

YOGI WRITINGS: *Cindy Delain*

Photos by Kathy Prekoski

Step aerobics, circuit aerobics, kick boxing, spinning, treadmills, and weight machines, need I go on?!? Yes, over the years I tried all of these and more. And you know what? It never lasted. Eventually I tired of whatever I was doing and moved on to the next popular trend. Through all this my mother said, "Why don't you try yoga?" I scoffed at the idea, thinking it was not rigorous enough to be beneficial.

I should have listened to my mother. She had done it long ago and loved it though she doesn't currently practice due to lack of access. I finally stopped going to the gym as I continued driving by the Valley Yoga sign on my way to work at COS and began to seriously think about inquiring. Almost simultaneously a new interest in yoga surfaced on campus. One of the programs I supervise at COS is the PE department and we conducted a survey to get a feel for interest in classes (at the time we were adding classes). Yoga rose to the top as the most requested class.

The stars aligned when Valerie Ehrlich expressed a desire to coordinate and teach that first class. With her enthusiasm and commitment we started Yoga at COS. I decided then it would be a great opportunity to try yoga so I attended Valerie's class. Not too long after, wanting to practice yoga more



often, I attended my first class at Valley Yoga. I have been in love with it ever since and cannot imagine my life without it.

I have never felt this way about any other kind of exercise but I guess this is because yoga goes beyond just the physical exercise. It's a community of friends I get to see 2-3 times a week, it's a time on the mat where I don't think about the outside, and a time to understand my body. I never thought I would have more flexibility

and strength at 54 than I have had my entire life! Amazing! One other thing I never thought I would be able to do is ski off the 12,000 foot black diamond run at Mammoth Mountain.

I skied Mammoth all my life but never felt confident enough physically or mentally to ski off the top. It's called the Cornice for good reason—because from where you stand at the top you can't see the run below until you make your first move over the cornice. All I know is that because of the yoga I had the confidence to try. With the wind blowing against my back on a beautiful sunny day I went for it! I made it to the bottom successfully and gracefully. When we finally stopped, my husband said "You did it!" I was so unexpectedly overcome with this physical and mental accomplishment I couldn't talk! I know this sounds silly in the scheme of things, but I guess for someone who never, never expected to do this . . . it was just overwhelming.

One additional recent benefit I believe is related to Yoga and not just the over the counter Calcium and Vitamin D is that my bone density increased by 5%! All pretty darn good for a 54 year-old post-menopausal woman! Yoga will always be part of my life! Thank you to Brenda, all the instructors at Valley Yoga, Valerie, and all of you I see every week.

