

What do you really teach, when teaching Yoga?

Thank you all for such a wonderful response! I am grateful for being in the same community with you all, a community of Yoga Teachers. It is a powerful spiritual community. It is also a community of healers of many aspects of our existence. I hope you have realized that. We can change the way the world is and the world needs the changing.

I did not state if the question was related to teaching Yoga or to teaching yoga classes because I wanted you to reply to what you teach. What is the difference? Yoga classes do not necessarily expose the students to the essence of Yoga, and it is done by design. It is also being continuously altered by demands of the Western culture and by the yoga more contemporary originators/creators wanting to do something different, to place their name and authorship on it. Yoga practice continues to gravitate towards a physical exercise, so yoga classes become a yoga inspired physical exercise, as I see it. Good exercise but not much of Yoga.

So, what is Yoga? I cannot answer this for you, but I consider Yoga to be the Oneness, the Oneness we are all, not a part of it but it. I consider Yoga to be the spiritual practice of integration of consciousness. I see it not as a union, a practice of connecting our mind, body, spirit, and the rest. In my understanding, there is no need to connect anything, as there are no parts to connect. So, what is the practice of Yoga defined this way for? In my view, it is the practice to realize that Oneness and to continue becoming more and more aware of it on and off the mat.

There are many ways to do it and it is not easy to do it just during the yoga class but many of you, based on your comments include the elements that can help your students to become aware of who they are and that who they are is not who they think or were told they are.

Can we expose the students to all 8 limbs of Yoga during the class? Possibly some

Can we expose the students to Yoga philosophy during the class? Possibly some

Can we expose the students to the awareness of their spirituality? Yes

Can we expose the students to what they really are? Yes

Can we help the students to be healthier? Yes

Can we help the students to lead balanced lives? Yes

And finally, can we expose the students to what Yoga really, really is? YES!

As you noticed I did not use the words 'can we teach', because we cannot teach. All we can do is to inspire our students to uncover their inner teacher and to pursue the transformation.

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.", William Arthur Ward

"You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him find it within himself." - Galileo

I hope I inspired you to think about what we teach. I hope some of you will get inspired by the replies you all posted. I do not expect you to agree with my view, as I explained it above.

What do you really teach, when teaching Yoga?

Summary of your responses

I received 109 comments to the post on Facebook, including responses you sent me through our website. There were many similar responses and I combined these into one entry below.

All responses were very sincere, thought out, with a desire to express what often is not easy to express using words. Some of you appreciated the question as we often do not think of what we teach, and/or what we need to teach, or what is there to teach.

So, here is an abbreviated summary of what your first answer was to the above question.

- Awareness, self-love, compassion
- Teaching about gratitude and looking inward while acting outward
- Letting go of expectations, ego, stresses tension in the mind and body and being present with body and breath exactly as you are
- Finding ease, presence, letting go
- The art of listening to the body, finding the middle way & observing the breath
- Loving awareness
- Teach students to get to know their own personal bodies, feel where their limitations are and accept them, work with them
- Understand the difference between functional and aesthetic yoga
- Introduce students to a holistic view on health - meridian system and also how food, thoughts, movement can make you create the balance in your body that is so needed to be healthy
- Stillness
- Listening to your body, letting go of things that no longer serve you, being present in the moment
- Inner awareness and the connection between mind body and soul
- Awareness of what the body & thoughts are doing in the present moment.

- Listening & observing, kindness to Self
- Focus inwards with open curiosity
- Creating a safe place for students to explore their emotions
- Teaching self-love, acceptance, and surrendering to what life throws our way
- Spiritual emancipation
- Awareness of subtle energies
- Seeking balance between ease and effort
- Fully express ourselves in every pose we attempt by accepting our limitations, being grateful for what we can do, remaining calm and breathing smoothly and easily throughout the class
- Inner peace, calmness and honoring the Yamas
- Turning inward, caring for and knowing self
- To find expansion of the awareness and the Self
- Breaking away from the ego-mind, tapping into the inner light and re-discovering the infinite nature of the Self
- Teach about functional aging, flexibility and inner peace, calmness and honoring the Yamas
- Sankalpa
- It all comes back to self-love
- Self-love, and connection to soul and source
- Encourage, remind and empower people to remember who they are, honoring their uniqueness, their inner wisdom, divinity, strength, what feels right to them, breathing deeply, expanding prana in every tissue and experiencing the profound vibration, pulsation and tingling effect that follows this intention and focus in each movement
- Sink into stillness
- Yoga is a work in not work out

- Discover the inner strength that within everyone by looking inside themselves to find it
- To pay attention to the changing sensations in their bodies and to be present to discomfort
- Mindfulness
- Authenticity, being with oneself
- Just stick to anatomy, alignment and silence
- Making peace with and listening to one's body
- Self-love, acceptance of everything, ahimsa, the art just to be, that less is more
- Self-reflection, reaction vs response, self-love and peace in mind
- Mixing the TCM meridian work and yin and yang view as well as the chakra, prana and yoga philosophy into my classes
- Real teachings of Yoga come from the philosophy from reading the books and taking it into the personal practice
- To get to know the mind through the physical practice
- Affirmations and energy healing while breathing into poses
- Patience, self-acceptance, curiosity, self-awareness, non-judgement, gratitude
- To base my classes around the Yamas and Niyamas, and how to bring the principles of yoga into your everyday life
- Connection, humanity, presence, values and interiority
- To listen to the body, to perceive intuition and self-confidence to trust whatever comes up

We will be scheduling a short presentation titled 'The Art of Teaching Yoga', free to all. Please let us know if you'd like to participate, via email to George@NomadicYogis.com