



NEWSLETTER OF THE YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA | EST. 1976

# YOGA BRIDGE

CONNECTING MIND & BODY

WINTER 2023 VOLUME 23 ISSUE 1





Please reserve the date to join us in 2023:

October 13 (Friday evening) to Wednesday October 18

## Richard Miller

# The Depth Teachings of Meditation



There is a longing within each of us that is calling us home to awaken and embody our most essential nature – the underlying causeless Mystery that has given birth to each of us, and the entire cosmos.

Seize this retreat! Advance your opportunity to engage contemplative practices that emphasize awakening your true heart of wisdom and love and enable you to embrace all aspects of your everyday human life and relationships – fully and intimately.

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**Format & Price TBA.** If interested in participating, please register your name at: <https://yoga.ca/product-category/workshops-classes/>  
We shall notify you of any updates.

For more information contact Anita (780) 432-7152 or [sielecki@hotmail.com](mailto:sielecki@hotmail.com)

*Richard Miller, PhD. is a world-renowned spiritual teacher, author, yogic scholar, researcher and clinical psychologist who has blended the non-dual teachings of Yoga, Tantra, Advaita, Taoism, and Buddhism with Western psychology and neuroscience.*

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## YAA DONATION PROGRAM

### DID YOU KNOW?

The YAA is a registered Charity with the Canada Revenue Agency. Donors receive an official Income Tax Receipt for tax purposes.

### HOW IS YOUR DONATION MONEY USED?

Donations fund YAA Yoga Outreach Programs: schools, prisons, the underprivileged, and physically, emotionally or socially challenged Albertans who do not have easy access to yoga opportunities.

Your cheque, cash or online (yoga.ca) contributions are greatly appreciated.

### IT'S A WIN-WIN! THANK YOU!

*"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."*  
— Tagore

The Yoga Association of Alberta is a non-profit organization offering yoga activities to the public for the purpose of providing self-development opportunities to Albertans through its own activities and in co-operation with groups practising all recognized yoga disciplines. Support is provided to members and local groups through:

- Providing information about yoga activities in Alberta.
- Publication of a regular newsletter, Yoga Bridge.
- Promoting and maintaining high standards of yoga instruction through a teacher training and certification program.
- Organizing workshops, retreats and other activities independently and in co-operation with individuals and yoga communities throughout the province.
- Serving marginalized populations including prisons, street youth, women's shelters, seniors and rural communities through an Outreach Karma Yoga Program.

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The YAA editorial board reserves the right to copy-edit and condense all articles being published. Any substantive changes will be made in consultation with the author and in view of publication deadlines. Those wishing to submit articles should consult the YAA Newsletter Submission Guidelines for Contributors at [yoga.ca](http://yoga.ca). All submissions, whether solicited or not, are reviewed according to these guidelines. We do not include promotional information in published articles. The YAA is in no way responsible for advertisements or calendar entries that are submitted but not included in the newsletter.

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**CIRCULATION:** +1,200 / issue (3 issues / year)

### ADVERTISING RATES

Size	Width x Height	B/W	Colour
Eighth Page	2.875" x 1.75"	\$75	\$110
Quarter Page	2.875" x 3.625"	\$100	\$140
Half Page	6" x 3.625"	\$130	\$200
Full Page	6" x 7.5"	\$200	\$300

Please e-mail advertisements in high resolution PDF format. Additional charge for typesetting, formatting or editing ads. The YAA reserves the right to refuse ads that are not in readable format or that do not contain appropriate content. Details at [yoga.ca/newsletter/](http://yoga.ca/newsletter/)

**Calendar of Events & Advertising Deadlines:** February 15, June 1 (Events August 1) and October 15

**Article Submission Deadline: Consult with** [editor@yoga.ca](mailto:editor@yoga.ca)

Newsletter circulation is approximately one month after deadline but cannot be guaranteed.

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

# YAA Yoga Bridge

By Dave Downing, Volunteer Editor

From unseasonably warm and dry from July to mid-October to unseasonably cold and snowy in early November... well, finally that has had the effect of pushing me back onto the editorial throne in the den that faces the beige vinyl siding of the duplex next door. Looking inward is my theme for the next little while... not much to look at outside and a looming deadline for my first draft within the hour has this effect on me.

The last few lines of the song by Bette Midler came to me just now:

*Just remember in the winter,  
Far beneath the bitter snows,  
Lies the seed that with the sun's love,  
In the spring becomes the rose*

Winter isn't only a time of death and deep sleep, it's a time of renewal and looking inward and is a good theme for the winter edition. Our contributors anticipated this, I think. Kat Boehm's article presents the fundamentals of the Buddhist approach to mindfulness and Anne Douglas uses the metaphor of winter to discuss an inevitability for all embodied beings. Barbara Eastham's article tells us of her journey to self-discovery through karma yoga and teacher training at the Yasodhara Ashram in south-central BC.

Sara Eisenzimmer shares the introspective journey she took when reading the Bhagavad Gita; hers is the first article in a new section of our newsletter called "TTP Pearls", a place where YAA-TTP students can share their thoughts and insights. Our other regular sections all include articles that directly or indirectly encourage an introspective attitude towards self or others. In *Learning about Asanas*, Marion "Mugs" McConnell lays the groundwork for the Sage Pose in her

well-illustrated article. In *Members' Musings*, Valery Petrich pays homage to Father Joe Pereira's simple but effective yoga-based spiritual approach to helping those in need; Paula Kabalo shares how her discovery of the neti pot helped her through both the COVID pandemic and allergy season. *YAA Outreach* includes an article by Candice Jackson on her and her students' experiences at the Abbotsfield Recreation Centre in yoga classes supported by the YAA. Megan Kim reviews Beth McCann's latest book "Awakening Sleeping Beauty" in the *Book Reviews* section.

Anyone with an idea for an article, poem, drawing or photo that could go under our column "YAA Members' Musings" is encouraged to submit. My ongoing promise is that editing will be light for these short submissions, unless there are ethical or advertorial concerns.

You may (or may not) recall an email call for photos we could use in our newsletter. Lisa Workman, YAA certified teacher, submitted the photo you see on the cover of this newsletter. As well, see Jennie Musani, Ashley Blackwood and Jennifer Bustin on page 20. Thank you all! But you don't have to be a certified teacher to see your work in print! We welcome your photos and articles.

*Dave is a retired ecologist who has practiced yoga for a few years and who enjoys helping others to get their stories and ideas across clearly. He can be reached at [editor@yoga.ca](mailto:editor@yoga.ca)*



# Vashishthasana: Sage Pose

by Mugs McConnell

There are several yoga poses named in Sanskrit name that are named after a given Rishi that get translated as “name of Sage pose”. When we encounter these asanas, we know the pose is named in honour of someone who has contributed greatly to yoga, and therefore it is worth taking time to investigate who the Sage or Rishi is. Knowing the name for each asana gives us the opportunity to embody the essence of its name.

Vasishtha was one of the seven great Rishis or Sages of India. He is credited as the author of a portion of the Rig Veda. The Vedas are the oldest known Hindu texts (perhaps as old as 1500 BCE), so his contribution helped to lay the foundation for Vedanta Yoga as we know it today. The text Yoga Vasishtha is credited to him, and he is notably mentioned in several mythological stories of yoga including his friendship with Lord Rama. He cared deeply about life, human suffering, and spiritual liberation.

The name “Vasishtha” is symbolic of a great compassionate soul who freely gives of himself. The name means “most excellent”, “best” or “wealthy”. These words conjure up for me a person who strives to do their best, shares the wealth of their knowledge freely with others, and leaves us all feeling rewarded by their compassion and love for others. Transfer that meaning into the asana, and I will do my best, feel no guilt from any need to modify the pose, and the result will be an inner abundance. As you explore Vasishtha you can formulate in your mind what this asana means for you.

## METHOD IN STAGES

### *Ardha Vasishthasana 1 Half Name of Sage Pose 1*



Inhale into Table pose (kneeling on hands and knees). Keep the right knee on the floor, and exhale while extending the left leg back. Inhale and roll onto the right knee and right hand, rotating the right shin to pivot the body sideways. Exhale. Root the left foot into the floor. Inhale and raise the left arm up toward the ceiling so the shoulders are stacked one above the other. Alternatively, keep the left hand on the left hip for ease of shoulder discomfort or for greater balance. Open the chest, breathe, and balance on the right hand and right knee.

To come out of the pose, exhale and lower the left arm, placing the hand on the floor. Pivot the left knee into alignment and return to Table pose. Rest and breathe in *Balāsana* (child’s pose). When ready repeat on the opposite side.

### *Ardha Vasishthasana 2 Half Name of Sage Pose 2*



From Table pose, inhale and extend the right and left legs back into a plank pose. Breathe. Inhale and roll onto the outer side of the right foot. Exhale and place the sole of the left foot onto the floor in front of the right leg, with the knee bent at a 90 degree angle. Breathe while you stabilize. Root the feet and right hand into the floor and inhale to raise the left arm up toward the ceiling so the shoulders are stacked one above the other. Open the chest. Breathe and balance on the right hand, right foot and left foot.

To come out of the pose, exhale and lower the left arm, placing the hand on the floor. Breathe in and pivot onto the toes of both feet, then exhale into Table pose. Rest and breathe in *Balāsana* (child’s pose). When ready repeat on the opposite side.

### *Purna Vasishthasana: Full Name of Sage Pose*



From Table pose, inhale and extend the right and left legs back into plank pose. Exhale and firmly root into the right hand. Inhale and roll onto the side of the right foot. Exhale and root the right foot, then stack the left foot on top of it. Inhale and raise the left arm up toward the ceiling so the shoulders are stacked one above the other. Breathe and balance on the right hand and right foot in a sideways plank pose.

To come out of the pose, exhale and lower the left arm, placing the hand on the floor. Breathe in and pivot onto the toes of both feet, then exhale into Table pose. Rest and breathe in *Balāsana* (child’s pose). When ready repeat on the opposite side.

### *Eka Pada Purna Vasishthasana: One Legged Name of Sage Pose*



From Table pose, inhale and extend the right and left legs back into plank pose. Exhale and firmly root into the right hand. Inhale and roll onto the side of the right foot. Exhale and root the right foot, then stack the left foot on top of it. Inhale and raise the left arm up toward the ceiling so the shoulders are stacked one above the other. Balance on the right hand and right foot in a sideways plank pose. Exhale and bend the left knee to meet the left hand. Wrap the index and middle fingers of the left hand around the left big toe. While holding onto the big toe, extend the left leg up toward the ceiling. Straighten the legs as much as possible. Breathe and hold the pose.

Join your Alberta Yoga Family!

## THE YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

YAA Membership is open to EVERYONE (including non-teachers)

\$10 Associate (electronic copy) ; \$30 Full: (mailed newsletters)

First time members receive FREE Associate membership for a year!

Sign up at [yoga.ca/membership](http://yoga.ca/membership)

To come out of the pose, exhale and release the left big toe from the fingers. Stack the legs again in sideways plank pose. Breathe in and pivot onto both hands and the toes of both feet into plank pose. Exhale into Table pose. Rest in *Balasana* (child's pose) and breathe. When ready repeat on the opposite side.

