Yoga Living

Volume XI, Issue V

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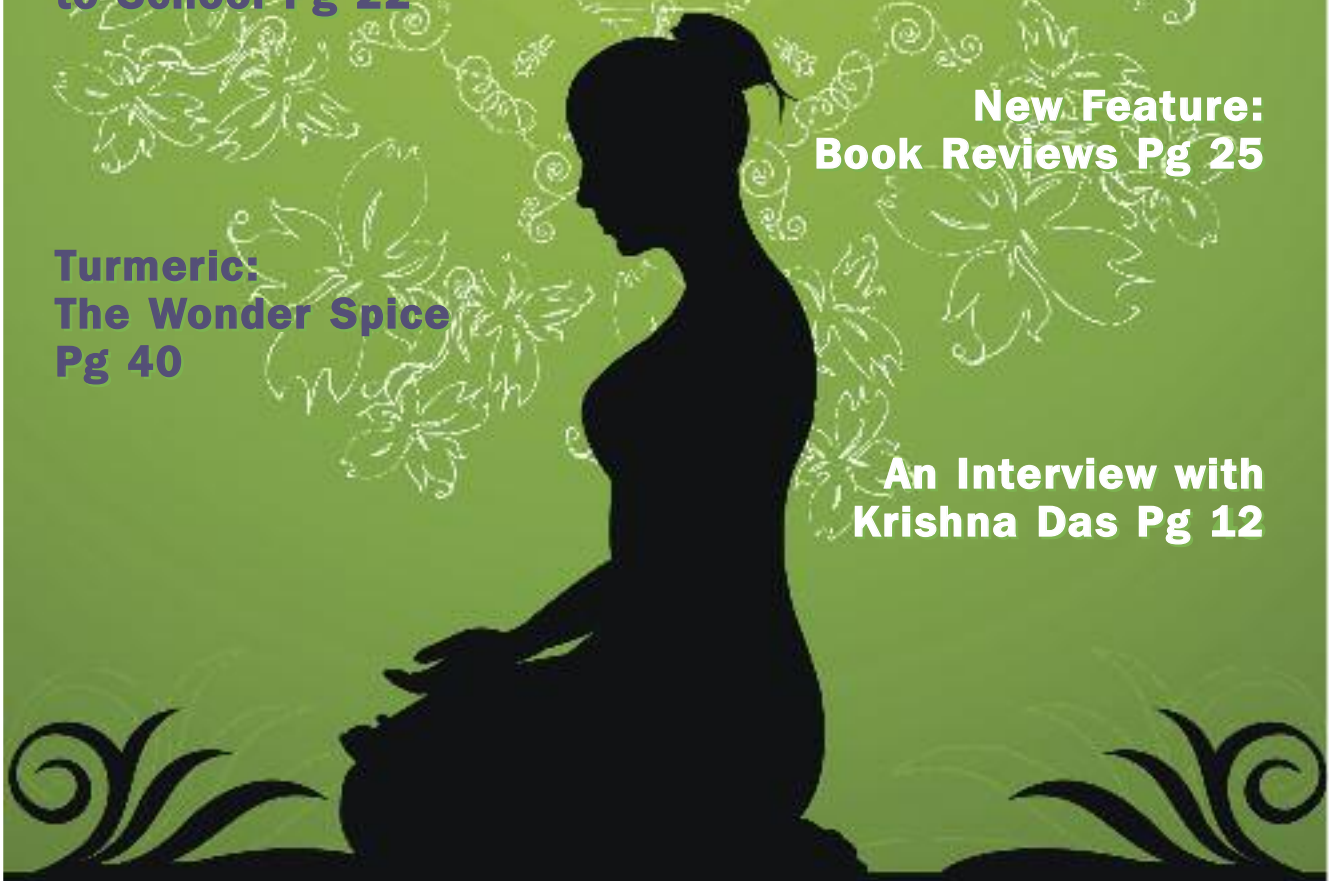

