought you up that didn't give you the confidence to tell me the truth. In order to figure out where I went wrong with you, I'm going to walk home 18 miles and think about it.'

So, dressed in his suit and dress shoes, he began to walk home in the dark on mostly unpaved, unlit roads. I couldn't leave him, so for five-and-a-half hours I drove behind him, watching my father go through this agony for a stupid lie that I uttered. I decided then and there that I was never going to lie again.

I often think about that episode and wonder, if he had punished me the way we punish our children, whether I would have learned a lesson at all. I don't think so. I would have suffered the punishment and gone on doing the same thing. But this single non-violent action was so powerful that it is still as if it happened yesterday. That is the power of non-violence."

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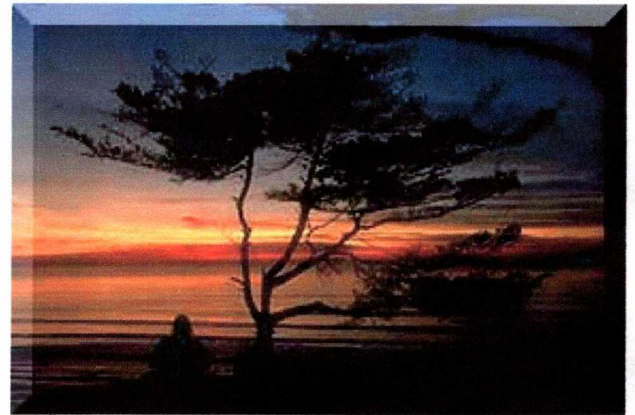


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Yoga Tips

Tippety Tap

Does your system need an immune boost? We are entering the flu season, so every body listen up close....tap your sternum. The sternum is the top part of the center of your rib cage. Tap it and sing a song. The singing makes it more fun. Your voice vibrates as you tap. Some say this activates your heart chakra. I it activates your immune system, which warms r heart chakra. What have you got to loose? Tarzan did something close to this as he pounded his chest. Tarzan certainly had some good stamina. But all I am suggesting is some gentle tapping. Helloooo in there.



Shanti.

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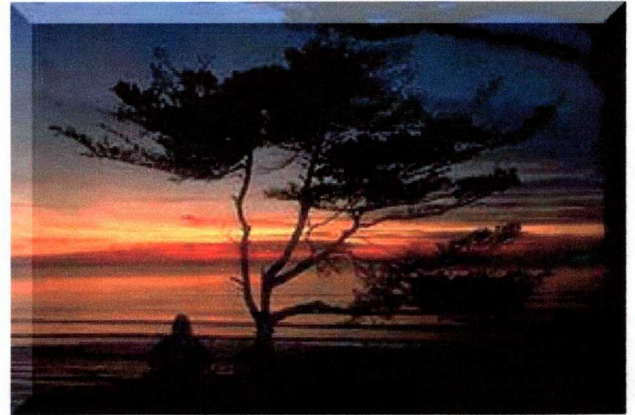
Yoga Tips

One less turkey this Thanksgiving...

I first read "Diet for a Small Planet" by Frances Moore Lappe in 1982. Eighteen years later, I still refer people to it who are looking to become vegetarians. As a teacher, it never ceases to amaze me that the same schools that support a healthier mind are stocked with the unhealthiest of foods. It is so completely

ocritical to have a system that is created to expand
ds offer mind expanding snacks consisting mainly
of fritos and pepsi. Take a walk on the wild side of the
cafeterias in any public school and you will find Pizza

Hut, KFC, and an assortment of french fried meats from fast food chain monopolies.



It is very difficult to be a vegetarian in our society. I certainly have struggled with it myself. However, I believe educational institutions have a responsibility to educate on all levels of body and mind. Vegetarianism needs to be taught in schools. As a teacher of yoga and the exploration of principles of non-violence, many college students approach me in their desperate quest for new eating habits. They turn to me looking for vegetarian encouragement and suggestions. As their bodies become healthier, they come to realize the violence associated with the meat industry. Yoga is a path of expanding consciousness. As sensitivities increase, the pain and suffering from the world within and without also becomes more realized. Chanting "om" before heading off to a lunch of big macs somehow does not cut it. Certainly fast food chains that make a living off of processed foods and drug induced dead meats are not in any hurry to change the status quo. The new improved whopper is just around the corner...

Self help books abound in answering the problems of suffering. The manual on 'how to be

happy in a sad world,' is a perpetual best seller. Each new best seller is said to hold the key to the door of happiness; Oddly, this slightly opened door regularly jams until the new best-seller comes out with a new key to this ever jammed door. "Diet for a small planet" needs to be a part of high school curriculums. Vegetarian diets and lifestyles need to be taught in schools. We must start to look at education as more than educating minds. We are educating bodies too.

lymind as one. The spirituality is in our realization that each of us are not only responsible for our own self realization but are also responsible for slaughter houses (directly or indirectly) that prevent the full awareness of this realization.

Shanti.

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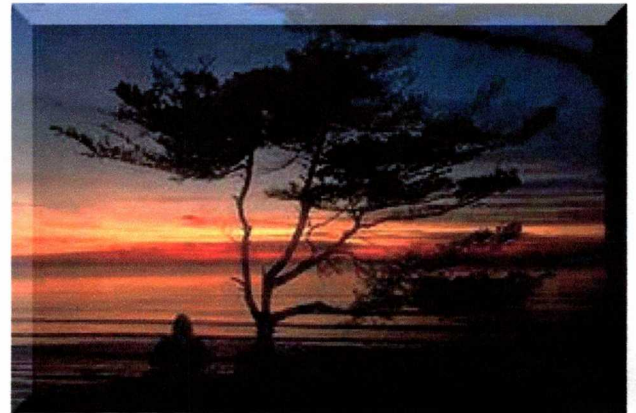


Yoga Tips

Excerpt from the new "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga, 2nd edition" by Joan Budilovsky and Eve Adamson

Page 314:

Yoga helps us simplify our lives, our emotions, and our material concerns. The study of yoga can help us gain perspective on what is important. It can help us detach from our competitive selves and see our bodies and minds as oases of self-discovery. Shavasana, the corpse pose, helps us to explore death within life. We can also discover that the limits of our body do not define our existence. Our existence is interconnected with the joys and sorrows of all life, including the bee on the porch, the bird in the air, the snake on the path, the fish in the water. Letting ourselves be with, and be one with, all of life can open up truth to our minds and hearts."



