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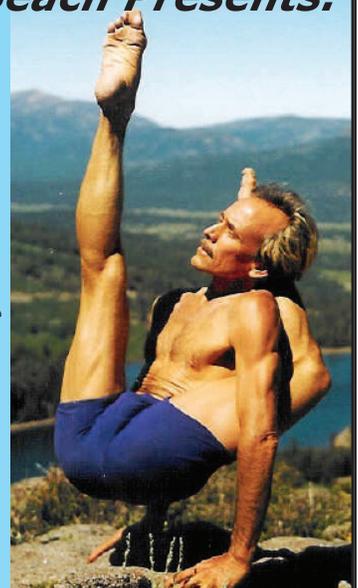
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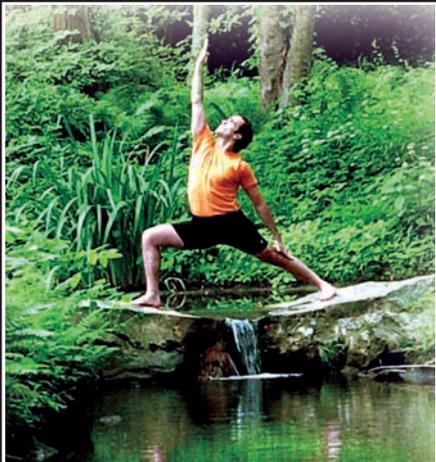
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I HAD BEEN INTENDING TO WRITE AGAIN FOR ALMOST A YEAR, BUT I HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND THE WORDS. The creative faucet was shut off completely, not even a drip. When I finally got the courage to sit, and be patient for the writing to flow, I turned up something of an article, but it barely skimmed the surface of my skin.

Now I find myself sitting barefoot and cross-legged on a picnic table by the gulf, seagulls calling out overhead, sunshine blessing me with its magnificent presence, bathing my skin in light.

I prepare myself to write, but the original ideas that arise in my mind transform as the pen meets the paper.

I began 2006 creating a quote, that, in my eyes, represented the personal and spiritual work into which I'd poured my heart the past few years.

"You must first embrace yourself in the darkness before you can then step out into the light."

Apparently the Universe heard me and took this as a request, deciding to give me this lesson again, something had been left undone.

"Excuse me, but I believe I've already peeled this onion. We worked on this the last few years," I began respectfully.

And as the year wore on, "Uh, when does this ride stop please? I'd like to get off now."

And even later with a certain sarcasm, "Are you kidding me?"

I had great intentions and aspirations. My ego was attached to a certain outcome, and I imagined the year unfolding effortlessly. Instead, I found myself plunging into the darkness of my soul.

I would revisit some of my familiar haunts during the year—those parts of me that I had previously despised, but assumed I had, in fact, learned to love and forgive.

X&O

by Deborah Shipley



done the legwork, but not the feeling part. I haven't really been feeling the love now, have I?"

"Can I reach down into the depths of my soul to those scary spots that I would much rather repress?" I wonder.

Through these personal trials, I had started to question everything.

I became increasingly agitated by spirituality and words used to describe it.

But I continued, in spite of my growing cynicism, because somewhere inside of me I believed – there was still a flicker. I continued to practice, to read spiritual texts, to meditate, to perform asanas, to breathe, to affirm, to chant, to get on my knees, to gain support and camaraderie from spiritual communities and friends, to be in nature, and to utilize energy therapies and

alignments. I persisted when I didn't feel like it. At times, I would walk the talk and, at others, I would fall back into my "not-so-divine" patterns.

And then something began to happen, to shift. I could feel the tipping point coming, but I wasn't exactly clear which way I was going to tip. I could feel the rising cynicism in myself, but I could also see that proverbial light at the end of the tunnel.

It was around this time that I became aware of a healer. As trusted others spoke of her and their experience, I intuitively knew I had to see her – and immediately. I knew this was a vital step for me. So I went. Skeptical and discerning on the one hand, but ready and open on the other.

To put into words everything that happened that day would feel impossible. This amazing woman was a conduit and I had prepared all year for this – or perhaps a lifetime. I felt waves begin to rise up from my core-deep, and powerful. And in the stillness in between each wave, I touched God, and She held my hand and She was a part of me. And >>

The court was in session and I spent my time confused and divided between the roles of judge, jury, defender, and condemned.

"Why was I being pushed back into this sea, feeling like I was lost without a life jacket?"

Everything I thought I knew was challenged and tested—my ego reeling and my head spinning from it all.

The topic of my writing is love – I will write about how we, as humans, love those people that are easy to love, but leave out the one's who are difficult. The, "Sure, I love everyone, except..." experience that almost all humans share to some degree, whether we care to admit this or not.

"Can you take that person for whom you struggle to love and really feel love for them in your heart?" I imagine writing.

And then I pause, and all of the year comes flooding back to me, my lesson from the Universe comes into sharp focus.

"Maybe it's me I need to love, maybe it's my difficult parts that I need to send love to and that I haven't really done this yet. I may have

everything, and I mean everything, was okay in those precious in-between moments. A profound peace, a calm silence. Waves rising, crashing, and surrendering. I was no longer skeptical, and I was no longer afraid.

And again my intuition spoke, and it whispered that I wasn't quite finished yet.

I still carried some agitation towards spiritual words. I felt if I heard divine, universe, or karma in a sentence again, especially if it came out of my mouth, I might just be sick. And then I actually was. For three days. Only able to arise for the most basic human needs. As suddenly as it all came on, it dissipated - into stillness; and it created an open space. The same still and open space that I felt in my healing session. And it was in that space that I felt love and acceptance. I didn't *know* love and acceptance. I *felt* it, and that was the difference. In that space, I understood that what I felt was not coming from a book, a movie, an article, a lecture, a teacher, a therapy session, or a

relationship. Those could all be powerful guideposts, but only for me to experience first-hand and in my own time. I knew to truly be open to life, to touch and love others' souls, I first had to touch and embrace my own - not just the beautiful parts - but the hard to handle ones too.

How could I write an article about loving others when I hadn't fully extended open arms around myself?

