

STUDENT RECOGNITION

JANUARY 2008 - NAOMI WEAVERLING



Being Yoga's January Student of the Month is Naomi Weaverling. Naomi is originally from Tokyo, Japan and has now lived in the Bay Area for 15 years. She is a wife and mother and works in computer translation dictionary development.

When the time came for Naomi to prepare for life in her 50's, she reflected upon her lifestyle and chose to do adopt yoga as regular exercise and to take a flower arranging course to nurture her artistic side. Now, two years later, Naomi practices yoga four times week, enjoying our Yin and Flow classes, as well as the occasional Bikram class. She says, "Much to my delight I regained flexibility I had in my teens with Yin practice and I developed arm and core strength from Flow that I never had before. Yoga develops physical strength and flexibility hand-in-hand. After two years, subtle improvements in my mind and body built a solid transformation. I also gained self-confidence and more trust in myself. It has given me the strength to maintain a positive attitude during life's many challenges, getting the best out of bad times".

This year Naomi also hopes to attend more Bikram classes. From her regular yoga practice she has felt improvement in mind and health and feels excited to continue exploring the breath, and where conscious breathing can lead her. We are glad to have Naomi as a regular student at Being Yoga and are proud to honor her as our Student of the Month.

STUDENT RECOGNITION
FEBRUARY 2008

CLAIRE HALDAN



Claire Haldan is a needlepoint teacher and designer who has spent her life in the Bay Area. She began practicing yoga regularly with us almost six years ago and has since taken almost 500 classes. Claire loves Bikram yoga and says her mind and body like the rhythm of the same exercises and the discovery of subtlety that brings. She says, “Yoga has helped to keep my back strong and my muscles more limber. It brings energy and a great sense of well being to daily life. The multi-level benefits have come for me, as the teachers tell us, when we let go and just move with what they are saying, letting the yoga happen and not trying so hard to be in control”.

Claire’s lovely smile and warm disposition definitely reflect her calm state of mind. Her teachers can tell that she comes to her mat with the attitude of an open and humble student ready to embrace each session. She says, “What keeps me coming back is the ever increasing sense of serenity that regular practice brings, the physical well being, the wonderful teachers who inspire each time, the camaraderie of doing something as a group no matter what different levels people are at, the freedom to be at your own pace and know that beauty of the place we are in. There is great mental and physical freedom in yoga as it becomes an on going part of my life. As there are only the set poses to do and improve as you are able, little by little, so little things in life are sometimes more important than the big things we can get so caught up in. Watch for the daily little joys, the small steps we each achieve and know that as we are attune to them the other things will fall into place”.

Thanks to our student of the month, Claire, for sharing her story with us.

STUDENT RECOGNITION
MARCH 2008
RHONDA TATEMICHI



Rhonda Tatemichi is someone who is always busy and on the go. She is very active, both on the job as a personal shopper and in her free time exercising, traveling, and spending time with her family. Rhonda says that yoga helps her find harmony and balance despite such a hectic lifestyle. She has practiced Bikram Yoga with us for 7 years now, taking over 700 classes!

Rhonda first tried yoga out of curiosity and a desire to overcome an injury that was causing back pain, and she quickly realized all the benefits a regular practice can bring. She has been freed of her back pain and says that she is stronger in other sports, such as running, which she still enjoys. Rhonda appreciates what she has learned about breathing and now uses her breath as a tool to calm her mind whenever needed. In addition, she feels her posture and balance have improved and that her immune system is stronger because of yoga.

Rhonda still practices yoga with us 3-5 days a week, even after 7 years, and her commitment is inspiring. She is able to reflect with appreciation on the friends made over the years and the strong sense of community at Being Yoga. Rhonda says, "I like all of the things our studio has done to keep it fresh and constantly changing, including a brand new studio which is the most beautiful place to practice. I love all the different instructors whose words always make me find something new to think about in my routine. I have been in many crowded classes but now I only see myself. Commitment makes you feel good, too!". We are proud to honor Rhonda Tatemichi as our March Student of the Month.