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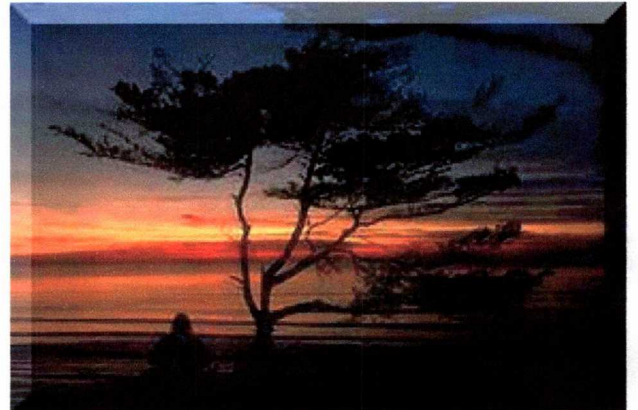


Yoga Tips

Excerpt from the new "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga, 2nd edition" by Joan Budilovsky and Eve Adamson

"Here are a few breath-savvy concepts to keep in mind while practicing your asanas:

- Inhalation most often occurs when your chest opens, your limbs extend outward or upward, and your head is up.
- Exhalation most often occurs when your chest contracts inward, your limbs move close to your body, your head is down, and your body curls into itself.
- Retaining the breath after an inhalation helps stabilize and energize the chest area.
- Retaining the breath after an exhalation helps stabilize and energize the abdominal area and releases toxins from the body.
- Forward-bending poses are conducive to exhalation, then retention.
- Backbending poses are conducive to inhalation, then retention."



Yoyoga with Joan



**January 1, 2001
Issue 97**

**"Just as a man casts off worn-out clothes
and puts on new ones, so also the embodied
Self casts off worn-out bodies..."
----Bhagavad Gita, 2-22**



The next update of Yoyoga will be February 1, 2001. In January, Joan will be away at a Sivananda Yoga Ashram in the Bahamas studying yoga therapy with Sandra McLanahan M.D. Joan's bi-weekly updates will resume February 1.

To Find Out More About Joan's New 2001 Classes, [Click Here!](#)

Web Site Awards:



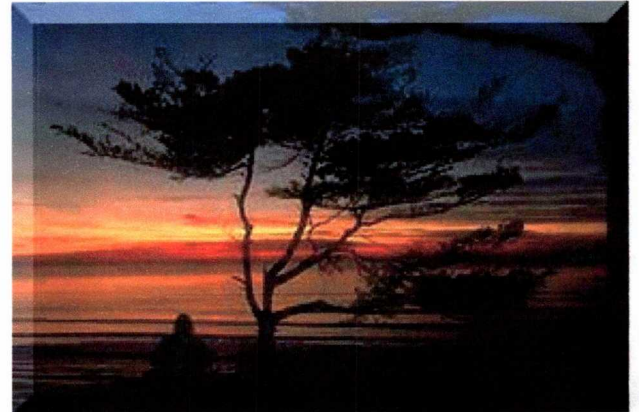


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Yoga Tips

2001: An Earth Odyssey

When the film, "2001: A Space Odyssey" came out years ago when I was a child, it was a movie fantasy of a distant time and place. In weeks to come, as the movie screen images replayed across my mind, I marveled at the thought of the future and building colonies on the moon. What would living in 2001 really be like? It was so, so far away...



Here it is! And we are not yet building colonies on the moon! Yet I have embarked on a journey of uncovering deeper planetary aspects within my being. The sun/moon influences that harbor within our existence. I have been growing to realize that it is not necessary to travel to the moon to realize the physical effects the moon brings into our lives. The moon orbits around me/us. I/we orbit around the sun. The sun and the moon are symbolic of our relationship to each other, and to ourselves.

As we continue our earth odyssey together, the orbits continue. Movement is constant...orbits, heartbeats, breaths, lives. Uniting this movement into a balanced state of consciousness is Yoga. We can not stop this movement on this earth. It is beyond our control. A greater force moves us. It is bigger than both of us!

Yoga is learning to work with the gravitational forces (karma) of our existence. Whether these forces are physical or mental. The Yoga Journey is a travel into deeper levels of consciousness and understanding. It is 2001: An Earth Odyssey. An exciting, evolving time for all of us. Welcome Aboard!!

Yoga Tips

BAHAMA MAMA

I have to admit it folks, it has not been easy coming back from my yoga retreat last month in the Bahamas. I came back to a whirlwind of classes (as student and teacher), with back assignments that were due, foggy freezing weather, etc., etc., Not that the Bahamas started out that great either...let me tell you about it...



I arrived late Friday afternoon. My plane had been delayed and I arrived just in time for the afternoon rush hour. After gathering my luggage at the Bahamian airport, I got into a beat up station wagon, that was termed a "taxi." The driver asked me if I had been to the Bahamas before. I said yes (when I was 16). He then told me "Don't worry, I am going to take you through the back roads." So, we drove down some back roads to get to my destination.

Then he pulled off a dirt road and said, "Don't worry, I have to get some gas."

I noticed that the back door handles were off. I asked him and he said they had to get fixed.

He said, "Don't worry." I worried.

We pulled up to the gas station in the middle of nowhere. Other "taxis" were there too. I breathed a sigh of relief. After the fill up, back on the road..."Don't worry, I am going to take you on some more side roads to avoid traffic."

As I watched from my back window, I marveled at the sites before me. Beautiful people, beautiful colors.

"Don't worry, I am taking you through the slums of the Bahamas." Almost forgetting, I started worrying again.

