



September 1999 Contemplation Theme

Teaching

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

I remember being asked repeatedly, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” I could never have imagined I would be a yoga teacher (and probably neither could my high school guidance counselor). The die was cast early for me: I began teaching when I was in fifth grade. My teacher let me leave class every day to go assist the kindergarten teacher. Even through the years in the business world, I was always training staff and clients. But teaching yoga is the best!

Teaching puts the yoga teacher in the flow of grace in a way that merely doing personal practice can never open up. You may have already noticed that being a student in a yoga class provides you with more benefits than doing your practice at home. The group energy and focus definitely play a part in this, but that is not all. There is something more. Grace flows through the generations of teachers, stretching back to the beginning of yoga, which was at the beginning of human existence. The teacher and everyone in class are bathed in this flow. The teacher experiences it as flowing through him or her, like a river coursing through his or her essence and being. A teacher is at her best when she is having this inner experience while talking and moving through the class — and the students know the difference!

I remember when a Teacher Training graduate returned from teaching one of her first solo classes. She was excited and amazed to report that she had leaned all the way forward into a deep angle for the first time ever during this class. She tipped forward to show me — but could not go as far as she had during the class. Shock registered on her face, for she had done the full pose just an hour before! This flow of grace is one of the best-kept secrets of yoga — and it is one of the reasons yoga teachers love to teach so much.

I am constantly re-inspired by the love and dedication with which Svaroopa-style teachers serve their students. While they serve others, they get to live in the flow of grace that supports and reveals ever more and more. You can, too. Do more yoga.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama', with a small heart symbol above the 'a'.