

YOGI WRITINGS: *Barbara Mayeda*

Yoga, a gift you give yourself.

People take yoga classes for many reasons. For me it's about quieting my mind, and expanding the movements I don't do with my body on a daily bases. I am 58 years old, married with 2 adult children and a grandchild on the way. I enjoy working more than full time, and being active in community non-profits. As Director for the Private Home Care Department at Kaweah Delta I spend most of my day talking and multi-tasking. I am the go to person when something needs attention. My day is spent on the computer, sitting at my desk, attending meetings or driving from place to place. Because of my ten-year history with Yoga I take advantage of any time I have to do chair Yoga. I have learned how and why my body needs to move differently than just sitting in a chair or bent over the computer. My head needs to move all different ways during the day. I recently met a woman who no longer could look up. She physically could not lift her head to see the top of the roof at her house. We take for granted that we can move, bend and extend. My favorite saying is "With Yoga you can put your underwear on without having to hold onto anything". I want to be able to roll on the ground with my grandchild and enjoy being a grandparent.

In the winter my family and I are skiers, Yoga has nursed me back to health after two different accidents: a shattered shoulder with broken leg and a torn PCL, none of which I had surgery for. Yes, I have been skiing for over 30 years and continue to enjoy the challenges of being in control on the slopes. As Cindy wrote earlier, I also was able to ski the Cornice at Mammoth. I skied Cornice after recovering from my shattered shoulder and broken leg. Without Yoga I don't think this would have been possible. The feeling of accomplishment when I skied down with my daughter was overwhelming. I did it!



My goal is to attend yoga twice for 1½ hours weekly. I go right after work at 5:30pm. I have a different instructor for each night. The constant in Yoga is I am not in charge for the entire time I am in class. You can't multitask in Yoga. You must silence your mind and follow the directions of the instructor. I must say that 99.9% of the time, my mind is totally focused on the pose I am doing and listening to the instructor to hear how I am getting to the next pose. Some of my poses have been modified because of injury limitation, but the instructors are very good -- working with everyone who comes to Yoga with limitations.

I find Valley Yoga to be a mentally and physically safe environment. It's all about you and your ability to do the best each day. Some days you can do certain things and other days you say today it just not going to happen for me.

The gift of Yoga is priceless.