"Don't worry this is worst section of Bahamas we in now." Gulp.

We finally made it to my destination. I paid him more than he expected. I was so worried by then I almost offered him my whole wallet.

"Thank you for getting me here," I honestly said.

Off to the retreat. A beautiful sanctuary down the beach from "Club Med" and "Atlantis." A quiet and serene sanctuary. I settled my bags into the dorm room on the beautiful Bahamian bay. Five beds scattered around the small and simple hut. I would be sharing the room with four other women I had never met. The room sighed of simplicity and I was most grateful. I soon took a walk around the ashram and noticed some huts right on the ocean. I asked if any of those rooms might be available (I dreamt of being on the ocean, you see, not that there is anything wrong with bays). I was told yes, but the ocean huts were more expensive.

Ever thrifty, I replied, "That's ok. Bays are beautiful. I'll stay where I am." This is the first clue to a thickening plot, for one never goes on a yoga retreat to "stay where one is."

I soon settled down to a wonderful vegetarian dinner with fellow yogis and listened to some soul soothing mantras before retiring to my dorm room on the bay.

I was exhausted - hardly any sleep the night before in anticipation of my travels. One other person was already sleeping in the dorm room when I got there. The other roommates were not around. I quickly and quietly changed into my pajamas and got under the covers of my little bed. Ommm...sweet om.....

SUDDENLY THE ROOF SHOOK!

"WHO LET THE DOGS OUT...UH UH UHUH!"

I shot up in bed!

A cruise ship parked in the bay right outside our dorm room. The music blasted, shaking my eardrums and rattling the roof of our little hut! I could not believe what I was hearing!

I said to my roommate, "What in the world?!" She did not respond....she was sleeping.

The music roared. I put the pillow over my ears. It did not help. The dogs were howling, painfully loud. I sat up in bed.

I looked at my roommate curled up in her bed across the room. "I can not believe you are sleeping through this?" I squeaked in between thundering base notes. She was fast asleep.

I started to laugh. I teach meditation. Surely I can get past this insanity.

"H, UH, UHUH!"

In my maddening meditations, I realized the paradise I arrived to was really hell! This was truly a downward dog experience!!!

I laid back in bed. My laughter turned to anger. I got up, put a jacket on over my pajamas and went to the "front desk" hut.

"I would like to change to an ocean side hut."

"They're all filled." she replied.

"No they're not," I firmly retorted. "I saw one earlier."

"Yes they are."

"No they're not. I can show you one that is empty."

"JESUS CHRIST!!!!" she yelled. Impatient with my impatience.

She angrily grabbed the keys and told me to show her which room was empty. She ran ahead of me towards the beach huts. I toddled behind in my slippers, stubbing my toes along the uneven path.

"Great retreat you have here!" I sarcastically growled up to her. Not that she would have heard me, Ricky Martin was now singing full blast.

"LIVIN' THE VIDA LOCA!"

Eventually, with so much ado about everything, I settled into my new ocean hut with a new roommate, who, coincidentally (if that is possible) was from Chicago. The ocean waves drowned out the fourth and final round of Vida Loca. Whatever ship sounds blasted next were soothed away by ocean sounds. Thank God for oceans.

The next day I rose early for yoga class by the beach. I watched the waves and breathed a sigh of relief waiting for my teacher to appear. I closed my eyes. I heard the teacher sit in front of me. I opened my eyes. It was the same person who yelled at me last night!

"Let us begin by balancing our emotions with alternate nostril breathing," she serenely stated.

Her eyes were closed; secure now in her serenity. Traces of Vida Loca drifted through my mind as I tried to relax. Regretfully, I slipped out of class early and avoided this teacher the rest of my stay. I say regretfully because unfinished karma biz makes it inevitable that the next time around won't be as easy. There is no such thing as avoidance when it comes to karma!

And so began my yoga retreat. The cruise ship only parked there that first night. My time at the retreat turned into a time of inner reflections, lots of yoga classes, lots of sunflower seed picking for our dinner salads, lectures on the Dean Ornish Program for Reversing Heart Disease and Cancer, and satsang sharing amongst beautiful people. I learned a lot from others. I learned a lot about myself, although time will tell how well I learned.

I briefly entered another world while at this wonderful ashram. During one yoga class, my sweat smelled as when I was a child. A strange unexpected observance, but a true one. For a moment, I was a child. It overwhelmed my senses. Then the scent faded. I tried to bring it back. It only happened once.

Jagatamba, the vivacious senior yogini who appeared later in the retreat, became an inspiration to me as to what I can aspire to in my yoga practice. Through her encouragement, the story of Ramayana is awaiting another reading from me.

A snake greeted me one morning outside my door. It stood up. Stunned, I stopped in my tracks, then studied him and said softly, "Good Morning, Snake." He nodded and slithered away. I felt at one with nature.

It's been hard settling back into life in Chicago. I do love it here, though. There is much to be done here. It's not like the Bahamas (or is it?), but it's definitely home. As I look for the book of Ramayana, I dream of reading it on the shores of Lake Michigan...

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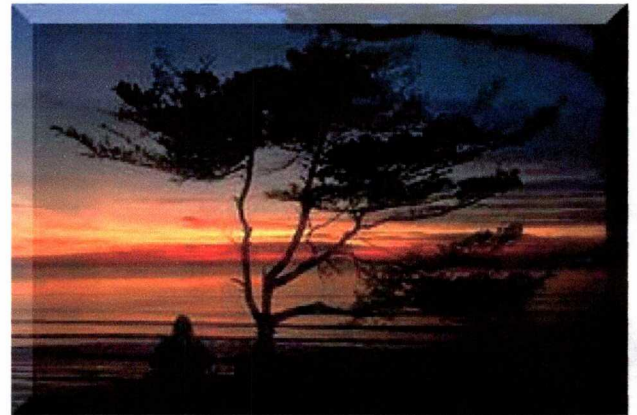
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Yoga Tips

Sidhartha

If you have not read the book, "Sidhartha," now is the time. It is a Pulitzer Prize winning book written by Herman Hesse. It was first published in 1951. It is now published in paperback by Bantam Books for only \$4.95. Click here to order it at: [Amazon](#). It is a book small in size but large in stature. Sidhartha is the story of one man's path toward self

ization. It is the story of birth and rebirth, death and , the indwelling eternal self. There are many paths to truth, but its realization can not be taught, only learned through self actualization. Although great teachers and saints may come into our paths to point the way, it is only through our self-actualization that truth can be realized. An external God pardons our humanity, an internal God awakens our divinity. A divinity that transcends boundaries, names and descriptions and dwells in the eternal spirit of life. Om.