I am finishing my article, stretching my arms, listening to the waves gently crashing, wiggling my bare toes, and gazing up at the sky. And in that inspiring moment I am rendered breathless. What my eyes behold is an airplane trail, creating a perfect "X" and alongside it a cloud formation in the form of a perfect "O." The joining of matter (prakriti) and spirit (purusha), Heaven and Earth. And I know, in that instant that I am loved as the Universe signs the open sky. ▲

**X&O, my dear child.
X&O.**



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And yet... we fight. Through all of recorded history we have fought. Often with more passion than we love. Is human nature so perverse that we consciously choose pain over pleasure? Or is it always the other guy's fault? *We* would always prefer to love our neighbor. *We* tried

to turn the other cheek. But *They* forced us to fight back. *They* are the evil-doers. *We* are the good guys. *They* must be stopped so that *We* can make the world safe for lovers of Truth, Justice and *Our* way.

When things don't seem to make sense, where do we go for understanding?

Each year, on the first day (Ekadashi) of the bright half of the month of Margasheersha (this year it fell on our November 30th) traditional Hindus celebrate Gita Jayanti, the revelation of the Bhagavad Gita. Here in Philadelphia, for the past 30 years or so, teachers of the SKY Foundation and other students of Dr. Pratap have been meeting in the Crystal Room at Garland of Letters Bookstore on this night to read the Gita from beginning to end in Sanskrit and English. It takes about three hours to get through the 700 verses.

On its surface, the Gita is a 6,000-year-old war story. The great warrior, Arjuna, is fighting not only a war, but the ultimate civil

war. He must fight a climactic battle with his friends, his family, and his revered teachers.

MAHATMA GANDHI, THE GREAT WARRIOR AND LOVER WHO DEFEATED THE BRITISH EMPIRE WITHOUT FIRING A SHOT, SAID:

"The Gita is the universal mother. I find a solace in the Bhagavad Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies – and my life has been full of external tragedies – and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavad Gita."

He has no stomach for this war and is on the verge of convincing himself to cut and run. But his charioteer is Lord Krishna who reveals himself as Vishnu, the Supreme Being.

We know Lord Krishna also as the personification of romantic love. He's often depicted surrounded by adoring Gopis (milkmaids) and his love affair from childhood with Radha is a divine play

But here, in Arjuna's moment of truth, Krishna teaches him how to be a Yogi. How to see through the duality of us versus them. How to act without attachment to the outcome. How to experience his larger self or Atman. How to discriminate between what is real and what is illusory. And, ultimately, how to achieve true liberation.

The message seems to be that our dharma or fate is what it is. Sometimes we are meant to be lovers and sometimes we are meant to be warriors. That is not in our



control. What is in our control, however, is how we react to the circumstances we encounter.

Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, "I consider the Yogi-devotee – who lovingly focuses on Me with supreme faith, and whose mind is ever absorbed in Me – to be the best of all Yogis."

My wife, Barbara, asked me why

I turned an article on love into a discussion of war. "The Gita," she said, "isn't really about war at all. It's a metaphor for the internal struggle to transcend our senses. That's what Arjuna needed to overcome on his personal battlefield. The war story is just a way to get *your* attention. It's a guy thing. If it were up to the mothers and grandmothers there would never be a war. Period."

"Would Radha talk that way to Krishna?" I asked her.

"When you turn blue and start playing the flute, I'll let you know."

That's Barbara. And that's why I love her. ▲

A student of Dr. Vijayendra Pratap, Gershon Levitt is vice president of the SKY Foundation and a charter member of the Yoga Research Society. More information at SkyFoundation.com or YogaResearchSociety.com, or send an email to Yogasearch@aol.com, or come visit Garland of Letters Bookstore, 527 South Street, Philadelphia. 215-923-5946.

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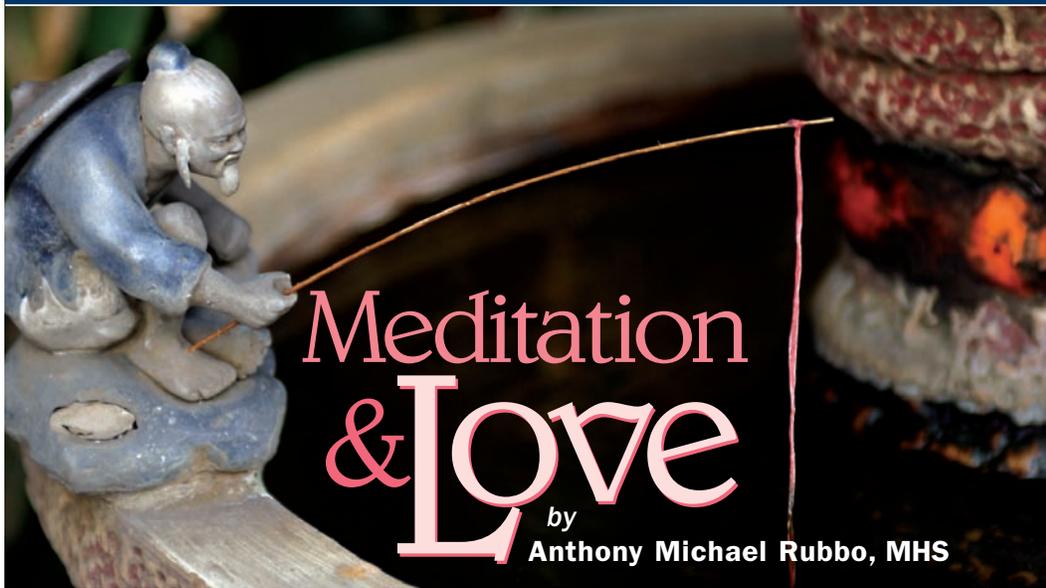
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Meditation & Love

by
Anthony Michael Rubbo, MHS

fully, and appreciate yourself for the person you are. You begin to consider what you like about yourself, the things you want to keep the same about yourself, and the things you may want to change. But even in your intention to change, you still accept yourself as you are, with the awareness that you are going through a change. This heightens your self-acceptance and therefore your sincerity, since you can speak to yourself and to others honestly about who you are, and communicate your genuine feelings.

THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION.

Sometimes, all it takes is for someone to explain the connection between meditation and a particular area of life. That's my role – to explain how meditation works, and how it can produce such positive changes in your life.

