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**13 STEPS** TO DEEPEN  
YOUR HOME PRACTICE

# **TRUE YOGA IS SIMPLE**

## **13 Steps To Deepen Your Home Practice**

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## **FOREWORD**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Each person we meet, each situation we encounter has something for us. But most of the time, we are too much in a rush to see it.

Before I get into the story, I'd like to thank a few people who have really shaped me and the way I see things.

Of course, it's the talented yoga teachers I met on my way: Surinder Singh, Asish Sharma, Suryans Thakur, Diana Schopplein, Sergei Mikhailov. I was lucky to see yoga from different perspectives.

Much gratitude to Spiritual Masters I happened to come across live or through the web: Om Baba, Lisa Cairns, Adya Shanti, Roger Castello, Samdarshi, Tigmonk, Mooji and many others. It's great that you share wisdom with all of us and give inspiration to walk our path consciously.

I doubt, my teachers will ever read through these lines. Yet, I believe it's worth mentioning their names. Who knows, maybe there's something out there for you, and this book is just a bridge to get you to something bigger.

There's a tale about a Master and a Student. It was told by an Indian Brahmin who likes interpreting the scriptures in his own modern way. In fact, if you know a more correct version of this tale, I'd be happy to hear it.

Anyway. So, one day there was a Master and his disciple. In India,, teachers are given very high respect. People believe that they can reach the Truth by serving their Masters, being in their presence.

Our disciple was very hard-working, very loyal, and very sincere. Every day he prayed to Lord Shiva asking to give him the Ultimate Knowledge. And in his prayers he always remembered his Master and thanked life for being around him.

One night the student woke up and saw that the Master was away. The following night – the same.

The disciple started worrying about his teacher. So, in the evening, he secretly followed his Guru and saw that he went to a bar.

The student was waiting in the bushes. After a while, he saw his Master leaving the bar drunk and with the traces of lipstick on his face.

In the morning the student came up to the teacher and said, 'You don't have to go all alone at night. It's dark, scary, and you're old, you're getting tired fast. I will wait for you in town, and carry you back to the ashram on my shoulders.'

When the night came, the Master went to the bar again. Lots of drinks, drugs, dancing, and prostitutes... He was enjoying his time while his student was patiently waiting in the bushes.

Lord Shiva saw the sincerity and loyalty of the disciple and appeared in front of him.

'What are you doing here? Don't you see that your Master is fake? I am Shiva. It's me you were looking for. Let's go from here.'

I saw your truthfulness; I saw you prayed to me every day. You wanted to enter into the Kingdom of Truth; I will take you there.'

And, the disciple replied, 'Yes, I wanted to reach the Truth, but I can't go anywhere without my Master.'



Shiva couldn't resist the loyalty of the student and agreed to take the fake Master to the Kingdom of Truth.

So, they enter the bar and tell the Master that they are taking him with them.

But the Master says that he can't go anywhere without his prostitutes. Now, Shiva has to invite the prostitutes to join them.

But the prostitutes don't want to go anywhere without their pimps. And the pimps don't want to go without their drug-dealers.

Shiva turns to the disciple and says, 'Can you see? Just because of your sincerity and genuine loyalty I had to admit all these crappy folks in my Kingdom of Truth'.

The point is, personal qualities of the teachers are much less important than the sincerity of the aspirants.

I've seen true hearts around fake Gurus. And, they were developing regardless of their unworthy Masters. They were progressing due to their own loyalty and love.

And I've also seen the most corrupt babas (monks) being utmost true during the Pooja

time (making ceremonies and worshipping God).

So, I thank all True and Fake Masters. For they are a genuine reflection of what's inside of us: a bit of this, a bit of that.

I would also like to thank Marie Forleo, a great entrepreneur and speaker. Taking her course on Marketing I saw that being successful in life and society can go together with genuine service. She was the one who actually inspired me to express myself through writing.

And, certainly, big gratitude to my family and friends for accepting me with all my goods and bads, and supporting me regardless of the decisions I make, crazy at times.

I'd like to honour my Mum for emphasising the need of learning English. This language has opened lots of doors for me: doors to knowledge, experiences, relations and understandings countless times.

Warm hug to my Grandma for creating opportunities in my life. You gave me freedom and choice to do things others won't dare to do.

