



Yoga Seasons - May 2016

Hi James,

Hope you and Nicky are well.

I'm writing because I am having trouble with my self practice and I'm not really sure what to do about it. I have been practising Ashtanga for about 18 months and in the past 12 months of that time I haven't really progressed in my practice. This started to frustrate me but I persevered.

Then, about 3 months ago I quit my job and went to Iceland with my husband, which was amazing but since my return I've really lost my passion for yoga self practice. I was practising 3-4 times a week (usually Mysore) but now I'm lucky to practice 1-2 times.

This is despite having more time than ever before to practice. I'm not really sure what's happened or how to get it back. Can you or Nicky give me some advice?

*Fiona
Teacher Training Student*

Dear Fiona,

In our yoga practice there are re-occurring seasons spring/summer/autumn/winter and these recycle endlessly.

When you are in the winter period everything feels heavy and dull and uninspiring. But, the seasons turn and if you can take the long-term view, this will pass.

The winter is when most people give up. All you need to do is to keep things ticking over, with a little yoga practice, and allow time to move on. Spring is coming!

Winter is the time to consolidate and minimize extraneous activities - curtail non-essential expenditure of energy. Keep your core essence alive with a healing/recuperative practice (e.g. Knoff Yoga Discovery syllabus).

Don't criticize yourself for being on the material plane and subject to nature's laws. This is much bigger than us.

Each time you step on your mat (which is the hardest part of yoga), read the Knoff Yoga 'Intention for Practice' aloud and with real understanding. "I come to honour and respect myself through my body. I come to nourish, nurture, strengthen, and purify my body through the practices of asana and pranayama and still my mind through meditation. I am not here to beat myself up or force my body into pain. I am not here to criticize or judge myself or anyone else".

On earth as it is in heaven, we are wrapped in the possibility of 'Isvara Pranidhana' - to access our inner divinity. But, to generate love we must give love. And as a yoga teacher we are in the best position possible to channel Shakti. Shakti is both responsible for creation and the agent of all change.

You fan the flame of love/energy by sharing with others... go teach yoga with an open heart and your inner conflict will dissipate as you allow Shakti to flow through you - creating the change we want, but remember we are all subject to the laws of nature and honouring nature is mandatory for a yogi.

By the time I have done my practice and then set in front of a computer for hours, I often have zero desire or interest in cycling into The Yoga School to teach a class. But, I always feel re-connected to myself, yoga and life when I do. You will have heard the saying "fake it until you make it". Put on your happy face and make the effort, for without effort (Tapas) there is no improvement.

Progress in yoga is subjective. Improvement in asana reflects physicality, not necessarily spirituality. You can be an amazing yoga asana-ist and still be self-centered and unhappy.

Knoff Yoga is Hatha Yoga, i.e. we honour the body as our temple, and use it for spiritual growth. When practicing spiritual alignment and teaching with an open heart, we allow Shakti to flow through us. To increase this

flow of energy, we need to share it with others.

When you are in the winter-time of your practice, when everything feels too much, simply back off, slow down and consolidate. Find your centre. It is always there, otherwise you would be dead!

To fan the ember of our essence, to increase it's size and strength, we simply share our love of yoga (and the Knoff Yoga techniques); allowing love to grow and expand into the world, and we are re-energized in the process.

Yoga is a journey, not a destination. Knoff Yoga is a road map created to give you clarity and direction. If you are not following the map, you can easily get lost.

A great big hug to you.

Namaste

James