

YOGA RASA COMMUNITY NEWS

February 29, 2008 • Issue 88

Yoga Rasa exists to actively participate in creating peace on our planet by joining with others to grow an all-inclusive yoga study community, promoting total physical, mental, spiritual health and well being.

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☸ A "PEACE" OF MY MIND...

Tracie's message

The yoga practice of asana (physical postures) creates a profound relationship with the body that is beyond the ego and establishes the power of understanding, appreciation, awareness and stability. Asana practice through class attendance, workshop participation and personal ritual unites the mind with the body and returns us to a state of seeing the world from the inside out. I believe our primary responsibility in this lifetime is to become the master of our own mind and body, ultimately mastering living. Yoga, beginning with asana, is the tool toward mastery.

By engaging fully in the practice of asana the power of understanding as a way of being is expressed as a worldview. When one truly sees and experiences the response and adaptability of the body when surrender and trust are infused with effort, this, over time, becomes a general way of living in the world. As effort is deepened, appreciation of the strength and sophistication of the body and the body/mind connection becomes palpable. As one becomes immersed in an ocean of appreciation a paradigm of joy and compassion flows through the consciousness and washes over all relationships one engages in life! With persistence and focused attention, awareness returns to a deep sensitivity that is missing culturally and individually. With heightened sensitivity we are able to "hear" what it is we truly need physically, emotionally and spiritually. We then are able to "hear" what our loved ones are saying and what the planet needs. The sum of understanding, appreciation and awareness equates to the flexibility of body and a body that

eventually results in stability! Stability at the physical level is the ability to stand on your own two feet without fear of falling. The experience of stability in the mind is the ability to stand strong regardless of external circumstances and to witness the rise and fall of the emotions and come out stronger than before.

Frank Zane, three-time winner of the title Mr. Olympia, teaches that the body is a manifestation of the mental/emotional and spiritual health of the human being. We can love the mind by loving our body and love the body by loving the mind! One empowers the other. I often say the journey toward the mastery of yoga's challenging postures empowers one to journey through life's challenges with mastery! My experience has proven this to be true and I feel great enthusiasm and excitement toward the future and seeing life as an experiment in proving this truth to the greatest degree possible! Join me, let's do it and live it together! Let us all live the possibilities and you have the tool with you at all times, your body is your teacher. Immerse yourself in the practice of asana as deeply as possible and seek to master asana technique, fundamentals, alignment, mindfulness and breathing to experience the wisdom of understanding, the joy of appreciation, the keenness of awareness, and the power of stability!

Love, T.



COMING ATTRACTIONS

February 29	Early Bird registration balance due – Asana Immersion (3/14-16 & 5/2-4)
March 1	Meditation Intensive II (3/1-2)
March 14	Asana Immersion (3/14-16 & 5/2-4)
March 16	Early Bird registration due – Beginner Tribal Fusion Belly Dance Classes (starts 3/30)
March 22	Early Bird registration due – Posture & Breath Clinic (4/5)

Note the early bird deadlines for great savings on great workshops!

The Many Dimensions of Asana

*“Steady in your intention, and you’ll be steady in your posture. Asanas can come naturally.”
~ Yoga Sutra 2.46 translation from [Yoga, Power, & Spirit](#)*

Today’s topic is asana – the yoga postures. While they initially appear to be totally focused on the physical aspects of ourselves, asanas are truly a multidimensional practice that has a lot to teach. They teach us physically, but can also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually if we allow it.



, Liz

Asana Trains the Mind

I am glad to be back with you all! Tracie and I have returned from our training with Yogarupa Rod Stryker. We practiced the asanas about 2 or 3 hours over the course of each of 5 days, although Rod said over and over again, “Yoga is all about the mind.” Is this incongruent? Not at all. The asanas definitely do a great deal for us physically, but the change that can be created on the level of mind is astounding.

The levels of body, breath, and mind are interwoven like the gnarly roots of an old tree (OK, so I wanted to use the word gnarly but the statement is true nonetheless!). One way to deduce what kind of effect your asana practice is having on your mind is to look at how you approach the poses and also the content of your inner dialogue. Yoga teaches us to do all of what we are capable of, but at the same time loosen effort. If you are pushing into your joints, forcing a position even when you feel discomfort in your back, or working to the point of dizziness or nausea – what is happening to the mind? You are reinforcing a punishment-based paradigm leading towards injury (physically and mentally) and creating a relationship of disrespect with yourself. If you are holding your breath, hear yourself making frequent grunting noises, or feel your face turning red – what is happening to the mind? The mind is gripping, over-efforting to the point of diminishing returns, and self-trust erodes. There is likely a motivation of trying to be “good enough.”

Steady & Comfortable

The proper approach toward the poses, as taught by the ancient yogic texts, is to make them steady and comfortable (yoga sutra 2.46), creating a clear space inside your body and mind that gives rise to grace and bliss (even in the midst of physical intensity).

To find this space, first a foundation of alignment is necessary. The alignment principles taught by yoga create space, length, flexibility, and strength. Something that seems to be minor, like spreading the toes, is actually imperative for creating this space in the ankle and even up to the knee, hip, and spine. Because we have typically used our bodies in the opposite way prior to coming to yoga (this was true for me), fully grasping the alignment principles takes many years. You will find that the principles have many layers and your understanding evolves dramatically as you practice over time. This evolution is necessary since your body changes as it learns, which opens up the next level to you. These principles can not simply be read in a book – they have to be practiced. When you practice with a teacher, this gives you another



benefit. At Yoga Rasa we teach based on observation, so we can help each student as best as possible in a group setting. Also, to learn the alignment principles in the most in-depth way, Tracie offers the Asana Immersion. If you are interested in deepening your practice in this way, check it out – it starts Friday, March 14.

