

enjoy

Why yoga? Why you? Why now?

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In the search for achieving -
and nurturing - balance, peace,
truth and harmony in our lives,
yoga can provide solutions.

There are four key ingredients
leading to balance in your life and
yogic practice:

1. Introspection – looking within and observing yourself
2. Illumination – manifesting from inspiration and creativity
3. Wisdom – knowledge in practice and oneness
4. Innocence – the child-like freedom to express and to love

As a yoga teacher, I have been searching to understand the mysteries of the psychological and physical shifts that take place in a person's life when they first encounter and then stretch into the amazing and life-changing world of yoga.

Yoga brings peace to all, yet every experience is individual. The history, principles, roots and heart of yoga centre around the individual and how we are all unique in all respects. Yoga creates individuality and artistry. Through learning simple principles and disciplines of the body, mind and soul, yoga allows confidence to grow, inner strength and power – which may have been stripped away over years of neglect, misuse, abuse or ignorance – to re-emerge.

As adults, we slowly lose our child-like nature and our innocence in the pursuit to get ahead in this fierce and competitive world and in our fast-paced, sometimes neurotic, lives. This has come to be a 'normal' way of life. The end result of being out of balance sooner or later manifests as disease. The body loses its homeostasis, power and strength, its harmony and peace and flexibility. The mind loses these traits, along with confidence, as the spirit is sapped of its creativity and infinite power.

All you have to do is observe a child's pure innocence through their strong and flexible minds and bodies, allowing them to see the world as their oyster. At each and every moment, a child lives life without fear of flying. An adult's world, on the other hand, is mostly not open to this innocence and trust. In an adult's world, clipping one's wings, conforming and adapting to society's demands is all part of growing up.

When you get to experience yoga, you remember - on some deep, deep level - what it was like to fly. You remember the freedom and exhilaration this feeling brings to your spirit and soul.

In a metaphorical way, yoga resets the clock. Re-balancing the hardware and software of abundant

and joyous journeys. Re-claiming what might have been thrown away, discarded onto a rubbish heap of times gone by.

Yoga is timeless. It's history goes back thousands of years. Yet it is just as important and poignant and relevant now as it was eons ago. As we move within each moment and movement in yoga, we discover the relevance of time, step-by-step, beat-by-beat. We learn to connect with our bodies, our breath, our mind and soul. Precious awareness and attention to detail is born. Within this slow and gentle rhythm of being in the now, we start to see and feel again the magic of the moment.

The ever-beating pulse and sound of our heart. We begin to taste success again and smell the flowers of youthful exuberance. This is why yoga teachers of the highest order look so young and inspire so much. They are living, breathing examples of one of the laws of nature. What one thinks of with an open heart, balance and harmony, they must become.

This will not be easy all the time because life is a kaleidoscope of different experiences and challenges. Both light and dark, soft and hard, bringing with them successes and failures. This is the journey of life. For without failure, we cannot learn.

To fly as a child in our youth, be grounded as an adult, then learn to fly again - practicing yoga with a thirst to grow will give you the tools to do just that. Let no man, woman, company or society take this away from you. Like the DNA blueprint encoded into every cell of our being, it is our birthright to fly and soar again and again.

Our forefathers used and understood another important element of yoga: courage. Without courage, humankind would never have survived the jungle. We are all here today because of this incredible power. We might not live in a wild, dark jungle with ferocious, man-eating creatures hunting us, but today's society of super-congested highways, stressed employees and employers is an equally dangerous place in our quest for survival. Survival of the fittest, just like our ancestors before us. We need to develop courage, not just to survive, but to grow, evolve and prosper in all parts of our lives. These are the tools needed to fulfill our dharma (destiny), bringing happiness, health, harmony and respect to all creatures.

This leads us to ego. In yoga, you learn to confront your ego. It is both powerful on the one hand and crippling on the other. It all depends on understanding how it works and how we use it.

If ego works towards being conscious with kindness and awareness, it can inspire and heal.

Happiness, prosperity, goodness, love and joy manifest as a result.

However, if used unconsciously and selfishly, with arrogance, without care and consideration of others, and without awareness, the ego has the ability to destroy lives, including the life of the person using it.

History is littered with many examples of both sides of this coin. Using ego wisely is what it's all about, with gratitude, mindfulness and awareness.

Thousands of years ago, Patanjali, who was one of the greatest Sage's of Yoga, said: Yogashchittavrttinirodhab. This complicated word translates as: Yoga (union), Chitta (mind), Vrtti (activity), nirodhab (complete absorption).

The art of yoga works on the ability to direct the mind toward an object and to sustain that direction without any distraction. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra's (threads) is a text that covers the many aspects of life, beginning with a code of conduct and ending with mankind's vision of his true nature. To paint and see the God and path of yoga, this 'eightfold way' or roadmap offers a method of awakening.

I want to bring home the idea that it is this moment, this exact time in your life, that is important. Not quaint or insignificant, but monumental. Nothing is beyond your reach. Quantum mechanics and physics prove this. If we accept ourselves as worthy of love, respect and honour, and believe in these possibilities, so it shall come to pass. For this is the law of attraction. If we change our thought patterns, our belief systems, we can change our reality and manifest our dreams. We have the power to create our own destiny. Yoga instills in us the tools to bring this to fruition.

What we speak and how we carry ourselves on this wonderful journey of life affects our present and our future. Accept that change can and will happen. Imagine a world without change, then imagine one with change! Which one would you choose?

Welcome to the world of yoga... make your dreams a reality. 🌸

Sheldon Grant Leon is Founder and Director of Joyous-Journey, which runs classes, workshops and retreats worldwide incorporating yoga, meditation, tai chi, qi gong, nutritional education and life coaching. All classes are done in a fun and safe environment at exceptional locations, where hearts open and spirits fly. Sheldon's diverse background includes yoga, meditation, nutrition, naturopathy, kinesiology, gymnastics and various forms of dance.

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