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Yoga Tips

Yoga, Om

Yoga means union or yoking. Om means all, all encompassing.

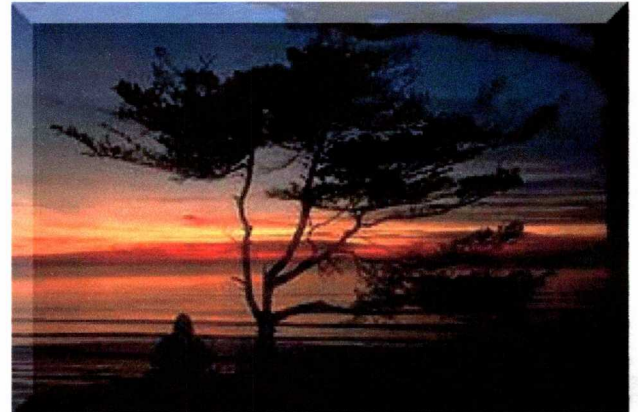
I teach yoga. Through teaching, I learn so very much. Each quarter, at the college where I teach, I have

students write a final paper on a Yama. They choose one of the five yamas to write about: non-violence, truthfulness, non stealing, non lusting, or non greed.

Each quarter I am amazed at the depth of feelings, understanding, and openness revealed in the papers I receive. Each quarter, I put a book together of the students writings. I tell them ahead of time that I will be putting the book together, but each quarter it still surprises some students.

Yesterday, as the papers were handed in, one of the students asked in class if she could have her name taken off in the book so others will not know it was her who wrote the paper. I was surprised, but I said, that was fine. I asked if anyone else would like their name removed from their paper for the final book...a majority of the class raised their hands!

Now, you have to understand, these students are very articulate and the papers are quite amazing, yet the majority of students wanted to be anonymous in the book. It never crossed my mind that anyone would not want their name on their paper!! I asked my next class, and it was the same response! A majority of people would prefer that their name not be on their final paper in the book.



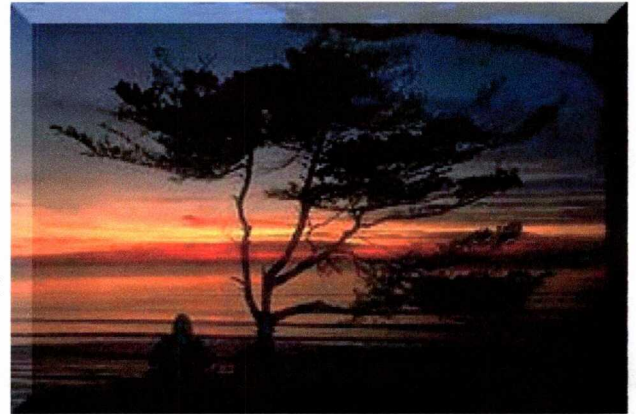


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Yoga Tips

Yoga and Massage

As you know, two subjects dear to my heart are yoga and massage. The tip today is information that you may find helpful in these areas. First of all, I get many letters regarding specific health problems and how yoga and/or massage can be of help. It is often difficult to answer specific questions in a letter, although I try my best. Both yoga and massage are personal journeys that are to be personally practiced to experience the results. They are truly hands on approaches to health.



A new book I worked on that just came out this month is called, "Yoga the Path to Holistic Health." The author is BKS Iyengar. He is an internationally recognized Hatha Yoga Master. He is from India and has written many books on the subject of Yoga. He is now in his 80's and still teaching and lecturing around the world. Many schools and hospitals have been highly influenced by his teachings. I have never met Mr. Iyengar, nor am I paid royalties on the sales of his book. I was hired by the publisher as the US Consultant on the book. I reviewed the text and offered my suggestions and comments. I highly recommend this book to you.

"Yoga the Path to Holistic Health" is an encyclopedia of hatha yoga. It offers a series of poses to work with yoga as therapy for a wide assortment of conditions or ailments. The conditions in the book are wide and varied. Many of the conditions are conditions that Yoyoga readers have written to me about. A small sampling includes: headaches, insomnia, colds, indigestion, alcoholism, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, fatigue, epilepsy, cancer. The book is quite comprehensive and thorough. The yoga therapy theory is based on the massage of the internal

organs. Holding yoga poses for a series of breaths can condition the organs and create a healthier body. This book is a treasure chest of information.

On the Massage Therapy front, there is a new House Bill 2271 being presented for State Law. This bill will regulate the practice of massage therapy through licensure requirements. Massage come along way in the past two decades in the United States. Although massage has been successfully used in hospitals and healing associations within other countries for centuries, it is only recently that massage therapy has been recognized as a legitimate healing profession here in the United States. Our national Government's Office of Alternative Medicine has been supporting numerous recent studies and research into the documented benefits and healing aspects of massage. For more information on this bill and the advancement it will do for the Massage Therapy profession, contact Dennis Hill of the Advanced Anatomy Massage Academy in Villa Park, Illinois at 630-832-4217 or toll free 888-832-4232. AAMA is a school for Massage Therapists and Dennis Hill, its founder, has been a strong advocate for the advancement of this bill. Whether or not you are interested in the political ramifications of this bill, you might still be interested in calling the school to book a student massage. I get no royalties from this school either. I simply believe in the benefits of massage and in the benefits of yoga. And, I sincerely wish the very best for you..

