



I've been thinking a lot about community lately. I have watched my small studio grow and grow, and as we prepare to expand into Bluffton, I have been overwhelmed by the sense of unity in my yoga community. It made me think of a blog written by my dear friend and studio manager Brittney.

Brittney and her (new) husband Andrew were discussing the differences in the benefits of yoga versus the gym. To Andrew's question, "Well, what's the difference?" Brittney responds:

"The difference is COMMUNITY. Take a moment for yourself next time you go to the gym. Do you see anyone sharing human experiences with anyone else? Do you witness bonding, problem solving, or compassion? Do you see high-fives being thrown for a person that completed their goal of 15mins on the elliptical?"

In my teaching and practice, I witness strength, growth, honor, and empowerment being given to each student by each other. We high-five when we complete our first wheel, we connect with each CHATURANGA, we grow strong together with each partnered attempted headstand. If we were to plug earphones in our ears and zone out we would not benefit from what we are experiencing. Honestly, when we do that at the gym we don't benefit at all, either, because we are not being present in the moment. We are not noticing the growth in our workout."

This really connected for me. In the style of yoga that we teach, Baptiste Power Vinyasa Yoga,

we are teaching to physicality. We are teaching students to get IN to their bodies, and out of their heads. It's why we do not use music to soothe students, but rather use the practice to teach students to be with themselves. This is **powerful**. The aspect of community is also very powerful and inspiring. Our students care about each other. I turn back to Brittney:

"This Yoga Community has given me the pleasure to witness community in a rather extreme form. Our house was destroyed last June by a fire at 5:30am. Andrew, Armani (our dog) and I survived, yet we had NO POSSESSIONS left. This COMMUNITY stepped up together and by that same night, we had EVERYTHING we needed, from clothes to dog bowls. This experience allowed me to grow not only in the realization that I didn't need ITEMS to make me happy, but it allowed me to get out of what I thought I knew, which was Beaufort wasn't California and I wasn't happy in it. This COMMUNITY of AMAZING people are all here for each other. Through thick, thin, and within, we are all here to help out, to empower, to teach, and to inspire!"

So that is what yoga does. It puts the UNITY in Community.

One last word from Brittney: "Community is awesome. I hope that each of us can take it off the mat and bring it out into our daily lives!"

Word.

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