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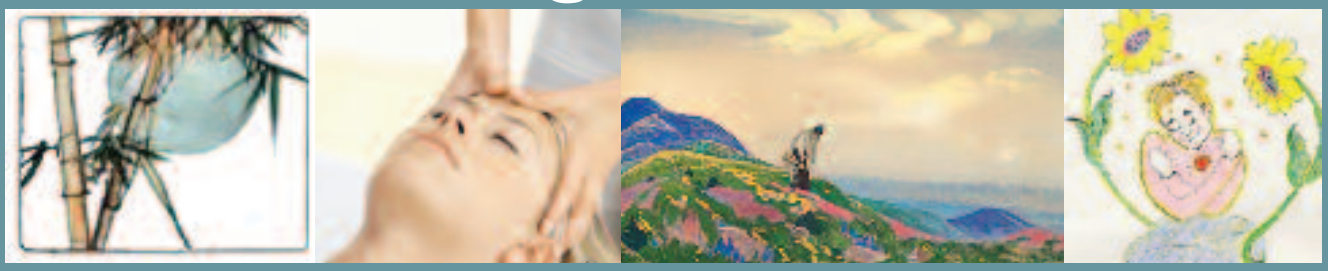

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Rev. John Coy Cook is a member by birth of the Navajo Nation. A Presbyterian minister, he draws on his knowledge of archaic and contemporary Navajo language, history, philosophy, and ceremony. Cook introduces people to Navajo teachings about balance and order, and teaches us to fit in with nature, and restore loving family relationships.

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Yoga Living **Online! www.yogalivingmagazine.com**

Lynda Lyng

lives, writes, and teaches in Kimberton, and may be reached at llyng@lunayogapa.com.

Educating the Nervous System
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Lisa Flynn

is the founder of ChildLight Yoga and Yoga 4 Classrooms, two very popular, effective programs for parents, teachers and yoga therapists to learn to share yoga with children. Lisa trains and speaks at many locations throughout the Northeastern United States. For more information, visit www.childlightyoga.com.

Yoga Goes to School
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Kristen Butera | **RYT 500, IYT**

is the manager of the YogaLife Institute and the editor of Yoga Living magazine. She is also a Kripalu yoga teacher, Integrative Yoga Therapist and gourmet cook. Kristen can be reached at yogalifeinstitute@verizon.net or www.yogalifeinstitute.com.

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Komali Nunna

is a California-based chef from Southern India who has been entertaining guests in her home and community for 25 years, and now shares her time-tested recipes in a new cookbook, Entertaining from an Ethnic Indian Kitchen. To obtain spice blends used in her recipe and to learn more about her cookbook, visit www.KomaliNunna.com.

Turmeric: The Wonder Spice
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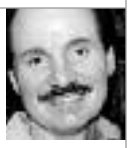

Ji

aids others in process through the vehicles of *Dream* & *Spirit Sessions*. These interactive sessions allow participants to integrate New Energy, clear discomfort, and embrace new directions. Contact Ji at momentswithji@verizon.net.

Dreams Teach Education
page 28

Angela Nevius | **RYT**

serves as *Yoga Living's* Advertising Coordinator, frequent contributor and overall "Gal Friday" (according to her!). She teaches Yoga, gardens, raises two sons and two dogs. Reach her at yogalifeinstitute@verizon.net.

Kino MacGregor

is the director of the Miami Life Center in South Beach, FL. She is the youngest woman out of a select group to receive the Ashtanga Yoga Certification from Sri K. Pattabi Jois in Mysore, India. For more information on her local, national and international workshops and classes, visit www.miamilifecenter.com and www.ashtanga-awareness.com.

The Yoga of Purification
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Susie Beiler

Holistic Health Counselor, Occupational Therapist; Private nutrition & spiritual counseling, group programs, seminars, nutrition DVD, natural body care & essential oils, Raindrop Technique; susiebeiler@hotmail.com

Educate Yourself
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Michael Cheikin | **MD**

is a holistic physician, Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation *(Physiatry)*, Pain Management, Spinal Cord Medicine and Electro-diagnostic Medicine. Contact him at drc@c4oh.org.