Yours in peace,

Om

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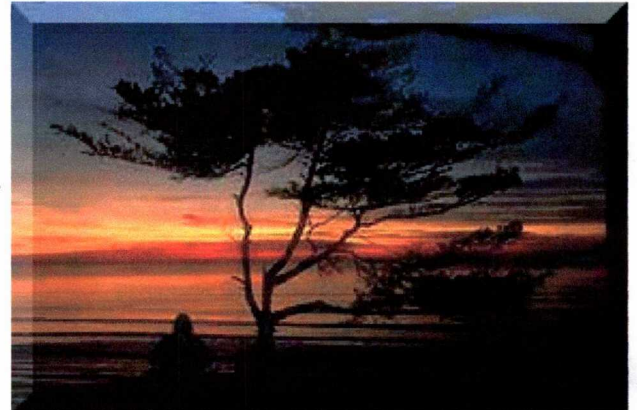


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Yoga Tips

Just whistle a hamburger tune!

Not too long ago, I went into a popular fast food chain and heard some music around the corner. I love music. I went around the corner of the store and found children laughing and smiling around a large plastic tree that the music was coming out of. The branches of the tree did not have leaves, instead hamburgers were hanging from the branches. Of course! It was the Hamburger Tree!! What a witty idea! It charmed the children and had them all singing its catchy tune. They told their parents..."We Want hamburgers, skoo-be-doo-be-doo!" The parents smiled and ran to the counter to order their kids hamburgers. They love to see their kids smiling. I love to see kids smiling too.



Where are the hamburger trees in England? We apparently have so many of those trees here in the US. I don't exactly know where they all are, but we have hamburgers everywhere! Surely, the hamburger trees are blooming quite well here. I hear, though, that England gets their hamburgers in a whole other way. It's horrifying. They get their hamburgers from dead cows!!!

The people of England are aghast over the thousands and thousands of cows and other animals being currently slaughtered from a rampant disease that is feared to be infecting the herds. The people of England are horrorstruck! The government is going into the countrysides and killing massive herds of animals. Dead carcasses of animals are scattered all across the beautiful England terrain. It's ugly! It's shocking! It's slaughter!! Death is flamboyantly everywhere over there!! The farmers are crying. The parents are crying. The children are crying. Everyone is horrified! Where are they going to get their hamburgers now?

Welcome to America!! We have lots of hamburger trees here, skoo-be-doo-be-doo!



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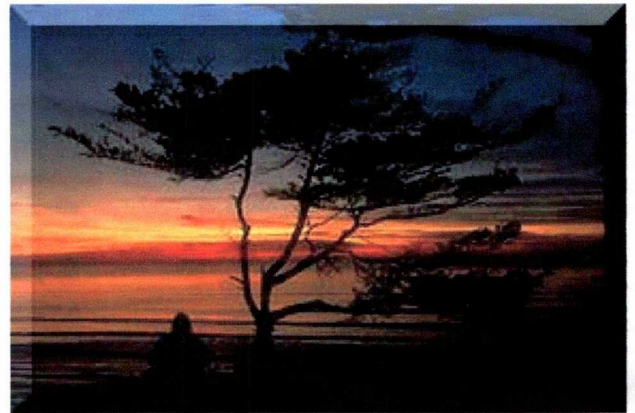
Yoga Tips

Om sweet Om

Excerpt from "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga, 2nd Edition"

Om is a common mantra because it's designed to invoke a universal perspective: You see your body/mind in relation to its place in the big picture. In Sanskrit, Om is spelled "aum," and each letter is a red symbol:

- "a" represents the self in the material world
- "u" represents the psychic realm
- "m" represents indwelling spiritual light



Chanting "Om" unifies your perceptions so you can sense yourself as an integral part of the universe. Gradually, the chant helps you shed everything that separates you from the universe - all your negativity, illusions, and misperceptions of yourself and the world. Om is a great mantra for anyone. Don't be embarrassed! Give it a try!

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Yoga Tips

Karma Canoe

Based in the theory of reincarnation, we are all born on wheels. These wheels are wheels of karma. One action causes a reaction. Most of us are so busy rollin' on our wheels, we roll right down into the river and into an ever increasing and tumulus current. And here, we jump into our karma canoe...

... paddle as hard as we can, but the karma current is VERY strong. It is developed over many life times. In our tumulus ride, we might be overthrown and taken in by the rapid waters, or we might hit a damn. But with the timelessly exquisite crafting of our karma canoe, whatever our twisted adventure, we can count on rollin' down the river again, right into the next water fall, or the next damn, or the next...



Each of us comes into this world with slightly different karma canoes. For example, if someone pushes me, I might hit them with my paddle, you might move over, someone else might paddle away, or make a joke about it (and get beat up even more, perhaps). We are locked in the currents of our karma canoe until our awareness heightens and we realize there are other ways to react. These reactions bring about different actions, and the currents begin to change. We then become more active, rather than reactive. We begin to see the inner power we have. We are not simply tossed by the currents. As we row, we are strengthening and building the karma canoe. With every breath we take, we are even influencing the waters that move us.

The yoga philosophy sees the body and mind as one - if one is thinking so, one is doing so. Real change can not happen until self awareness is heightened, heightened to a level of significant depth. Some might call this "enlightenment" (Yogananda), others "compassion" (Dalli Lama), still others "perspective, paradigms and possibilities in curriculum." (Schubert).

Children learn very well. Why not bring children sooner to the realization that to "know thyself" is the greatest treasure one can give this world. Perhaps if more children were encouraged to respect and listen to the voice within, they will be less likely to follow the inequities of the societal voices without - many powerful voices of history. The histories forged by wars and prejudices. Sometimes so subtle, always so powerful.

Meditation fosters a deep respect for individual expression. Children are naturally so creative...before they get locked into the external systems of inequities that our society, our schools, our cultures, ourselves, have so neatly constructed for them. Some of us just don't know how to get out of our systemized crazed canoes. Children will help us find a way. To watch a child discover life, is like being born again oneself.