This issue of *Yoga Living* Magazine is devoted to *Love*, so we will look at the connection between meditation and our highest human emotion and energy. There are at least three kinds of love with which we are generally familiar – the feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection (as a parent, child, or friend); a person toward whom love is felt (a beloved person, sweetheart); and the affectionate concern for the well-being of others (the love of one's neighbors). Within a loving person or relationship, we usually find two essential qualities – sincerity and sensitivity. These two qualities develop naturally in the practice of 'sitting still and quiet.' Their development occurs through the changes that take place regarding our thought process. First let's consider the quality of sincerity and how it is cultivated in meditative practice.

Sincerity refers to that quality that is expressed when a person is truthful in both their thoughts and their feelings. When you are sincere, you are not hiding anything; you don't have a secret selfish

agenda. You are giving yourself completely in your communication or relationship.

In meditation, a clarity is cultivated that allows all of your personal thoughts and feelings to come to the surface. First you notice a change in posture, which becomes more stable, as you gradually use less and less effort to maintain your position. Then there is a change in your breathing, which gradually becomes more relaxed, slower and more regular. Also, you gradually become less stressed, as you naturally become aware of the tensions you're holding in your body – your back, shoulders, neck, face – and begin to release those tensions.

Then you reach a point where you become aware of your thoughts. This awareness of your thoughts is different from the act of thinking itself. You are in a clear non-thinking state and observing when a thought enters your mind, and then reflecting as it passes. This observation allows you to see yourself in the act of thinking, to see your thoughts and yourself objectively.

In this process, you get to know yourself, and the more you practice, the more you know about yourself. At some point, you eventually have a sense of full clarity about who you are as an individual and unique person. You realize that without such a practice, you might go through an entire life under the control of thoughts that continually run through your mind.

As you get to know yourself more, you accept yourself, understand yourself more

In meditation, you also experience a heightened sensitivity to yourself as a physical, mental and emotional person. Through a non-judging perspective, you allow your feelings to surface. When your feelings surface, you accept them, which then allows you to better understand them. Through understanding, you come to appreciate them and why they are in your life. This progression of awareness, acceptance, understanding and appreciation leads you to the mental side of your life, in which you then begin to think thoughts that support yourself as an emotional being.

As you see your emotional and mental aspects relating to your physical nature, you begin to understand yourself physically, and engage in activities that support your physical being. In a way, it could be said that you become a friend to myself.

When you take this quality into your life, you naturally begin to more easily observe how the feelings of others translate to their thinking, their words (which are extensions of their thoughts), and their physical conditions and actions. In this way, your meditation leads you to a heightened sensitivity to the important people in your life, and to people in general.

In conclusion, as the qualities of sincerity and sensitivity are developed or strengthened through meditation, the experience of love naturally grows in your life; and your important relationships deepen and become more genuine. ▲

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IT IS WITHOUT EVEN THE NEED FOR CONSCIOUS THOUGHT THAT WE HUMANS ARE AWARE OF THE THERAPY OF MOVEMENT. This awareness is, in fact, innate and common to the human experience. And yet, how ironic is it that some of us still jockey for a parking space nearest the door of our local health club, even though we intend to run on the treadmill for an hour. And then we run on that treadmill, as if to compensate for our time at the computer desk, and feel justified because of the time saved in the parking lot. Is there something of an irrational juggling act at work here? There's a clue in the fact that we don't see our local farmers at the health club. Perhaps they are already blessed with the bodies we aspire to – bodies formed by arduous labor – the work that is the natural condition of humankind.

Well then, is it beauty alone that urges us to seek this state of physical prowess? Or is it more likely that we seek that which is our natural condition? Consider the likelihood that our powerful minds were meant to exist in symmetry with strong and lithe bodies. Psychological studies show that the more balanced a physique, the more we ascribe beauty to that form. How natural, then, that humans everywhere seek the experience of balance – mind to body, body to environment. The beautiful bodies we want are formed by movement – a further testimony that this is our natural condition. We were meant to move, just as we were meant to think, intuit, evolve. The balance of strength between our bodies and minds is key to an overall feeling of fulfillment.

We are fascinated with watching our children – rarely still, loving to run, to dance, to play, unless confined by study or stories or the artificial total engagement of television. Still, deeply imbedded in their intuition, they seem to sense that a developing mind and a growing body go hand in hand. How much there is for us to learn from them!

Often we realize when struggling with a problem that's troubling us, a simple and practical remedy is to take a walk.



AMY'S POWER YOGA WITH A HEART: Wayne & Bryn Mawr

The Therapy of Movement

by Katie Tandon

We are fascinated with watching our children – rarely still, loving to run, to dance, to play...

How much there is for us to learn from them!

The kinesthetic in all of us is freed up by walking, and the mind/body connection aligns; our thinking becomes clearer. Those who work out regularly know the emotional benefits of the release of endorphins that occurs as we begin to breathe more deeply, fully and rhythmically – it feels GREAT!! Often such movement and breathing are the best medicine for situational depression, stress and anxiety. We thereby not only

get to feel good about our strong and lovely bodies, but concurrently enhance emotional well-being. Simultaneously, our deeper breathing promotes health of the heart and lungs and oxygenates the entire body more fully. Talk about multitasking!

Surely the queen of multitasking in the realm of movement therapy, however, is the science of Yoga. In its most basic assumptions, Yoga seeks the balance of mind and body as well as the balance of human life to the life of the planet (through the concept of ahimsa or 'nonharm'). Its series of physical movements (asanas) balances the strength and flexibility of the muscles and the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, all while promoting spinal alignment. It further balances the systems of the body: the endocrine, nervous, circulatory and lymphatic, with the movement of energy (prana) in our

bodies. It balances our shoulders with our hips, our left side to our right side, our forward bending to our backward bending, our breath to our movement. Like its sister science, Ayurveda, Yoga seeks balance of body in general as the primal and natural state of health. This state of balance or health exists through the combination of movement (asana) and contemplation or meditation (dharana and dhyana). The perfection of movement in yoga asana is meant to purify the body, (which it achieves outstandingly), to prepare the body for states of higher awareness as something possible for every person.

