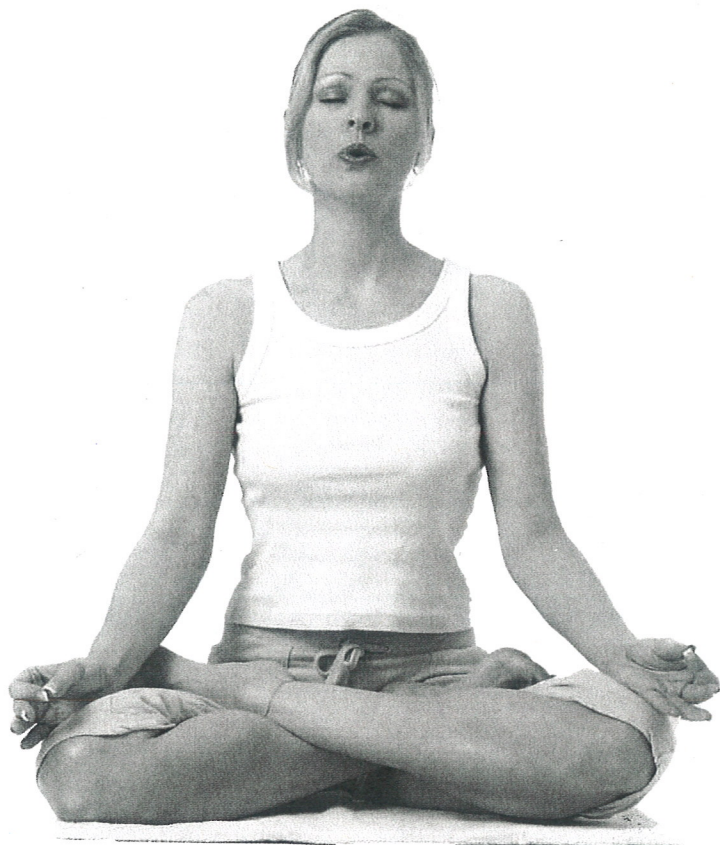


YOGA

2008 Health Resolutions

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Earlier this week, I was asked by a friend to write an article on how yoga might connect us to our New Year's Resolutions and make them last. Initially I thought, what a great idea, because later I remembered that Yoga itself is over 2,500 years old. This article will explore how yoga illuminates a new way of viewing our tension and how that may relate to a better world.

The practice of yoga itself gets us to reveal where in our body we hold stuck energy. Tension or stress is not a bad thing. Actually stress is according to yoga nothing but another form of trapped energy in the body. We know that when we feel down, tired or irritable: it is our energy that is fluctuating or slipping.

In those moments, we are prone to look outside for the answer, feel inner disappointment, and attempt to fill this insecurity with some 'quick fix.' Before we embark upon self-improvement, we must get clear as to why we wish to change. Do we look outside for answers?

Are we motivated by guilt, high expectations, or perfectionism? Do we even go so far as to believe that because we are experiencing turbulence or challenge in our life, that we are inherently flawed?

Yoga trains the mind through stretching to dig deeper, to look on the inside and to slip underneath these appearances of good/bad, right/wrong and look for hidden treasures in yourself. Moments that we feel weak or vulnerable can be beautiful opportunities to transform and grow. It's suddenly not about being better than the next guy, just being better than we used to be. Like an underwater sea diver looking for beautiful coral at the bottom of the ocean, our soul is also searching to develop and heal.

Yogi's have known for a long time that our energy levels can facilitate this process. Furthermore, we have the ability to boost our own levels of energy. The key to increasing our energy is to focus on the inside in a loving and positive manner. Each of us according to the Tibetans is a piece of the divine energy. Acting upon this light and becoming a light for others or "following the golden rule-in action" increases further light. Eating alkaline, non-processed, non-dairy (for the most part) foods also boost our energy levels. Regular exercise and plenty of it helps the body and mind to heal faster and accelerate at higher levels.

My yoga teacher, Jonny Kest once said: "All of our issues are in our tissues". Yoga and stretching opens up these areas and helps us to play the edge and increases our ability to stay calm under the most stressful of circumstances. Using the breath and witnessing our blocks without judgment, we begin to dissolve and resolve old issues in the body. The lure of quick fix solutions no longer carry weight as we anticipate how our old habit reactive patterns will be reshaped into making a very positive difference in the world. May your New Year be the best one for you in 2008.