Surely, we have built strong currents for our children to travel into, very difficult currents to maneuver. We feebly try to hand them a paddle or two, but many of us are barely staying above water ourselves. In fact, some of us are sinking fast....Help!!!

Children naturally question and explore the magnificence of their karma canoes. A magnificence found through the inner reflections of their physical discoveries. As the societal walls and structures begin to build around their open and creative minds, a meditation practice can help to remind them that they have the power within to continue to alter the currents and build a brand new transcendent canoe. For those adults caught in a sinking canoe....there is a child that has the creative power to create a glorious new canoe for you too.

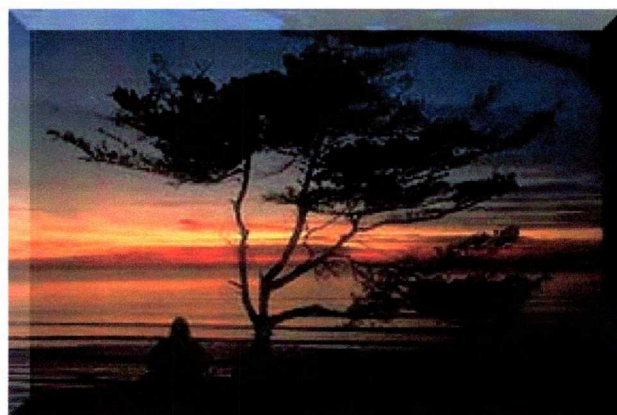
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Yoga Tips

Excerpt from "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage" Your Finger on the Pulse

Got pain? Have a ball! Press a softball into a muscle spasm or trigger point, such as in a biceps, shoulder muscle, or hip, and roll it around. Or for hard to reach areas such as your back or buttocks, put a tennis ball against a firm surface, and then lie gently on the ball so it can move over the painful spot. Don't practice this technique over areas of inflammation or injury.



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Yoga Tips

The Many Miracles of Massage

Here's some of the things massage can do for you...that is right, FOR YOU!

Improve Circulation

Relieve Congestion

Increase Red Blood Cells

Release Muscle Tension

Relieve Muscle Spasms

Increase Blood supply and nutrition to muscles

Reduce lactic acid build up in muscles

Improve Muscle Tone

Delay Muscle Atrophy

Eases strain of blood circulation on vital organs

Prevents formation of scarring in muscle tissues

Improves Nervous System Functioning

Can help burst fat capsules in subcutaneous tissues...Be Gone Cellulite!

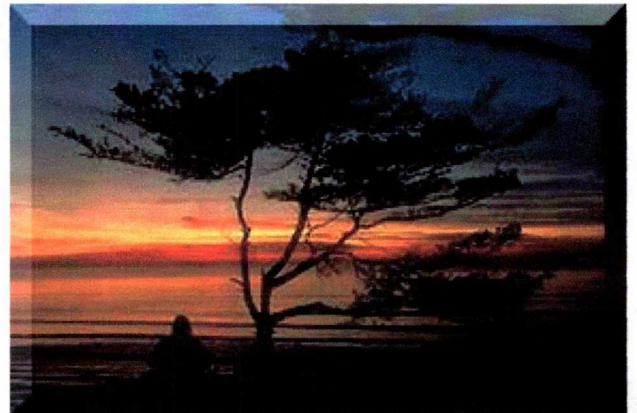
Heightens Healthy Tissue Metabolism

Massage helps to retain nitrogen phosphorous and sulfur necessary for healing bone fractures.

Reduces or Eliminates Edema

Lessens pain and facilitates joint movement

Aids Stagnant Elimination System



Just one of the above is reason enough to get a massage today. Yoga Tip for today - Book a Massage right now!



Yoga Tips

Notes from an Undertaker's Daughter...

I remember an exhilarating game of double dutch jump rope with my sister, Jane, and our neighborhood friends, Valerie and Mary Beth. We were about ten years old. The sun was bright, the air was cool. We jumped and laughed and challenged each other to jump more. I remember looking up at the leisurely drifting clouds above us as my skip became faster and faster. It seemed the slower the clouds, the faster the ropes twirled. It took skill to jump between the two ropes, changing paces, yet remaining poised and steady - body and mind in harmony. The two opposing ropes came from opposite directions, uniting through the graceful movements of our bodies. It was an incredible time, an incredible game.



Afterwards, our friends returned to their homes and our sister and I ran around the corner to ours. Still laughing and beaming, we charged into the office. There, our smiles came face to face with the sullen faces of deep despair. A family sat in the office mourning their loved one who had just passed away, tear stained faces, sobbing shoulders.. Our home was a funeral home. Our father, a most compassionate man, the Undertaker.

The reality of death flushed across my being like the winds had just flushed across my face. Stunned by the sobs, we quickly stopped laughing and bowed our heads. As quickly as we slowly could, we maneuvered our way to the staircase to run to our family apartment upstairs. I was embarrassed by my laughter that was halted so suddenly by the tears of the grief stricken family. My father remained calm through our interruption. He softly introduced us as we scurried up the stairs. He never reprimanded us, instead he introduced us as his children. This was a scene that played out regularly in my childhood.

"Why can't we live in a normal home?!" I often complained to my father.

"Because this IS our home," my father would respond.

I did not understand. I wanted to move. I wanted to be like Valerie and Mary Beth. I did not want to be quiet because of a funeral going on downstairs. I did not want to live so closely between grief and joy. I did not understand these transitions. These balances were difficult to come by - much re difficult than double dutch jump rope. Learning to control the body was relatively easy, but mind.....

Today, I study and teach hatha yoga - the yoga of balance. It has been important for me to understand transitions, or rather, to learn how to work with their inevitability more effectively. This summer, I am teaching pre-schoolers about the delicate balance of nature. We are studying animals. How do animals move? What is it like to be the body of a tiger, a butterfly, a dog? We act out these animals through yoga poses. We are studying the transitions of life in all its many forms. From elephant to cobra, from sleep to wakefulness. We do this through the study of hatha yoga. And what a beautiful study it is...