**Benefits:** Strengthens the arms, wrists, and legs. Firms and tones the core muscles, particularly the obliques. This is a good weight bearing pose. Improves balance and posture.

**Precautions and Modifications:**


For wrists, come into sphinx arms (on the elbows) instead of balancing on the wrists.

For shoulder issues keep the hand of the upper arm on the hip instead of raising it up toward the ceiling.

To assist with the weight bearing, place a block or two under the hip to help support the weight of the body without losing the plank position of the leg and hip.

**Resources:**  
[www.vedicfeed.com/rishi-vasistha/](http://www.vedicfeed.com/rishi-vasistha/)  
[www.moonastro.com/babyname/baby%20name%20vasishta%20meaning.aspx](http://www.moonastro.com/babyname/baby%20name%20vasishta%20meaning.aspx)


**Marion Mugs McConnell** is a YAA Senior Teacher. She is the co-founder and owner of the South Okanagan Yoga Academy (SOYA) and its yoga teacher training. She has been practicing yoga for 49 years and training teachers for 44. She is the author of *Letters from the Yoga Masters: Teachings Revealed through Correspondence from Paramhansa Yogananda, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda, and Others*. She has studied yoga extensively and is certified in various lineages including Sivananda, Gitananda, Mantra Yoga, and Freedom Yoga.



Save the date to join us in July 2023:

## Releasing the Deeper Layers of Stress

A Meditation & Mindful Movement Retreat  
with Kavindu (Alejandro Velasco)



**Wednesday July 12, 2pm to Sunday July 16, 1pm (2023)**  
**Providence Renewal Centre, 3005-119 Street, Edmonton and via Zoom**

*Most of the stress that we experience today is generated by our own thoughts and beliefs. In addition to the suffering it generates, chronic stress prevents us from accessing our inner wisdom and compassion.*

*Ancient teachings propose that most of the uneasiness and stress we suffer can be released gently and wisely through practice.*

*In this retreat we will examine the main layers of thoughts and beliefs that generate stress, and facilitate their release with a combination of right understanding, meditation, and restorative yoga practices.*

*Anita Sielecki will lead Mindful Movement practices to facilitate somatic integration.*

**Fee: \$785 (in-person; all meals & accommodations included), \$395 (online) Some scholarships available.**  
**Information: Anita (780) 432-7152, sielecki@hotmail.com**  
**Please register at <https://yoga.ca/product-category/workshops-classes/>**



# SAVE THE DATES: YAA EVENTS

**Know Your Yoga Body.**

**Start Anytime.** Five 3-hr video modules of anatomy & physiology w/ Paula Carnegie Fehr\*\*. Certificate of Completion/TTP credit if optional assignment is completed.

**Senior Teacher Showcase. Ad p. 26.**

**FREE for YAA members. Twice Monthly online classes w/ YAA Senior Teachers\*\*.** Dec 5, 19 w/ Karen Hamdon\*\*; Jan 5, 19 w/ Donalee Campbell\*\*; Feb 1, 15 w/ Erin Michie\*\*; Mar 7, 21 w/ Mugs McConnell\*\*. Meet AB Teachers!

**Trauma Informed Training.**

**Nov 25-26, 2022 w/ Paula Fayerman.** Follow-up to June 29 Intro. (recording available at yoga.ca). Online only. Five hours of training.

**Exploring Yoga in Community Ad p. 23.**

**Dec 2-4, 2022; Jan 27-29; Apr 14-16, 2023.** A gathering of friends organized by Anita Sielecki\*\*. A peaceful and supportive retreat with asana, pranayama and restorative yoga. Connect with YOUR Alberta Yoga Community.

**YAA-TTP Classes. See p. 20-21.**

**2022: Dec 3. 2023: Jan 14, Feb 11, Apr 22, May 6, June 3 and more.** Mentor with highly qualified YAA Certified Senior teachers\*\*. Learn at your own pace, flexible schedule and "pay as you go". Start anytime!

**ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN FORMAT OR CANCELLATION DUE TO COVID-19.**

**REGISTER: [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store/](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store/)  
**\*\* Denotes YAA Senior Certified Teacher****

**Mindfulness Made Simple Ad p. 19.**

**Jan 21/'23 w/ Kat Boehm\*\*.** Students & teachers welcome. Explore the stages of mindful awareness, living in your body, safe & present.

**Professional Development Series. Ad p. 26.**

**Feb 9/'23 Social Media for Yoga Teachers w/ Jill Gaumont\*\*.** 8-9:30pm. Free for all YAA members. Live Zoom webinars with recordings.

**Art of Living and Dying Ad p. 11.**

**Feb 25-26/'23 w/ Anne Douglas\*\*.** Learn to live your life in an awakened manner.

**Teaching Skills Workshops. See p. 21.**

**Mar 10-12/'23 w/ Karen Hamdon\*\*; Oct 20-22 TBA** Students & teachers welcome. Learn the art of teaching yoga or refine your teaching skills.

**AGM w/ Richard Miller\*\*. Ad p. 35.**

**May 27/'23** YAA Elections & wksp.: "Tapping Into Unbreakable Well-being." No charge.

**Mindfulness & Meditation Ad p. 8.**

**July 12-16/'23 w/ Kavindu & Sielecki\*\*.** Releasing the Deeper Layers of Stress. Learn to live your life in an awakened manner.

**iRest w/ Richard Miller\*\*. Ad p. 2.**

**Oct 13-18/'23** A life-transformative retreat w/ internationally renowned teacher Richard Miller\*\* (USA). "The Depth Teachings of Meditation". His online workshop events are exceptional. Early bird deadline and discount TBA. [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store/](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store/) for updates.

**INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: 780-427-8776 OR [YOGA.CA](http://YOGA.CA)**

# The Winter of our Lives - Yogic Practices to Support End of Life

by Anne Douglas

Yoga is well known in the west to offer excellent practices for healthy, balanced and enlightened living; few know of the yogic practices and principles that can help us prepare for and support us through the winter of our lives and into death. While death is a very natural part of life, many of us are unprepared to meet our own demise or that of our loved ones in a skillful and peaceful manner.

As the winter months take hold in the northern hemisphere and the darkness and cool temperatures drive us inward, it seems a natural time to turn to the yogic scriptures for inspiration and solace for the inevitable end of our days.

Sutra 2.3 of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* introduces the five primal causes of human suffering, or the five *klesas*. The first four include ignorance of your true Self, self centered egoism, attachment to pleasure and aversion to pain. The fifth *klesa* involves our will to live and our fear of death. Sutras 2.10 and 2.11 offer the resolution from these causes through the process of returning them to their source by means of meditation. In other words, rather than engaging with these five behaviours, we instead simply observe them arise, without engaging them, so that they may dissolve back from whence they came. While this may sound overly simplistic, by repeatedly observing these behaviours just as one might observe a thought in meditation, their power over us can gradually dissipate.

At first this practice of observing the five causes of suffering may seem overwhelming or tedious. But one might be surprised at how quickly evidence of behaviour change can occur, especially by contemplating just one *klesa* for a set period of time.

Gradually, we can gain insight into their harmful impact, which can help to cultivate motivation in making discriminative choices.

As an example, we can observe the natural human tendency to cling to life (known as *abinivesha* in Sanskrit) when we swerve to avoid an oncoming car in traffic, or when we choose to keep our bicycle brakes in good repair. These are natural, logical and healthy responses to potentially life-threatening circumstances that are mostly within our control.

There is also the unnecessary clinging to life that can create suffering based on behaviours that originate from unexamined fears or beliefs. These can include the fearful assumptions we make about what happens after we die. There is little to be known about this from a scientific standpoint, however there is much written on the subject from a philosophical or spiritual perspective. One way to alleviate our fears can be to contemplate writings in which various authors describe the process of death from their own or others' direct experience.

The Katha Upanishad, also known as "The Secret of Death", tells the story of a young boy, Nachiketas, who has a conversation with Yama, the "Lord of Death". Nachiketas asks Yama what happens when humans die. Yama advises him not to fear death since "the true Self is not born, nor does he die and is eternal. The Self (Atman), is smaller than small, greater than great and is hidden in the heart of each creature. He is Free from avarice, free from grief, peaceful and content, he sees the supreme glory of Atman. Self (Atman) is soundless, touchless, formless, tasteless, scentless, without beginning, without end, imperishable,

beyond great, blissful, and when one reveres one's own Self, he is liberated. To understand the eternal nature of one's Self is to feel calmness, inner peace, patience and freedom regardless of the circumstances one is in, affections or threats one faces, praises or insults one is subjected to."

The secret of death according to the Katha Upanishad is in knowing the secret of the true self. This is the essence of all of yoga, to know who you truly are, through the practices and revelations passed down by the Rishis that help to guide our self-inquiry through contemplation and meditation.

The Bhagavad Gita offers a practice of "Closing of the Gates" in chapter 8, verse 12 as a means to prepare for death. The practice invites one to restrain the energy of the senses, elements and chakras so to fix the mind in the region of the heart, and then eventually up to the head. It is said that at the time of death, this practice allows the body to fall away with ease and the soul to move up and out, through the crown of the head, in full divine consciousness. Consistent and dedicated practice is required in order to lay the energetic pathway for

the life force to know where to go when it is time. While practice is not a guarantee of outcome, it does increase the possibility of liberation at the time of death.

The practice of Yoga Nidra, or yogic sleep meditation, offers the means to experience our body and mind falling into deep rest or sleep while remaining awake at the deepest and most essential level of our being. At first, we likely remain fused with our body and mind and perceive that "I spaced out" or "I fell asleep". However, with practice, as we navigate the ever-subtler layers or *koshas* of self-experiencing, we can begin to orient to the subtlest layer of self that is unmoving, unchanging and ever at peace. This is our most essential self.

Further, Yoga Nidra can act as a perfect dress rehearsal for death as we surrender and let go at every level from gross to subtle, without fear or clinging, we simply abide as pristine stillness that is ever and eternally awake.

Paramahansa Yogananda described death well when he said, "Death is not as terrible as you think.



## Workshop

### THE YOGIC ART OF LIVING AND DYING: PRACTICES FOR END OF LIFE AND AWAKENED LIVING

with Anne Douglas,  
YAA Senior Teacher



**February 25-26,  
Sat/Sun 10am - 1pm**

**Online via Zoom,  
Recording Available**

**\$150**

Sign Up [yoga.ca](http://yoga.ca)

As sure as we are born, we will all die. Yet few of us are prepared to meet this unavoidable event in a skillful and peaceful manner, be it our own or another's. Ancient wisdom offers several perspectives and practices that not only prepare us for this inevitability, but helps us to live our lives in a more sacred, welcoming and integrated manner.

It comes to you as a healer. Sleep is nothing but a counterfeit death. What happens in death we can picture in sleep. All our sufferings vanish in sleep. When death comes, all our mortal tortures cease; they cannot go beyond the portals of death."

May these dark days of winter, where deep sleep, death and the seeds of renewal live together, be our inspiration through practice, contemplation and meditation. And may we gain insights toward the end of suffering, the end of life, and the promise of rebirth.