Fallacy of Diagnosis; or The Power of an Un-Diagnosis
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Anthony Michael Rubbo | **MHS**

is a consultant to education and industry, and the author of books on personal leadership and meditation. He is currently writing a novel and collaborating on a production that promotes the spiritual lifestyle. If you have questions or comments, you can contact him at anthonymichael133@gmail.com.

Inside-Out Education
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Marilyn Moser-Waxman

integrates practices and techniques from a variety of holistic health and healing systems from around the world. Her classes and coaching offer a well-rounded education that is applicable to a wide spectrum of dietary needs and health issues. Learn more at www.thenourishingwell.com.

Your Kitchen: The Key to Vibrant Health
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Michael Reddy | **PH.D CPC, ELI-MP**

is a certified Core Energy Coach who is deeply committed to Systemic Family Constellation Work. He taught shamanic spirituality and healing for many years. In addition to working with individuals, he specializes in helping wellness professionals and entrepreneurs find their true alignment, the right clients, and new tools for helping. Learn more at www.reddyworks.com.

Sphere College: Rising from the Ashes in Phoenixville?
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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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Letter From the Publisher

"To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge."
Henry David Thoreau

If I had to sum up the essence of education into one line, it would be this quote from Thoreau. He was also a student of eastern philosophy, and much of the wisdom he gleaned in his studies comes through in his great works. This particular lesson is one that I have seen played out over and over again in my life, as well as in the lives of my students. When in the process of seeking or presenting knowledge, most people fall into three different categories.

The Know-it-Alls: You know the type. They never ask any questions, and no matter what the subject matter is, they present themselves as experts. These people seem to decrease the joy of learning by not engaging in the process of imaginative questioning and sometimes turn the conversation into an assertion of their questionable superiority. Their proverbial cup is already full, and there is no room for additional knowledge to enter and be processed.

The Don't Really Cares: This type of person is sometimes too busy, too blind or too apathetic to think outside the boundaries of their own problems or ego driven pursuits. When asked a deep question, they will look at you and shrug their shoulders, laugh it off uncomfortably or offer little interest or curiosity about the situation being presented to them. They live life according to the status quo, never rocking the boat by thinking or questioning the nature of things too much, not wanting to be challenged on any level.

The Seekers: This type of person specializes in asking questions, being imaginative and trying to see things from different perspectives. They might not always find the answers, but will have a lot of fun and maybe even some major insights while trying to figure things out. These people embody the philosophical concept known as ***beginners mind*** with an attitude of openness, eagerness, and lack of preconceptions when examining an idea or question.

Having been a Yoga teacher for many years now, I have learned firsthand that one of the best gifts any teacher can give a student is to teach them the joy of being a seeker. This process of questioning is inherent Yoga philosophy. In India, tradition dictated that knowledge be handed down from a realized master (*Guru*) to a disciple (*Acharya*). Lifestyle practices called the *Yamas* and the *Niyamas* were learned through experiential knowledge and contemplation, usually a combination of reading, self-inquiry, and spiritual dialogues/allegories.

As a philosophy, Yoga guides us to discern the difference between intellectual knowledge and realized wisdom. The ancient mystic Ramakrishna offered the distinction between the two with an analogy of a fire. *"He who has merely heard of fire has Ajana (ignorance). He who has seen fire has Jnana (wisdom). But he who has made fire and cooked with it has Vijana (realized wisdom)."*

In the Bhagavad Gita, the basic cause of suffering is explained in great detail, but can also be summed up with great simplicity – we as human beings are limited by the mind's materialistic boundaries and cannot fully discern the unchanging nature of reality. We are stuck in the veil of illusion (*Maya*). In this way, being an intellectual is not a requirement for being an aspirant of knowledge, as book learning lacks the experiential and mystical qualities of realized knowing. Questioning and ultimately being comfortable with the concept of not knowing is a necessary part of the process. It is, as the poet Rilke once suggested, a willingness to *"…love the questions themselves and gradually, without noticing it, someday live into the answer."*

Your Publisher,

Bob Butera

Bob Butera, PhD, Yoga Living Publisher, Director of the YogaLife Institute in Devon, PA, writer, and national trainer of Yoga Teachers