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Yoga Tips

Give yourself a hand or two..

Mudras are hand positions that help to direct energy within the body. For example, if you are seated, place your hands palms down on your knees and close your eyes. Stay there for a few moments to notice the feeling state this evokes. After a few moments, open your eyes and place your hands palms upward on your knees. Stay there for a few moments and notice the feeling state within you. Were there any differences in way you felt between the two positions of the hands?



If held for a period of time, you will begin to notice that the palms facing downward has a grounding effect on your feeling state, whereas the palms placed upward has an opening effect. If you have a seated meditation practice, I encourage you to pay attention to the positioning of your hands, for they do have an effect on the energy in your body, and in turn the effectiveness of your meditation practice. For example, on days when you are feeling not centered or spacey, try sitting with your hands palms down. On days when you are feeling balanced and centered, place the palms up.

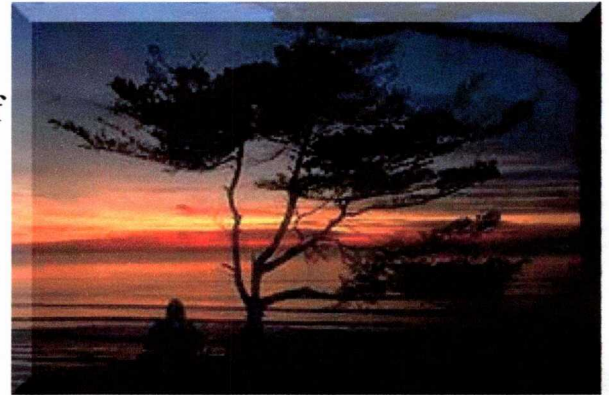
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Yoga Tips

Dear Friends,

An overwhelming tragedy has hit the United States this week. A tragedy so horrific that many loving minds and hearts have been thrown into chaos and confusion. Many of us have had a hard time focusing and reflecting on our daily responsibilities and life plans. We have been torn asunder by what has happened. Many have lost their lives in very cruel ways, and many more of us remain to sort out this tragedy and work through the enormous grief and horror experienced in the process. When tragedy strikes

us, whether it is the home of the country we live in, or the home of our intimate experiences, we are torn apart and then, in time, brought together in reflective ways to actualize the reality of our connected consciousness. This connected consciousness can take various paths. It can be a path of further destruction, hate, and isolation, or it can be a path of deeper love and compassion for all.



As I taught yoga to the preschool children this week, I reflected on the beautiful diversity in the cultures around me. Palestine, Israel, Africa, Sweden - all countries were reflected in the loving eyes of the children surrounding me. We were joined by their teachers in Muslim garb. Beautiful teachers who daily demonstrate to the children, and myself, lessons in love and respect. I am glad our country is not able to respond immediately to this tragedy by bombing another country. My heart ached to think that these beautiful teachers, or children, may in some way be mistakably associated with the crimes of another. We live in a melting pot of cultural diversity in America. A diversity that offers us many opportunities to transcend external barriers of color and culture.

At a time when we are encouraged to run to the loving shelter of family and friends, we forget that loving shelter is the birthright of us all. If it is difficult at this time to open your heart to the varying cries among us...then open your ears. This is a time for us to listen...really listen. Something we may not have been doing well...and still not doing well by focusing on retribution rather than the

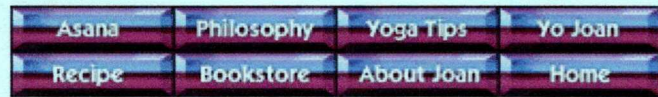
cause of the anger and hatred that would fuel this horrific event. And when we listen, give us the strength to listen with a nonjudgmental mind. Before running to a corner of righteousness, let us listen to the depth of pain and suffering that is bellowing from the depths of those who are tormented and those who torment. As we open our ears, we must realign our hearts with the open hearts and minds of all who live as beacons of hope in our relentless journey of healing.

those of us living in New York City and at the heart of this tragedy, the depth of feelings are first hand. Feelings that are not parlayed through the news media. Continue lighting the way, and recognizing those who are illuminating paths before us to help us thru these difficult times. In this process, as our understandings and compassions deepen, each one of us has the ability to realize the transcendent power of love.

OM.

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Yoga Tips

A prayer for us all

So many difficult emotions. So many difficult actions being considered and taken. I share with you this inspiring prayer by Thich Nhat Hanh, in which he encompasses all of us in his heart of understanding. Many blessings...



ST IN PEACE

by Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh

I am a World Trade Center tower, standing tall in the clear blue sky, feeling a violent blow in my side, and I am a towering inferno of pain and suffering imploding upon myself and collapsing to the ground.

May I rest in peace.

I am a terrified passenger on a hijacked airplane not knowing where we are going or that I am riding on fuel tanks that will be instruments of death, and I am a worker arriving at my office not knowing that in just a moment my future will be obliterated.

May I rest in peace.

I am a pigeon in the plaza between the two towers eating crumbs from someone's breakfast when fire rains down on me from the skies, and I am a bed of flowers admired daily by thousands of tourists now buried under five stories of rubble.

May I rest in peace.

I am a firefighter sent into dark corridors of smoke and debris on a mission of mercy only to have it collapse around me, and I am a rescue worker risking my life to save lives who is very aware that I may not make it out alive.

May I rest in peace.

I am a survivor who has fled down the stairs and out of the building to safety who knows that nothing will ever be the same in my soul again, and I am a doctor in a hospital treating patients burned from head to toe who knows that these horrible images will remain in my mind forever.

May I know peace.

I am a tourist in Times Square looking up at the giant TV screens thinking I'm seeing a disaster movie as I watch the Twin Towers crash to the ground, and I am a New York woman sending e-mails to friends and family letting them know that I am safe.

May I know peace.