Those who do Yoga experience the relaxed state of mind/body and the sense of well being it imparts. This type of movement increases flexibility and strength, promoting longevity and calm. It is truly therapeutic at every level of our being. We know this intuitively when we do it. Perhaps it is the same intuition that moves those in sedentary occupations to go to the gym and work out on the elliptical – at some level we know we were meant to move; as a species we have not evolved past the need to balance intellect with physicality. >>



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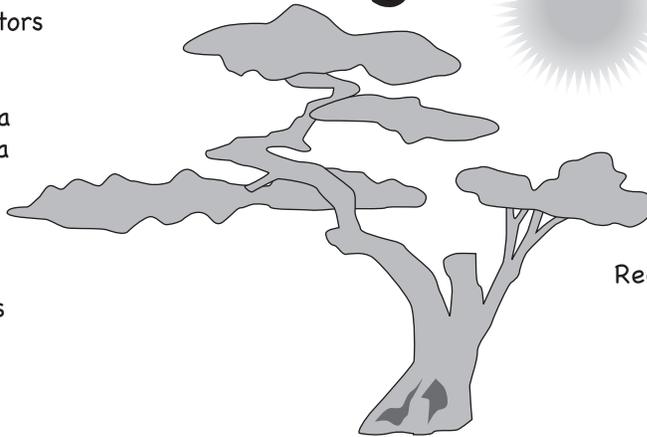
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In the same way, one notes the meditative power of movement in Yoga asana matched to the rhythm of the breath – as in Sun or Moon Salutations (Surya or Chandra Namaskar). It has proven equally powerful for this author to add musical rhythm to the synchrony of breath and asana, thereby further



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enhancing a deep sense of connectedness. This offering is called Adagio Yoga. 'Adagio,' a well-known type of Ballet performance marked by calm and grace, in its base means, 'displaying feats of lifting and balancing.' As the intention of Adagio Yoga is to promote the lifting and balancing of the Subtle Body (energy field), as well as the balancing of the physical and emotional bodies (sheaths), through the addition of a musical mechanism, the analogy works well. To connect breath and movement to music becomes, then, a mimic of the synchrony of our bodies in alignment with the music of the natural world – the lyrical quality of the movement of the trees in the breeze, the fish as they sway in the pond and the bird as she soars rhythmically to the beating of our hearts and the turning of the planet.

Another of the wondrous mechanisms for the balance of body and mind is in the joy of dancing. Though perhaps not for everyone, there is much evidence that the rhythmic movement of the body, to music or otherwise, aligns neurochemistry, and makes a symphony of our brainwaves that is conducive to integrated mental functioning. The therapeutic use of rhythm in a neurological context

has been explored by the Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential in treating intellectually challenged children, and by pioneers such as Drs. Michael Cheikin and Dharma Singh Khalsa. Cheikin has demonstrated conclusively that the use of rhythm in movement sequences can be used to

significantly reduce spasticity during the rehabilitative process. Cheikin concludes, "The use of rhythm and sound to facilitate neurological recovery remains a vast, unexplored frontier."¹ Similarly, Khalsa's many studies of rhythmic breathing (pranayama), demonstrate its positive effect on neurochemistry (especially in the

periaqueductal gray area, or PAG in the midbrain, the site of the body's largest supply of opiate receptors).² Khalsa notes especially the power of rhythmic breathing to relieve pain, anger and fear and is, like many of us, himself inspired by the incredible ability of rhythmic breath to connect us to the vast power locked within the collective rhythmic movement of all life in the cosmos.³

The school of Dance Therapy, moreover, enjoys a continuous notoriety in the field of Mental Health to facilitate the unfolding of emotional states. The truly kin-

esthetic at heart receive great pleasure, as well as increased coordination and fitness, from the pursuit of movement to music. Whether in a structured ballet or hip-hop class, or in totally free-form dance, there is some part of us that reaches upward, toward the free, the spiritual, the integrated part of ourselves as we surrender to ecstatic movement. We feel free, and beautiful, as if we could fly or at least evolve, while dancing. Like all art, we feel it in our souls.

So for once let's attend to the inborn wisdom of our kids, to our Yoga practice, to the rhythm of our souls in alignment with circadian rhythm, and move. Dance to the music. Twirl in alignment with the spiral of the galaxy, like the dervishes of old. Explore the primal nature of the beauty of the physical body. Balance the intellect with the heart; find the symmetry in the seat of the soul of our movement, our breath. Move with beauty, with grace, with abandon if you want. **But move.** ▲

¹Cheikin, Michael, *Rhythm and Rehabilitation*, Art. p.6.

²Khalsa, Dharma Singh, *Meditation as Medicine*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, First Fireside Edition, 2002), pp. 61-2.

³Khalsa, p.69.

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Katie Tandon has been a certified Yoga teacher since 1983. She is a Dance Instructor, Licensed Counselor and Certified Addictions Counselor. She is a Professional Member of the Int'l Assos. of Yoga Therapists, and teaches locally at Sacred Springs Yoga and Pilates, The Center for Optimal Health, the Phoenixville YMCA and Owen J Roberts Adult School.



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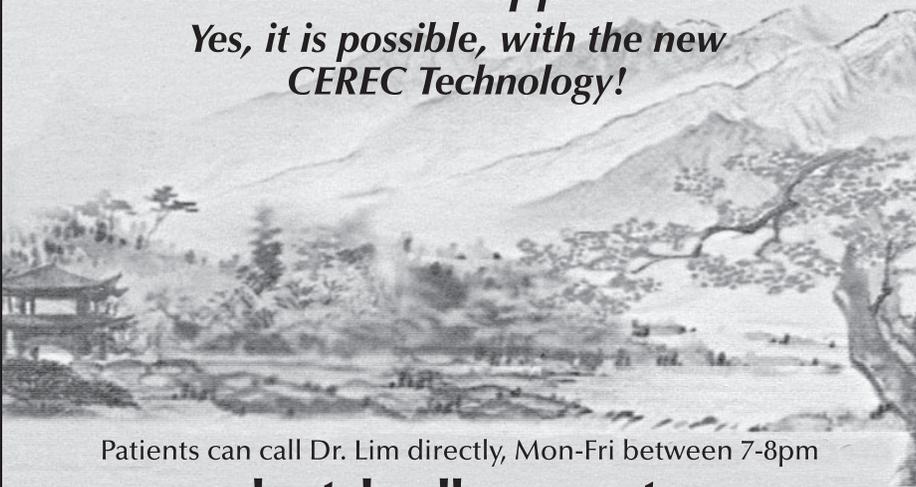
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Penny Kulp grew up in Chester Springs, PA, in a caring family environment. After a short time in business, her concern for others led her into a career as a Massage Therapist.

