



April 2007 Contemplation Theme

Healing, Transformation & Illumination

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Whatever physical problems you started with or are still working on, you already know that you feel better when you do yoga. Whether you are doing poses at home, taking a class or getting private sessions, your yoga gives you an immediate improvement in your body. The more yoga you do, the more changes you get, and they are progressively faster and easier. It's a cause-and-effect relationship, absolutely reliable.

Svaroopa® yoga excels at healing what ails you. Every week, someone tells me another miracle story about how medicine had no answers for them and *Svaroopa*® yoga took care of it. One yogi told me that her life-long asthma is getting better, though the doctors predicted it would get worse as she aged. They now tell her, "Keep doing what you are doing! It's working."

Western medicine is wonderful for three things: emergency care, surgery and biochemistry. If you walk out the front door and get hit by a car, don't go to the yoga studio. Go to the emergency hospital. The doctors there save lives every day. Medicine also excels with anything that can be removed. If there's something that can be cut out in order to improve your health, they do a wonderful job. It might even save your life. Moreover Western medicine can treat a wide range of serious conditions with medication. While you may have heard of someone being over-medicated, most people on medications are doing very well with them. Western medicine excels at biochemistry.

Yet medical professionals often say, "We don't know what causes your condition. We cannot cure it, though we can offer treatment for your symptoms. The treatments work for some people and not others." Medicine's failures include low back pain, neck and shoulder pain, plantar fasciitis, insomnia, low energy, anxiety, allergies, frequent colds or flu, asthma, high blood pressure, migraines, poor digestion and many other conditions. *Svaroopa*® yoga excels at treating these! You really can take charge of your own healing for most conditions, or use yoga as a valuable adjunct to your medical care.

The healing you get from yoga is not limited to physical conditions. Every time you release the deep spinal tensions, your mind becomes more peaceful. Your emotions become more settled, less reactive. At the end of class, you feel relaxed and energized at the same time. This is not merely physical. You feel both expansive and grounded at the same time. It is an unmistakable feeling of openness and ease, which is physical, mental and emotional all at the same time.

Whether you want to admit it or not, the healing you need is not limited to your body. Everyone has "unfinished business." Different people handle it in different ways. For you, it could show up as a constant level of high anxiety, or maybe it is relentless busy-ness. It might be your need to excel, or maybe it is negativity and judgment about everyone, even yourself. You might live with a constant background of sadness, or you could suffer from an inability to truly love and laugh and cry. Even reading this list might be hard for you. The bottom line is that you, and everyone, need healing on multiple levels.

Svaroopa® yoga takes care of it all — simultaneously. Your spinal release opens your body, mind and emotions to access the inner source of your own healing power. All the multiple levels of your being are bathed in the flow of your own healing force every time you open your spine; it's even more powerful when you are receiving an *Embodiment*® session. If this multi-dimensional healing were the only thing that *Svaroopa*® yoga provided, it would be enough. Yet there is more going on, every time you do yoga.

You come to take a class because you want to feel better. At the end of class, you do feel better. This is a cause-and-effect relationship. You do more yoga — you feel better. You do even more yoga — you feel even better. Do you know what happens next? You don't go back to feeling the way you used to feel. There are two reasons for this:

- 1) you have done enough yoga that your body, mind and emotions don't relapse back to how they used to be
- 2) Even if they did, you wouldn't like it, so you'd do some yoga right away to take care of it.

You become free from your old familiar pains and negativities, which means you aren't who you used to be. You are able to do physical things that you couldn't do before. You have a better attitude. You handle challenging situations more easily. Even what you want out of life has changed — now you want to go to a yoga retreat instead of going skiing. Now the late night movie doesn't attract you any more; you'd rather go to bed early so you can do yoga and meditate in the morning. You tell your friends and family about yoga. They might even get tired of hearing you talk about it, but you can see that they would be so much happier and healthier if they would just let you show them a few poses.

This is called transformation. You are not who you used to be. You have changed and you are still changing. A lot of this transformation is really easy — it just sneaks up on you. You love the new you because you feel so much better; you are happier. Yet sometimes this process of transformation is a bit rocky. It can be uncomfortable and confusing, especially when it affects your relationships or your habitual forms of self-sabotage.

Much of life is lived on auto-pilot. You go through your morning routine without having to think about it. You drive the same route every day, do repetitive tasks throughout the day, drive back along the same roads, and end the day with your usual evening routine. When you start feeling better, on all the multiple levels of your being, you stop enjoying some of your habitual forms of unconscious self-sabotage. You are not even interested in the old internal chatter while you are driving. You lose your taste for the evening glass of wine. While the people in your life persist in doing the same things over and over, you don't react the same way, so you don't get caught in the repetitive cycle. You can't live on auto-pilot any more because you are not who you used to be. This can be a big relief, or it can be uncomfortable and confusing for a while.

You are still living in the same home, with the same people, doing the same work or daily activities, but you are a different you. Those other people don't know who you are anymore! It's like you are on a train, speeding along the track, and it goes a little faster every time you do yoga, and you want it to go faster, but you don't know where it is going. "We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto."

Hooray! If you had been completely happy with how you were, you wouldn't have begun yoga in the first place. Each time you release those core tensions, you are dissolving another layer of falsity, exposing the real you that has been hidden underneath all along. This is a personality change; you are becoming happier, friendlier, more positive, compassionate, enthusiastic, resourceful and generous. You like yourself better, which ultimately overflows into how you feel about everyone around you. This is yoga's transformation.

Your healing and transformation happens organically, from the inside out. You uncover health and vitality while you discover your own inner sense of being "you." As you do more yoga, you get more and more of this, arising from within. How far does it go? When do you max out?

Imagine that you do enough yoga to heal everything, so you don't have any aches or pains and even the old unfinished business is all finished. Imagine that you have allowed your own transformation to blossom fully within you. Imagine that you don't just feel better when you have done yoga — you feel "better" all the time. What is the ultimate? How much better can "better" get?

The ultimate is illumination. Illumination begins with quiet mind. Illumination is that flash of insight that makes you say, "Oh! Now I understand!" Illumination arises as an inner sense of absolute fullness — expansive, independent joy. It doesn't feel like something big and fancy is happening to you. It feels so natural and easy. Illumination is the process of relaxing into who you already are. Yoga calls it the sweet surrender into your own divine essence. You live from that openness and inner fullness, in every moment, in every activity, in every breath. It is guaranteed. For that, all you have to do is more yoga

Namaste,



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