And much love to my daughter, who became my anchor. Without you, I would have been lost. You gave me strength, motivation and grounding. I had to stop wandering around and stuffing myself with intellectual knowledge. Around you, yogic science started opening up to me.



*Pic.1 Surya Namaskar*

# PROLOGUE

Just about a week and the teacher training course (TTC) finishes for all the students in my class, but not for me. The last days the pain in the lower sacrum has gradually increased. It hurts when I do Upward-Facing Dog, it hurts when I try to open my hips. I feel it when I'm sitting, and I feel it when I'm sleeping.



*Pic.2 Upward-Facing Dog*

I'm looking for advice from experienced yoga teachers around, but my case seems quite rare, and all of them merely say, 'Just stop the practice for a few

months.' I realize that I can't complete the course. I'm tired of constant pain, I feel lost, I don't have a clue whom I should approach to resolve my situation.

And here my journey into self-exploration and truly mindful practice start.

**Hello, my dear reader,**

My name is Olga Yumasheva, and I'm an active practitioner of yoga. When I say, 'I practice yoga', I don't just mean that I step on my mat every day, although it's almost always the case. I also point to the fact that the principles of yoga overflow from the mat into my daily living. They have shaped and continue shaping my understanding of situations, my reactions, and my behavior.

Like most students, when I just started, and the first few years I couldn't see what yoga was about. I treated it as a physical exercise, blindly followed the instructions, sweated, blushed, struggled for breath, and competed on 'who can do the most advanced pose.' I was dependent on group classes, lazy to practice at home, and needed a push from the teacher. I attended as many classes as possible, aiming to progress faster, went into extremes of having too long practice or no practice at all.

I kept on losing motivation, gave up practicing multiple times, and tried hard to force myself to get back on the mat. I made promises to

myself to do it tomorrow, and postponed it, and postponed it, and postponed it.

### 3 MAGIC KICKS

Then I had three **‘magic kicks’** from life that loosened my dependency on group classes and forced me to turn towards a more mindful, enjoyable, and beneficial self-practice.

**KICK 1.** I was fortunate to take my TTC as a beginner. Of course, I didn’t start teaching right after getting the certificate. But what I got there was rounded knowledge about yoga: pose mechanics, the connection between asanas and energy centers, benefits of asanas for physical/emotional/mental health, principles of asana sequencing, yoga philosophy, etc.

After the course, I could attend further group classes with my eyes wide open and critically assess them. To see things, we need to know where to look.

**KICK 2.** I was even more fortunate to get injured during my TTC. And that was the second big kick because I couldn’t find

external help. I was forced to acknowledge the responsibility for my own stupidity and impatience and do my own research to fix myself.

The pain was one of my best teachers. It sharpened my learning curve. I had to listen to my body, be gentle with it. Otherwise, it just hurt badly. My physical condition didn't allow me to continue with attempts to jump over my head and perform asanas that were beyond my level.

Instead, I learned about the beauty of simplicity. I added focus and mindfulness into my practice. So, easy poses started giving me incredibly profound experiences.

**KICK 3.** And finally, I was blessed with a kid, and I'm raising her as a single mom. In a way, it's a life constraint, but it gives me multiple benefits in my practice.

First of all, I have to lie in Shavasana with kids' songs in the background. So, I'm forced to improve my concentration power.

Secondly, I can't afford a 1,5-hour practice. I have 15–20 mins all in all. And in between my kid can come up, bring a ukulele and make me

play a song. I have to keep it short, and it makes it easier to have a consistent practice.

The short practice also teaches us to prioritize, do what's really important, and combine techniques to maximize the benefits.



*Pic.3 Shavasana*

And lastly, I know that if I skip my practice, I will just collapse. I need something to rely on, to give me the strength to fulfil my 24/7 mommy duties and not get overwhelmed.



Without these threemagic kicks, I believe I would still be running for 6 group classes a week and hunting for a selfie in Scorpio pose.



*Pic.4 Scorpio pose*

## **MAIN MISTAKES**

The main problem for beginners in yoga is over-relying on group classes and not questioning whether what we're doing actually benefits our health or ruins it.

Since childhood, we've been taught that the harder we try, the faster we progress, the longer we practice, the more benefits we get, the more complicated things we do, the higher results we achieve. And once we step on the mat, we apply the same principles to our yoga practice, not realizing that instead of getting healthier, we may harm ourselves.

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