Yoga Living
Your Healthy Lifestyle Guide

ON
EDUCATION

March/April 2010
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Publisher
ROBERT BUTERA, PhD

Editor
KRISTEN BUTERA

Art Director
AMIE HANNAH
Partners Press, Oaks, PA

Graphic Artist
MARIE KOZLOWSKI
Partners Press, Oaks, PA

Advertising
ANGELA NEVIUS

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Yoga Living, Your Healthy Lifestyle Guide, promotes the field of Yoga as a healthy lifestyle. The practice of a Traditional Yoga program includes each facet of life. This magazine introduces readers to resources for healthy living. Please share your copy of *Yoga Living* with your friends. Contact us at 610-688-7030 or at info@yogalivingmagazine.com. Advertisers go to www.yogaliving-magazine.com for a media kit.

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An Interview with Krishna Das

What initially brought you to Yoga?

Deep unhappiness…Feelings of inadequacy and inability to really involve myself in things.

Tell us a little bit about your time and connections with Ram Dass and Neem Karoli Baba.

I met Ram Dass in the winter on 1968/69.The minute I walked into the room where he was sitting, without a word being spoken, I knew, intuitively that whatever it was that I was searching for, was REAL...it existed in this world and could be found. This totally changed the way I felt about life.

I was with Maharaj-ji for two and half years, before he sent me back to US. It was the first time I had ever been loved unconditionally, without any limitation...it was also the first time I was able to love completely, without any fear.

How did you get your spiritual name? What does it mean?

Maharaj-ji. He was calling me driver at this time, having taken the keys to Ram Dass' VW bus and given them to me. All my other friends had gotten Indian names, but he was still calling me Driver. One night I wrote in my diary that, "I guess I will always be Driver." The next morning Maharaj-ji called me in and gave me the name Krisna Das. It means "servant of God". We are in the lineage of Hanuman who worshipped God thru service and devotion.

Give us your take on Bhakti Yoga, what does it mean to you?

Falling in love with love.

Do you practice other types of Yoga? If so, how has your practice evolved over the years?

Practice removes the covering that hides our own inner beauty... the love that lives within us as who we truly are. Any spiritual practice that one does will reveal more of our Self to us over time.

What are some of your favorite chants?

All chants are my favorite chants.

What are some of your favorite books about Yoga and Spirituality?

Miracle of Love by Ram Dass. Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda. InDEvine Presence about Bhagavan Nityananda by Hatengdi. The Life and Teachings of Sai Baba Of Shirdi by Rigopoulos. Blazing Splendor by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche. The Art of Happiness by the Dalai Lama.

What is it like working with Deva Premal & Miten for the upcoming tour?

It's wonderful to work with people of like mind and heart.

Tell us a little bit about your most recent book Chants of Lifetime.

It has many stories of my time with my guru in India and how that led to my Chanting with people now.

What guidance would you offer to those who are new to the practice of Bhakti Yoga?

No one is new to Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti yoga is Love...Everyone is looking for love. All love leads to the Inner Heart, eventually. Bhakti is a way of going directly to that instead of following every dead end on the way.

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"Teacher Training was truly a life-changing experience!" **– Becky M.**

"The teacher training program at PYW was one of the most positive experiences in my life."**– Janice T.**

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- S.K., formerly afraid of heights

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- C.S., mother of child who no longer has a peanut allergy

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- R.A., history of multiple health problems

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Heart Flow Yoga: Poses that Open

"There is a light that shines beyond all things on earth, beyond the highest, the very highest heavens. This is the light that shines in your heart." – *Chandogya Upanishad*

When introducing the idea of heart opening into a yoga pose routine, many people think first about romantic love. Yet there are many forms of love, and in many cases the most important is self-love. Finding love for the self at the deepest level is what allows us to give and receive love for and from others. In his book, The Four Loves, author CS Lewis distinguishes need-love (*such as the love of a child for its mother*) from gift-love (*epitomized by God's love for humanity*), all the while acknowledging that any attempt to define love is more complicated than it seems. As a result, he divides love into four categories: Affection (*familial love*) Friendship (*love based on common experience*), Eros (*romantic love*) and Charity (*neighborly love*). At any given time we may find ourselves deficient or overflowing in one of these areas, and a yoga practice centered on awareness of the heart can help us to understand and work with these imbalances.

