

April 2017

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Finishing Well Yoga

Yoga at home and in the workplace

Dear Friend,

Greetings from the land of Spring, warmer temperatures, and flowers.



With the birds singing the promise of sunny days, you'd think our lives would be less stressful. Right? But we keep putting new stressors on ourselves that hold our bodies in 'fight or flight' mode and cause us dis-ease. The good news is that we have the ability to reduce this stress and live happier, healthier lives! I believe this and continue to devote more of my yoga practice to offering tools to manage stress, such as breath work (pranayama), mindfulness, meditation (focusing), and the poses of yoga.

In addition to these, the right music can be extremely helpful in creating an atmosphere of relaxation. Some of my favorites are music by Deva Premal. I particularly enjoy [Rang De](#) for its light and uplifting beat and [Gate Gate](#) for its soothing nature.

I'd also like to note that I have added Setting Your Posture to the end of the "[Magic Breath Toolkit](#)." This toolkit can also be found under Self-Care Articles on my [website](#). Posture-setting helps us sit tall and strong with an expanded and open chest, making room to receive more oxygen which fuels our bodies.

In this new addition, I speak about moving from masculine strength to feminine strength. We use our masculine strength to get into a pose and then allow the body to flow into our feminine strength to sustain it. An example of masculine strength would be lifting a heavy table, using all the muscle we can to oppose gravity and pull it upwards. If we then want to move this table into another room, it is best to relax the muscles so that we can sustain the lift over a longer period of time. This is what I call the feminine strength. The muscles are certainly engaged but not rigid. Feminine strength is long-lasting, supple, and is able to flow with the environment around us.

And speaking of environment (and Spring), have you ever watched a blade of grass grow???

Namaste,

Ron Collins

My 2017 Classes

Yoga for SPS Students

8am - 9:15am
Wed, Thurs, & Fri
April, May, & June

Quote of the Day

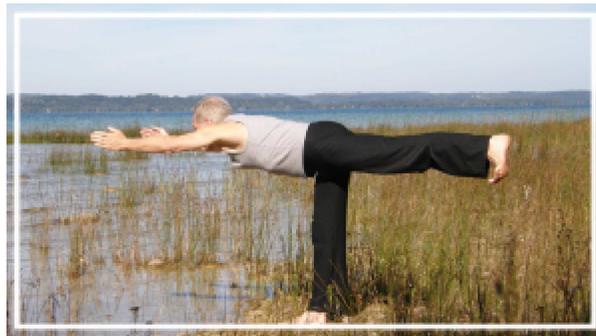


*"Life isn't about waiting for
the storm to pass...
It's about learning to dance
in the rain."*

Vivian Greene

Private Sessions

Thursdays
2pm - 7:30pm
Call 616-340-7338 or click
[here](#) to visit my website for
more information.



Self-Care Article

The Noncompetitive Approach

The practice of yoga was established approximately 4000 years ago and with writing instruments coming into existence about 2500 years ago, we find a very distinct paper trail of yogic history, knowledge, and wisdom. For thousands of years, yoga has been engaged in as a noncompetitive practice. That's right, each time a Yogi places his or her feet on the mat, it's not in relationship to others but is in relationship to the self, an inward focus that helps join mind, body and spirit, and bring us into full balance and alignment.

When we stand on our mat or sit for meditation or pranayama, our focus moves inward to discover our feelings, emotions, thoughts, and/or breath, allowing us to live in the present moment. Then with what we discover, we can respond to what we have observed. The noncompetitive approach, which could also be thought of as nonjudgmental awareness, plays a vital role when we choose to respond to our observations with compassion.

This is a unique action in our present society. Can you imagine watching a basketball game for the sheer joy of watching the athleticism rather than the scoreboard? To be excited for an athlete's skill and agility no matter which team the player is on, and not be excited because they may win or lose in relationship to others, would offer such a different

perspective. We would then be able to focus on the preparation of the game, the athleticism, the desire to participate, the humor, and the sheer skill that the athlete possesses. When the ball leaves the shooter's hands, we let it go and do not count whether it goes in the basket or not. Just imagine.

Unfortunately, a basketball score lets us know how we did in relationship to our peers but does not always let us know how we did in relationship with the self.

Yoga, on the other hand, does. For instance, when we participate in a group yoga session, the focus is within and not with our actions in relationship to others. We might see a pose done beautifully and marvel at it, but beyond that, we have no concern that the pose is better, equal to, or worse than ours or others'. The pose just is.

What is important is that we show up on the mat and devote ourselves to our practice. Some days the practice may be full and rich and easy. Other days may be full of struggle, questioning, holding back, and just getting through the normal poses. With yoga, we live in the moment, we focus on the execution of the poses, meditation, or pranayama, and then we let it all go. There is no win. There is no loss. There simply is experiencing... and we don't keep score.

Non-competitiveness opens us to freedom of expression, less worry about the outcome, and more sharing and camaraderie. It also encourages excitement for others when they do well and allows us to be fully joyful for them.

Just imagine.

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