STUDENT RECOGNITION APRIL 2008

BEING YOGA STAFF



Many things awaken when we practice yoga regularly - our bodies, our minds, our consciousness. We are aware of things we didn't notice before, our perspective changes. Our old ways of criticizing and judging are, over time, replaced by attitudes of contentment and gratitude. This month for our student recognition program, we have chosen to acknowledge the staff at Being Yoga for behavior and choices that model living yoga both on and off the mat.

While it may often seem that so many people are motivated by the question "what can I get out of this?", our staff displays the attitude "how can I be of help?". This shift in focus is remarkable and represents the understanding that along with an increased level of awareness and consciousness also comes the increased responsibility to practice ahimsa (nonviolence) in both word and deed. It is so tempting to engage in our society's typical small talk- criticizing, complaining, and gossiping. Yet our staff here understands that words have great power and should be chosen carefully, doing no harm to oneself or others. The words we use are another opportunity to practice loving-kindness.

Being Yoga staff members are eager to make all students feel welcome and to create a safe environment to awaken and explore both body and mind. Their personal practices of yoga and meditation have shown them how witness the mind, and then how to choose to cultivate the seeds of positive thought into action. Thank you so much the wonderful staff of Being Yoga - a group of positive individuals who inspire us to awaken to our fullest potential, to rise above and appreciate our connection to one another, to everything.

MAY 2008

KEVIN KARL



Our May Student of the Month is Kevin Karl, a kind and humble man whose dedication to his yoga practice has benefitted him in many ways. Having first discovered yoga over 20 years ago when searching for a meaningful path, he found his way to Being Yoga 4 years ago and has practiced with us for over 500 classes. In addition, Kevin was vital in the creation of our beautiful new studio, assisting with architecture and permitting issues.

Like many of us, Kevin was brought to yoga by his pain -but his was intense back pain and involved surgery. He says that his first few months of Bikram yoga were actually quite painful as his body began to open up. Some benefits Kevin noticed quickly, such as a gradual release of tension and greater flexibility. He now uses his regular practice to manage his pain, to balance out the physically taxing nature of his job, and to participate in a community yoga experience. Kevin says, "For me the practice of yoga has fostered an awareness of my personal being, a sense of existing and belonging to the present. Our time together in this world is so mysterious and fleeting. Slowing the pace of life and hearing my own rhythmic breathing together with those around me has afforded me a sense of peace and a sense of place." Thanks to Kevin Karl for sharing his story and being part of our wonderful community at Being Yoga!

Randy Brase (May 2008)

JUNE 2008

RANDY BRASE



This June we have chosen to honor a student who is celebrating his 3rd yoga birthday with us this month. Randy Brase is a dedicated yoga practitioner who takes full advantage of the many styles of yoga offered at Being Yoga. He says his regular yoga practice has helped him physically and emotionally - helping to treat a former chronic case of sciatica, and enabling a sense of peace despite a busy and erratic schedule.

Randy practices around 3 times a week and takes a mix of Bikram, Vinyasa, and Yin classes. He says, "I like the variety of styles, it keeps me on my toes - so to speak. I like Bikram because it lets me focus on a pose and really try to understand it. I like Vinyasa because of the flow of movement and variety of poses. And I like Yin because it helps me stretch and loosen up those tight spots that I cannot otherwise get to. The combination of the 3 sort of lets me become my own chiropractor and masseuse".

Randy says that although he really loves yoga, some days it is a struggle to come to his mat. He maintains his commitment his practice and feels better for it. We appreciate Randy's help keeping the studio clean, a contribution of his energy that benefits us all. We are proud to honor Randy Brase as our June Student of the Month.

JULY 2008

LEILANI VIANA



Leilani Viana is a television broadcast engineer and lover of the outdoors. This yogini will tell you herself that she is not much for words. Yet simply by her graceful and quiet presence one can sense that she is a physically and spiritually connected person. Leilani has maintained a regular Bikram yoga practice with us for several years and says, "It is very important to me to try to stay as healthy and fit as I can and practicing Bikram does just that for me. The teachers at Being Yoga have helped me so much. Their knowledge, motivation and inspiration keep me on my journey to a better me".