Anne Douglas, YAA 1000, RYT500, & C-IAYT has been teaching yoga and meditation classes, workshops, trainings and retreats since 1989. She has over 4 million listens to her meditations on the Simple Habit app. Join Anne for her February '23 YAA workshop of a similar theme, *The Yogic Art of Living and Dying – Everyday Practices for End of Life and Awakened Living*. Anne can be contacted at [anahatayoga@telus.net](mailto:anahatayoga@telus.net)

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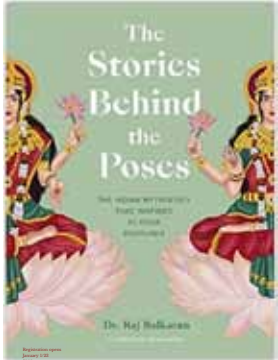


- **Yoga Teachers:** Fulfills 15 Recertification Hours
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**Annual YOGA RETREAT** June 2-4, 2023  
 in Sorrento, BC  
**With Dr. Raj Balkaran**

Author of *The Stories Behind the Poses*




Registration opens January 1/23  
 \$325+gst



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**YAA OUTREACH**

# Yoga Changes Lives

by Candice Jackson

*Note from Executive Director, Donalee Campbell: The YAA's vision is to promote quality of life, connection, and physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health for all Albertans, regardless of circumstances. Our active outreach programs bring the healing benefits of yoga to marginalized and underserved communities. One such program includes ongoing weekly classes at the Abbotsfield Recreation Centre through the Candora Society, which primarily serves low-income families with a high percentage of women, newcomers, indigenous and seniors in North East Edmonton. The following is a recent report from the teacher leading the class, along with a sample of feedback from class participants.*

I am a senior living with a muscular dystrophy condition. It is critical for my health, physically and mentally, to be actively engaged in as many opportunities as possible. Yoga, with its poses, stretches, flexing, strength building, breathing, relaxation and meditation are vital to my well-being. The classes are free, [close to home], user-friendly, and there are no barriers to participation. It's fun and challenging to be part of the group. The other [students] provide very positive support, friendship, and a sense of belonging.

—Margaret, Student, YAA's Candora Society Outreach Program

While the yoga class itself is fantastic, the mental health aspect is even more important to me. I am a widow fairly new in the area so spend much time alone. These classes are very important to me.

—Kathy, Student, YAA's Candora Society Outreach Program

I live in this community and [have] been attending this yoga class for many years. Candice is a dedicated and passionate teacher. My body and mind feel better after attending... It is a gift to our community. Thank you.

—Emily, Student, YAA's Candora Society Outreach Program



From the perspective of the person at the front of the class, I have observed how important the class is for participants not only physically, but also socially. Progress for many of the participants is slow but steady, and they are very open about expressing their thanks at the end of the class for this wonderful practice.

—Candice Jackson, Teacher, YAA's Candora Society Outreach Program

*Candice is a YAA Intermediate yoga teacher who teaches Hatha Yoga and Chair yoga and has been working with the Candora Society and teaching classes in the community of Abbotsfield for the past 10 years, taking over from long-time YAA member Judy Murphy who began the program.*

# My Experience of Transformation at Yasodhara Ashram

by Barbara Eastham

On a sunny Sunday morning in early Spring 1976, I found myself aboard a ferry crossing the sparkling Kootenay Lake. For the first time in my life, I had the distinct feeling that I was coming “home”, that I was about to embark on a life-altering experience.

I was part of a small group of aspiring yogis coming to Yasodhara Ashram for a six-week work-study program. During that time, I practiced karma yoga around the Ashram and was introduced to other aspects of yoga. At the end of the program, the trajectory of my life had been completely altered. Touched by the study and practice of the yoga tradition, I wanted to go even deeper!

It was then that I decided to take the Yoga Development Course (YDC), the Ashram’s 3-month deep dive into yoga; I derived so much benefit from it that I have taken it twice. But before I tell you more about these transformational experiences, I want to take you on a journey through time so you can discover how this magical place in the world got started.

## THE STORY OF YASODHARA ASHRAM

It was 1955. Sylvia Hellman, a German-born woman with no yoga background, was called through a vision to travel to India to meet her guru Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh.

Incredibly, after only six months of intensive training, Sylvia became Swami Sivananda Radha, one of the first western women to become a swami. She received daunting instructions – return to Canada to establish a yoga ashram and adapt ancient yoga teachings in a way that westerners could understand.



Aerial view of Yasodhara Ashram gardens with Temple of Light in the background.

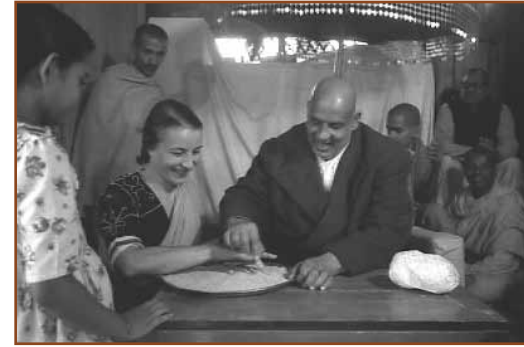
After humble beginnings with little money and few resources, 60 years ago Swami Radha found a remote property on the shore of Kootenay Lake in British Columbia. As she set foot on the property, she immediately had a vision of the beach covered in precious jewels. As her feet walked the land her

spirit soared, and there was no doubt she was being called home. Thus, Yasodhara Ashram came to be.

Over the years, guided by inspiration, spiritual practice, hard work and devotion the ashram began to grow. In the six decades since, thousands have come seeking spiritual nourishment and have collectively built this place into the magnificent spiritual community that it is today.

## HOW THE ASHRAM SUPPORTED MY GROWTH

I consider myself lucky to be among the people who have deeply benefited from the Ashram and Swami Radha’s teachings. The first time I took



Yasodhara Ashram founder Swami Radha with her guru Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh

the YDC in 1977 as a young woman, I discovered clarity and confidence. I found the purpose, meaning, and value of my life that I was seeking. My experience showed me the healing value of the yoga tradition and allowed me to take my next steps toward becoming a yoga teacher.

Forty-four years later I took my second course as a mature adult and gained the clarity, appreciation, and enthusiasm for stepping into this new phase of life. I was stretched into new learning, new formulations, and the opening of my capacity and potential. To have this happen later in life is a remarkable opportunity for which I am very grateful.

It wasn’t necessarily an easy path to get myself to the Ashram either time. There were the inevitable responsibilities and relationships to step away from, the financial resources required, and the belief I had to cultivate that I deserved to do this for myself. But deeper than all this was an inner call that carried me forward.

## AN INVITATION TO COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF

In 2023 Yasodhara Ashram will be celebrating its 60th anniversary. It continues to be a flourishing model of sustainability and a spiritual beacon on the planet. Built on a strong foundation of spiritual practice and Karma Yoga (selfless service), it is a living example of the intersection between the everyday and the miraculous.

So, why might you consider coming and experiencing this unique place? Let me tell you,

there is so much about the Ashram that touches the spirit. The beauty of the land and its spiritual legacy offer an extraordinary opportunity for renewal and integration. The sparkling of the lake light, the beneficence of the mountain spirits and the soothing blanket of the forest are deeply healing.

The rhythm of daily ashram life is also a joy to behold – morning hatha yoga, learning and personal reflection, beautiful meals, serving in community, and the incredible opening of the heart in evening Satsang.



Barbara playing harmonium alongside Ashram friends.

This is a community that respects individual differences while always honoring the Divine Light within and everywhere. It is a place of spiritual nourishment and personal self-discovery. There is no other place like it on our planet.

If you feel a calling to come to the Ashram, listen and trust it. You may not know how it will be possible for you to do this, but my experience is that life will support your heart’s desire.

You too may set foot on this land and feel something in you has come home. Like Swami Radha and so many after her including myself, you may discover infinite precious jewels on the shore of Kootenay Lake.

*Barbara Eastham is a YAA Senior Teacher and lives in Kelowna, BC. She was Coordinator of the Yoga Centre of Calgary TTP for many years. She is a Senior Teacher and Trainer of Integrative Restoration Yoga Nidra. To learn more about the ashram and January 15-March 15 YDC visit [www.yasodhara.org](http://www.yasodhara.org).*



# Mindfulness: A Path to Awakening

by Kat Boehm

The approach to and practice of mindfulness has in recent years become more popular and it is taught in various ways in different venues (schools, therapist offices, hospitals, prisons and yoga classes) What is this practice of mindfulness? How does it support awakening? In this article I outline the Buddhist path to mindfulness (inspired by what the Buddha taught) and the rewards it offers.

The Buddha taught mindfulness 2600 yrs. ago (translated as *Sati* in Pali, the ancient language the Buddha spoke) which literally means “to remember”. We practice mindfulness to remember to be in the present moment. Mindfulness invites us to show up for what is happening, just as it is. It is a doorway into deep understanding and acceptance of reality. The practice of mindfulness requires patience, persistence and compassion. Rewiring our mind and body takes time. We learn as we travel our path that it takes both courage and tenderness to go through the tough stretches. As a teacher at a recent retreat sweetly sang “*Waking up is hard to do*”.

Many of us have been practicing mindfulness and have an idea of what it is, but is the practice always easy or available? It seems to me that we are continually swept away by thoughts, feelings, and sounds. The mind has a very strong habit of creating associations with present life situations through memory. This natural response can make it very difficult to be steady and calm in the midst of various conditions we meet daily and repetitively. Have you experienced this in your life/ practice? Do you have the motivation to be here and now, but interrupted by the mind that incessantly thinks or distracts? Do you experience a yearning to feel stable in the midst of intense emotions, which you can't regulate or clarify? Have you felt disjointed

and hyper with the ignited stress response in body/ mind when life delivers an unexpected event?

I remember vividly my first silent retreat, 10 days of silence and meditation. This was in 1997 while I was backpacking in India and living in Dharmasala, home of The Dalai Lama and many Tibetan refugees. The retreat was probably one of the most profound experiences I've had - rustic and basic accommodations plus very simple food - were minor issues compared to how uncomfortable the practice of mindfulness was to my body and mind. I was a young seeker, very keen on learning all I could about meditation and yoga. What I learned from this retreat (not at all what I was expecting!!) has been the guide for my practice and teaching:

- noticing thinking is being aware
- not liking what you are thinking is resistance
- wanting things to be different is suffering
- believing you can change or control is more suffering
- observing yourself without kindness, compassion and acceptance gives rise to contraction/resistance (more suffering!!)
- silence is more than the absence of sound — the mind thinks, comments and creates incessantly even if the body occupies a perfectly quiet place!

Let's define and explore these insights, starting with what the Buddha taught in one of his first sermons, known as turning the **Wheel of Dharma**.

