

# NEWSLETTER

from the



# NYACK *Yoga* CENTER



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Dear All,

Another year! Another newsletter! It seems like yesterday that the last issue, September through December, was sent and here I am again.

However, I do write a monthly newsletter for the Yoga Teachers Association and it can be accessed on the internet at [www.ytayoga.com](http://www.ytayoga.com). Check it out each month.

I always think of January as the quiet month, following in the wake of the holiday revelry and excitement. It is also the beginning of a new year fraught with all the possibilities for renewal and regeneration. I'd like to suggest, if I may, that if one has to make a resolution that it be simply, "to walk your talk!" Our yoga practice certainly supports that motto. We can actualize our desire for better health, greater strength and clearer consciousness. We can invoke and cultivate the states of awareness that compliment every aspect of our being thus creating a life worth living with joy and zeal. We can embrace this life with reverence and gratitude - the high states of being that bring us healing and grace to the beholder and illuminates the energy fields around them benefits others. Yoga and its practice creates a win-win situation!

Thinking and feeling in the high minded realm brings to my mind to share with you the opportunity to bestow the greatest gift - to act with great compassion and love - to be able to change the lives of many - to become an organ donor! This is a truly generous act that can provide renewed life and continued health for up to fifty people from just one donor.

Science has progressed unbelievably in transplant services and is in the position of saving lives of children, family members and anyone else healthy in all ways but in the one damaged part that can be replaced

- if there are parts available. That's where we come in - the ultimate act of yoga, giving to yourself with no expectations of receiving anything in return. N.Y. residents can register to be organ donors through the Organ and Tissue Registry. For more information visit [www.health.state.n.y.u.s/nysdoh/donor](http://www.health.state.n.y.u.s/nysdoh/donor) or call 866-693-6667.

It was 4 years ago that my husband received a liver transplant, so I speak from experience. It was a miraculous gift as we were so close to losing him - just days away! We hold his donor in light and love and continued gratitude. We as a family are planning to be donors when the time comes to separate from physical form. Why bury or burn what can be such a treasure for others.

**My 10 Week Fitness Dance class begins on January 10th.** This is a fun way to round out your physical workouts with Jazz movements and music; the perfect partnership with yoga. Try it and see for yourself!

March 6, we'll again begin the ten week **Meditation Course** given on Sundays from 9:00 am to 12 noon. Serious students are encouraged and invited to take this course as it will deepen and enhance your yoga connection.

May the winter season unfold in a peaceful, enlightening way bringing better things for all beings on the planet.

Much Light and Love,  
Paula

# A LETTER TO PAULA



As a dancer of many years, I first approached yoga somehow in a few similar ways, particularly, one of, as if rehearsing for a great performance. So for the first few classes I took at different studios in

and out of the city, I experienced that I was able to do the "Steps". Of course I could do them! But I did not know at the time that I was paying a price. I was being somewhere else.

At the end of each class, I found myself in the same place: Physically and Mentally. A place of not feeling connected, feeling rushed, doubtful, exhausted and not really understanding what was taking place "within" and "with my body". Needless to say, I never progressed and needless to say, it was difficult to get back to yoga classes. Periods of time would pass in between them, although somewhere I knew, it would be good for me.

In March of last year, wanting again to invest in myself through yoga and aiming for some continuity, I signed up for a five day intensive retreat in Mexico.

There, I tapped into something different, this time with the help of Meditation and Pranayama. At the end of the retreat I was determined to find that which I had tapped into (which I still didn't know what it was at that time and maybe a teacher to go with it, when getting back to New York. Upon my arrival, that same week, I met Robin Laufer at a fundraiser and after hearing my story, she smilingly "prescribed" Paula's Class.

Well, I remembered going to her class on a Wednesday. The Yoga Light went on that day, and it has not stopped once since then, and neither have I. Paula's teaching and teachings were exactly what I was looking for. By the following day I knew that I wanted to do my teacher training program with her.

By the second class, literally, she had me doing head stands, a pose I always wanted to do but was afraid of.

