



Recently I read a piece by Georg Feurestein, a man who dedicated his life to studying yoga philosophy and history, where he said the principal lesson of yoga is that “happiness cannot be bought with a quick fix but is the mature fruit of a life dedicated to higher values and ideals.” Which to me is a perfect way to describe yoga, and I’m sharing it with you as a warning. If you are looking for a quick fix starting a yoga practice may not be the route for you. If you are ready, you are in for a beautiful experience because yoga is a means of contacting our own inner happiness. Even if it’s been buried deep for a long time.

Establishing a successful yoga practice

When we are building any new routines or habits there’s some ground work to be done before taking any other action. We need to connect to our ‘why.’

You may be wanting to just dive in, forget all this extra work and get on with it. This pre-work is what is going to keep your practice sustainable, this is your foundation. Even though this is not asana (posture practice) this is a part of your yoga.

Get out your journal, and find a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed to complete these exercises.

Exercise 1: Your ‘Why’

Take a moment to think about each of these questions and then write your answers down in a journal.

- 1. Do I really want to have a yoga practice?**
- 2. Why? Be specific.**
- 3. What do I expect of the practice?**

(seriously, write it down!)

Why would you like to start practicing yoga needs to be crystal clear to you, otherwise it most likely won’t stick. Without clarity it can be easy for us to sabotage our own good intentions.

Exercise 2: Overcoming Obstacles

The all so common self sabotage. Not to worry, once again, it's a normal part of creating a new habit or routine. Most often it shows up in the form of EXCUSES, and we usually can come up with a lot of them. To create sustainability we have to be one step ahead of our excuses and this exercise will allow you to do that.

Write a list of your 10 best excuses down in your journal. No censoring yourself. No one needs to see this but you so let it be as uncensored as possible.

Our minds are really good at making obstacles seem impossible to overcome, especially when they are racing around like a tornado in our noggin. By getting these thoughts outside our head and putting them into writing things become more manageable.

Address each obstacle one at a time. Some excuses once written out may easily be removed, others may not happen immediately. Can having a yoga practice itself help you to remove some of your obstacles?

Exercise 3: Time Commitment

A lot of us are likely to try jumping in with both feet. Going from 0-100 real quick. I find myself doing this and I've witnessed friends and clients do the same. It's that all or nothing mentality. Starting an exercise routine = EVERYDAY FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR NO REST DAYS, trying to eat healthier = STRICT PALEO/VEGAN OR ELSE!, starting a new business= NEVER TAKE BREAKS, WORK UNTIL YOU WANT TO CRY. You get the idea. Things become a bit out of balance and then it's tough to stay with it. We burn out, get discouraged and feel poorly about ourselves. The all or nothing way isn't usually very sustainable.

Ask yourself how much time you are willing to commit to your yoga practice. Remember to be realistic. No need to get all high and mighty.

Now reduce that amount by ten percent. Because even when we try to be realistic we usually overestimate, let's be honest. This will be your starting point. One video per day, one per week, two per week...whatever you choose is perfect.

Exercise 4: Making it real

Now you have your why, you've addressed your excuses, you've figured out a reasonable amount of time and the next step is truly committing.

It's easy to decide in our head to do something, and then let it fall to the wayside. Mental contracts with only ourselves are very easily compromised or forgotten.

Put your commitment in writing and share it. Remember to be detailed and that consistency helps to keep us on track.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- **How long will you practice?**
- **How many times per week?**
- **What time of day?**
- **Where?**

If you are feeling resistance to this step, take a moment to reflect on why...and then do it anyway.

After completing these four exercises it's time to get on your mat...if that's what you have decided.

With love, compassion and gratitude,

Tera