There are **four Noble Truths**:

1. Life is difficult
2. Why? Because we cling
3. The way out - don't cling
4. Relief develops if we then follow the **Eight-fold Noble Path** by cultivating the following attributes:

- Right Understanding
- Right Thought

- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Mindfulness
- Right Concentration

where “*Right*” is refining ethical conduct, concentration and wisdom. This Path allows us to see the 3 truths of existence, which the Buddha named “*Dukkha, Annica and Anatta*” in Pali:

- life is unpredictable, unfair, difficult, unsatisfactory and painful (suffering/not perfect)
- things change (impermanence/not permanent)
- there is no one that things are happening to (non-self/not personal)

**AWARENESS** is the thread that weaves the path the Buddha taught. We engage with this quality of mind in relation to the Four Noble Truths to see clearly and surrender. Awareness means *to know* what is happening and how we are relating to what is happening. It is a quality of mind that observes, notices, consciously witnesses, and pays purposeful attention, without judgment or agenda. Awareness is a holistic state of mind where it simply notices without a narrative; it receives what is happening and lets it be. Awareness gives us insights into why we *suffer*, why we *want* things to be different, how *resistance* gets in the way of change, and how we can deal with these challenges through *self-compassion*.

**SUFFERING** is the first of the four Noble Truths that the Buddha taught—life is hard. This can sound a bit gloomy and overwhelming (especially if you are new to the Buddha's teaching)

As my practice evolves, I think what the Buddha is telling us is that life is a flow of changing events. Wanting things to be different is what keeps us gripped in patterns of non-acceptance, self-pity, blame and reactivity. These states lead to a belief that there is someone which is controlling life (me,

mine, I). We have a very strong patterning that makes our perspectives hard to change. There is a tendency to interpret life as a personal drama, begrudging how life is unfolding with constant change and uncertainty. We crave security and solid ground, resisting the reality that things are never permanent. This attitude only increases our suffering, as the present moment experience is a consequence of past actions (karma) and our struggles make life harder. Karma is an integral part of Yoga and Buddhism; nothing in life is random but is a result of prior actions we have taken for which we are now reaping the results that we interpret as positive or negative.

**WANTING** things to turn out differently than they are is the second of the four Noble Truths the Buddha taught. Clinging or craving is a sticky, attached quality of the mind.

How often do you ruminate or rehearse situations in life? This would be clinging to thinking; wanting an outcome or privately directing life via thoughts. We could say this is the act of over thinking, which could lead to anxiety and agitation in the mind. One of my core teachers says: “thoughts are not the problem, it is how we relate to them that is the problem”.

Are you able to be with feelings and emotions fully? Feel them in your body? Listen to what emotions are telling you? For many of us, the answer is no. We often cope, pretend, ignore, or manage feelings through addictive behaviors or reactivity. Because we crave a different reality than the one we are living, we resist feeling and

experiencing the present moment as it is, living in the body, allowing and softening. This resistance might be the wiser choice under traumatic circumstances, but as we distance ourselves from those circumstances, with the gift of awareness we might see how coping in unhealthy ways and denying emotions are a hindrance to releasing pain. It is common to get triggered by current events that reignite the painful flames of past events.



Another way craving manifests is pushing away; not wanting the current experience we are having is clinging to the idea that things should be different. This increases our suffering, as there could be a belief that what we are feeling is unworthy, not valid, scary, or silly. We might think that life is unfair, and we find faults with ourselves or others. We are caught in a loop of aversion and clinging at the same time!

**RESISTANCE** is an energy of the mind that contracts when life is difficult. We don't want to feel pain, no sentient being does. We naturally pull away from pain through contractions in the body (holding the breath, tightness in various areas, gripping, tensing, and a pit in the stomach are a few examples). Similarly, the mind will contract by justifying or trying to figure out a difficult situation. We can often sense that our mind is agitated and tight, that we are suffering, but we are unable to set aside the problem and find space. Attempts to solve the problem don't seem to work, which only increases agitation. The saying that *what we resist persists* can be seen when we are hooked in this energy of resistance. We are actually fuelling the discomfort by not being with it and believing we can think our way out.

The practice of mindfulness is a practice (not easy) to let in, let be and let go. We need patience and courage, as we open and soften to what is difficult. We expand our willingness to learn from the natural habit energy of contraction. I believe we have to practice again and again and again—coming back to the body and breath, relaxing and releasing, grounding and resourcing. Once we have balanced the nervous system and suppressed the fight/flight/freeze response we can view the difficulty from a new perspective, with intuitive awareness and kindness.

**COMPASSION** (*Karuna in Pali*) Although not formally taught as the 3rd Noble Truth - to be compassionate towards our suffering encourages a subtle release. It is often defined as meeting difficulty with the quivering of the heart. It is noticing you are suffering and giving yourself care "*Ouch this hurts*" Kirsten Neff offers this quippy statement to meet difficulty.

You are already in an unpleasant mood, perhaps brought about by a life situation where you are learning a lesson such as having difficulty with

relationships. Why make it more difficult by being hard on yourself? We often abandon ourselves through blame, shame, and ill will. Many of us turn on ourselves with a harsh and impatient inner voice when we make a "mistake".

What would the outcome be if we could give ourselves the same kindness we would give a good friend when they are going through a difficult time? Or that we would extend to a child who is sad and crying by holding, consoling and reassuring? This is self-compassion. We deserve love, care and kindness; in the face of a tough situation, this could be just telling ourselves that we are doing the best we can and it's OK and natural to feel pain.

Compassion softens the heart in the midst of a difficult life situation. Compassion relaxes the body and mind and opens the whole system to receive the warm energy of empathy, care and understanding. We can then be open to the fourth Noble Truth where relief comes through developing the right attributes as outlined above in the eight-fold Noble Path.

Awareness and compassion are the gateways to mindful awareness. The truth of existence is that challenges and difficulties are a part of life but our perspectives can change. Life continues to change and feel uncertain. Although we may experience pain, we don't have to suffer; we can let go and observe with compassion for ourselves and others.

May we renew our motivation to open and trust, allowing wisdom and compassion to shine and nurture.

May we be kind, patient and gentle with ourselves as we walk our path of awakening.

May we live on this earth with respect for another and the planet. Engaging in actions that deepen inclusion, understanding and equality.

**Resources:**

*Sattipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization* by Bhikkhu Analyo. Windhorse Publications, Illustrated edition (Aug, 1 2004)

*Self-Compassion* by Kirsten Neff Released by William Morrow April 2011

*Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening* by Joseph Goldstein. Sounds True; Reprint edition (March 1 2016)

**Kat Boehm is a YAA senior teacher.** She teaches yoga, Pilates and mindfulness meditation (online and in person). To learn more: [www.movingmindfully.ca](http://www.movingmindfully.ca) and [kat.boehm.mindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:kat.boehm.mindfulness@gmail.com)



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**Kat Boehm is a YAA Senior Certified teacher and has been practicing meditation, mindfulness and yoga since 1997.**

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- Dec 3, 2022 Special Concerns & Limitations. Sutras Pada 4 w/ Kat Boehm\*\*
  - Jan 14, 2023 Preparatory Poses and Modifications; Sutra 1.1 & Centering w/ Beth McCann\*\*
  - Feb 11, 2023 Basics, Equalizing Poses; Benefits of Yoga w/ Beth McCann\*\* (Date change)
  - Apr 22, 2023 Standing Basics; Origins of Yoga w/ Neil Haggard\*\*
  - May 6, 2023 Seated Poses; History Yoga in the West w/ Neil Haggard\*\*.
- Other Dates in 2023: Jun 3; Sep 16; Nov 4; Dec 9

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# Awakening Sleeping Beauty

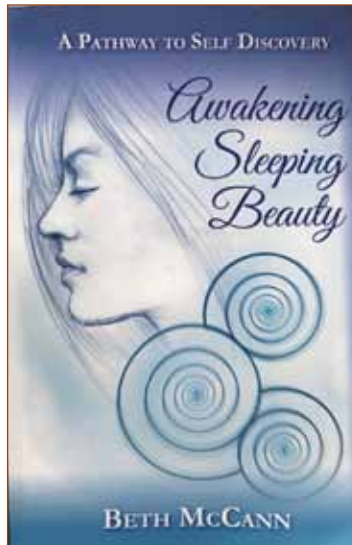
By Beth McCann

Book Review by Megan Kim

Almost fifteen years ago, the wisdom of Beth McCann began to seep into my consciousness as I began my YAA teacher training under her mentorship. It was a slow-motion paradigm shift that continues to unfold in my heart and mind, and in my continued learning.

Beth's memoir, *Awakening Sleeping Beauty*, published recently by Stone's Throw Publications of Port Perry, Ontario, reminds me again of what she introduced to my needing mind, through her words as well as her embodied loving kindness. Phrases such as "All parts of you are welcome here," and "You're safe here," continue to find their way into my own classes. I remember again how I first found permission to be with whatever arises, whether it is a sleepless night or a body that won't conform to a certain yoga pose or a well of sadness.

The story tells of her journey through various experiences and teachers of yoga, finally to discover the healing and transformative practices of yoga centered on the energy body and the chakras (spirals of energy at certain key points along the spine). It also illustrates the power of relationship between a student and a teacher. "She accepted me unconditionally," Beth writes of her senior teacher, Sandra Sammartino, whom she met in her 40s. Sandra and other gifted teachers gave her "space to discover who I was in a safe, secure environment." She learned to go inwards, after twenty years of practicing yoga "from the outside in."



The story is framed by the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty. The spinning wheels of that story and the spinning wheels of the chakras both serve the purpose of a paradigm shift. In the case of Sleeping Beauty, the paradigm shift was from being awake to being asleep; the spinning wheel sent the princess into a sleep state for 100 years. In the case of Beth, the shift was from being asleep metaphorically, to being awakened through the energy of the chakras.

The spiraling nature of these wheels supports the nature of Beth's story as well, which has a non-linear quality. As she takes us through events and landscapes of her history, as well as her understanding of the Sleeping Beauty tale and her learnings in yoga, she comes back to the same places again and again but is never quite the same.

She shares with us stories of her loving and remarkable family members, such as her father, who was willing to go AWOL to be at the birth of his first daughter (Beth); her attuned mother who "radiated love outwards"; a bootlegging grandmother who practised midwifery; and ancestors who bravely left family, friends, and homelands in their younger years to immigrate to Canada. We learn a history of her journey through various mindbody systems including Iyengar yoga, transcendental and Vipassana meditation, Qi Gong, Hakomi and the Enneagram to name a few, and we get some fascinating glimpses into the evolution of yoga in Edmonton since the 1970s. There are stories



Beth McCann

of a traumatic car accident, a divorce, a daughter's wedding ("Marrying into a family is like entering a new mystery school." Beth McCann 2021 p.127), a teaching career and motherhood. She entrusts us with intimate selections from her journals, revealing the messy and redemptive power of the deep and often difficult inner work necessary to heal and re-parent oneself. "It is a fine art to welcome everything and push nothing away." (Beth McCann 2021 p. 148).

It is ultimately a story of how one woman learns to truly love herself, with the loving support of Sandra and a few other wise guides. The chakras gave her a scaffolding for that work; even the way she organizes the chakras by chapter reveals that path to love. Through this exploration, she writes, "My personal honour code emerged... First, I focused on loving self. A person must first love self

before love can be extended towards others." (Beth McCann 2021 p. 79). Whether you read Beth's book, or participate in her classes or workshops, you can feel that you are in the presence of someone who truly loves herself. And this gives you space and permission to discover who YOU are in a safe, secure environment.