Leilani is a graceful, humble, and delightful individual whose behavior reflects many important lessons learned on the yogic path. She comes to her mat and lets the process unfold. Furthermore, she is consistent with her practice, which is the ultimate discipline. She has inspired her teachers and fellow students and we are happy to honor Leilani as our July Student of the Month.

AUGUST 2008

MICHAEL PIETRO

Michael Pietro, originally from Brooklyn, works in the international trade of food commodities such as fruits, vegetables and grains. He has been practicing Bikram Yoga three to four days a week since joining our studio one year ago this month. He greatly enjoys the mental and physical challenge that yoga provides and says that he has never felt more fit.

Michael travels a great deal with his job and finds that yoga helps him balance the stress of plane travel and the stress of life in general. He says, "I find the studio a sanctuary from the blackberries, emails, and phone calls of everyday life. Yoga is an investment in my physical and mental future - another penny in the bank at the end of every class". We are happy to have Michael Pietro as part of our yoga community and honor him as our August Student of the Month.

KEVIN ANGELO (October 2008)



Kevin is our website guru. He is not only dedicated with maintaining/designing Being Yoga's website, but he is committed even with a busy schedule to his regular yoga practice.

You are a very busy guy, Kevin. What do you do in your spare time in addition to your yoga practice?

My wife and I love to travel and explore new places. We spend a lot of time hiking within Northern California and visiting new sites within the United States and beyond when time and our work schedule permits.

I particularly love the outdoors—hiking, camping, kayaking, white water rafting, scuba diving (most especially) and enjoy photography as well.

How long have you been practicing yoga and how were you introduced to yoga?

I have been practicing Bikram Yoga for approximately a year and a half. My wife and I live in the neighborhood and were extremely curious upon seeing individuals exit the yoga studio dripping in sweat as if they came out of a broiler oven. My wife and I tried it out and we were hooked.

Why do you practice yoga?

What I like about Bikram yoga is the flexibility and the mental discipline it promotes. In the beginning, it was to help me with weight loss but I have gotten so much more. It has gifted me with a state of ultimate presence like a part of me suddenly woke up.

How has Being Yoga helped you on your journey?

I noticed that we always take care of the most mundane aspects of our life—finances, material possessions, career, etc. but we seem to neglect our mind. Yoga has helped me prioritize my

physical and mental health. As a result, I am able to put things in perspective and have greatly changed how I approach various situations in life.

Please give us some words of wisdom for our students.

Sometimes it seems like we choose to be in a comfort zone we like to go to. On the other hand, our Bikram practice provides us with another kind of zone that gifts us with an invaluable connection to the deepest part of ourselves. We all know that it is never an easy commitment to make. I'm sure we can all put together a long list of other things we can be enjoying than being inside a human oven, right? So remember to give yourself a pat on the back, after you check-in at the reception area everytime you choose to practice. You've definitely made an excellent decision that day.

Remember to live in the moment. Allow yourself to just "BE". And let experience provide you with a priceless awareness that will stir you in the right path as we all continue on our personal journeys.

November 2008 Student of the Month



Arlina Ramirez

Arlina is our studio angel. She gives and gives and gives....Every time she is at the studio, she helps out – towels, desk, being a warm greeter. She also raised the most money for the Art of Yoga Project - \$600! Thank, Arlina.

Tell about yourself, Arlene

I am a very busy person! I work seven days a week as a Housing Inspector supporting low-income individuals and as Program Director serving homeless families. Despite my busy schedule, I regularly practice Bikram yoga, ballroom dancing, and volunteer in the community. Also, I am very involved with my lovely daughter, Armalyn Anne, her husband, Robbie, and their beautiful son, Memphis Emmanuel.

How did you discover yoga?

