

# “We don’t advance in Yoga, We expand”

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Many years ago when I started practicing yoga, I would watch my yoga friends on their mat touching their toes, or in full wheel or locust pose, and I would think to myself, “ wow they are a great yogi”!

Of course when you are young and therefore of course impressionable, visuals affect and sway you. For me, when I was younger, it was skinny bodies, long and lean, and to my perception, looking fab, and of course bending like they were made out of rubber that influenced and affected me.

And I damaged my body along the way trying to be like them.

As time went on, my practice developed, not only on the mat but off the mat as well. The yoga mat went everywhere with me; it was the first thing to be placed in my case.

I would find myself humming mantras or chanting them to a tune. Food choices were no longer about counting calories. I found I was choosing foods that looked nourishing. And, I realized, I never had to look like those yogis in the magazines.

I realized it didn’t mean you were more enlightened if you could hold a headstand for half an hour. I realized you didn’t DO yoga. Yoga is a practice that you can experience anywhere, on and off the mat. It’s not just about the ‘poses’.

We don’t advance in yoga, we expand.

We become aware of our breath. We become aware that when our posture is open, the energy moves more freely. Self-reflection becomes important. Insights come in during our practice.

You are able to take your awareness to your breath and slow down.

You start to realize the messages your body is giving you, and you start to listen to its language in a different way. That niggle in your lower back could be resentment, fear, worries regarding money. Your shoulder hurts, or is stiff, you seem to carry the weight of the world on them. Time to reassess the way of doing things.

I realized I needed to take full responsibility for my own life, no-one could do it for me. I realized I couldn’t blame anyone else for the hurts and dramas in my life.

Yoga taught to me to take a pause, to greet my breath, not only on the mat but during my day, it was an invitation into myself. A quick stock take if you like, to see and FEEL how things are, and if there was anything that I needed to change.

Yoga encourages us to expand and grow. WE start to realize we are the master of our life. When our mind is at ease, our body feels at ease. WE will endeavour to put clean fuel in our body and mind. Clean fuel comes in many forms, from the foods we eat, to the uplifting people we choose to be around.

Feed your soul, nourish your spirit, expand your wings and fly!

Much love Anna xxx

