

Yoga teacher - just a job or a vocation?

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Become a Yoga Teacher

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When we are thinking of becoming yoga teachers, there are many ways and offers today. What to look for in the "marketplace" of yoga? The offers range from one weekend, four weeks, educations according to the minimum European standard of the yoga unions of about 650 teaching units (à 45 minutes), to the more elaborating and profound studies of some yoga schools, yoga colleges and yoga universities.

Clear is, that we can not truly teach yoga when we have only learned it from books. We may get a first introduction that way, but then must come the deeper explorations into this universal and many faceted teaching. At that point we must look for a qualified yoga teacher, as there are many traps we can fall into: We can come to do damage to the body out of ignorance - instead of contributing to a healing of our body/mind, and spiritualizing our life.

As yoga has become more mechanicalised, as it became more fashionable, we often meet yoga as a mere workout reduced to a number of techniques thrown in there without the understanding of its use, how each aspect builds upon the other and, how they form a holistic teaching. Therefore, it is important to realize what you are looking for, and what you are willing to give in order to gain that: Determine your goals and pursue them when you have become clear on your intent. Yoga teachings are too often limited to "let's work-out together and have a nice cup of tea afterwards". This is nice, but for those, who wish and long for the deeper teachings, this is simply a first step to take and then go on.

The way people see themselves is mostly based on the image that they think they have in relation to the outside world, and they try so hard to fit to that. However, that image or picture probably feels rather empty. In our society it is a danger, and a tendency, to mainly live the outer life and get hooked on power, and hereby neglect or totally ignore the ability to live from inside out. Do we decide to start walking the path of yoga? Then our inner development and sadhana will guide us through the peace of inner realization, and we will learn to use our energy with intention and without waste.

To draw on the teaching of yoga, in order to eventually become a yoga teacher - to significantly move to higher levels of understanding and expertise - takes a committed and diligent person with perseverance. Are you lucky to have found a teacher that you correspond with, it is easier but not without effort, as you learn to emphasize more the inner work than the outer activity.

As yoga teachers or people who aspire to become that, there is an important choice we have to make, this choice is between image and being based on the realization that when we do not really live our own lives, we live on others' ideas, we are in imagination. Shall we "live" on adoration of others or shall we find our individual inner path, exploring who we really are and enliven our life? Taking this choice in favour of being and acting on it can be seen as self-initiation into the path of yoga.

We can identify and be delighted with a teacher, however, the task we receive in yoga is to fully live and adapt to the reality of our own life. A serious teacher will challenge us, that is in the very nature of things, how else can the student learn to bridge the often limited ways of thinking and reacting? However, the student will have a feeling of being understood and supported by the teacher. Should that not be the case, it may be time to look for a better suiting teacher.

So again it is clear, as yoga practitioners wishing to become a yoga teacher we have the task to find out where we stand, where we want to go and how. Is there a serious interest, there has to be the corresponding commitment and the choice of a prolonged effort in a long-term education plus daily

individual practice. Four years study to become a yoga teacher can here be seen as a necessary minimum, although the task is a lifelong one.

You can find serious authentic teachers, but you must look carefully. Take time to get a sense of the teacher that you are drawn to, how he/she works, and how you feel in his/her presence. Surroundings have a big influence on the individual. They can bring out the best or further limiting behaviours, so also the seriousness and commitment of the fellow students are to be taken into consideration. There are many superficial offers of yoga today, and some are teaching yoga in ways that seem not to have moved to an inner yoga, but stayed in the outer glamour of things. That is inconsistent with the spirit of yoga, which has such profound teachings, that can only really be revealed and understood through skilful and attentive application over a long time.