

“Yoga is the unifying art of transforming dharma into action, be it through inspired thought, properly nurturing our children, a painting, a kindness or an act of peace that forever moves humanity forward. “ ~ Micheline Berry

We all find happiness in different places. Picture stepping onto a rolled out yoga mat and suddenly feel light and caring less. As you extend your limbs and close your eyes, worries suddenly don't hold the weight they once did. Imagine this practice, transforming the different attitudes you present. Attitudes of grudge or judgement for ourselves, our bodies, our emotions that we often hold on too long to.

Elena, a yoga teacher on Cape Cod, originally from Bulgaria, explains how yoga impacts contentment, self love and body image. Elena is a mother of two, a wife, an amazing massage therapist, and also one of the brightest yogis out there.

How would you describe your path to becoming involved in the yoga community and it's impact on you?

It has been a journey, a journey deep inside life itself and what it means to be alive, the psychology of human being-ness, the exploration of the workings of the mind, the science of body and soul interconnectedness, the development of a simple attitude of wonder, curiosity, and above all, of love and gratitude.

It's effect on me... Oh, wow, lightness and joy, realization that perfection is already here, what I seek is already here, permission to be true to my unique nature, and at the same time to be able to be transparent and not take myself too seriously.

As a yoga teacher, what are your personal goals?

When I originally started my yoga teacher training, as a young mom, I wanted to invite the attitude of patience and non-reactivity in my life, I felt like a big bubble ready to burst much too often, and these so called moods were tainting my days much too often in dark colors. I wanted to have the ability to see the rainbow colors instead.

How has yoga shaped or shifted your relationship with your body?

I remember clearly during one of my breathing exercises ... The realization that I don't have to control all that happens in my life, I can only do my part and let go of the outcome, and that it will not always match my expectations. Expecting my body to do a headstand without a proper alignment, without a proper warm up, without a proper training, and injuring myself as a result is a clear example of ignorance, and an insight how I was not respecting my body, its limits and its voice. I realized how important was to create inner softness and look beyond the outer image of my body. Instead, turn inward and listen, deep inside, and allow to be breathed into and out.

Today we see a lot of young women struggling with truly appreciating themselves which brings me to ask how does yoga benefit self love?

Self love, wow, that is a big one, yoga is way of embracing all of your self, I mean all of it – the dark and the light, with all your attention, care, and tenderness, and cultivating it every day, with every breath, with every exchange of words with your self or another. Because really, there is no

one else there but yourself. Yoga is a way of learning to nourish self love every day by taking time to be with yourself as you are.

So through yoga, how has it helped you find joy? What's your definition of happiness?

The cultivation of deep self love is a state of contentment, of joy, quiet celebration of life that overflows from your heart, connects to the ocean of life and makes a full circle by evaporating, and coming back as rain, loving nourishing rain. The earth is content, there is no other way to be, but happy with what is. Sometimes it rains, sometimes it pours, sometimes it is so dry, it cracks. Can you still hear the Earth celebrating? We are One with it. Invitation to this ongoing celebration – look inside your heart, there's a button, click it, and then Instagram it for everyone to see, it's that important.

“Mindfulness helps you go home to the present. And every time you go there and recognize a condition of happiness that you have, happiness comes.” ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Read more about Elena on her website here: <http://www.onemassagecapecod.com/#!untitled/cagb>