A graduate of Episcopal Academy and Gettysburg College, Penny completed her professional training at the Pennsylvania School of Muscle Therapy in 1998. She started practicing at her current location in June of 1999, and has since gained the respect of many clients.

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addition, at the highest vibrational level Love is the Divine energy of all spiritual traditions. In this space, Love is expansive, all encompassing, and one with everything. There is no judgment, no separation, no morality, and thus no right or wrong. All events are neutral. It is our interpretation of worldly events that gives them meaning to us. That being the case, I suggest you perceive wisely, for your peace and freedom depend on it.

In order to experience this Divine Love we must feel. Love and God are synonymous. We are Love, and we are all Goddesses and Gods incarnate! "Deny not the role of *feeling* in this dimension, for feeling is everything! You cannot even know the presence of God unless you feel it. You cannot *think about* the presence of God. You cannot insist on a belief about the presence of God. That does not do it; that does not fill your cup. Feeling fills your cup. Feeling – unbridled, unblocked, unobstructed feeling – is the doorway to that Love that sets you free! Knowledge is reality and reality is Love" (*The Way Of Mastery*, 2004).

It is when we experience the Divine Love within that all other illusory forms of love are unmasked. Love that is not unconditional, inclusive, and expansive are egoic creations of special love and separation. By special love I mean, I love this person more than that person. Or the love that I feel for my partner makes me feel whole. Keep in mind that we are all going to participate in degrees of >>

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Carol Bowman, MS, past life regression therapist for fifteen years, is the internationally-known lecturer and author of *Children's Past Lives* and *Return From Heaven*.

Carol has been featured on national TV and radio including *Oprah*, *Good Morning America*, *The Art Bell Show* *Unsolved Mysteries*, *ABC Primetime* and as reincarnation expert on A&E and The Discovery Channel.

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special love in human form. The idea is to move along a continuum toward unconditional love, less specialness, and more inclusiveness. Healthy Love is finding the Love within, connecting with God or Spirit, and extending this Love outward because it is our nature to celebrate our wholeness and oneness. "Therefore, you – as a body and as a mind – abiding in space and time on a tiny planet, *you are* reality's decision to manifest itself in form, for no other reason than to extend its own nature. The happiness of the soul depends on its decision to extend only, that which is loving" (*The Way Of Mastery*, 2004).

How do we tap into this innate part of ourselves you may ask? How do we *be* Love? "Because you are the manifestation of Reality itself, of Knowledge itself, of Love itself, it must mean that at any given moment, there is within you part of the mind that yet remains free from the ego's authority. That part of the mind in which there already abides perfect peace; that part of the mind in which there already abides

perfect certainty; that part of the mind in which there already abides the willingness to extend Love without attachment. There is already within you that part of the mind that can deliver up to you the answer for each decision. The answer helps to extend Love, first into your own beingness, and then through it. For you can only *give* what you first *receive*. And in your giving receiving is completed" (*The Way Of Mastery*, 2004). Thus *real Love* is given or realized in the self first, and then it is organically extended.

This realization of real Love has been a powerful remembrance for me. When things get complicated and fragmented in my life, all I need do is have a little willingness to call in Spirit to help remind me that I am Love and all my brothers and sisters are Love too. We are all one, or to put it another way, Christ is God's only creation and we are all Christ. "Therefore, indeed, beloved friends, if you would look to see what the purpose of your life is, it is quite simple. Being only Love, you can have no other purpose than to extend the

treasure of your very Self. I am one with my Creator – now. I choose to fulfill my purpose by extending only the reflection of my Self, and I am but Love" (*The Way Of Mastery*, 2004).

So if our purpose is Love, and we are all Goddesses and Gods, and we are all Christ, then what is this whole human experience on the planet earth about anyway? "The things of space and time are seen and embraced as that which is given of the Creator to the son, to the daughter, in order to be utilized as devices for assisting Christ to extend Love. It does not matter whether it is a pencil or a computer or a trip to your grocery store or a party in which you invite your friends to come and play. All things finally come to be seen as having only one purpose: *the extension of Love*" (*The Way Of Mastery*, 2004). Wow, sounds like everything is an opportunity to extend Love. And being that all events are neutral, we can choose to interpret everything as a call for Love. Now that is what I call *true Love, true peace, and true freedom*. God Bless! ▲

Dreamer Dan, LOVING MAN

THE BEATLES RECORDED SONGS THAT CHANTED THE MANTRAS, "LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED," AND "ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE." The noted astrologer, Alan Oken, said, "I Am not in Love. I Am Love. When I say I Am not Love, I deny the very essence of my Being." John's Gospel proclaims, "God is Love."

Dan's Truth told him that God/Goddess is Unconditional Love. His Truth further added that it is the vibration of Love that holds this physical experience together. Without it, life is not possible.

To further explore the aspects of Love, Dan consulted the DreamTime.

Love endures the test of time

I found myself in a new environment. The transition was smooth. Some re-membered me and Loved me. Change is an ongoing process. All Moments contain change. Love's vibration exists beyond that of the Hu-man Creation of time. Love existed before time. Love exists through the convention of time and will remain after time has completed its purpose.

Pure Love mirrors that of the Higher Planes

A dear friend wore a purple sweater. We felt deep Love for each other. The color purple suggests that the Dreamer's friend is allowing Grace to enter her body through her crown Chakra. Attunement with that Energy allows the Dreamer to experience the pure Love of the Higher Planes.

Love brings the closest form of relationship

I saw a young woman reading. I suggested that she do something different. She said she Loved to read. I touched her gently to open a new channel for her Love. Love Creates an intimate communion with the Higher Self. The woman had mastered that Art. The Dreamer invited her to share her Love with another. Love includes intimacy with others as well as with the Self.

