

## **Bryon Kest - About Yoga**

A fitness routine based on aesthetics feeds your ego, not your spirit. By increasing your ego, you actually become more vulnerable, more susceptible to the everyday occurrences that are out of your control. By feeding your ego, you ignore what you truly need in order to create something your ego desires. Consequently, you end up working against yourself and your goal of health, and you actually create more imbalance.

Power Yoga is directed at creating the highest level of energy, vitality and freedom. The only way to do this is to work with yourself, not against yourself. By working hard sensitively, we create an environment that's healing and that honors each individual, an environment that respects our boundaries and works within him or her. In this way, we create an atmosphere conducive to natural expansion and growth. We're not interested in pushing past our edge to get to a place where we've been brainwashed into thinking we need to be in order to have happiness!

The fact is, we're all different: different faces, shapes, sizes, personalities, etc.... We all shouldn't have and can't have the same bodies. Our life experiences and genetic dispositions make us different. Real health and vitality comes when we stop comparing and competing with each other, and start listening to the voice within that tells us what we need. We don't need to have the "best body;" we need to have our own body. By turning off the controlling mind, we can finally listen to the innate wisdom that waits to be heard.

The sad state of this planet is a prime example of how we've stopped listening. Our egos and intellects have gotten so big we've become enamored with ourselves and our capabilities. Our great societies, with all their cities and technological advances, are monuments to the seemingly unflinching prowess of the intellect. But the fact is, our intellect is only a small fraction of our intelligence. By shutting down our other faculties in favor of the intellect, we move away from our natural balance. Hence, the state of our people and planet.

Picture a web, with all its strands interconnected and sharing its burden. What's happened to us is, all the weight on the web has been placed on a single strand: the intellect. And we can't survive on intellect alone. The web that holds us together, as humans and as a planet, is ripping apart! The cause is intellect ruled by the ego, which creates a very scary level of self-indulgence. This is a no-holds-barred self-indulgence in which almost everything else is forsaken. And this is planet earth, Twenty-First century style!

To heal our planet, we need to heal ourselves...because we are the source of the imbalance. We need to quiet down, stop thinking, stop controlling, and start listening. Our bodies are the natural world, even as we live in an unnatural environment. If we quiet down and listen to what our bodies need (instead of telling it), we can then feed ourselves naturally and properly, and become more in harmony with the natural world. All our activities and endeavors will resonate with this harmony and we, as well as our planet, can begin to heal. No longer will our actions be governed by ego or intellect; they'll be guided by the deeper wisdom within. We can then use the intellect as it was meant to be used: to help us shape the wisdom coming through.

This brings us full circle back to yoga. Originally, yoga was created to facilitate the stillness in order to emancipate the wisdom. Some still use it for this purpose. Beyond this, yoga is a tool or system created to facilitate balance. In order to facilitate balance, the imbalances need to be exposed and eradicated. This can be a totally possible yet challenging endeavor, and this is where we start losing people.

Unfortunately, many people don't seem to want to do the work necessary to create harmony. When you spill something on the floor, you clean it up, right? You don't want to live with that mess. Well, that's all yoga is designed to do: bring awareness to the mess and give you direction to help start the cleanup.

From the first step in yoga, you start feeling better simply because your house has just begun to become cleaner or less cluttered. The move toward harmony begins immediately. You don't need some blind faith that someday down the road yoga will enlighten you. The first class helps us quiet our minds and experience the peace beyond. This same first class helps us release some tension, which gives us a feeling of lightness, balance and connectedness. We've begun to restore the web.

As long as we approach our yoga practice by listening carefully to what the body needs and by moving away from any existing ideas of where our ego wants this body to be, our initial experience can be wholly satisfying.

The hardest part of the practice of yoga can be honoring our bodies and what they need in this moment. Too often we find ourselves slipping back into our old habits of goal orientation, self-criticism and re-activeness, which are the root of so much imbalance, disharmony, misery, and so forth.

Goal orientation, which sometimes is expressed as "I'll be happy when," leads you away from the here and now. Looking outside yourself for happiness doesn't work. If you're not happy now, you won't be happy for long no matter where you go. Why? Because happiness, or wholeness, has to come from within. And wholeness comes with acceptance of Right Now! There will always be another place to go, so there is no such thing as getting there. As far as your potential for happiness is concerned, "You are there."

Self-criticism leads us to feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, worthlessness, and low self-esteem, as well as the criticism of others, which keeps us at each other's throat.

Re-activeness creates tension. Discomfort is a part of life. Unwanted things happen, and wanted things don't happen. Our comfort zones get trampled. No one, no matter how wealthy or powerful, can escape discomfort. Yet within our discomfort, we actually have a choice: Shall I accept it or not? Accepting discomfort is intentional passivity. Non-acceptance is resistance.

But the truth can't be resisted, so resistance creates disharmony. This resistance manifests itself as re-activeness, and these reactions create internal locks or knots. These locks are held in the body. As we unconsciously react more and more, knots upon knots are built in the body, slowly but surely forming walls or barriers that start disconnecting us from ourselves.

Fortunately, our yoga class helps to create optimal physical health by enlivening and invigorating our whole body, ending dormancy, strengthening the weak links, and releasing the knots. It also energizes the mind and provides a safe, controlled environment for working on all the negative issues that are exposed. This is the real key!

Because the body is a direct manifestation of the mind, as we heal our mind, our bodies naturally follow. Also, our bodies are subject to the laws of nature. Eventually they will dry up and blow away, because all matter is in a state of flux. Yet it seems our minds are subject to no laws. As far as we know, our minds are limitless. So it makes sense that through yoga poses we start to hone and strengthen the unlimited aspect of ourselves, our minds! This leads us into a whole new place of connectedness, balance and satisfaction.

This information didn't come from a book. It came from a yoga practice. We all have deep wells of insight and creativity that are waiting to be tapped by the long, strong roots of yoga.

Namaste,  
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