

Online (Live) Yoga Classes: Impact on Practicing and Teaching – Part I

By George Zarnowski, founder of Wind of Prana movement.

We learn in many ways, by reading, by listening, by watching, by doing, by exploring, by contemplating, and most importantly while realizing in our lives what we have learned. Sometimes those who teach us live with us or near us, like our parents, our families, our friends, our animals, and the nature. But most of the time our teachers are not always physically where we are, and very often we have never met them or seen them. Many of them have passed away, but they are still teaching us through their writings, recorded lessons and through what we have retained in our memories from their teachings.

Thanks to the technology developed just recently, considering long human history of learning, we can now join our teachers who are physically not near us, via video or audio connection, in the present moment (live). We still have the books, the recorded lessons and the teachers we can physically visit but the new technology allows us to have access to all the teachers, no matter where they are and no matter where we are or decide to be. In that sense, the teachers seem to be stationary by we can be whenever life takes us. We can connect with our local teacher, when we travel or move away or with any teacher who we find to be the one we need, using these new technologies.

Remote learning, using live or recorded sessions has been with us for a long time and has been used equally effectively by independent teachers as by the educational institutions, the universities, temples, churches, and by other gatherings of people, so we can experience the togetherness in the present moment, no matter where physically we are.

Recent global situation introduced new conditions into our lives and accelerated use of remote learning with a quantum leap!

So, what are the benefits of participating in Yoga classes and courses online (live)? Here are some of them but I am sure you can think of many more.

- We can join our favorite teachers and favorite lessons/classes no matter where the teacher is.
- It allows us to remain in our familiar environment.
- It does not require the resources to travel to where the teacher is, even if it is near us.
- It allows us to focus on lessons without undertaking the efforts associated with the travel.
- It helps us to create that special place in our home from where we can join others, but also where we can continue our own personal practices afterwards, like Yoga, meditation, prayer, etc.
- It affects our sense of separateness to realize that we are all connected, that we are all 'here' that there is no 'there', that we are the oneness, all of us.

- It allows us to become more familiar with each other, being invited to parts of our homes, seeing each other in our familiar environment, sometimes with our family members passing through the space, often waving a hello, with our pets showing their love to us, with the sounds we experience around us (until we are muted).
- It allows us to show others more of the way we are than we would be while in a studio.
- Being comfortable, at our own space, we can be more relaxed and open to the practice and to asking the questions.
- We can perhaps feel the session to be more personalized as we see and hear the teacher speaking directly to us.
- We can feel being a part of the global community of people living in different countries, in different cultures, with different beliefs, different languages, with a realization that we are all the same, and eventually that we are not just the same but that we are one.
- ... and when the online session is over, we can continue experiencing its benefits without the necessity to rush out the door, retaining the session benefits for much longer.

There are many other benefits rising from what is listed above in terms of how and what we learn and what we become as we continue learning. Yes, those of us who have the studio we invested our efforts and resources in may have a feeling of abandonment or may see the online sessions taking away our ability to teach, our ability to financially be able to maintain the studio. The teacher needs to teach and must teach, no matter how and where, therefore we all need to acknowledge that how we teach must change. Having a studio is not only a perfect opportunity to invite your local students to your teachings, and to that space you so creatively and passionately prepared for them, but also to open that space to anyone who'd like to join your classes. Making your local classes in your studio available online, enhances the experience of your teaching to those in the room as well as those online. So, take advantage of it and spread your teachings.

Part II writing will talk about how different teaching online is and need to be to enhance the experience of Yoga class for our students. In the meantime, ...

Be the light and share it.

George has been engaged in teachings and practices of Buddhism and Yoga for over 30 years and teaching online for over 5 years. More information about Wind of Prana and George's bio can be found on the website: WindofPrana.com