Love remains constant, sees through the illusion of separation, and supports the choices of the other

My friend turned his back on me and befriended another. The Knowing of the

Dream brought the realization that my friend still Loved me. I therefore felt free to support his choice to befriend another.

"Love is Patient and Kind"

I felt an attraction to a young woman. I gently drew her to me. Attraction indicates a Love connection between the Dreamer and the young woman. Love has Great Power. It is a magnet that draws others into its Energy. Love vibrates with Patience and allows the other to come near in a progression that feels comfortable. Conversely, the abuse of Power separates the person from his most prized possession, the Gift of Love.

Love proceeds in accord with personal growth choices

A woman and I looked deeply into each other's eyes. We Loved each other very quickly. We would come together slowly because we knew we had to proceed according to Law. When we look deeply into the eyes of the other, we form an immediate connection at the sublime levels of Heart and Soul. The Dream shows that the two Love each other deeply but have to follow the Law of their own Creation. These two chose to meet at a certain time. They also chose to nurture their relationship and growth in accord with a specific timetable most beneficial to both.

Love overcomes fear and allows for the growth of others

My grandmother tried to push two of my teeth together. I told her that my teeth had

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to breathe. When she stopped, I smiled with the Beauty that others Loved. Dan knew that his grandmother symbolized the fears of the family in which he had incarnated. He also knew that the teeth symbolized the vehicles through which he would express his Truth. His grandmother feared his Truth because it represented a departure from hers and called into question the safety of her own belief system. Dan advocated for the Living Breath of his own Truth. When his Truth was free, he was then free to share his own Beauty. Beauty inspired by Love had risen beyond the fear of his Beloved grandmother with whom he would always share a deep Love.

Dan closed the book on his Dreams of Love. His parting realization told him that Love is the joining of the male and female Energies within each individual Hu-man. It is the balanced Hu-man who walks the Earth in the fullness of Love. The Sacred Feminine brings the compassion of Love and the flow of Wisdom. The Sacred Masculine brings the focus, strength, and courage to endure until One's Path of Love is complete. ▲



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Origins

THAI YOGA MASSAGE IS ALSO KNOWN AS NUAD BO RARN, THAI MASSAGE, THAI BODYWORK, ANCIENT MASSAGE, OR YOGA MASSAGE. Thai yoga massage is an ancient form of massage therapy which dates back 2,500 years ago. Through his travels to Thailand, one of the main crossroads of international trade, Dr. Jivaka Kumar Bhaccha, learned about Traditional Chinese Medicine and combined it with his knowledge of Ayurvedic medicine. Dr. Jivaka is known as the founding father of Traditional Thai Medicine. Thai massage was developed as part of Thai medicine. He is reknown for being the physician of Siddhartha Guatama, a.k.a., the Buddha, the Enlightened One. As Buddhism spread, so did Thai massage. Thai massage was originally taught by monks in temples. It was a way for the monks to extend their spiritual practice with compassionate touch. Thai massage is still taught at Wat Pho temple, a national center which teaches and preserves Buddhist spiritual practices as well as Traditional Thai Medicine in Bangkok, Thailand.

Theory

From an Eastern perspective, Thai yoga massage purposes to balance the life force energy circulating throughout our body. This life

force energy is invisible to the eyes but can be sensed intuitively. However, for anyone who might be skeptical about energy work, Kirilian photography may prove helpful in showing vital energy moving in people. This vital energy, known as prana to the Indians, or Qi to the Chinese, is in all living things. When energy is blocked or stagnant due to physical and mental stress, the body becomes dis-eased or ill and can not perform well. Applying pressure on marma (also known as acupressure) points and guided stretches along the energy channels or Sen energy lines help to stimulate, redistribute, and re-establish the flow and supply of energy throughout the body, thereby releasing tension, stress, aches, and pain. When the energy flows naturally and freely, the receiver feels a sense of relaxation and the joy of well-being.

From a Western perspective, Thai yoga massage addresses health by referring to the anatomy and physiology of the body. Thai yoga massage helps the skeletal, circulatory, muscular, and nervous system (Chow, 24). Yoga asanas help stretch and create space between the bones relieving pressure and improving flexibility in the joints and spinal column. Various rotations of the joints such as the shoulders, elbows, hip, knees, and ankles also help relieve pressure and tension. Clients may feel taller and lighter. Palming and thumbing help the circulatory system do its job of carrying blood to and from the body cells. Inverted poses with the legs held above the heart like the half-plow help the heart transport the blood back and forth more quickly, intensifying the oxygenation and detoxification of the blood. The increase of blood flow to muscular areas also reduces tightness in the muscles and improves elasticity. Overall the combinations of deep breathing, gentle, firm pressure of palming, thumbing, and yoga stretching communicate to the brain and spinal cord to slow down and relax. The stillness and sacred space provided in Thai yoga massage supports and nurtures the body and mind.

Techniques

Similar to shiatsu, the basic hands-on techniques used in Thai yoga massage are palming and thumbing. Palming as the name suggests is the use of the palm. Palming is used to warm up the body, especially over the muscular areas like the back, legs, and arms. Thumbing as the name implies is applying pressure on the body with the padded part of the thumb. Thumbing covers a more concentrated area than palming. The small thumb-like pressure stimulates marma points. Both palming and thumbing are done along the sen energy lines. Besides the palms and thumbs, practitioners also use other parts of their body as massage tools. For example, they use the lower arm, elbows, knees, and feet to do the massage and the assisted yoga



Illustration B:
Child's Pose

poses. The practitioners' emphasis on using their body weight instead of their body strength helps to reduce tiredness and injury. Other techniques include lifting, shaking, rotating, pulling, pushing, and stretching.

Yoga in Thai Massage

In Thai yoga massage, hatha yoga is included as part of the massage. That's what makes it truly unique. Similar to partner yoga, practitioners help recipients get into the postures and assist them by stretching and holding the stretches. The practitioners serve as guides and health partners. For Darilyn Anne Avery, NCBTMB, a nationally certified massage therapist at Health First, Malvern, PA, "Thai yoga massage is about how we can achieve health and wellness together." Practitioners help the recipients maintain a comfortable and stable pose. They are mindful of the recipients' physical limitations and medical conditions. The yoga postures and conscious breathing all help to open the chakras or life force energy centers in the body. There are seven major chakras: root, sacral, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye, and crown. The >>



Illustration A:
Butterfly Shoulder
Stretch

continued on page 38

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chakras have physical, emotional, and spiritual functions. Focus on the chakras during assisted yoga helps to balance physical and energetic functions. Three of the assisted yoga postures are **butterfly shoulder stretch**, **child's pose**, and **cobra pose**.