She has provided the nurturing and trust I needed to move forward. She also has shown and encouraged me in how to enrich my spirit and mind, how to honor my expressions and recognize my potential.

She has a quality of impacting you with the information needed at the Exact moment that you are looking for...consciously or not. The awakening is obvious..... touching everyone in class. In Her classes, I have been able to rise above what I think or know and with her constant support and guidance, MINDFULLY, I place myself in a different position, one from where I can see another approach to a pose or situa-

tion, as if dissolving my own mind.

Interesting enough, some of my favorite yoga quotes are:

ANYTHING EMBRACED BY THE ENERGY OF MINDFULNESS WILL GO UNDER TRANSFORMATION.

YOGA IS THE RESOLUTION OF THE AGITATION OF THE MIND. WE CAN USE OUR BODY AND BREATH TO TAME THIS WILD BEAST. IN THE STATE OF YOGA, WE ARE NO LONGER AT THE MERCY OF ITS ENDLESS SPINNING, INSTEAD WE EXPERIENCE A DEEP AWARENESS OF AND AN IDENTIFICATION WITH, A CONSCIOUSNESS MUCH GREATER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL EGO. (This is the promise that Patanjali offers in the yoga sutra.)

My favorite pose? The Scorpion. I was mesmerized by it the first time I saw it live, not in a magazine.

And so I wrote the following poem after that first attempt, around a year ago. Yes, right after one of those head stands, Paula looked at me and said, you are ready, let's go.

"It's simply an inversion" she said,  
So dressed up as an adventure, I went upside down  
And although I knew I would fall down, I didn't.

Instead  
I grew.

Like I was supposed to, long ago, when I was still growing...  
So bent, twisted and confused, I held tight to my new  
wobbling feet  
Forearms, and hands  
Lifting...

The sting will come. Just practicing now and  
I know I will, and I know I'm ready, because my soul has  
accepted what

She said in class: "We have no time not to"

Paula has mesmerizing standards of teaching. My husband who has a story of his own with yoga and contracting scar tissue on 50% of his body, due to skin grafts following severe burns as a child, and who never went to the same yoga class or teacher more than once (of course with long periods in between of me nagging him about it, yes, because it's good for him!) Now goes to Paula's classes two or three time a week, on his own, and by his own will.

He said the other day casually in the kitchen while I was doing the dishes, Oh Paula, she is not teaching, that woman is channeling! I turned around and said, you are right honey...you are so right.

It's been courageous, loving, fun and unstoppable for the best audience of all, myself. It's now my desire and aspiration to be able to do that for others.

Thank you Paula,  
Nury LeVier



Five months ago I climbed the long narrow stairway above “Born of Earth” at the corner of Main St. & Broadway and had the wonderful fortune to find one of Nyack’s great gifts - the yoga studio of Paula Heitzner.

How is it possible that I have lived in Nyack for 25 years and never taken a class from this amazing teacher? In yoga circles they call her a teacher’s teacher. Each class is like a workshop because of all the attention to detail and her breadth of knowledge.

A typical class has between 15 and 20 people. The students are tall, short, lean or round, in an age range anywhere from the low 20’s to the mid 80’s. Some students are newbies like me, others have been following Paula for 40 years.

In her classes everyone gets attention. You will find whatever is needed for that day. Paula is a marvel of insight. Whether it’s the mechanics of the body, mind or spirit. Nothing escapes her eye.

As my first class began, Paula said, “If anything hurts or is uncomfortable, let me know and I will help you, because that is where your work begins.” And so it did.

That first class happened to focus on grounding and feet, in particular the arch of the foot. At that time I was suffering from plantar fasciitis and just had finished and unsuccessful bout with physical therapy.

Paula, like a laser, zoomed in on my difficulties. She immediately began to give me specific instructions detailing what muscles to use and kept me mindful of the situation. Within a short time of attending her classes I was able to go bare foot again as well as walk normally!

She shares with so much generosity - always mindful of the student’s needs. It has improved my practice both on and off the mat. It is impossible not to benefit just from knowing her.

It is said that when one is ready to learn a teacher will appear. And so she did at the top of a long narrow stairway.

— Jamie Whitehurst