Megan Kim was first certified in 1998 through Prana Yoga in Vancouver, and then through the YAA in 2009, with Beth McCann as her senior teacher. She is also influenced by Marcia Langenberg and her teachings in the Desikachar lineage, yoga therapy with Susi Hately, and other somatic education systems, such as Feldenkrais. You can reach her at megankimyoga@gmail.com

Beth McCann, YAA Certified Senior Teacher, past president of the YAA (1995-2000) and on the TTP and Certification Committee for over 25 years, can be reached at bmccann@telus.net. The book is available at the YAA Props Store. 780-427-8776.



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# Father (Fr.) Joseph Pereira: A Remarkable Ministry

by Valery Petrich

Many in Alberta are celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Father Joe Pereira and his significant contribution to yoga. Some people know him as a Catholic priest; others know him as a senior Iyengar yoga teacher or as a steward of street people in the slums of India.

All of these impressions are true. They are kaleidoscopic glimpses of a man with a simple mission, to ease suffering and inspire hope. Fr. Joe, as he is affectionately called, made a meteoric rise from his humble parish in Mumbai to a global figure of note today.

I first met Fr. Joe in 1983 at the CPS (Christa Prema Seva) ashram in Pune, India when he came to give a Sunday morning service. In autumn 1986, David McAmmond and I were at the Yoga Centre of Calgary, which was attached to the YAA at that time. I walked Fr. Joe who was visiting in Canada for the first time and staying with his godchildren in Medicine Hat. We hosted him for a workshop on the *Yoga Sutras* and Iyengar Yoga and the word got around. Edmonton soon followed. He was then invited to speak at a conference at the University of Calgary hosted by the Foothills Yoga Group. While sitting in the audience, my visiting friend Nancy Ford from Washington D.C. listened and immediately called the *Yoga Journal*. "You need to know about this man!" she enthused. As a result, he was invited to be keynote speaker at the Unity in Yoga conference in Murietta, California. Thus he made his debut to the U.S. yoga audience.

Born in 1942 in Vasai, India, Fr. Joe pursued a master's degree in psychology and philosophy and later a theology degree before entering the priesthood. He says that his real education came from observing a wisp of a woman named Mother Teresa use the power of love to transform those in pain to dignity. He saw this as the epitome of any religion and he called it the 'faith factor'. It became

his touchstone. When an event in his personal life caused him to stumble in his faith, he sought guidance from Mother Teresa. She counselled him not to abandon his calling, saying that it would become clearer in 10 years. "I knew my heart was too big to love just one person" Fr. Joe said. He persevered and in 10 years his priesthood flourished as she had predicted.

Fr. Joe started dropping into yoga classes taught by BKS Iyengar in Mumbai in 1968. He welcomed this intense style which to him complemented his faith and gave him the physical stamina to meet the demands of his schedule. When he was assigned a Mumbai parish, he astutely recognized the role yoga could play with the recovering addicts who were joining for fellowship in his church basement. With Iyengar's blessing, he began to teach.

When he severely injured his back from a motor vehicle accident, he placed himself into Iyengar's hands and followed a rigorous routine for two years. It was through Iyengar that he experienced how a powerful, loving touch could transform pain – a tenant of Iyengar's philosophy of '*loving your body back to life*'. Using humility to transcend pain and unleash Grace was a powerful experience for him. Like Iyengar, he believed that yoga practice could help affliction of all kinds. He began to understand at the physical, mental and spiritual levels how woundedness could be a pathway to Self love.

This revelation became the pillar for Kripa (Grace) Foundation, a charity he founded in 1981 to serve those in recovery. Fr. Joe often states that no one can afford the luxury of believing they are not addicted. Pornography, gambling, drugs, and alcohol affect not only the addict but those attached to them through love. I heard him respond once to a lady who confided she had bipolar disorder, "we are all bipolar. We are all addicts. We are all

unwell... to the extent we are alienated from God's grace in our daily lives".

Fr. Joe and Iyengar developed a mutually respectful and deeply committed relationship to fulfilling the goal of reaching the addict and those poor in health.

Fr. Joe succeeded in extracting from Iyengar's methodical style a brilliant application for those in recovery. He has done so in an unparalleled way. He incorporated Iyengar yoga into his Kripa centres which were growing in number across India. A signature feature of the Kripa model was that those in recovery similarly helped newcomers, thereby creating a family of support. Another signature of the Kripa model was Fr. Joe's encouragement not to neglect the body's care as the temple of the spirit; he incorporated this concept within the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Kripa has grown globally within churches, universities and yoga studios on five continents. The model demonstrated a successful yoga component that western countries started to watch keenly.

Eventually, Fr. Joe was invited to present his research at Cambridge, UK, and Hazelton Institute in Pennsylvania and other research centres worldwide.

When the AIDS epidemic emerged in the early 1990's, I was working with a group from AIDS Calgary and Fr. Joe, Iyengar and I collaborated on sequences that would work to alleviate symptoms and build immunity. This culminated in the production of the video '*Living with Aids*' which distributed successfully when the *Yoga Journal* wrote it up in their magazine. It became a protocol for teachers working with AIDS and other auto-immune disorders. I then launched Kripa West Charity in Canada to create an umbrella for his work. This work was significant at the time because there was scant attention to yoga as a therapy. People started to pay attention to an unlikely Catholic priest teaching yoga. Fr. Joe opted not to wear his collar at times and people who

worked with him sensed that his heart transcended religiosity. He endeared himself to the gay community by breaking down the barriers between them and the Catholic church. "*Love is not a gender, it transcends all*", he would say.

He taught throughout Canada and the U.S. (Oakville, Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Moose Jaw, Calgary, St. John's, Halifax, Comox, Vancouver, Edmonton Anchorage, Hawaii, Milwaukee and numerous other towns and cities). His work also gained international recognition. He began to teach regularly in Poland, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, Alaska, and more recently China.

Fr. Joe seems indefatigable, an energy he attributes to a two-hour daily practice. He insists that Grace is bestowed if only we trust the process of a dedicated practice. I have seen him numerous times arrive fresh at his destination and ready to teach when others are just plain tired. I have never known him to say no to an invitation, even to the most far-flung place or circumstance – whether

it is to conduct a talk or hold the hand of someone ill. As his friend of many years, I gave up long ago trying to influence him with appeals to pragmatism or taking time for himself - for years he refused my invitation of a holiday in Banff. "*It is about people, not places, Val*". He has unswerving faith that his actions are guided by an invisible hand. He still lives in a small room with a cot and few possessions in Vasai. In this way he claims he can continue to identify with 'the poorest of the poor' in spirit.

The *Yoga Journal* awarded Fr. Joe the Karma Award in 2002

for his service in the area of yoga and addiction. In 2009, he received the prestigious Padma Shri Award, an award from the Indian government for remarkable social service. It is because of these awards, Fr. Joe states, that some of his superiors within the church became willing to overcome their skepticism of yoga.






**Father Joe and B.K.S. Iyengar**

Fr. Joe's work continues through the Kripa Foundation Iyengar Yoga (KFIY), a Teacher Training Program birthed in Canada which prepares yoga teachers globally to work in the field of recovery. He offers teacher training in Goa, India every January. His book *The Spiritual Paradox of Addiction* cowritten with psychiatrist Dr. Bedi is notable for its explanation of addiction as a misguided urge for spiritual ascent. When understood in this way, addiction becomes a roadmap to sublime wellness and the good feelings that yoga offers replace addictions to harmful substances or practices.

Today, the large global Kripa family displays a tapestry of friendship and singular purpose to take his work forward. This is evident in the KFIY training here in Canada which he calls his first 'home away from home'. He has birthed a unique model that stands as a beacon of hope to both the addicted and those affected by addiction. It promises to guide yoga teachers for many years to come.

We who have enjoyed his friendship over the years admire his indomitable passion and purpose. He has the uncanny ability to lift you out of lethargy and clarify your personal values in a matter of minutes. We often hear his challenging words "*Make of your lives something beautiful for God*". He has a reassuring presence that makes you feel all is well. At the end of a workshop when his baritone voice bursts into song '*Abide with Me*', you can hear a pin drop.

*Valery Petrich is a long time teacher and founder of The Yoga Studio of Calgary and the Yoga Studio College of Canada. She is an author, speaker and educator on yoga. She lives in Richmond B.C. and can be reached at 1yogalady@gmail.com. Information about Fr. Joe's trainings can be found at kripafoundationiyengaryoga.ca.*



## Professional Development Series

**SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOGA TEACHERS**


**Thursday, February 9th 8-9:30 p.m.**

Join YAA Senior Teacher Jill Gaumont in this free webinar providing practical tools for yoga teachers.

Livestream via Zoom **FREE** for all YAA Members

Recording available with Full Membership

- A beginners guide to building an authentic & engaging social media presence.
- Suitable for anyone regardless of their technical knowledge.




## Senior Teacher Showcase Series

**GET TO KNOW ALBERTA'S BEST TEACHERS**

Livestream **FREE** for all YAA Members  
Recordings available to Full Members

Sign up now at **yoga.ca**

**Upcoming Schedule:**

- Dec 5 & 19 (Mon) Karen Hamdon (Edmonton)
- Jan 5 & 19 (Thurs) Donalee Campbell (Sh Park)
- Feb 1 & 15 (Wed) Erin Michie (Edmonton)
- Mar 7 & 21 (Tues) Mugs McConnell (Mexico)



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## YAA MEMBERSHIP PERKS

Perks for YAA members have seen some recent changes. Recordings for free class offerings (Senior Teacher classes & Professional Development Webinars), free teacher directory and events listings will only be available to Full or Lifetime members. Associate members will still have access to the free classes as they are live-streamed. Full membership with the YAA is a great value at only \$30/year or \$350/lifetime. Here are a few of the benefits you receive with your membership at each level:

### Associate Membership (\$10/year - 1st year free for all Alberta residents):

- Electronic subscription to the *Yoga Bridge* newsletter, a valuable enrichment tool for all yoga practitioners.
- Free workshop attendance and voting privileges at our Annual General Meeting.
- High quality yoga props, mats and accessories available at excellent prices. Locally sourced where possible.
- Free live streamed online classes showcasing YAA Senior Teachers twice a month.
- Free live streamed professional development webinars for yoga teachers.
- Borrowing privileges from our extensive library of yoga books.
- Opportunity to purchase advertising space in the *Yoga Bridge* newsletter.
- Opportunity to participate in YAA workshops priced below \$80.

### Full Membership (\$30/year or \$350/Lifetime) receives all of the benefits of the Associate Membership PLUS:

- Printed versions of the *Yoga Bridge* newsletter mailed to your home or business. (Ask us for complimentary copies to distribute to your community).
- Free directory listings for yoga teachers on the Find A Teacher page of our website.
- Free event listings on our website and in the *Yoga Bridge* newsletter, circulated to over 1500 yoga practitioners province-wide.
- Access recordings for free Senior Teacher Showcase Series & Professional Development Webinars.

