



Facing Imperfection + Feeding Your Passion & Inspiration to Teach

## Description

## Remember Why You Love It

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Never let go of the first moment you fell in love with yoga. ?? Faith Hunger

Your teaching will benefit from cultivating a deep well of passion and inspiration.

- One of the fundamental sources of inspiration can be to focus less on yourself and more on the benefits others receive from yoga.
- When you're overflowing with a desire to share, teaching can flow effortlessly. Let yourself remember the time a student shared with you how much class impacted her, how a quote or *pranayama* teaching you offered helped her find clarity, or how an *asana* adaptation you taught helped a student experience a newfound ease or empowering impact.
- Remember the ripple effect. When students leave class feeling grounded and balanced, they bring their fullness to their families, friends, colleagues, clients, and strangers in their community.



- Occasionally revisit what you love about teaching â?? what keeps you engaged. Whether you are excited by anatomy or philosophy, adjustments or chanting, remember to engage in what you love.

#### **STUDENT THANK YOU**

I practice yoga because it helps me relax, slow down my thinking, and I learn something positive every time I come to class. Itâ??s very good for the spirit, body and mind. Thank you [to the teacher who visited the detention center] for coming! â?? Student at juvenile detention center, Yoga Behind Bars

#### **YOUâ??RE BRINGING GIFTS TO PEOPLE YOU DONâ??T EVEN KNOW!**

Through your prayers, your practice and your potent sharing, youâ??re bringing balance to people of whom youâ??re not even aware. Just consider the people who live with your students; their lovers, children, parents, friends, co-workers. Remember that youâ??re helping more than just the people whoâ??ve laid their mat down with you â?? there are countless more hearts youâ??re touching, bodies who will now let more light in because of what you do. Thank you. â?? Elena Brower

#### **BEING REMINDED OF WHY YOU LOVE SOMETHING**

If you donâ??t get a chance to practice and be reminded why you love something, it doesnâ??t matter if you get paid \$150 an hour, itâ??s still difficult to share it. If youâ??re not practicing, you have nothing to give. â?? Yoga International

#### **REMEMBER WHAT EXCITES YOU**

Q: What still excites you and keeps you engaged with teaching yoga? A: I love studying all the neuroscience and western research on mind body practices that has been rolling out over the past decade. Another thing that keeps me excited and engaged is creating room for students to ask questions in class. When my students ask questions or share ideas, it allows me to teach spontaneously and creates an opportunity to relate how the practice can directly apply to our lives and to the actual moment we are in together. The spontaneity frees me up to make things more relevant and relatable. â?? Teach.Yoga, Jillian Pransky Interview

## **Imperfections, Struggle, Perceived Failure**

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Most successful people throughout history are also those who have had the most failures. That is no coincidence. — Tal Ben-shahar

### Overcoming Perfectionism

- It's easy to get caught up in thinking that perfection is the goal or that you must "get it all together" before you can share authentically.
- However, with experience and courage, we come to realize that, in fact, personal challenges are the ground for application of the teachings, and this leads us to becoming better teachers.
- A simple example is experiencing injury that induces you to learn more about anatomy and physiology and how to adapt your practice to accommodate your injury. What you learn, why you learn it, how you apply it, and how you evolve in your view of students experiencing injury makes you a better teacher.
- We come to see life's challenges and suffering not as obstacles on a path toward perfectionism, but simply as the path.

## Failure & Perseverance

Let's say you find yourself struggling to do something new related to your teaching. For example, perhaps you're trying to incorporate a new technique or learn more about anatomy. Or maybe you want to begin leading workshops, or to find more balance in your life. How can you respond to your personal struggle?

- Persistently remind yourself that struggle, failure and perseverance mark every path to fulfillment. Success is not a straight line!
- And as for persistence, remember, The difference between good and great is immeasurably small. Sometimes all it takes is a bit more perseverance and you find yourself at the next level.

### I WILL NOT WAIT UNTIL I'VE GOT IT ALL TOGETHER

I will not wait till the time is right or until I've got it all together to share my heart. I will not waste one second in perfectionism! This imperfect platform allows me to share myself. I am creating here because I must. Because it heals me. I implore you to take your life and hold it in both hands and make it yours. Bring all of yourself and all that you dream. Bring it to life. Carrie-Anne Moss

### PERSONAL CHALLENGES MAKE MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

I have no problem with yoga teachers keeping their personal problems to themselves, because that's what healthy boundaries are. We are there to serve our students and not just talk about our own issues, especially if they're unresolved. For myself, it is a constant struggle to find a balance between over-sharing and being authentic in my teaching. What I'm concerned about is the idea that as a yoga teacher we have to achieve some kind of perfection in our own lives and that our faults somehow reduce our capacity to teach. In fact, I think it's the other way around: our personal challenges make us more effective teachers because we are forced to apply the teachings in our own lives. Jivana Heyman

