



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter

Issue no: 27

September 2009

## Yoga in Everyday Life

Yoga is not all about postures or meditation as I have tried to convey to you in my newsletters. Yoga is also about the way we behave in everyday life. I have previously told you about the book ***The Four Agreements*** by ***Don Miguel Ruiz***. Here is a summary of the four agreements. Try and live by these four agreements for just a week. It is not so easy.

### Be Impeccable With Your Word

Say only what you mean. This means avoiding gossip, lies, empty promises and other ways we cause problems with our words. Many people don't realise the power of their word and see the harm that can be caused with speaking carelessly, thoughtlessly or aggressively. Realise that you can cause damage if you're not careful with what you say. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

### Don't Take Anything Personally

Nothing others do is necessarily because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When someone gives us feedback about us, it's important to remember that no opinions are truly objective; we all have our biases, "filters" through which we view the world. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

While everyone has their biases and there is no such thing as true objectivity, by *never* taking *anything* personally, people can really limit their ability to see their own negative patterns and biased thinking, and work on developing more healthy patterns and clear-sighted thinking.

### Don't Make Assumptions

Stress is created when people assume they know what other people are thinking without checking with them. Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. Understanding that other people might have different motivations for their actions, and to discuss these motivations before jumping to conclusions about their behaviour, can go a long way toward preventing interpersonal conflict.

With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

### Always Do Your Best

Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret. As long as you put an honest effort into life, you will have nothing to be ashamed of. This is good advice for anyone and this behaviour can help people achieve more progress towards their goals and prevent unnecessary feelings of regret.

### Conclusion

If these four agreements are followed generally (and not fanatically), these suggestions can help you reduce a great amount of stress by helping you avoid thought and behaviour patterns that create frustration, blame, hurt feelings and other negative emotions.

# Posture of the Month

## Bhujangasana I (Cobra Posture)

**Bhujanga means a serpent. In this posture, lie flat on the floor, face downwards, lift the body up from the trunk and throw the head back, like a serpent about to strike.**

### Technique

1. Lie flat on the floor. Stretch your legs back, tops of your feet on the floor and keep your feet together. Keep your knees tight and your toes pointing.
2. Spread your hands on the floor under your shoulders. Squeeze your elbows into your body.
3. Press the tops of your feet and thighs and your pubis firmly into the floor.
4. On an inhalation, begin to straighten your arms to lift your chest off the floor, going only to the height at which you can maintain a connection through your pubis to your legs. Press your tailbone toward your pubis and lift your pubis toward your navel. Tighten your thighs and contract your buttocks.
5. Firm your shoulder blades against your back and expand your side ribs.
6. Lift through the top of your sternum but avoid pushing your front ribs forward, which only hardens your lower back. Distribute the backbend evenly throughout your entire spine.
7. Hold the posture anywhere from 15 to 30 seconds, breathing easily.
8. Exhale and bend your elbows and release back to the floor.
9. Repeat the posture two or three times and then relax.

### Preparatory Postures

Setu bandha (bridge) and Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (upward dog).

### Cautions

Avoid this posture if you have a back injury, carpal tunnel syndrome, headache or are pregnant.

### Beginner's Tip

Don't overdo the backbend. To find the height at which you can work comfortably and avoid straining your back, take your hands off the floor for a moment, so that the height you find will be through extension.

### Intermediate or Advanced Yoga Students

Once you have mastered Bhujangasana I, we will work on Bhujangasana II, which involves bending your knees, then holding the kneecaps with your hands and finally straightening your legs. Please only try this under the supervision of a teacher.

### Benefits of this posture

- ❖ Strengthens the spine and soothes sciatica
- ❖ Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders, and abdomen
- ❖ Firms the buttocks
- ❖ Stimulates abdominal organs
- ❖ Helps relieve stress and fatigue
- ❖ Opens the heart and lungs
  
- ❖ Therapeutic for asthma



Contact Lynne at [lynne.gully@iremia.net](mailto:lynne.gully@iremia.net) or Tel +302892042356