

EMBODYING PEACE The Mythic Yoga Way

IDEAS FOR YOUR SELF and for TEACHING CHILDREN

Have a regular personal yoga practice as well as a practice that includes children.

Pursue and find an enjoyable, fulfilling, and passionate work or profession.

Stop shopping for unnecessary things. Things, especially big houses and all the stuff in them, use a lot of energy and attachment to them makes it hard to get through the eye of the needle.

Be ruthless in clearing out clutter and getting rid of things.

Donate stuff you don't need to charity. This is half way to freedom.

Be sure to practice your hobbies that give you pleasure and joy and you will influence those values on a child.

Do simple activities with children. Ride your bike, play jump rope, make lemonade from real lemons, sing songs. Create toys and art from recyclables.

Keep a personal journal and dream diary.

Express in art, music or dance the images in your dreams.

Ask children about their dreams. Urge them to keep daily feelings and dream journals.

Start asking your friends and co-workers about their dreams.

Start a dream circle.

Start a story circle or interfaith peace storytelling gathering at your home or church.

Explore your shadow side. Look at things you don't like, or things you criticize others for. Start there to discover things about yourself. Urge children to do the same.

Create a collage from magazine images exploring yourself.

Include likes and dislikes, things that scare you, things you love. Share the story of the collage with others. Encourage children to make and talk about a collage also.

For difficult issues and unresolved problems, seek out a professional therapist. Write a letter to your government representatives urging that mental health care be a priority in this country.

Spend time in nature. Grow a tomato, plant a tree. Sleep outside sometimes or indoors with the windows open.

Explore and renew your relationship to animals.

Have green plants and fresh flowers in the room. An indigenous woman in Juchitan, Mexico, once told me that flowers are lujo, luxury.

Get in touch with your waste. Recycle and compost.

For a full life, practice the awareness of death. Teach death to children. Don't change stories that have death in them.

Encourage grieving and ritual, such as Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. Learn about your ancestors and tell their stories to the children. The African Dagara Grief ritual is powerful. I spent 3 days with Sobonfu Some (www.Sobonfu.com) and it changed my life.

Create a child-centered environment at home or at school to direct, observe and encourage the child's natural interests and temperament that is within. Have a variety of stations in the house or classroom with activities that a child can work with.

Have a special altar or place to meditate, do yoga, or come together as a family or class. Encourage children to gather special objects that may symbolize how they feel and place the objects on the altar or have the child talk about the object.

Take time for silence so that you can listen to eternity. Be sure to have down time, shavasana, quiet reading time, or nap time.

Take time to be conscious of the food you eat. Take time to thank the earth or your favorite deity before each meal.

Designate that part of the midday meal be eaten in silence.

Eat only fresh, organic and whole foods. You will be surprised at how healthy and thin you will be, and how much money you save if you eat mostly fresh fruits and vegetables.

Cut back on animal products or go vegetarian.

Meditate regularly. Teach the youngest children to meditate, using breath and simple mantra such as, “love and peace and happiness.” For older children, use regular mantra, such as *Om Namah Shivaya*, or an affirmation or a prayer of your religious choice. Meditation is resting in eternity, meditation to balance between time and space for a while. Stop time and space and embrace the mythic realm.

Observe your thinking often, especially when emotions arise. Step back and question where that thought is coming from. What is the story behind this feeling? What is the original emotion and story behind the feeling of anger?

Learn to mediate in action so that you can discipline and pause your thinking and ultimately achieve 1.2 in the Yoga Sutras, *Chitti vritti narodaha*. Bring awareness of divine awareness into your environment and rest in the peace of eternity while maintaining presence in the world.

Practice Mantra or prayer during the day, during driving and working, cooking or eating. Occupy the mind with mantra when especially worrisome or angry thoughts come up. *Om Namah Shivaya* is powerful for erasing negative energy. Try to listen to the voice that arises in the silence, your intuition to guide you to do what you need to do in the world and inform the intellect.

Attend kirtan.

Practice and teach breathing. Use breath awareness to help calm down nerves, anger, and as time to reflect and look at an issue. Anger is a secondary emotion. Breathing helps you reflect on what the motivating emotion really is and resolve the problem.

Keep a journal about these feelings as they arise. Assign images and characters to your emotions and see what story emerges.

Write a memoir and explore your personal stories. Tell them to others.

Cut down on the news. Read over the Internet.

Cut back on TV watching and eventually eliminate it. Watch

only commercial-free movies and documentaries. You won't miss a thing and I guarantee you will still know what's important to know and still get a lot of enjoyment and knowledge out of media. You will also develop a lot of your own talents and find out a great deal about yourself and provide a lot of peace and healing.

Stop reading popular men's and women's magazines. I haven't read one in 10 years and I've never felt so good about myself.

Start shopping at thrift stores and develop your original style.

Get involved with your local school. Volunteer to tutor a child or assist in the classroom. Volunteer to tell stories. Contact www.spellbinders.org

Visualize communities that are sustainable, mixed-use, ethnically and economically diverse. Visualize schools that are properly funded with a 100 percent literacy rate and that there is universal health care. Visualize you can walk everywhere for what you need and not have to drive and use petroleum.

Visualize community gardens and public plazas.

Tell stories to children – folktales, myths, fairytales and personal stories. What the Baby Einstein can't tell you in a video is that the real Albert Einstein said that if you want to have brilliant children, be sure YOU TELL them lots and lots of stories. And not show them a bunch of stores.

When telling, never worry if you sound stupid or silly or make mistakes or think you can't sing because all humans were meant to sing and only you can give yourself permission to be stupid. By looking stupid and not singing very well and even breaking down and crying, you give others the permission to do the same and nobody has to pretend to be something they're not and won't treat you that way either.

Use the stories you tell to start talking about your own life and how it relates to the stories.

Urge children to tell their own stories. Start by asking them how they feel.

Practice the feeling of love. Practice self-love as well as love for

others. Read psychologist Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*.
Enjoy your life. Experience heaven in the joyous creation of being
on earth.

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<http://www.mythicyoga.com/lotus/teachings/kaplan.htm>

<http://www.storytimeyoga.com/lotus/teachings/kaplan2.htm>