In a heart opening practice, the traditional emphasis is on opening the chest or physical area around the heart, but in this flow I am encouraging you to explore both the front and back of the heart through movement and holding. The front of the heart is where we give love, and the back of the heart is where we receive it. In reality, any pose can be a heart opener, just by bringing the attention to the area and the energetic expansions and contractions in that area. Use this flow to get your awareness centered on the heart and find a way in, and then use your own intuition to take your practice wherever the heart leads.

Getting Started:

Meditation on Anahata (Heart Chakra)

Take a few moments to sit in a comfortable meditative seat, noticing your breath and slowing it down into a deep even rhythm. Bring both hands to heart center in Anjali Mudra (Prayer Seal). Visualize a green light in whatever form it comes to you and then allow it to settle deep into the heart space. With your inhalations let the breath expand the light, and with your exhalations let the muscles in the chest soften and relax. If one of the mantras below resonates with you, repeat silently or out loud if it helps. You can also bring the mantra practice into your poses if you find it to be a helpful tool.

Mantras: I allow myself to give and receive love, I trust in the loving heart of the universe, My heart is open, I accept myself as I am, I love myself, I am whole.

Warm Up Sequence

Ball Hugging: Can be done from seated, kneeling or standing position. Bring the arms to shoulder height and bend the elbows out to side (fingertips lightly touching, palms turned towards the chest) to create the sense of hugging a ball. With an inhalation, open the arms and start to draw the shoulder blades together, lift the heart skyward and open the throat. When opening the throat, try to lengthen the neck out of the shoulders instead of collapsing the back of the neck. With the exhalation start to bring the fingertips back towards each other, slightly rounding the upper back to expand the space in between the shoulder blades, chin falling to chest. Repeat 10 – 20x.

Cat/Cow: Come to a table position, hands underneath the shoulders, knees underneath the hips. With the inhalation let the abdomen drop and the tailbone tilt,

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creating a small curve in the lumbar spine. Let the gaze come skyward and the heart open energetically forward. With the exhalation, let the tailbone carve under and bow the upper back, relax the back of the neck and let the crown surrender towards the earth. Repeat 10 – 20x.

Cobra Undulations: Come to lay on the abdomen, bringing the palms to the earth and lining up fingertips with shoulders. With an inhalation press the palms into the earth bending the elbows and drawing the shoulder blades together, taking the gaze slightly up and shining the heart forward. Exhale slowly lower yourself back to the earth. Repeat 10 – 20x.

Pose Sequence

Anahata (Heart Melting Pose): From a table position walk the hands out so that the arms are extended in front of the shoulders. Keeping the buttocks up in the air, start to sink the chest and chin down to the earth. If the chest and chin do not come down easily to the floor, let the forehead rest on the earth instead.

Standing Yoga Mudra: Come to standing with feet hips width apart and with the exhalation start to fold forward with a long back, leading with the heart as the upper body surrenders to gravity. Let the arms sweep past the legs and the fingers come to interlace, resting on the low back. Either stay here with the arms or start to take them overhead, drawing the shoulders towards each other and breathing into the heart space. Modify by holding onto a strap with the hands to create more room for the shoulders. To release, let the hands come apart and arms extend next to the ears. With the inhalation come up with a long back and return to standing.

Note: *From a symbolic perspective, in this pose thinking mind is surrendered below the feeling heart. Meditate on this concept while in the pose – what does it mean to you?*

Vrksasana (Tree Pose): From a standing position, bring your weight over to one foot. Find a firm standing foundation by spreading out the toes and feeling all four corners of the foot on the earth. Draw up on the kneecap with the thigh muscle engaging the entire standing leg. Bring the opposite foot to the calf or thigh, making sure that it is above or below the knee joint. Firmly press leg into foot and the foot back into the leg to create stability. Bring the hands to heart center and let the eyes softly focus on something that is not moving.