Butterfly Shoulder Stretch

In the butterfly shoulder stretch, the recipient sits cross legged Indian style with hands behind the head (**Illustration A**). The physical awareness of a butterfly shoulder stretch is on releasing tension in the chest and shoulders (Mercati, 131).

The stretch increases range of motion in the shoulders and scapula. On a deeper level, the butterfly shoulder stretch helps open the heart or anahata chakra. The heart chakra is the energy center for compassion, tolerance, and acceptance.

Child's Pose

For the child's or prayer pose, the recipient kneels and bends forward (**Illustration B**). The physical awareness of a child's posture is on loosening stiffness in the spinal column and back muscles. The stretch also benefits the pelvic muscles and sciatic nerves. It relieves problems with the reproductive organs. Holding the posture also compresses and massages the abdominal organs. As a type of forward bending posture, a child's pose symbolizes the ability to bend, be flexible, and be humble (Saraswati, 227). It also represents surrender to the things we can not control or change. The chakras to focus on are solar plexus chakra or sacral chakra (Saraswati, 124). Solar plexus or manipura chakra is in charge of digestion and the metabolic process. It is associated with assertiveness and ambition. Sacral or swadhistana chakra deals with the reproductive and excretory functions. It is focused on getting pleasure from food, drink, and sex.

Cobra

The cobra posture is performed with the recipient laying on the belly and lifting up like a snake while the practitioner pulls the arms to the back (**Illustration C**). Cobra posture is one type of backward bending asanas. It has many physical benefits. It opens and stretches the upper body. It also stretches and tones the back muscles. It relieves back pain and improves flexibility in the spine. The cobra posture also helps relieve reproductive problems. It is good for the abdominal organs, especially the liver and kidneys. The act of bending backward relates to being open to life. Stiffness signifies body

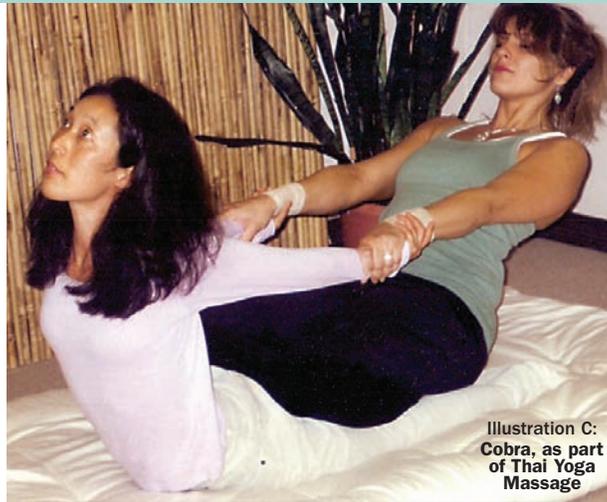


Illustration C:
Cobra, as part
of Thai Yoga
Massage

armor, one of the body's defense mechanism (Saraswati, 194). Backward bends flush out stiffness and rigidity, encouraging individuals to be flexible and spontaneous. It also relates to people "bending over backwards" for others. It strongly influences many chakras, namely sacral, solar plexus, heart, and throat. The throat or vishuddhi chakra is known as the purification center (Saraswati, 518). It allows people to accept things as they are, allowing the dualities of the good and the bad to be. Focus on the throat energy center helps balance ailments associated in the throat area namely, the vocal cords, larynx, thyroid, and parathyroid.

Hands-on Session

Before a session begins, practitioners connect with the receiver to establish intentions of self-healing and metta. **Metta is loving kindness for the receiver, oneself, and all people.** Practitioners ask for healing for the receiver, for the practitioners themselves, and for everyone in the world. Avery opens with a humble mantra, "*Om Namoh Shivago*. I pray for the one I touch, that he/she will be happy, and that all illness will be released." Avery encourages moderate feedback by emphasizing, "Silence allows the recipient to receive without distraction, and get to a meditative state by concentrating on the touch, and how it feels."

An important part of Thai yoga massage is deep breathing. Deep breathing is highly encouraged. The receiver breathes slowly, deeply, and mindfully. Being conscious of one's breath can bring one to a deep state of relaxation. It helps one stay in the moment and become more aware of oneself. Deep inhalation helps the energy move to the internal organs as deep exhalation helps move stagnant and toxic energy out of the body (Mercati, 16). The practitioner listens to the client's breathing and responses and coordinates the stretches accordingly. The practitioner and receiver work together in a

smooth, free flowing choreography, from one movement to the next.

Because Thai yoga massage is done fully clothed on a mat on the floor, it is especially suited to clients who are concerned about being undressed. The cost varies depending on the practitioners' years of training and location. It ranges anywhere from \$55-\$80 per hour. Massages can last from one-hour to two-and-a-half hours. The length of the sessions can be adjusted depending on the client's schedule and availability. Besides the legs, abdomen, arms, back, shoulders, neck, ears, and scalp, a whole body treatment also includes a foot massage, attending to the soles and toes, a hand massage, working the

palms and fingers, and a facial, soothing all parts of the face like the forehead, eye lid areas, cheeks, jaw, and chin. All parts of the body, the front, the sides, and the back, from bottom to top, get personal attention. Like getting regular tune-ups for the car, Thai yoga massage is a touch of healthy tune-up for your body. Recipients feel recharged, invigorated, and relaxed. It is as if all the kinks and knots got out. *Looking relaxed and calm after her session, one of Avery's clients, Beth Margolis-Rupp of Chester Springs, PA, smiles, and says she feels "ahhhh" and "a deep release" when she gets Thai yoga massage.*

People from all walks of life and with different health conditions come for Thai yoga massage. According to Pam Smith, RYT, a yoga instructor and massage therapist, at Triunity Holistic Chiropractic Studio in Allentown, PA, "The level of pressure used and type of asanas performed are related to the flexibility, age, and physical condition of the client." Smith says clients come for Thai yoga massage because other modalities have not worked for them. Many simply want to satisfy their curiosity and experience it for themselves since Thai yoga massage is still relatively new in the West. ▲

To find practitioners who are trained and certified in Thai yoga massage, contact massage schools, National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB), American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA), and other professional massage therapy organizations.

