

WHY KUNDALINI YOGA

By Marika Bethel

As we embark upon the many wonders of this technological age there are many fabulous aspects to explore. Information and data is more accessible to the average human. Acquiring information that historically took hours on end, in the matter of minutes has provided educational efficiencies beyond belief for many students and teachers. The average American can communicate with anyone in the World through email and/or voice to voice via computers. Products and services are just click away for most consumers at competitive prices. Whether its retail companies selling over stocked merchandise or someone wanting to sell furniture because they are moving, it's all at your fingertips!

Within Corporate America, communication has become more efficient than ever before. Documents once requiring a messenger or FedEx can now be sent via attachments in email. Meetings once requiring travel can now be conducted via web casts on the Internet saving thousands even millions in expenses.

Technology has facilitated increased competition among Corporations in a positive and negative fashion. Many companies who had a long-standing niche in the market place have struggled to maintain their edge due to the new ease of entry into many industries. This development has applied pressure for corporations to produce profits resulting in corporate mantra's inferring operations should be lean and mean in order to remain competitive.

As a result of the lean and mean mantra's many companies are downsizing employees to control expenses while attempting to keep margins at profitable levels. As employees leave the payroll those left behind begin to wonder if they should have left too. Why you ask? Because all too often the workload of their peers remain and is renamed under new restructured responsibilities.

With the idea of ongoing downsizing and more work, employees find themselves living an overworked and out of balanced life. Negative behaviors are running ramped throughout many corporations in the form of malicious backstabbing, elitist attitudes, the hoarding of information to disadvantage peers and the list could go on and on. For those trying to live in a positive space, encountering these behaviors often result in a lack of enthusiasm and decreased motivation.

I know because as a member of Corporate America I witnessed it everyday. The struggles faced on a daily basis make one feel like they are in a living hell. So how do we get out of this living HELL? Well there are 2 words that could save your Mind, Body, and most of all your Soul. Those two words are Kundalini

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Yoga! When the light of positivity is doused by negative behaviors Kundalini Yoga is a technology that facilitates a centering of the soul. It rejuvenates and refocuses us on what's really important...living in a positive space while neutralizing negative surroundings.

Let me share with you more about Kundalini Yoga. Kundalini Yoga is the yoga of awareness. What awareness you might ask? Well, the awareness of the integration of your physical self (finite) and your soul (infinite). Kundalini Yoga utilizes breath (pranayam), postures (asanas), sound (mantra) and meditation to achieve this integration and awareness. Yoga is not a religion but about the flow of energy and the relationship between the finite and infinite. We often never think of ourselves as spiritual/soul beings having a human experience but that's exactly what is happening. Many people often think yoga is about being able to put your leg over your head like Madonna did in a picture taken for a popular magazine. Well, the practice of yoga is more than this outward display of flexibility but it assists us in exploring our possibilities as humans. Anyone of any age, size and/or physical endurance can experience Kundalini Yoga whether size 4 or 24 this yoga is for you!

Kundalini yoga affords us the opportunity to break through mental barriers while achieving an improved mental outlook. One of the keys to realizing an improved mental outlook is to develop a neutral mind, which improves the quality of thoughts and subsequently actions.

The Master of Kundalini Yoga, Yogi Bhasan, brought Kundalini to the United States in 1969. He declared, "I have come to create teachers, not gather students". Yogi Bhasan studied Kundalini Yoga, Tantric Yoga and Gong Meditation under the direction of Sant Hazara Singh in India. Further training in yoga was conducted under Acharya Narinder Dev who taught Yogi Bhasan Hatha yoga, the impact and balance of the nervous system. This specific training was found to be a valuable tool for the people of the United States since many were suffering with disorders of the nervous system. Yogi Bhasan left his body in October 2005, however his legacy remains through his enormous library of teachings and the teachers he trained to spread the joys of Kundalini yoga. Students and teachers work diligently to maintain the true teachings just as Yogi Bhasan taught them.

I would like to share with you my personal experience with Kundalini Yoga. My first class was on February 16 2003. I recall my wonderful teacher loving me dearly as I set out to have an experience like no other. I can't remember the

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kriya set we practiced that day but I do remember her gently helping me into most of the postures through her soothing encouraging voice. It had been along time since that type of encouragement had been delivered to my ears. There were moments when my body was shaking like a volcano and she lovingly said "this is good-Yogi Bhajan says it is better to shake in your youth than in your old age" and I thought to myselfooohh really. When we got to deep relax, I realized that my mind and body was quiet and I could hear my soul speak. It was amazing! When the session was finished the world looked different to me people were beautiful, sweet and kind. I was immediately hooked.

We conducted a few more sessions then it was time for White Tantric Yoga. I had no idea what I was in for but a couple of days later I realized it was good! Over the 40 days after White Tantric there were subtle but amazing changes in my life physically, mentally and spiritually. The truth was following me everywhere. There was a sense of awareness regarding my thoughts and the more I became aware the more work there was to be done. I noticed that postures that I could not get into 1-month prior, I could actually get into. After experiencing 60 minutes of meditation 11 minutes was a piece of cake. I wanted more of this technology called Kundalini Yoga.

I began attending Kundalini Yoga East in Manhattan on Sunday's at noon. The classes were very loving and healing but hard work. It was about keeping up but focusing on doing the best you can do. Again, on a subtle level I began to explore pushing pass the mental barriers and saying to myself "self what if my body just doesn't listen to you and really experience this posture/meditation/pranayam". When this would happen, I would have amazing focus. I still wanted more of this Kundalini Yoga. I wanted to develop a daily practice but was not sure how to go about it. I spoke with my teacher who shared a few Kriya's with me however, the integration into my daily lifestyle was not happening. My teacher and friend spoke of a teacher-training course that was beginning in September 2003. I thought to myself "me a yoga teacher?" But one day in class the announcement was made about the training course and my soul said "yes this is for you, this will assist you in integrating Kundalini Yoga into your life". I did and it has been a blessing ever since.

One of the first assignments was to develop a daily practice (Sadhana) that would be practiced for 40 days. We choose individual Sadhana's that worked on specific areas associated with our Numerology. This was great! Exactly what I wanted to learn! Well, I made it through the 40-day event though there were very bumpy moments throughout.

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I did not move into another 40 day Sadhana right away however, I would practice Sun Salutations. One week, I did absolutely nothing...no Sadhana no Sun Salutations. Life was happening all around me. I was in the midst of closing and moving into a new home in addition to having intense pressure at my corporate job.

Boy, did I pay for it by having one of the worst weeks of my life. Marika OFF Kundalini Yoga well let me explain what it looks like.

Monday-I was the most frustrated with the negativity of my workplace since the year began. Tuesday-I had told my boss "I was tired of this shit" in response to changes he made to my work inputs without telling me 1 on 1 (this was not my personality nor something I had ever done in my 16 ½ years of my career). Wednesday-I was in an all day meeting conducted to positively rally the troops for the next year's business objectives. I was cynical and negative non-stop through all 9 ½ hours. By Thursday-I was so sick of myself I didn't know what to do so I was focused on moving into my new home. Friday- I got right back to my Sun Salutations and life was better.

The bottom line-once you integrate Kundalini Yoga into your life it becomes essential in maintaining a calm mind, vital physical presence and happiness, which is our birthright.

I understand now there is never a time to forgo the experience of Kundalini Yoga and I hope you do not forgo your opportunity today!

THANK YOU!!!!