Note: *From an archetypal perspective one might see the tree as the essence of giving and receiving. Trees breathe life-giving oxygen into the world and transform everything around them in the exchange of carbon dioxide for oxygen. Try to connect to the essence of the pose while holding it.*

Utthita Parsvakonasana (Extended Side Angle): with sweeping arm variation. From a standing position, open lengthwise on your mat with the feet anywhere from 2 – 4 apart. Bring the left foot to face the side and the right to point towards the end of the mat. Bend the right knee and bring it over the ankle and let the right elbow rest on the right thigh. Ground into the outer edge of the left foot and extend the left arm over the left ear, turning the palm down towards the earth. Start to bring movement into the extended arm sweeping it in a circular fashion. When the arm comes back focus on spiraling the heart skyward. Repeat arm movement 10 – 20x and then take the pose to other side.

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Trikonasana (Triangle/Bound Triangle): From Extended Side Angle, bring up the torso and relax the arms. Extend the bent knee leg. Inhale take the arms up to shoulder height. Exhale hinge from the back hip, lengthen the side body and reach forward. With an exhale let the front hand come to lightly touch on the leg above or below the knee joint while the back arm reaches up for the sky. Stack the shoulders and square the hips. Turn to look up and the extended hand if it feels ok for the neck. Broaden out the heart space by reaching into the top arm and activating the fingertips. Take the extended arm back and around, letting it rest on the low back or reach for the extended leg thigh. Imagine the heart opening towards the heavens. Hold for a few deep breaths and then repeat on the other side.

Ustrasana (Camel Pose): From a table position, come to standing in the knees. Bring the hands to the lower back for support, palms on the back and finger tips pointing towards the earth. Draw the shoulder blades together by bending the elbows and bringing them towards each other. Gently start to press the hips forward and arch the low back. Let the throat open and the neck lengthen out of the shoulders (try not to collapse the back of the neck). If the low back is tender or tight stay in this version, if it feels right to go deeper start to bring one hand and then the other down to the heels, continuing to press the hips forward and heart skyward. If the arms are too short, turn over onto the balls of the foot and reach for the heels that way.

Adhomukhasvanasana (Downward Facing Dog): From a table position walk the hands forward a bit, paying close attention to your hands. Spread the fingers wide, cup the palms and gently bow the fingers. Turn your toes under and bring the bent knees off the ground. Keeping the knees bent, start to press away from the hands and guide the torso towards the thighs. Start coming into the legs by bending one knee at a time eventually moving into an upside down v-shape. Let your heals sink towards the earth and breathe. To fine tune the pose, let the crown of the end extend towards the earth in line with the arms. Draw up on the inner arm muscles and back and down with the shoulder blades. Slight inward rotation of the thigh muscles if you can isolate them.

Note: *You can repeat Camel Pose and Downward Dog as a pairing several times if it feels right for your body.*

Finishing Up

Supta Baddha Konasana (Supported Reclining Bound Angle Pose): Fold and stack 1-3 blankets firmly. Bring a pillow to the top of the blankets that is 1-2 shorter than the blanket stack. From a seated position, line the blankets up with the sacrum and bring the soles of the feet together and open the knees out to the side (use rolled blankets, pillows or blocks underneath the thighs for support). Lay back onto the stacked blankets with the spine and let the arms open into a T shape to encourage passive heart opening. The throat can open and the head should be supported just below the edge of the blanket stack. Stay in the pose 1 – 5 minutes, focusing on a slow, deep breath expanding the heart space. To come out, bring the knees together and roll slowly over to one side and off of the blanket stack.

Balasana (Childs Pose): From hands and knees, lower the buttocks back towards the heels and the forehead down towards the floor. Let the torso drape over the thighs and the arms come to rest long by the sides. If the forehead does not touch the floor, bring the arms around and stack the fists to let the forehead rest. If the buttocks cannot touch the heels, bring a blanket in between the buttocks and the heels for support. Focus on your breath opening the back of the heart.

Closing Offering:

I bow to the heart, my inner teacher.