

How I found yoga (or yoga found me) or My Karma is my Dharma ~ Kathleen Pratt

I was in my late 40's when I took up yoga as a desperate attempt to do more self-care. I was very stressed out during a two-year period when my mother was living with end-stage cancer. I did not feel comfortable going to a yoga studio - I felt too self-conscious, intimidated and didn't have or want to wear the 'right' clothing. I started attending an early-morning class at a community centre. The instructor was an older woman and I was inspired by her playful and accepting attitude. The class was small, consisting mostly of older women and the room was a bit dark, all of which added to my comfort level. It became difficult for me to attend that class, so I started doing yoga at home on YouTube. At some point, yoga became an essential part of my routine. If I missed a day, I felt out of sorts; as if I got up on the wrong side of the bed. My mother died, and yoga helped me through the very difficult times and emotions that followed. When I couldn't sleep, I'd do yoga. I could go to my mat and focus only on the present, which eased the agony of rehashing things from the past. Although I'd struggled to meditate for years, I realized that yoga is meditation and after doing the poses I was able to sit still and meditate. The 'blissed out' feeling that I achieved in yoga helped calm my overworked nervous system. I could practice compassion in this expansive state, which was critical to achieving forgiveness for me and others.

During this same period of time, like many women at mid-life, I was struggling with finding my true purpose. I felt drawn to become a yoga teacher so I could help others experience the benefits of yoga. I had been a social worker for 25 years and I saw the potential for yoga to transform my practice with groups. I realized that although talking through things has great benefit, many people (including myself!) needed to work through emotions that are felt and stored in the body. I took a leap and immersed myself in yoga teacher training for eight months. At the end of this time, I was bursting with ideas for yoga classes I wanted to offer. I was intentional about marketing my classes to women with little to no yoga experience and who might not feel comfortable attending a studio class. I received positive feedback from both new and experienced people in the class about the physical benefits they were seeing from their practice, as well as the pacing and gentle approach. My classes are trauma-sensitive and designed with the absolute beginner in mind. Each class includes foundational poses, breathing exercises and meditation with the goal of cultivating flexibility, strength and mindfulness. More experienced yogis will enjoy the pace and options for poses, allowing them to go deeper in their practice. My intention is for each student to experience a feeling of accomplishment and wonder.

Please join me for yoga like you've never experienced before!

Trauma-sensitive yoga for individuals, couples and groups