



May 1992 Contemplation Theme

The Yoga of Relationship

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

I have written the Statement of Purpose for our new Master Yoga Foundation with “Cultivating our innate yearning for transcendence.” This yearning for “something more” in life is what impels you to action. You try to satisfy this innate longing by achieving or by buying great things, or by having significant relationships. To accomplish great things, to own beautiful possessions and to have good relationships is healthy, but is that really enough?

The problem with looking to your relationships to satisfy this inner longing is that you put pressure on the other person. This is defined as dysfunctional, meaning that it does not work. It cannot work, because that for which you truly yearn can be found only inside your own being. The moments you connect with it while you are with another person are profound, but it is the connection with your own inner essence that gives these relational experiences their significance. Trying to find that feeling again by recreating the externals (eating at the same restaurant, listening to the same album, or having a similar conversation) will guarantee inconsistent results.

The intimate connection that you seek with another person is more than a meeting of minds and more than a meeting of bodies. The point at which communication becomes communion is the experience of union. This is the goal of yoga, and the meaning of the Sanskrit word “yoga” itself — union. Once your innate yearning connects with your own inner source that fills it, you experience this connection and communion with everyone. It is the natural outward expression of the inner experience.

My own experience of relationships has been transformed by yoga. I have difficulty naming it “love.” It is somehow both more and less than what I always thought love was. Whatever you want to call it, it is yoga. This is what makes our relationships work. For me, it includes a deep respect for every person, along with a genuine interest and caring for how they think, how they feel, and for what is going on in their lives.

Because of this, I never tire of talking with students about their lives, about their body, about their feelings, and especially about their experiences of yoga. I feel deeply honored by their sharing with me. I am grateful for this opportunity to share my understanding and my experience of yoga with you, through these articles. I look forward to continuing my learning and the process of transcendence through this relationship with you.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rama'. Above the 'a' in 'Rama', there is a small heart symbol containing the Sanskrit character 'Om' (ॐ).