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*Program cofacilitated with Sandy Gargus,
Nutritional & Lifestyle Coach*



*Wendy Goldenthal, CI, HBCE
Certified Instructor, HypnoBirthing
Childbirth Educator*



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*Corporate groups, Individuals, Adolescents and Children
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Resonance

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Beyond Talk Therapy

The mind often lies to itself, whereas
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Resonance, as a body centered therapy, utilizes the body's postures, symptoms and sensations, unconscious gestures, and other subtle signals to access parts of the psyche that hide behind the protective defenses of the intellect so that healing and integration can occur in the whole of the body/mind.

Sondra Howell specializes in Peter Levine's trauma healing, Arnold Mindell's Process Work with body symptoms and illness, and in helping adults and children live joyously.

SONDRA HOWELL

Registered Movement Therapist
Member, USA Body Psychotherapists
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Often I find myself at a roadblock when trying to help my patients and myself heal. I think of all the visits where we've talked about medications and supplements, diet and exercise, smoking and lab data, and yet we've not talked about the "elephant in the room" – the real issues.

It is as if we're colluding with each other, kind of a "don't ask, don't tell" about health and the root causes of our dis-ease. If I asked my new patient all the things I needed to know about him or her, it would take hours. Who is able or willing to pay for this time? If I ask a patient about their spiritual or sexual life, about their compulsions or painful relationships, will they come back for the next visit? If I am honest in telling a patient that their condition will take a few years to heal, or that they will need to come to yoga class every week, or spend many hundreds of dollars on lab tests or supplements, will they go running?

The average doctor visit is 3-5 minutes, the average psychotherapy visit is 50 minutes; how much can be truly accomplished in this limited amount of time? It's as if we're pretending to do some work, so that we can feel good about ourselves and go about our lives. But such superficiality, like a bandaid over a deep wound, cannot accomplish much; even more worrisome is that by allowing such wounds to fester, when they finally require real treatment, they are deeply established and more difficult to treat. As they say, "A stitch in time saves nine." So, what is the root cause of our resistance to heal? If we look closely at the

Colluding to Not Heal: OR, A Deficiency of Self-Love

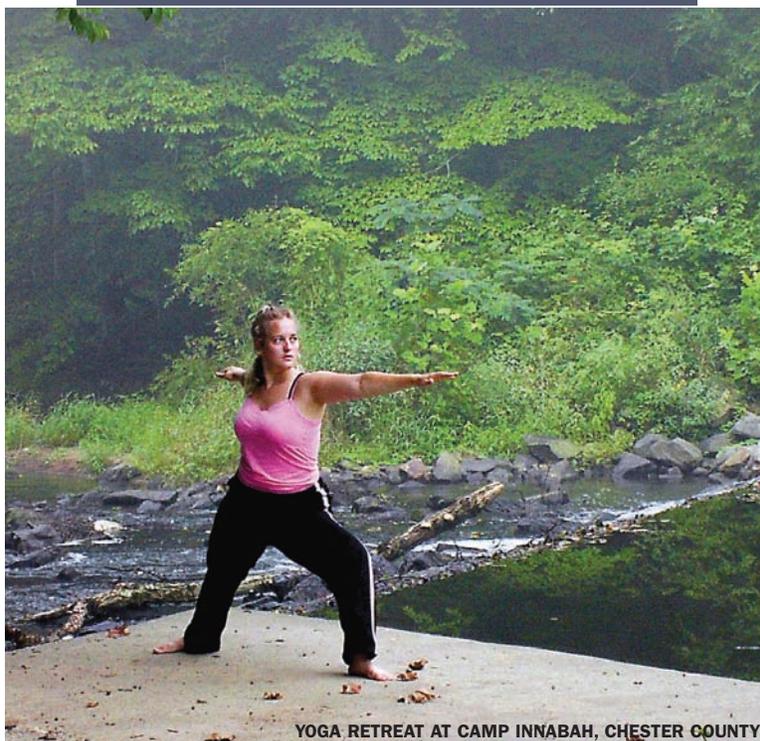
of mind, can reveal insights that "re-frame" such fears to reduce their paralytic effect (more on solutions below).

The next reason is "lack of resource," usually in the form of time or money. However, we all know people that make the time, and find the means, to do what they want. Under the surface of "lack of resource" is "priorities out of order."

Why would we place other priorities, such as vacations, clothes, entertainment, restaurants, daily Starbucks, lottery tickets, etc, over our health? Is it that we lack faith that if we invest in our health, in our selves, we will see a "return on investment." If we spend our time and money on a good restaurant meal, rather than a yoga class or month's worth of supplements, are we assured a satisfying experience? If I put off pleasure today, will I see the results later? Americans are notoriously bad at delaying gratification. We don't put away enough for retire-

ment and we go into tremendous debt at high cost (i.e. credit cards) just to have pleasure (or avoid pain) today. Our escape into TV, shopping and other distractions are, again, bandaids that cannot give us long-lasting peace. Addictions, more extreme versions of these diversions, are compulsions to engage in these activities to keep away painful thoughts and feelings.

Another reason we don't invest in ourselves is a strange equation that we make. It is similar to the phenomenon where we drive around for minutes to find a close parking spot, and then walk for miles at the mall. In many aspects of our lives, we are irrational creatures, acting from emotion and perception, rather >>



YOGA RETREAT AT CAMP INNABAH, CHESTER COUNTY

by Michael Cheikin, MD

"reasons" that we give ourselves, the solution to such roadblocks becomes apparent.

The first reason seems to be fear, as in "if I acknowledge and open this wound, will I ever heal, or will I be consumed by the pain." This often seems to be the case in childhood trauma, which can lead to a lifetime of dysfunctional relationships, obsessive fears and compulsions, pre-occupation with bodily symptoms, and a baseline level of anxiety and/or depression. However, yogic and Buddhist practices teach us that by going into the very heart of the pain and fear, using a concentrated and non-judgmental frame