- Free community gatherings with professional development workshops.
- Opportunity to participate in YAA workshops priced at or above \$80 including internationally renowned teachers.
- Opportunities to deepen your practice through our Immersion Program, apply for Teacher Training and Advanced Training Levels. All training levels are pay-as-you-go from qualified teachers anywhere in the world. Mentorship with YAA Senior Teachers close to home.
- Practicing teachers can apply for individualized assessment through our Equivalency Certification Program with credit for previous qualified training.
- Discounted insurance rates for teachers.
- YAA Certified Teachers get access to community job postings, outreach and committee placements, and senior teachers can act as mentors for the TTP and upgrading levels.

As a member of the YAA, you are supporting the YAA's mission to promote a high quality of life, connect communities, increase activity, mobility, and engagement, and improve the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being for all Albertans, regardless of circumstances, through equitable access to education and participation in the diverse styles and traditional teachings of yoga. An inclusive umbrella organization, the YAA offers yoga to the public, raises the standard for high quality teacher training and upgrading, and has an active outreach program that brings yoga to underserved and marginalized communities.

Please consider upgrading your membership and/or making a donation to the YAA to help us serve our communities better and continue adding great perks like these to your membership. All donations over \$20 are eligible for an income tax receipt. Upgrade now and your yearly membership is good until the end of 2023. You can purchase several years at once or purchase a lifetime membership and avoid the hassle of renewals for life! Call the office at 780-427-8776 or see the website at [yoga.ca](http://yoga.ca) to pay online.

Thank you for continuing to be a part of our community!

## TTP PEARLS

# Bhagavad Gita

By Sara Eisenzimmer, YAA Teacher Training Student

I started the TTP program in November 2021. One of the assignments given to students is to study the *Bhagavad Gita*. I chose Stephen Mitchell's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*<sup>1</sup>. He explains the teachings in easy-to-read language that outlines the counsel given by Krishna to his devotee Arjuna just before battle commenced on the fields at Kurukshetra. The dialogue explores the essence of Yoga and Self, unending life and death, light and darkness to discover the true nature of reality. It is meant to be studied in depth, with practices of meditation, self-inquiry and contemplation revealing new layers of insight each time. The Gita says that even if we practice imperfectly, our efforts will be recognized.

I couldn't help drawing parallels to my own life and experiences, comparing them to other material I've listened to or read in the religious and mysterious categories. When I read the Gita I thought of stories I had read in the Bible. I was raised Catholic with all that entails but felt that maybe there was more to be understood. I felt like an explorer going on an adventure and began reading about other religions and the possibilities of the Universe and what lies beyond this life. I liked how the Gita shed light on these possibilities and it made me curious again to explore the vastness of Consciousness.

Through my own life experiences I have understood to some degree the Yoga or "oneness" the *Bhagavad Gita* conveys. I realize that the wonder and expanse of life as I know it cannot be all there is and I cannot live a rich, full life on my own, in the body or the spirit. My understanding of life in this earthly existence seems so minuscule compared to the universal Consciousness that pervades all. I



felt I understood the connection of the essence of Yoga, when Krishna says to Arjuna everything leads to Him, and is Him, so even the small amount of understanding I've gained is part of that Consciousness. We've all come to this understanding in our own way, whether we've called it energy or a feeling or simply said "It's nice to see you again old friend". The energy that is in our bodies, in others and all around us is real—even if we can't perceive it through our normal senses, we can feel it. I am reflecting on the deeper meaning of life, that our human journey is a discovery of how our physical bodies

are linked with our subtle or spirit bodies and how they are a part of the Consciousness underlying all. I think that's what Arjuna wants to know and what his guru Krishna speaks of and shows him.

Perhaps what the Gita reveals is the connection, and the Universal oneness in and of ourselves that through Yoga the opportunity for introspection is revealed. As Krishna states "Nothing in this world can purify as powerfully as wisdom; practiced in yoga, you will find this wisdom within yourself"

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Stephen Mitchell, *Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation*, 2000, Three Rivers Press, New York.

*Sara has worked in the recreation, health and wellness industry since 2000, with extensive experience in both group and individual fitness. She comes to the yoga world with a solid background in corrective exercise, performance programs and customized technique training. In November 2021 she began the YAA YTT and is excited to continue learning about this intriguing multi-faceted practice.*



# YAA EVENT CALENDAR

- E** Edmonton & Area
  - C** Calgary & Area
  - O** Online
  - H** Hybrid (Online and In-Person)
  - \*\*** Denotes YAA Intermediate or Senior Teacher Status
  - Events in colour are organized by YAA
- All events subject to change due to COVID-19**

### Full YAA Members:

No charge to advertise your events here and also on the YAA website.

YAA Advanced Training Levels require that upgrading hours be taught by YAA Intermediate or Senior Teachers\*\* (or equivalent).

### YAA Workshop & Classes Fees & Cancellation Policy

**Registration** Registration with full payment to the YAA office is required for all YAA workshops, TTP classes, retreats, etc.

**Transfers** Transfer of your registration payment to another participant is not permitted.

**Cancellations** There are no refunds for cancellations received within two weeks prior to any YAA event. Cancellation fees will apply when cancellations are received more than two weeks prior to the YAA event, in which case you MAY qualify for an 80% refund if your space can be filled by another registrant. Cancellation due to illness (with a doctor's note,) or due to unforeseen emergencies, MAY qualify for a refund depending on the overall event budget, which can only be evaluated after conclusion of the event.

### START ANYTIME EVENTS

#### START ANYTIME E H YAA

**Immersion Program, Teacher Training, Advanced Training Levels w/YAA Senior Teachers. Pay-as-you-go. See <https://yoga.ca/training/> for information. Ad p. 20-21.**

#### Start Anytime O

Meditation Course w/ Kat Boehm\*\*. The Curious Heart: Online Meditation and Mindfulness Course [pauseandconnect.teachable.com](http://pauseandconnect.teachable.com) Ad p. 19.

#### Start Anytime O

Life Anatomy: It's FUNctional w/ Sherry Ogg. For yoga teachers and students. Online, correspondence and live. [micromoves.com/therapists.asp](http://micromoves.com/therapists.asp). info@micromoves.com. 780-414-0273. Ad p. 12.

#### Start Anytime O YAA

**Five 3-hr Video modules of Anatomy and Physiology for students or teachers w/ Paula Carnegie Fehr\*\*. \$150 (\$200 for Certificate of Completion if an optional assignment is submitted to fulfil the 15-hr YAA-TTP anatomy requirement). Start anytime. Info.: Paula: [hiddenmessages.ca@gmail.com](mailto:hiddenmessages.ca@gmail.com). Register: [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store) or 780-427-8776.**

### DECEMBER, 2022

#### December-January C

Learning the Ropes: A 3-Part Series on How to use the Rope Wall with Janet Harvie. The basics and beyond. Learn how to practice with the yoga rope wall. In Person. Calgary Iyengar Yoga. 403-457-4070 [deanna@calgaryiyengaryoga.com](mailto:deanna@calgaryiyengaryoga.com) [www.calgaryiyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews](http://www.calgaryiyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews)

#### December 2 E H

Monthly Meditation w/ Rebecca Hung. 7:00pm-8:00pm. \$18. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### December 2-4 E H YAA

**Exploring Yoga in Community: Asana, Meditation, Therapeutic & Restorative Practices Retreat w/ Anita Sielecki\*\*. Fr 6:30pm-Sun 1:00pm. In person at Providence Renewal Centre and/or live streamed online. Contact Anita 780-432-7152 for info. Register 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 23.**

#### December 3 E H YAA

**Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Special Concerns & Limitations w/ Kat Boehm\*\*; Sutras Pada 4\*\*. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.**

#### December 3 E

Realignment Yoga for Hips & Low Back w/ Candace Wickins. 10am-11:30pm. \$35. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### December 3 C

Gitananda Yoga w/Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 9:15-10:45am. \$15.25. 809-1402; [harmonystudio@protonmail.com](mailto:harmonystudio@protonmail.com)

#### December 3 C

Family Yoga w/Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 11am-12pm. \$11.25/5 & under free. 403-403-809-1403; [harmonystudio@protonmail.com](mailto:harmonystudio@protonmail.com)

#### December 4 E

3hr Hatha Training w/ Gerda Krebs\*\*. 12:30-3:30pm. \$50. 780-416-4211; [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

#### December 5 & 19\* O YAA

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series. Mondays w/ Karen Hamdon\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Get to know Alberta's Yoga Teachers! Twice/month FREE for all YAA members with a variety of YAA Senior Teachers. Zoom link will be noted on the registration receipt. Recordings available in between classes for Full and Lifetime members. [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 26.**

#### December 8 E

Book Signing and Talk on Family Care Giving w/Kim Fraser. Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

#### December 10 E

Yoga for Neck & Shoulders w/ Lisa Workman. 9am-11am. \$42.Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### December 11 E

Family Yoga w/ Hayley Markel. 1:30-2:15pm: Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### December 11 C H

Core Strength & Abdominal Health Workshop with Deanna Oliphant. Learn how Iyengar yoga can create strength, softness and space to bring health to your pelvic floor, abdomen and lower back, while promoting a healthy alignment of the spine. In Person & Online. 2-4pm. 403-457-4070 [deanna@calgaryiyengaryoga.com](mailto:deanna@calgaryiyengaryoga.com) [www.calgaryiyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews](http://www.calgaryiyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews)

#### December 19\* O YAA

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series w/ Karen Hamdon\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Info./Reg. [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Details see Dec 5 & ad p. 26.**

#### December 21 E H

Winter Solstice Celebration - Yoga, Meditation and Chanting w/ Satwinder Sran. 6:00pm-8:00pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### December 24-January 1 C H

8 Days of Yoga with CIY Teachers. Add some sparkle to your holiday season with 8 themed classes. All levels and abilities are welcome. In Person & Online. 9:30-11:00am daily. Calgary Iyengar Yoga. 403-457-4070 [deanna@calgaryiyengaryoga.com](mailto:deanna@calgaryiyengaryoga.com) [www.calgaryiyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews](http://www.calgaryiyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews)

#### December 24 E

Candle Light Christmas Eve Yoga w/Janet Lockau. 9-10-30am. \$19.05. Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca); [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

#### December 26-31 E

Gentle Restorative Clinic w/ Michelle Anderson. Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### JANUARY 2023

#### January 2 E H

Yoga Quest – New Year Yoga Challenge. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### January 2 E H

A New Year Yoga Celebration – Yoga, Breath work Meditation w/Neeru. 11:00am-1:00pm Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### January 4-Apr 21 H

SOYA 300hr Professional Upgrade to RYT500 Online/Florida, Module B, two modules req for certification, Live via Zoom meeting twice weekly, \$4195+gst. Save \$300 when you pay in full! Contact Becky 403-710-4294

#### January 5 & 19 O YAA

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series. Thursdays with Donalee Campbell\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Get to know Alberta's Yoga Teachers! Twice/month FREE for all YAA members with a variety of YAA Senior Teachers. Zoom link will be noted on the registration receipt and recordings available in between classes. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store) Ad p. 26.**

#### January 6 E H

Monthly Meditation w/ Rebecca Hung. 7:00pm-8:00pm. \$18.Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### January 8-14 O

Week Long Meditation w/ Rebecca Hung. 8:45pm-9:15pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### January 8 E

Free Yoga Day. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

#### January 8 E

3 hr Hatha Training w/Gerda Krebs. 12:30-3:30pm. \$50 (Yft members \$45). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)



### **January 11-February 22 E**

Trauma Informed Yoga w/ Jeremy Bell. 6:00pm-7:15pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca)

### **January 12 – February 16 E**

Women's Yoga for Pelvic Floor Health Workshop w/ Val Spak. \$75. 4:30 - 5:30 pm La Perle Community Hall [wisewarriorsyoga@gmail.com](mailto:wisewarriorsyoga@gmail.com) or 780-945-9507.