I am a piece of paper that was on someone's desk this morning and now I'm debris scattered by the wind across lower Manhattan, and I am a stone in the graveyard at Trinity Church covered with soot from the buildings that once stood proudly above me, death meeting death.

May I rest in peace.

I am a dog sniffing in the rubble for signs of life, doing my best to be of service, and I am a blood donor waiting in line to make a simple but very needed contribution for the victims.

May I know peace.

I am a resident in an apartment in downtown New York who has been forced to evacuate my home, and I am a resident in an apartment uptown who has walked 100 blocks home in a team of other refugees.

May I know peace.

I am a family member who has just learned that someone I love has died, and I am a pastor who must comfort someone who has suffered a heart-breaking loss.

May I know peace.

I am a loyal American who feels violated and vows to stand behind any military action it takes to wipe terrorists off the face of the earth, and I am a loyal American who feels violated and worries that people who look and sound like me are all going to be blamed for this tragedy.

May I know peace.

I am a frightened city dweller who wonders whether I'll ever feel safe in a skyscraper again, and I am a pilot who wonders whether there will ever be a way to make the skies truly safe.

May I know peace.

I am the owner of a small store with five employees that has been put out of business by this tragedy, and I am an executive in a multinational corporation who is concerned about the cost of doing business in a terrorized world.

May I know peace.

I am a visitor to New York City who purchases postcards of the World Trade Center Twin Towers that are no more, and I am a television reporter trying to put into words the terrible things I have seen.

May I know peace.

I am a boy in New Jersey waiting for a father who will never come home, and I am a boy in a faraway country rejoicing in the streets of my village because someone has hurt the hated Americans.

May I know peace.

I am a general talking into the microphones about how we must stop the terrorist cowards who have perpetrated this heinous crime, and I am an intelligence officer trying to discern how such a thing could have happened on American soil, and I am a city official trying to find ways to alleviate the suffering of my people.

✓ I know peace.

I am a terrorist whose hatred for America knows no limit and I am willing to die to prove it, and I am a terrorist sympathizer standing with all the enemies of American capitalism and imperialism, and I am a master strategist for a terrorist group who planned this abomination. My heart is not yet capable of openness, tolerance, and loving.

May I know peace.

I am a citizen of the world glued to my television set, fighting back my rage and despair at these horrible events, and I am a person of faith struggling to forgive the unforgivable, praying for the consolation of those who have lost loved ones, calling upon the merciful beneficence of God/Yahweh/Allah/Spirit/Higher Power.

May I know peace.

✓ I am a child of God who believes that we are all children of God and we are all part of each other.

May we all know peace.

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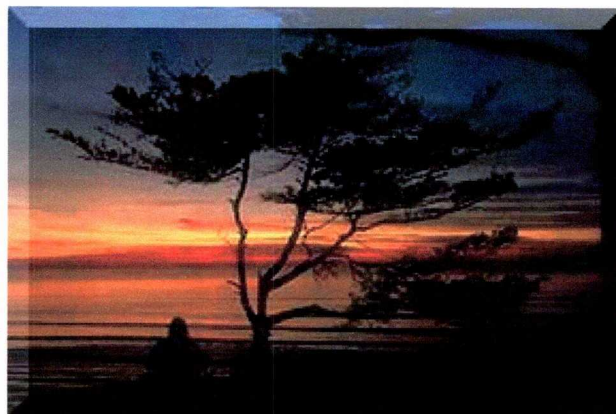
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Yoga Tips

Within the mind of one yoyoga teacher...

I walk into the classroom with ease and comfort within my body. The room has a glow of things to come. I am early before any students arrive. I spend some time in silent meditation. As students begin to enter the room, I greet them with joy and full awareness, still very close to an inner core of understanding I have glimpsed in my silence. I observe each person around me not rushed. Each person taking my full attention. I observe their outward expression and then deeper, past their physical appearance. I glimpse the connection to this inner core of understanding. I see a deepening inner beauty radiating from each person before me.



"Can you bend forward in half?"

My body freezes. Where am I? A student is standing directly before me.

"Yes." I respond. Confounded by my ego. Questioning my confidence. Can I really? This is degrading. I realize I am being judgmental. This person does not know me, does not know where I have just been. Where have I been? I am here now confronted by a wall.

"Show me." she says.

I look at her. I lower my eyes in embarrassment. I realize I must prove my worthiness to teach. What am I teaching? I take a deep breath and bend forward, releasing my ego to her expectations...to my expectations. I feel the puppet master lowering my strings. I bend my

knees knowing that this is not the forward bend she was expecting. I rest my nose on my knees. Why am I doing this? She asked, I responded.

My ego fades in and out. As it enters me, I am able to see it fully and not judge it. I easily let it go realizing that it does not define my existence. I inhale back up and the student has now faded into the background of other students. I take some deep breaths and remind myself of that distant core of understanding. I know it exists, where did it go?

I ask students individually how they are, and when they answer, I listen. I try to remember their responses so that I may later address their concerns, their troubles, their joys, more fully within the expression of what I am there to teach.

I turn my inner ear to the harp, and from deep within I strike meditative notes. Notes that are beginning mantras reflective of the experiences before me. We sit quietly and begin to focus on sound. This sound becomes a wave in the room, stirring our hearts to movement. I move along each student, privately tutoring each student, resonating the sounds and flowing into postures that their individual bodies are comfortable in. I relinquish preconceived ideas of what a pose should be or do. I let the stir of the student's heart guide my instruction and further my understandings - we are oneing.

Separating, I observe competitive thoughts and I do not let them guide me. I flow out of these thoughts and bring my mind and body back to this glimpsed core of understanding. This core that guides my deepest being. A being that I am comfortable with and wanting to share. A being that when I share, becomes one. Om. Om Namah Sivaya. Om.

pronounced OHM NAH-mah SHE-vah-yah. This is a sanskrit mantra. A mantra is a series of sounds or syllables or words that takes one into deeper states of consciousness. Siva destroys and recreates. The energy that destroys the lower self builds the higher self.' (Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga, 2nd edition, pg 240.)

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