### DON'T LET ROLE MODELS GET IN THE WAY OF REALITY

Impostor syndrome. It's rampant! Everyone who is doing important work is working on something that might not work. And it's extremely likely that they're also not the very best qualified person on the planet to be doing that work! Yes, you're an impostor. So am I and so is everyone else! Isn't doing your best all you can do? Time spent fretting about our status as impostors is time away from dancing with our fear, from leading and from doing work that matters. Seth Godin

### FULFILLING POTENTIAL MUST INVOLVE SOME FAILURE

When we hear about extremely successful people, we mostly hear about their great accomplishments not about the many mistakes they made and the failures they experienced along the way. In fact, most successful people throughout history are also those who have had the most failures. That is no coincidence. People who achieve great feats, no matter what field, understand that failure is not a stumbling block but a stepping-stone on the road to success. There is no success



without risk and failure. We often fail to see this truth because the outcome is more visible than the process—we see the final success and not the many failures that led to it. When I acknowledge that fulfilling my potential must involve some failure, I no longer run away from risks and challenges. The choice is a simple one: Learn to fail, or fail to learn. — Tal Ben-shahar

#### **THOSE THAT STRUGGLED PERFORMED BETTER LATER**

If you want to get stronger, over time you have to lift heavier and heavier weights. If you want to increase your endurance, you have to run farther than you are used to. It takes effort and struggle to improve physical performance, and as it turns out, this is true with mental performance as well. There is only one problem. Mental struggle doesn't look like a three-mile run through the woods. It looks like failure.

In a study of seventh grade math students, students were divided up into two groups. Both groups were given a set of complex math problems to solve. The first group was instructed to work cooperatively with fellow students to solve the problems. The second group received direct teacher instruction. The group that worked without direct instruction was ultimately unsuccessful in their efforts to solve the problems. After they had failed, the teacher provided an explanation of what they did wrong. What happens next is a bit more unexpected. Both groups were given a post test that included problems similar to the ones covered previously in addition to problems that were structured quite differently. The group that struggled and failed performed significantly better on all types of problems on the post test. They retained more knowledge and exhibited greater flexibility in applying their new learning to different types of problems. — Keith A Howe

#### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD & GREAT IS SMALL**

You may not know that paper burns at 451 degrees Fahrenheit and does not ignite at 450 degrees. Now imagine yourself lost in a forest, cold, needing warmth. You invest energy by rubbing two sticks together, causing friction in hope of igniting some paper and leaves. You create heat by your efforts and even raise the friction area's temperature up to 450 degrees without successfully creating fire. Sadly, you quit in discouragement, not knowing that the activation energy is 451 degrees. However, if you push a little harder and create a little more heat and raise the temperature one degree, the chain reaction occurs and the fire ignites—burning without more effort, burning by itself. The difference between good and great is immeasurably small. Sometimes all it takes is a bit more perseverance and you find yourself at the next level. This process of giving that little extra builds upon itself and forms the foundation for great performances. — Michael Lardon

## **Utilizing Best Practices**

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Looking to existing teachings, best practices and research can offer inspiration:

- You may learn new things or be reminded of something you had forgotten, making you excited to pursue a particular line of thinking.
- Your study may spark an idea to put one idea together with another to create something new. You might then depart from common practice to create something incrementally better, or perhaps even leading to a paradigm shift.

Whether you are inspired to create something that's been done before or whether you have an idea that is incrementally or dramatically new isn't particularly relevant. As long as you embody the idea, seeing it through your own lens, applying it to your own experience, perspective and style, it will naturally have a unique element to it.



Even if your driving objective is to create something new, an externally-driven desire to be unique or special will not be the place from which you actually create. Rather, your passion, service and creation come from the ways in which you find inspiration, immerse yourself, practice and tinker.

As an aside, sometimes things that seem obvious after you've immersed yourself in practice and study may actually turn out to be a vital new perspective and offering. It may not at first seem that you've created an important new offering because it may seem too simple in plain sight. But it could be that the only person who finds it obvious is you because you've given your attention and curiosity and personal perspective to this topic, leading to your passionate engagement and a unique offering.

