Yoga Blog Entries

Lauren L. Gallow, University of California - Santa Barbara

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/lgallow/19/
FREE yoga?! What! The Grinning Yogi is now offering a free Saturday 12:15 class taught by the recent graduates of our yoga teacher training (YTT) program. This class is a great way for new instructors to get more teaching experience under their belts, and for us students, it’s an opportunity to meet some of the wonderful new yoga teachers in our community.

Yesterday I took class with Sara Kisko, one of TGY’s latest YTT grads. Immediately I knew it was going to be a great class. Sara was walking around talking with all of us students, connecting with us and offering her calm demeanor to everyone before guiding us through our practice.

Calm and strong—that’s how I would describe Sara’s class. The vibe was decidedly chill, but the vinyasa flow she offered had us all sweating buckets! So often in vinyasa classes, I find the flow can move so fast that I don’t have the opportunity to sink down into poses and really find my footing. Sara offered a flow at just the right pace: slow enough to sink in, but energizing enough to keep us on our toes.

Not only that, but Sara’s class came along with a message that really hit home. Her offering was the idea of sitting with things when they aren’t how you expect them to be. She spoke about her new puppy and how she imagined him to be the perfect addition to her family and the cherry on top of the cake of her perfect home. But as we all know with puppies, that’s not usually how things turn out! Sara offered us the invitation to have gratitude for what is, instead of wishing things were different, or clenching to the idea you had of how it was going to work out. This was a timely message for me, as I have found myself lately diving back into the past and my old ideas of how things were “supposed” to be. Sara’s class was a reminder that living in the past is nowhere to be, and that having gratitude for what is can be a powerful tool to stay rooted in the present.

I especially loved the quote Sara shared at the end of class from C.S. Lewis, one of my favorite childhood authors: “It seems to me that we often, almost sulkily, reject the good that God offers us because, at the moment, we expected some other good.” A blast from the past, for sure, but a message that still resonates with me today.

What does it mean to observe your thoughts? What does it mean to be the silent witness, just watching, noticing. No judgment or move to change anything. Just watching the thoughts float in and out.

I’ve heard Jamie bring up this idea of witnessing in several classes. It’s not a new idea; in fact, it’s a common theme for many yogis. However, Jamie said something once in a class that really struck me: “We cannot be what we see.”

Whoa.

I had been practicing the noticing, the witnessing, for a while and it helped me separate myself from my thoughts to some degree. But I never really realized that through the practice of witnessing, we are noticing that we are not our thoughts. Our minds tell us crazy things. My mind told me today, “You are a failure. You will never find a real job. Nobody will ever want to hire you. You are going to lose everything and live under a bridge and everyone will hate you.”

Whoa!

I am not those thoughts. Those thoughts are not me. I have those thoughts, I have a mind. But I am not my mind. I am not the thoughts that threaten to bring me down and send me spiraling into a dark web of self-doubt and inevitably, self-sabotage. Because if I listened to those thoughts, I probably would have gone and eaten a candy bar or drank a bottle of wine instead of plugging away on my job applications. Ok, so I ate the candy bar. But I also kept plugging away at my job applications.

It’s a constant practice to disassociate from our thoughts, to quiet the constant chatter. And sometimes just noticing the thoughts is the first step. Because what we see, we cannot also be.

Blog entry by Lauren Gallow, Fall 2014
Acro Yoga Workshop
[Workshop feature]

“Contact: An Acro Yoga Playshop” with TGY Friends
Saturday November 1, 2014
1:30-3:00 p.m.

Coming up in November, TGY offers you a chance to get ELEVATED! Acro Yoga (as you probably guessed by the name) is a physical practice combining yoga and acrobatics. Most importantly, Acro Yoga lets you fly!

In this workshop, the basic skills of yogic “flying” will be taught in a fun, safe environment. Acro Yoga is a collaboration-based practice, so you will have the support of a partner to lift you to the next level. If you’re like me, your yoga practice has likely been a solitary practice. Just you and your mat. Break out of your comfort zone and see what it’s like to collaborate with a partner. When we work together, we can reach new heights.

This dynamic Playshop brings together all of the elements to make for a fully rounded practice. The Agni (fire) of acrobatics pairs with the Sukkah (sweetness) of healing arts, while the Sagaravat (ocean-like) flow of yoga counters the Sthira (strength through connection) of partnership.

Never done Acro Yoga before? No problem! No previous skills are necessary. Try something new and get out of your yoga comfort zone!
Bring a friend or come alone to this basic introduction to Acro Yoga. This practice is all about building safe relationships. The class will begin with whole class movements, stretches, and balances before breaking into small groups. There, you will experience partner folds and assisted stretches, standing partner Vinyasa, and balances. Finally, you’ll move on to basic Acro Yoga and transitions. The class will finish with Thai Massage—a sweet, sweet reward for all your flying!

Come out and build Metta (loving kindness) with your Grinning Yogi community at this fun and flying workshop.
Bring: Your mat and a smile. No previous skills necessary.
Come alone or bring a friend
Investment: $30
Sign up here.

You Have To See It, To Believe It
[Yoga Inspirations]

“You have to believe it, to see it.”

When I first heard this quote, my brain didn’t quite compute.

“But the saying goes, ‘You have to see it to believe it!’” my brain cried. It took me about a year to get it. I’m not exaggerating here. I remember when my best friend Jo said it to me for the first time, when we were sitting on the patio of a hostel in Iceland last July. She said it when she was describing her vision for our website, Desert Jewels.

“You have to believe it, to see it.”

Huh??

I couldn’t figure it out. So it stuck with me in my brain ball, the gears of my mind turning it in and out, over and under. Examining it, trying to fit it into a compartment. It didn’t fit anywhere. It went against everything I thought about myself and my relationships and my place in the world.

“Things don’t exist unless I can see them!” my brain kept insisting. But a little voice deep down inside kept whispering, “What about those other things? Those other things you want and dream about and envision yourself doing? You can’t see those things. They haven’t manifested yet. But they still exist.”

And it is in fact those tiny things, those whispers of inspiration or ideas that grow like dream seeds inside of you—it’s these little beliefs that grow into the big things. The dream job or the life you always dreamed of having but didn’t think you deserved or were capable of.

Trust that you’re on the right path. Even if you can’t see it yet. Even if you can’t see yourself out of the woods just yet. You are exactly where you’re supposed to be, doing exactly what you’re supposed to be doing. I know that to be true because if you are following your heart, that kind of work reaps only the most beautiful of rewards.

Blog entry by Lauren Gallow, Fall 2014