

YOGI WRITINGS: *Back Row on the Left - Sally Rogers*

Photos by Kathy Prekoski

I had been curious about yoga for quite some time. It seemed like something I would enjoy but I was sure I wasn't good enough, or deep thinking enough, or young enough. Besides, I worked out with a trainer with whom I met weekly at the gym. Surely yoga wouldn't give me the intensity as a workout at the gym. Yet something was missing... I didn't particularly enjoy my time at the gym. I was once quoted as saying, "The best part about going to the gym was leaving the gym." Don't get me wrong, my trainer was wonderful and he directed me to healthy eating for which I will be forever grateful. He will be a lifelong friend. I also walked daily and enjoyed Zumba classes. I still wanted something else.

Let me take you back. I became concerned about strengthening my body in my late 40's as I watched my mother's health deteriorate. She became exceedingly frail and since I favor her body type, I knew I needed to do strength building. A trainer was the answer so I joined the gym. After 8 years, I realized I wanted to enjoy myself more. Enter yoga.

In the beginning, about 2 ½ years ago, I attended once a week. I was comfortable in the back row on the left. A shoulder injury prevented me from doing some poses but I knew in time it would improve. I credit yoga and downward facing dog for my recovery. It didn't take long to realize I wanted even more. I added another class. Eventually I told Brenda that one of my goals was to be strong and asked her if yoga could do that. She grinned that grin and said, "Oh, you need to come to a level 2-3 class." Great, just great.

There were so many reasons to NOT attend those classes: I don't know the Sanskrit terms (except savasana), I hadn't been taking

classes long enough, I'm not young, I have lousy balance and on and on. And they do inversions! However, Brenda seemed to have faith in me. That's what took me there. What, am I going to tell her she's mistaken?

As in my other classes, all ages attend, the people are



wonderful, and the only expectations placed on you are the ones you place upon yourself. Also, as in my other classes, you'll find me in the back row on the left. At this point in my life, I'm settled into my career, have achieved my educational goals, and am not driven



to accomplish earth shattering goals. Or so I thought.

I clearly remember my first handstand. It wasn't pretty and my feet crashing into the wall could have awakened the dead. But doggone it, it was a handstand! I'd been attempting one for quite some time and I was downright giddy. It had been a while since I felt such a sense of accomplishment. Sounds silly...a handstand. Seriously? Yet, in the days that followed I had to remind myself to keep quiet because the bag boy, the movie ticket taker, and the waiter didn't give a hoot that I could do a handstand (although I did make an announcement at work).

In July, my husband and I were involved in an auto accident. I sprained my neck and had many contusions. Regardless, one of my first questions in the ER was when I could return to yoga? Both the ER doctor and my family doctor agreed that the sooner the better. They believed it would be helpful in speeding up my recovery. Clearly, yoga had become an important part of my life. Although I still avoid some poses that require putting pressure on my neck, I am much better.

I intend for yoga to remain an integral part of my life for the rest of my life. I find myself being aware of my body though I still groan at tree pose and wobble in warrior III. My friends and family know that I am basically not available on yoga nights. My husband encourages it, ("Are you doing yogurt tonight?") especially if my stress level has risen. On those days he seems to notice a difference in my mood after class. He appreciates yoga.

I still don't know the yoga terms, am still not particularly deep thinking but I am still in the back row on the left.