#### **LEARN FROM THE PAST**

Surgery is an engineering project, and it's based on best practices. Learn from the past, don't ignore it. Art, on the other hand, is something we value because it leaps. Art is more than engineering art is the thing that might not work. But even art is based on best practices. Just not as much. The playwright better have read Bellow and Beckett. The conceptual artist should be familiar with Duchamp. The photographer and designer needs to know Debbie Millman, Robert Mapplethorpe and Jill Greenberg. Ignore it if you want to, but learn it first. Seth Godin

## **Revisiting Your Vision, Intention & Methodology**

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It can be inspirational to revisit your personal intention and objectives, and creating a systematic approach to focusing on your priorities. For more on these topics, see [Vision & Goal Setting](#). You'll find inspiration and specific techniques, including answers to these questions:

- If we lack vision, we are simply reacting to the world and whatever appears most pressing. That is, we are living someone else's priorities. Where must we focus our attention in order to develop our vision?
- What one simple task causes individuals to have nine times the success of others?
- What 14 questions can help guide you to your vision?
- Give examples of how to set tangible and measurable objectives around such goals as teaching more philosophy in class or increasing your hands-on adjustments.

- When your objective is a quality, focus or intention such as embodying non-judgment, what question can you ask yourself to set tangible objectives?
- What are some common pitfalls along the way of endeavoring to accomplish our objectives?
- What practices can help to combat these challenges?
- Describe specific techniques for living your priorities.
- Describe a study of mathphobes that can help to motivate us to avoid procrastination.
- Describe more ideas and resources for gaining inspiration and insight into setting and meeting your goals.

## Remembering You're Not Alone

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Remember that you are not alone! Get a lift by reading the authentic stories of other teachers, and/or connecting with others.

Here are some sweet, special articles that may help you cultivate inspiration and spur creativity.

1. [10 Inspiring Yoga Teachers Who Have Beat the Odds](#) • Life is full of challenges: some that can be worked through, and some that can only be managed. These 10 inspiring yoga teachers have overcome adversity: each one has been helped by their yoga practice both on and off the mat, and each story is inspiring and encouraging in its own way. •
2. [13 Problems Only Yoga Teachers Will Understand](#) • Cute and light-hearted with funny images, but also real. • You forget the sequence you did on the right side and a student calls you out on it.)
3. [Five Reasons Why I'm Not Good Enough to be Your Yoga Teacher](#) • Love this one! In this Elephant Journal article, Jacquelyn O'Brien opens up about how our very human traits (such as not being flexible or cussing) may not make us perfect, but our humanity is an excellent reason to practice & teach.
4. [10 Ways to Be an Inspiring Teacher No Matter What's Happening in Your Life](#) • Inspired by Erich Schiffmann, a 24-year veteran teacher shares, • Teaching is great, but it's in those sacred moments before and after class that teachers must allow themselves to create, dance with the divine and move closer to God. That's where the real richness of the teacher lies. •
5. [Why Does Yoga Work? 3 Key Tips from Hala](#) • In this sweet, succinct 3-minute video, Hala Khouri talks to yoga teachers about the importance of understanding and embodying the practical, fundamental reasons yoga works. She expands on these three reasons why yoga works: we connect with ourself, we cultivate an ability to be present with our discomfort, and we cultivate resilience.
6. [How Yoga Makes You Happy](#) • In this DoYouYoga article, Sylvia Mordini suggests the importance of • spontaneous, sacred fun • in our practice and in ultimately reaping the reward of freedom. In this brief article, she includes inspirational quotes from yoga philosophy, literature and science including: • When you stop doing things for fun, you might as well be dead. • (Ernest Hemingway). Check out this article to reinspire your own playfulness or that of your students.
7. [I Am Just a Yoga Teacher](#) • Amy Cushing writes sweetly about her full life that includes parenting young children and a less-than-perfect body and pedicure. Read this brief article if you need a reminder that you are • perfect enough! •
8. [Seven Life Lessons Yoga Taught Me](#) • This Elephant Journal article reminds us of some of the basic realizations students make through beginning and sticking with a yoga practice.
9. [12-Year Old Yoga Teacher: I Love Teaching Yoga So Much](#) • A yoganonymous article, interview and video featuring a mature, calm young teacher who completed her 200-hour training and teaches children, teens and • soon • families.
10. [How to Survive as a Yoga Teacher And Be Awesome](#) • This article is written by an experienced yoga teacher and you may find it more inspirational and a bit deeper than some of the many similarly themed articles.
11. [Remembering B.K.S. Iyengar: Nicki Doane + Eddie Modestini](#) • With honesty and humility, Eddie Modestini shares the wise teaching advice that Mr. Iyengar gave in the form of critical feedback.

[Crushing Ideas of Perfection in the Yoga World: 8 Reasons to Embrace the Wobble](#) • Buffy Barfoot inspires yogis to embrace uncertainty on and off the mat.



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