



May 1996 Contemplation Theme

Community

By Rama Berch, C.S.Y.T., E-RYT 500

A community of yogis growing, supporting and loving one another, and deepening our experience and commitment together is really something to celebrate!

When I began teaching in San Diego in 1987, I felt like I was alone in a crazy world. I had spent a lot of time living in India and in communities devoted to yoga as a spiritual quest. Our modern world seemed very foreign to me. I returned to a Western world that was caught up in the superficial aspects of yoga, trying to perfect the body by posing in beautiful yoga "poses." The yoga I knew focused on the spiritual aspects. I lived in a perpetual commitment to that higher goal. At first, I felt like a missionary, preaching how to use yoga's practices to find the deeper experience as well as how to apply yoga to life.

However, what happened is that I learned from all of you. What I learned was love. I learned to delight in each person who comes with their questions and their needs. We find a meeting ground that always reveals an underlying foundation of love. It is that foundation of love that sustains me and the service that all our teachers offer.

Creating Master Yoga Foundation was a big undertaking. It still is. We still stretch to balance the budget and fulfill our responsibilities. Our growing community is sometimes a support and sometimes a challenge. The growing base of charitable contributions makes a tremendous difference in our ability to continue our existing programs, as well as to expand them. It is easy for me to get caught up in the administrative needs of an organization this size, and forget the people that we serve. Fortunately, you won't let me. I thank you for that.

Every day someone calls with a question or a suggestion that changes my life. Every day someone stops me with their story of how yoga has helped them. Every day I am reminded of our growing sense of unity by a discussion with a staff member, teacher or student. There is an underlying foundation of unity that supports our coming together. It has redefined the meaning of the word community for me: coming together in unity. We can enjoy this in every class and every time we meet on the street. Community is an important form of yoga practice. Do more yoga!

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rama'. Above the signature is a small heart symbol containing the number '31'.