While working with the alignment, breath must become steady. If there is not a steady, smooth breath possible in a pose for you, you are too deep or intense physically. Your breath is the gauge. Through a calm, even, steady breath, this clears the space of the nervous system, the main controlling system of the entire body.

Once breath is calm, you can work on clearing the space of the mind. When the energies and efforts of the body and breath are properly directed, the mind begins to clear. A good indication of the clarity of mind is how still you can become. If there is constant movement and adjustment, the mind is caught up in distractions. When you hold a pose with complete stillness (except for breathing!), the distracting thoughts that come up are cleared instead of reinforced. Rod led us through a practice at the training that focused on maintaining this stillness and by resisting the urge to move and adjust once I got into a pose, I gained some very valuable insights about my mind. While I will likely continue to work with them for a while, the space is on its way to becoming more clear.

This is how “Yoga is all about the mind,” as Rod said. Allow your asana practice, whether in class at Yoga Rasa or elsewhere, be about clearing space. Is your approach to the asanas adding to or removing the stuff in your mental space? To explore further, join us at the Asana Immersion in a couple weeks!

Tracie and Liz welcome all comments, criticisms, and loving support!

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Sacred Warrior Retreat



St. John, US Virgin Islands
June 21-28, 2008

The Sacred Warrior Yoga Retreat is
for those who want to:

- Live the best life possible
- Experience their highest potential
- Discover a more playful heart
- Discover Inner Peace
- Live powerfully, mind, body, spirit

“The basic difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge while an ordinary man takes everything either as a blessing or a curse.”

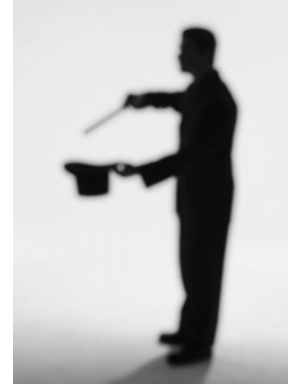
~ Carlos Castaneda

To read more about any of our workshops & retreats, go to:
<http://www.yogarasa.net/workshops.html>

Meditation Intensive Part II

~ Harness the awesome power of your mind ~

Make Your Dreams Reality.
Join Tracie This Weekend!



Discover . . .

A deeper aspect of yourself.

Learn . . .

The skills for creating a peaceful & powerful mind.

Identify . . .

Thoughts and beliefs that do not support your life's vision.

Enjoy . . .

Expanded awareness, enhanced creativity, & more fun in life!

Newsletter & archives can be found online at: <http://www.yogarasa.net/newsletter.html>

Asana Immersion



Registered Yoga School



Registered Yoga School

March 14-16 & May 2-4

All classes will focus on understanding principles of alignment and muscular and organic energy. We will look at where yoga asana/vinyasa and pranayama reside in our personal spiritual practice and the incorporation of Bhakti Yoga. We will address the practice and teaching of Yoga from incorporating the awareness of kramas and perception of koshas.

This class is open to all serious yoga students at various levels of personal growth.

Find Yoga Rasa on MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/yogarasa>



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EVENTS AT YOGA RASA...schedule/changes for the next two weeks

Saturday 3/1

7 am – Being Yoga Teacher Training
9 am – Yoga Foundation
12:30 pm – Meditation Intensive II

Sunday 3/2

10 am – Yoga Stability
12:30 am – Meditation Intensive II

Monday 3/3

9 am – Yoga Foundation
5:30 pm – Yoga Foundation
7:15 pm – Being Yoga Teacher Training

Tuesday 3/4

4:30 pm – Yoga Foundation 2
6 pm – Introductory Orientation (RSVP)
7:15 pm – Meditation
7:45 pm – Yoga Fundamentals

Wednesday 3/5

11:30 am – Sringara Rasa Flow
12:30 pm – Meditation
5:45 pm – Shanti Rasa Flow

Thursday 3/6

9:30 am – EnerPilates
5:30 pm – Power Yoga Foundation
7 pm – Yoga Foundation

Friday 3/7

9 am – Yoga Foundation
4:30 pm – EnerPilates

Saturday 3/8

7 am – Being Yoga Teacher Training
9 am – Yoga Foundation

Sunday 3/9

10 am – Yoga Stability

Monday 3/10

9 am – Yoga Foundation
5:30 pm – Yoga Foundation
7:15 pm – Being Yoga Teacher Training

Tuesday 3/11

4:30 pm – Yoga Foundation 2
6 pm – Introductory Orientation (RSVP)
7:15 pm – Meditation
7:45 pm – Yoga Fundamentals

Wednesday 3/12

11:30 am – Sringara Rasa Flow
12:30 pm – Meditation
5:45 pm – Shanti Rasa Flow

Thursday 3/13

9:30 am – EnerPilates
5:30 pm – Power Yoga Foundation
7 pm – Yoga Foundation

Friday 3/14

9 am – Yoga Foundation
3:30 pm – Asana Immersion

OM SHANTI

Please submit newsletter ideas! Email Liz at tararasa@comcast.net.

If you wish to unsubscribe from this, or any Yoga Rasa email communication, please let us know!