

KUNDALINI RISING

BY SHAZIA OMAR

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Tête-à-tête with Tim Feldmann

Tim is one of the most amazing yoga teachers I have come across. Prior to yoga, he was a dancer, but a near-lethal fall left him unable to walk. Years of yoga helped him rehabilitate and heal. Today, we will venture into his amazing story.

How did you get interested in yoga?

When I was 25 years old, I had a bad accident. I fell off a ridge in the mountains outside the capital of Venezuela. I could have died that day. It was a deep and steep fall, but I somehow survived.

It took me years to recover. My wonderful doctors told me I would not be able to run or dance again (I was working as a professional modern dancer at the time).

With willpower, determination and some very knowledgeable physical therapists, I got my body back. It was during this time that a friend took me to a yoga class. I instantly felt the healing deep in my bones. I have practiced ever since, almost every day.

Where did you learn yoga? What kind of yoga do you teach and where?

I encountered my first yoga in a

dance class in New York in 1994. The teacher introduced a few simple yoga exercises such as 'surya namaskara' and some 'virabhadrasana' variations. I was most enthusiastic, and she suggested I accompanied her to meet her teacher. It was called the Jiva Mukti Yoga Centre. Later, I met a wonderful teacher from Italy who had practiced for many years under the guidance of Sri Krishna Pattabhi Jois. He introduced me to another type of yoga, 'Ashtanga'. I have practiced that since, studying in Mysore, India many times. These days, I had the good fortune to be invited to teach yoga all over the world. Also, my wife and I have a 'yogashala' in Miami, USA, called Miami Life Centre.

In what ways has yoga benefited you?

Yoga has helped me heal my body



from an injury I was not supposed to heal from. I practice every day to keep my body strong and healthy, but the mental and psychological benefits are perhaps of even more value to me.

I have found this practice a wonderful tool in cultivating most positive characteristics inside, while helping me thin out some of the less positive aspects alive

in me; some innate arrogance, impatience and temper seem to have become less prevalent in my everyday living, and I find myself having more fulfilling relationships with people around me as a result.

There are many such concrete examples of yoga's positive effects in my life.

Describe a typical day in your life.

I wake up around 6 AM. I drink a cup



of tea or coffee and read the newspaper online, perhaps answer a few emails. Then, I shower and practice 'asana', have breakfast and begin to look at the responsibilities of life and work, perhaps administratively, perhaps teaching, whatever my professional life requires. Some study of 'yoga sastra' must happen during the day too, or it doesn't feel complete.

In the evening, I will eat with my wife and perhaps, watch a TV series before going to bed.

What advice do you have for someone who has never tried yoga?

If you have some form of pain in your life, be it physical, emotional or spiritual, yoga is there to help you find your way; not my way, not anyone else's way, but

your way. If your back hurts, yoga helps. If you are bothered by heavy thoughts, yoga clears your mind. If you find yourself lacking purpose in life, yoga can help you find the fire back.

What advice do you have for yoga practitioners?

Practice with diligence and joy, discipline and pleasure. Find the right balance for you. When something begins to work, when something gives fruit, stick with it. Try to find a knowing teacher and learn from him or her. If s/he is close to you, you are lucky. If you have to commute a bit, that is no problem as you will certainly benefit from the extra dedication which you must find within yourself.

What are some of the things you do to take care of the world, or yourself that you have learned along your journey?

I try to only put healthy food into my body. I often fail. When I succeed, my body works surprisingly well and fits me like a comfortable coat. But I have a taste for some food that need to be consumed in lesser quantities such as cheese, bread, coffee, and savouries.

I try to be disciplined about such food, and when I fail, I feel it in my 'asana' practice the next day. I try to live by the precepts of 'Patanjali Yoga,' by the 'Yama Niyamas,' hence cultivate a lifestyle which is kind to everything living, honestly and with integrity. It can be difficult sometimes but I like the boxing match with these noble principles, it keeps me alive and awake.

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