

Life Is a Journey, Not a Destination

By Guest Author: Nancy Davis

The heart of yoga is best defined as the process of self-awareness, self-discovery and self-realization as you test and grow your physical being.

Sometimes, in searching for what defines us, we need to be open to new experiences. It is easy to say, "No, I am too busy," when new opportunities present themselves. Yet it is those of us who take the step, whether it a step of courage or a step to make time for ourselves, that reap the rewards of a new challenge.

We reached out to a person who took this step. Nancy Davis, a former senior executive of a large public company, shared how she embraced the practice of yoga as she managed through significant life changes. Through her description of her journey, she gives us something to think about in our own life. What other aspects of your life could you view as a journey and not a destination?

When I first started a dedicated yoga practice, I learned that each pose, or asana, is a personal journey and not a destination. This simply means that it doesn't really matter if I cannot achieve the full expression of a particular pose today or even tomorrow. It is more important that I appreciate my progress each time I practice and honor where I am at a particular point in time. I will ultimately reach the full expression and when I do, I will experience the proper benefit the asana provides.

As my yoga practice matured and I embraced this concept, I began to appreciate how many other things in life "are a journey and not a destination," including a career, relationships, personal wellness, creating a home and developing a financial plan. These aspects of life can be viewed as a journey where we achieve success through incremental steps and personal growth. With each step, our self-awareness will improve, our confidence will be strengthened, and we will become more comfortable with our path and approach.

Establish a Foundation

Start each pose on a firm foundation. Be grounded by your connection to the yoga mat, whether it is through your hands, your feet or other points of contact. A solid base of support will provide the confidence you need before you move forward with any pose. Root down and rise up.

Don't Rush Into the Pose

Too often, we rush to reach full expression and we diminish the actual benefit to be gained from the pose. We stack our hips when they should be squared or we collapse inward when our shoulders should be opened and back. Our posture or alignment is compromised by the objective of getting our hand to the floor or extending a limb too quickly. Break down the pose; identify modifications and incremental steps to build upon. Each time you practice, focus on improving one or two components of the final posture. Use an aid to help you move toward the final expression. Blocks or straps can enable your practice and should not be considered a sign of weakness or inability. Take pleasure in your progress with each practice and move toward your ultimate goal with ease and reassurance.

Focus On Your Breath

As the intensity of the pose increases, focus on your breath. Your breath is a calming force both physically and emotionally. Your breath provides energy and strength, calming your nervous system, which enables you to deepen your posture and strengthen your confidence.

What other aspects of your life could you view as a journey and not as a destination? The same principles are easy to apply: Establish a foundation, appreciate where you are and focus on your breath.

About Nancy Davis

After many years as an executive in the business world, Nancy has immersed herself in the world of fitness and, more importantly, wellness. She is a certified yoga Teacher (RYT 200) through Yoga Alliance and completed her 200-hour Yoga certification under Kelli Precourt at Balance Health Studio in Florida. Nancy teaches Vinyasa yoga, which incorporates a flowing sequence of asanas (poses) coordinated with the breath. She firmly believes in the strong interconnection of mind, body and soul and the power of Yoga to forge these connections. Nancy currently teaches at Elevate Your Body in Sandy Springs, Georgia.