### **January 14 E**

Arm Balance Workshop w/ Melissa Perret. 11:00am-1:00pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

### **January 14 E H**

6th Annual Renew the Whole You w/ Rebecca Hung. 6:00pm-8:00pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

### **January 14 E H YAA**

**Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading; Preparatory Poses and Modifications; Sutra 1.1 & Centering w/Beth McCann\*\*. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.**

### **January 15 E**

Healing Journey: The Dreaming w/ Anne Belohorec. 11-12:30pm. \$30 (Yft members \$25). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **January 15-April 15 Nelson, BC**

Yoga Development Course; Yasodhara Ashram's 3-month deep dive into authentic yoga. Fees vary based on accommodation. Visit [yasodhara.org](http://yasodhara.org) or 1-800-661-8711

### **January 19 O YAA**

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series w/ Donalee Campbell\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Register: [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store) Details at Jan 5 & ad p. 26.**

### **January 20 - 22 Red Deer**

I Am Om w/ Paula Carnegie Fehr. A yogic exploration to expand the mind and consciousness. 15 hours. \$150. [hiddenmessages.ca](http://hiddenmessages.ca) Paula. 403-352-3398.

### **January 21 E H YAA**

**Mindfulness Made Simple: An exploration into the stages of mindful awareness, the importance of self-compassion and reclaiming living the body safely and present w/ Kat Boehm\*\*. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$100. In-person Room 8 Percy Page Centre or online. Recording available. 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 19.**

### **January 21 C**

Family Yoga with Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 11 am-12 pm. \$11.25/5 & under free. 403-809-1402; [harmonystudio@protonmail.com](mailto:harmonystudio@protonmail.com).

### **January 21 E**

Yoga for Hips and Psoas w/ Lisa Workman. 9am-11am. \$42. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

### **January 21 E**

Journey Through the Chakras w/ Sebastien and Jeremy. 6pm-8:30pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

### **January 27-29 E H YAA**

**Exploring Yoga in Community: A retreat Experience; Asana, Pranayama, Meditation and Restorative Practices Retreat w/ Anita Sielecki. \$280. Fr 6:30pm-Sun 1:00pm. In person at Providence Renewal Centre and/or live streamed online. Contact Anita 780-432-7152 for info. Register 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 23.**

### **January 28-29 E**

Pain Care Yoga: The Art and Science 13 hr Program w/ Terri Jones. 9am-4pm. \$350 (\$300 by Dec 15 early bird). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **January 29 E**

Yoga on the Wall Workshop w/ Melanie Checknita. 10:00am – 12:00pm. \$42. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

## **FEBRUARY 2023**

### **February 1 & 15 O YAA**

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series. Wednesdays with Erin Michie\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Get to know Alberta's Yoga Teachers! Twice/month FREE for all YAA members with a variety of YAA Senior Teachers. Zoom link will be noted on the registration receipt and recordings available in between classes. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 26.**

### **February 3 E H**

Monthly Meditation w/ Rebecca Hung. 7:00pm-8:00pm. \$18. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

### **February 5 E**

3 hr Hatha Training w/Gerda Krebs. 12:30-3:30pm. \$50 (Yft members \$45). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **February 9 O YAA**

**Professional Development Series Webinar – Social Media for Yoga Teachers w/ Jill Gaumont. A beginners guide to building an authentic & engaging social media presence, FREE for YAA Members. 8-9:30pm on Zoom. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 26.**

### **February 11 E H YAA**

**Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Basics, Equalizing Poses; Benefits of Yoga w/ Beth McCann\*\*. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3 rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edm., OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP & Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.**

### **February 11 C**

Yoga Workshop for Arthritis w/ Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 1-3 pm. \$30.00. 403-809-1402; [harmonystudio@protonmail.com](mailto:harmonystudio@protonmail.com)

### **February 11 E**

Date Night: A Meditation and Paint Event w/ Rebecca Hung. 6:30pm-8:30pm. Yoga Within #302, 8135-102 St. 780-450-9642. [www.yogawithin.ca](http://www.yogawithin.ca).

### **February 11 E**

Valentine's Partner Yoga w/Terri and Scott Jones. Time and price TBD. Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **February 12 E**

Healing Journey: Past Live Healing w/ Anne Belohorec. 11-12:30pm. \$30 (Yft members \$25). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **February 15 O YAA**

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series w/ Erin Michie\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Details February 1 & ad p. 26.**

### **February 18 C**

Family Yoga with Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 11 am-12 pm. \$11.25/5 & under free. 809-1402; [harmonystudio@protonmail.com](mailto:harmonystudio@protonmail.com).

### **February 25-26 O YAA**

**Yogic Art of Living and Dying; Practice for End of Life and Everyday Living. Zoom Workshop w/Anne Douglas\*\*. Perspectives and practices that prepare us for this inevitability and help us to live in a more sacred, welcoming and integrated manner. \$150 livestream on Zoom, recording available. Sat & Sun 10am-1pm. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 11.**

## **MARCH 2023**

### **March 1 YAA**

**Deadline for Initial Certification & Recertification applications for May approval. Email: [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca)**

### **March**

Mexico Retreat w/ Ty Chandler & Sharoni Fixler. Sustained practice, sequenced to progressively open the body through concentrated effort and awareness with the guidance of expert teachers. 403-457-4070. [deanna@calgaryyoga.com](mailto:deanna@calgaryyoga.com) [www.calgariyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews](http://www.calgariyengaryoga.com/workshopsnews)

### **March 5 E**

3-hr Hatha Training w/Gerda Krebs. 12:30-3:30pm. \$50 (Yft members \$45). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **March 7-July 21/22 O**

SOYA 200hr Foundational Yoga Teacher Training Online/Hybrid, live via Zoom twice weekly, \$3200+gst. Option to complete fully online or finish with a week immersion in Traverse City, MI. Save \$300 when you pay in full! Contact Becky 403-710-4294.

### **March 7 & 21 O YAA**

**Senior Teachers Showcase Series. Tuesdays with Mugs McConnell\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Get to know Alberta's Yoga Teachers! Twice/month FREE for all YAA members with a variety of YAA Senior Teachers. Zoom link will be noted on the registration receipt and recordings available in between classes. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 26.**

### **March 10-12 E H YAA**

**TTP Spring Teaching Skills Workshop w/Karen Hamdon\*\*. Friday 7-9pm, Saturday & Sunday 9am-4:30pm. \$225. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edm. OR livestream via Zoom. Hours count toward YAA Teacher Training or Advanced Training Levels. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 21.**

### **March 11 & 12**

Session I: Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita w/ Sudhir Tiwari, Senior teacher, Kaivalyadhama. Zoom. 10am-12 pm on Zoom. Cost \$80 for both sessions (See Mar. 18) Visit [www.yogawithneeru.com](http://www.yogawithneeru.com) or email [yogawithneeru@gmail.com](mailto:yogawithneeru@gmail.com) to register.

### **March 12 E**

Healing Journey: Meet your Spirit w/Anne Belohorec. 11-12:30pm. \$30 (Yft members \$25). Yoga for Today 780-416-4211; [info@yogafortoday.ca](mailto:info@yogafortoday.ca) or [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca)

### **March 13-24 E**

SOYA 300hr Professional Upgrade to RYT500, Module B, two modules req for certification, \$4195+gst. Save \$300 when you pay in full! Contact Becky 403-710-4294. Ad p. 12.

### **March 18 & 19 O**

Session II: Parallels between the Bhagavad Gita & Patanjali yoga sutras w/ Sudhir tiwari, senior teacher of Kaivalyadham. Zoom, 10-12noon. Cost \$80 for both sessions. [www.yogawithneeru.com](http://www.yogawithneeru.com) or email [yogawithneeru@gmail.com](mailto:yogawithneeru@gmail.com) to register.

### **March 18 C**

Yoga Workshop for Menopause with Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 1-3 pm. \$30.00. 809-1402; [harmonystudio@protonmail.com](mailto:harmonystudio@protonmail.com)

### March 21 O YAA

Senior Teachers Showcase Series w/ Mugs McConnell\*\*. 8-9pm on Zoom. Register [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Details Mar 7 & ad p. 26.

### March 25 C

Family Yoga with Mantrini Mikuska at Harmony Yoga Pilates Studio, Sat 11 am-12 pm. \$11.25/5 & under free. 809-1402; harmonystudio@protonmail.com.

## APRIL 2023

### April 14-16 E H YAA

Exploring Yoga in Community: Asana, Meditation, Therapeutic & Restorative Practices Retreat w/ Anita Sielecki\*\*. Fr 6:30pm-Sun 1:00pm. In person at Providence Renewal Centre and/or live streamed online. \$280 (sliding scale). Contact Anita 780-432-7152 for info. Register 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 23.

### April 16-Jan 28/24 O

SOYA 200hr Foundational Yoga Teacher Training Online, live via Zoom, 3 Sundays each month, \$3200+gst. Save \$300 when you pay in full! Contact Becky. 403-710-4294.

### April 22 E H YAA

Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Standing Basics, Origins of Yoga w/ Neil Haggard\*\*. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Teacher Training and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.

### April 30-May 11 H

SOYA 300hr Professional Upgrade to RYT500 Online/Florida, Module A, two modules req for certification, \$4195+gst. Save \$300 when you pay in full! Contact Becky 403-710-4294.

## MAY 2023

### May 6 E H YAA

Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Seated Poses, History of Yoga in the West w/Neil Haggard\*\*. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.

### May 27 O YAA

**YAA's 47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Noon: Election of Members at Large, Year-End Reports. 2:15pm: Workshop w/ Richard Miller. "Tapping into Unbreakable Well-Being". No charge for members but please pre-register to receive Zoom link: [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad next page (35).**

### May 29-June 2 Lake Louise

Immersive Trauma Integration and Yoga Wellness Training and Retreat at Chateau Fairmont w/ Lisa Scadolari and Lori Gill. \$3,200 (incl acc/meals)/\$1,000 day pass. 1-289- 213-8355.

## JUNE 2023

### June 2-4 Sorrento

Annual Retreat w/ Dr. Raj Balkaran. Sorrento, BC. [www.soyayoga.com](http://www.soyayoga.com). Reg starts Jan 1. Ad p. 12.

### June 3 E H YAA

Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Restorative Poses, Definition of Yoga. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.

## JULY/ AUGUST 2023

### July 2023

West Coast Retreat with Ty Chandler & Sharoni Fixler. Sustained practice, sequenced to progressively open the body through concentrated effort and awareness with the guidance of expert teachers. Two weeks offered. Calgary Iyengar Yoga. 403-457-4070.