I was introduced to yoga through my dearest friend and buddy, “Mr. Yoga”. I immediately noticed improvement in the following area: reduction of stress, improved posture, weight loss, less physical pain, increased flexibility, more energy and sleep. Having suffered years of back problems, yoga allowed me to finally sit at my desk throughout the day without being in tears from the pain.

What styles do you practice and why?

I have been practicing Bikram yoga 3 to 4 times a week for the past 4 ½ years. I have also attended meditation, flow and yin classes. As a person who never expected to like yoga, I have come to appreciate Robin, the owner, and the teachers for inspiring all of us to practice to our fullest potential. I will be forever grateful!

How has yoga helped you on your journey?

I can honestly say that my life has changed a great deal. The studio is a warm, friendly and pleasant environment. Robin is open to suggestions and constantly makes improvements. The teachers really care about both yoga and the students. I'm always encouraged to do my best and take my practice to the next level. The staff, studio, and practice have helped me to be free of back pain. I feel comfortable about my body, and most importantly, I find myself able to relax in the midst of very stressful situations.

Any final words of wisdom for the students?

Give 100% effort and you will gain 100% of the benefits. I have never looked better or felt better than I do now. Like any venture, it takes time. Now, each day, regardless of how busy or stressed I am, I look forward to my Bikram class!. I started my first yoga class in my forties and look forward to practicing for the rest of my life.

December 2008 Student of the Month



Tell us about yourself, Mark.

I have two grown children, Jonathan (29) and Anna (26), who are my inspiration and treasure. Apart from my passion for Bikram yoga, I also practice a Japanese martial art called Aikido. And I do occasionally brave the cold waters in Pacifica or Half Moon Bay, to paddle out and catch some fun waves with my surfing buddies.

How long have been practicing yoga and how were you introduced to yoga?

I first started practicing yoga when I was 20 years old. I taught myself from a book when I found myself at a summer job with few social outlets. I don't remember which style of Hatha Yoga it was, but every now and then, I'll run across a yoga pose that reminds me of those days.

What styles do you practice, how often, and what do you like about each style?

I am practicing Bikram, diligently striving for a 5-day a week schedule which I think is sustainable, given my work and other life commitments. I have tried Ashtanga, Yin, Integral and a few other forms. I like the heat and consistency in Bikram's Yoga - it allows me to easily stretch and measure myself from day to day. I enjoy the long held poses in Yin, and Ashtanga and Integral have focused on more upper body and inverted poses, which I enjoy as a change of pace.

Why do you practice yoga?

I started practicing yoga 7 years ago. Last year I took a few months off from yoga practice. I missed the practice; and I eventually decided it was time to get yoga back into my life. After that first return class I was driving home and experienced a most unusual, liberating and refreshing feeling of well-being. It's hard to describe. Someone thought it might be endorphins – perhaps. I don't know. It was different from anything I had ever experienced before. I realized that even though I might not reach that state of well-being after every class, the feelings were coming from a core experience of my body responding to a healthy way of living. My body was telling me to keep practicing yoga.

How has Being Yoga helped you on your journey?

Oh my. Being has been a fabulous sponsor on my journey. All the wonderful teachers, all the beautiful students and all the shared moments of struggle, effort, achievements and peace...I am blessed to be a part of this community.

What inspires you?

I am inspired more by people who share their love and share themselves with me, than by any book or story. Movies, books, can of course be the medium for that sharing; but I am most inspired by personal interactions that at times astound and amaze me. I try not to look too shocked when someone says something incredibly profound or brilliant, and I realize that they just made it up - from the heart, so to speak. It happens a lot in my life.

And final words of wisdom for our students?

Go Team, Go! Stretch - Stretch - Stretch! It's a fine line between stretching with effort in order to improve; and stretching with so much effort that the stretch can cause damage. One way I've learned - the hard way, which I do not recommend - is by going just a little bit too far, and having my body tell me the next day. If you can, it is much better to listen very closely and focus on your body - your breathing, your muscles that are contracting and those that are stretching and monitor how you feel in the moment in order to adjust in real time.