### July 3-19 E

SOYA 200hr Foundational Yoga Teacher Training immersion, Edmonton, \$3200+gst. Save \$300 when you pay in full! Contact Becky 403-710-4294. Ad p. 12.

### July 12-16 E H YAA

A Mindfulness Meditation & Gentle Yoga Retreat w/ Kavindu (Mexico) & Anita Sielecki Wedn. 3pm-Sun 1pm. Providence Renewal Centre and live online; check [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store) for updates or Anita 780-432-7152; [sielecki@hotmail.com](mailto:sielecki@hotmail.com). Ad p. 8.

## SEPTEMBER 2023

### September 16 E H YAA

Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Supine/ Core; Yoga Sutras Pada 1. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.

### September 18-29 E

SOYA 300-hr Professional Upgrade to RYT500, Module A, two modules req for certification, Edmonton, \$4195+gst. Pay in full save \$300. Contact Becky 403- 710-4294. Ad p. 12.

### September 22-24 E H YAA

Exploring Yoga in Community: Asana, Meditation, Therapeutic & Restorative Practices w/ Anita Sielecki\*\*. \$280 (sliding scale). Fri 6:30pm-Sun 1pm. Providence Renewal Centre &/or live online; contact Anita 780-432-7152 for info. Register YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 23.

## OCTOBER 2023

### October 13-18 E YAA

The Depth Teachings of Meditation, a Live Streaming Retreat w/ Richard Miller\*\* (USA) Including BodySensing & Yoga Nidra practices. Updates & pre-registration at <https://yoga.ca/product-category/workshops-classes/> Information: Anita (780) 432-7152. Ad p. 2.

### October 20-22 E H YAA

TTP Fall Teaching Skills Workshop. Friday 7-9pm, Saturday & Sunday 9am-4:30pm. \$225. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edm. OR livestream via Zoom. YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Hours count toward Immersion, TTP and Advanced Training Levels. Ad p. 20.

## NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2023

### November 4 E H YAA

Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Hip Openers; Yoga Sutras Pada 2. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. Hours count towards Immersion, TTP or Advanced Training Levels. Register YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad p. 20.

### December 9 E H YAA

Core Curriculum Class - TTP & Upgrading: Forward Bends; 8 Limbs of Yoga. 9:30am-3:30pm. \$80. Room #8, 3rd Floor, Percy Page Centre, 11759 Groat Rd, Edmonton OR livestream via Zoom. Hours count towards Immersion, TTP or Advanced Training Levels. Register YAA 780-427-8776 or [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store). Ad. p. 20.

## You are invited to the YAA's 47th AGM and Workshop with Richard Miller, PhD May 27, 2023 - Livestream Via Zoom

AGM:

Workshop:

**12:00-2pm:** 47th YAA Annual General Meeting, Member-at-Large Elections  
**2:15 - 3:45 pm:** with Richard Miller: **Tapping Into Unbreakable Wellbeing.**  
*Join Richard for an exploration of five inquiries that have been handed down through ancient wisdom teachings to help us directly experience our innate, unbreakable and ever-present Wholeness and Well-Being. These simple inquiries enable us to realize the fullness of our human potential where we feel empowered and in harmony with ourselves and the world around us during every step of our journey through life.*

Fee for Workshop: Free for current members who attend the AGM.

Pre-Register: [www.yoga.ca/yaa-store](http://www.yoga.ca/yaa-store)  
(Zoom link will be noted on your registration receipt)

Info: YAA (780) 427 8776



*Richard Miller, PhD is the Founder of the iRest Institute, Co-Founder of the International Association of Yoga Therapists, and Founding Member and past President of the Institute for Spirituality and Psychology. He is a clinical psychologist, author, researcher, yogic scholar, and spiritual teacher who has devoted his life to integrating western psychology and neuroscience with the ancient nondual wisdom teachings of Yoga, Tantra, Advaita, Taoism, and Buddhism. He is the author of *Yoga Nidra, The iRest Meditative Practice for Deep Relaxation and Healing, iRest Meditation: Restorative Practices for Health, Healing and Well Being, The iRest Program for Healing PTSD, and Yoga Nidra: The Meditative Heart of Yoga*. Grounded in 35+ research studies, the US Army Surgeon General and the Defense Centers of Excellence have recognized iRest as a Complimentary Program for healing chronic pain and PTSD.*

## When Air Becomes A Luxury:

### How my new Neti pot alleviated my first COVID experience

by Paula Kabalo

Since the start of Covid-19 in 2020, I took the strictest precautions to avoid infection. No, I don't have a heart condition or diabetes or a chronic disease. I was in my late '50s when the pandemic started and my guts told me that the virus could be a serious threat to my breathing system. As a person suffering from allergies all my life, I knew it was my weak spot.

My allergies were always characterized by tremendous congestion that would cause breathing difficulties. In recent years I was prescribed an inhaler to help me breathe freely. The stories about Covid were scary. I could imagine this familiar unpleasant experience of being unable to breathe freely, but worse. I attentively followed the reports by medical experts for possible serious deteriorations and further complexities.

And then it happened! I arrived home after a lengthy trip and I tested positive. Fortunately by then I had been experimenting for a few weeks with a secret weapon and I felt this would be its ultimate test. I am aware that this may be considered an over-dramatization, but I dare to state here that I simply feel that the Neti pot saved my life.

When the virus decided I was its next victim, unsurprisingly the level of congestion in my nose, throat and chest, sky-rocketed. Soon, by experimentation, I realized that the only thing that was releasing the extreme heaviness and air blockage I was experiencing was my little friend – my Neti pot. I spent a whole week repeatedly visiting the bathroom sink, pouring warm salty water through my nostrils, feeling how the air was able to make it once again through to my chest and lungs for a little while and then, congested once again I would repeat the process.

At nights, when my Neti pot and I would get some sleep, I would wake up so congested and with such a sense of compression in my chest that I imagined there was a big red “No Entrance” sign blocking the passage of vital air into my lungs. Slowly I learned that instead of getting anxious and concerned, I simply had to start my water-salt-nostril cycle-ceremony. And each day, hour by hour, I started feeling better and my congested chest felt lighter and more open.

I am aware of the stories we all heard about Covid patients deteriorating and needing oxygen and chemical supplements to open their lungs, and I feel fortunate to have trusted my new Neti pot early enough in the illness, allowing me to avoid these breathing complexities altogether and the endless side effects that could accompany them.

My Neti pot has become my alternate inhaler, like an open window into a fresh desert evening breeze. I do know that feeling well because that is where I live. Due to my ongoing allergies, it has become part of my daily life throughout the morning, noon, afternoon or evening. Moreover, it gave me the confidence I could get through this extremely unpleasant and frightening covid experience, an experience that I feel might have ended with a much worse outcome.

So, did I mention?? I got my personal Neti kit at the Yoga Association of Alberta office during my recent visit to Edmonton where my dear godmother Anita lives.

So, thanks Edmonton – for that too!

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*Paula Kabalo is a history professor at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev who joins the YAA Edmonton community at yoga classes via Zoom. She can be reached at [pkabalo@gmail.com](mailto:pkabalo@gmail.com)*

## PROPS AND MORE

### Neti Pot

#### Props - Product Description

- Ceramic \$24: great for home use
- Plastic \$20: unbreakable - perfect for travelling
- Non-Iodized sea salt
  - 10 oz (\$10)
  - 8 oz (\$5)
- Instruction on how to use are in the box.



Neti pots have long been used in Ayurvedic medicine to promote nasal health and improve breathing. They have become more popular in recent years as alternative ways to deal with sinus congestion, common colds, or allergy symptoms. It's safe to use in moderation for most people, but if you have any doubts, ask your medical practitioner for advice.

Neti pots usually hold 6 to 8 ounces of water and can be made of ceramic or plastic. There are commercially prepared saline solutions, but you can make your own. There are various recipes but a common mixture is 1/4 to 1/3 teaspoon of non-iodized salt (sea or kosher salt, not table salt) dissolved in distilled or boiled (then cooled) water. Stir gently until salt is completely dissolved and let the solution cool to lukewarm or room temperature if you used boiled water.

With your head over the sink lean forward and then tilt your head to one side. Insert the spout into the highest nostril while breathing through your mouth. Pour the saline solution into the higher nostril and it will flow through the lower nostril and out into the sink. Continue to lean forward. It may take a bit of practice and at first the sensation may feel unusual. With practice you will develop the best way to help the water to flow into the top nostril and out the bottom nostril and the salt concentration that works best for you. When about half the water in the pot is used, turn your head to the other side and repeat, inserting the spout into the other nostril that will now be in the higher position. When finished, rinse the pot with warm water and let it air dry.

**PURCHASE PROPS AT OFFICE OR ONLINE AT [YOGA.CA](http://YOGA.CA)**

# PROPS AND MORE



## Boasting about YAA Bolsters

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- Multiple uses / applications
- Supports a personal yoga practice or for studio use
- Highly functional zipper-free, oval-shaped bolster stays in place securely instead of rolling away, which can be a problem when using round-style bolsters
- Body can naturally mould around its oval shape, allowing for a gentle, even stretch
- Two durable covers: inner & outer (washable)
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- **SMALL:** \$50.00  
6" wide x 22" long; round, travel
- **MEDIUM:** \$72.00  
9" wide x 28" long; oval
- **LARGE:** \$82.00  
11" wide x 28" long; oval  
(Buy 15 or more of size large or medium and save \$4/bolster.)



# PROPS AND MORE



\* Made in AB. Prices subject to change without notice.

Prices include GST

### BLANKETS

Indian Blankets: white, cotton ..... \$47

### \* BLOCKS Made in AB (Green chipped blocks no longer available from manufacturer)

\* Soft & Lightweight Grey Blocks: 2" x 8" x 12", 20 or more @ \$11.50 ..... \$12

\* Black Foam Bricks: 4" x 6" x 9", 20 or more @ \$13.50 ..... \$16

\* Wood Blocks: 3" x 4.5" x 9" ..... \$25

### \* BOLSTERS Washable cover. Hand-made Alberta with care. Assorted fabrics/colours

\* Large Oval: 11" diameter x 28" long, members: 15 or more @\$78.00) ..... \$82

\* Medium Oval: 9" diameter x 28" long, members: 15 or more @\$68.00) ..... \$72

\* Small Round: 6" diameter x 22" long ..... \$50

### \* BOOK Yoga Therapy for Backs by David McAmmond & Anita Sielecki ..... \$38

### CHAKRA BANNERS white background ..... \$32

### \* EYEBAGS flaxseed, unscented, with washable cover ..... \$15

### JOY-A-TOES soothing and healing stretch for your feet and toes (S, L) ..... \$31

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\* Wood Bench with folding legs. .... \$39

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**NEW** Jade Organic Mysore Yoga Rug & Jade Dharba Grass Med'n/Yoga Mat ..... \$94 / \$65

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Manduka© & Jade Hot Yoga Towels ..... \$25

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\* 7' x 1" (\$8); 7' x 1.5" (\$11); 9' x 1" (\$10); 9' x 1.5" (\$13)" ..... \$8-\$13

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