

# Awake & Ready!

Newsletter of the Ananda Yoga™ Teachers Association  
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## From the Director

### Burn Bright, Not Out

While wondering what to write about for this issue, I ran into Lin Turner, an Ananda Yoga teacher from Davis, Calif. When I asked her what I should write about, she gave me a weary look and a wry smile, and said, “How about ‘Overcoming Yoga Teacher Burnout’?”

A great idea. So I interviewed three Ananda Yoga teachers who teach a lot, and I’ll share their wisdom with you. Each of them gave a wealth of insights and solutions, from how to recognize the many ways in which burnout can manifest, to finding the causes of burnout, to a wide variety of practical solutions, both preventative and remedial.

Even if you don’t have your own studio (as these three great souls do) or teach as much as they do, I’ll bet you’ll recognize yourself in one or more of their stories. These are all tremendously high-energy people, yet they’ve experienced burnout, so don’t feel like a wimp if burnout strikes. Just be thankful that there are solutions—and that Fran, Doug and Trina were willing to share their stories and wisdom.



Gyandev McCord

#### Fran Zabica

Fran teaches 12 classes a week at her own studio, Inner Harmony, in San Pedro, Calif. (Los Angeles), as well as 3 lunch-time corporate classes. Believe it or not, that’s down from 22 classes a week last fall when she really hit the wall with burnout.

#### Gyandev: How did that happen?

Fran: Last year was the most challenging time of my life. Not only was I teaching and running the studio alone for the most part, but my father became ill and I was the only one who could help. He lived three hours away, and I would drive there every weekend to be with him, and eventually pack him up and move him back to San Pedro. Little by little I felt my strength ebbing. The “catch 22” is that I had less and less time to do anything about it. I kept thinking that soon I would have time to recharge, soon I would have time for me. Then one morning I awoke to a world without joy and luster. Teaching yoga is my passion, but in that world my passion had become tasteless work.



Fran Zabica

#### G: What did your burnout feel like?

F: Moses kept coming to mind. I saw him as a Doorman holding the door open to the Promised Land, calling to everyone to walk through, telling them how beautiful it is, yet being spending the rest of his life as a Doorman. That’s how I felt.

To be honest, I felt that God had played a really mean trick on me, and I was a little angry. But even through the darkest moments, I knew that teaching was my passion, and I began to realize that it was not the situation, but my thinking that was the problem. I would hear Master whispering—sometimes yelling—in my ear, “God First! All else can wait.” And I’d yell right back, “Can my dad wait!? Can the students wait!? Can the bank wait!?” but deep down knowing that he was right. I was teaching on the memory of what it used to be like when I was really connected with God, hoping that that would be enough to inspire the students. I began to feel like an impostor, a mere shadow of my former self.

#### G: How did you try to change it around?

F: At first I thought if just I talked about it, someone would give me the answer (even though I already had it). So I would talk about what I was not doing and how it used to be when I was doing it (i.e., personal practice: meditation). The more I talked, the worse it got. Here I was spending a lot of time and energy feeling bad and complaining about how I had no time to spend on myself and my personal practice. Fortunately I was able to see that the joke was on me, and that in itself lifted me a bit.

So talking about what you’re not doing doesn’t help. Unfortunately, chocolate, french fries and ice cream don’t help either. TV is the least help of all!

#### G: What did help?

F: I knew that meditation was the answer, but I still had that Moses Complex. I thought that if I started really meditating again, I would just be given more work to do. So I set about the task of “fixing” my world through my own efforts. The more time I freed up, the more the time got filled. The more I

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## Burn Bright, Not Out

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tried to simplify, the more complicated my life got. I began to feel like a fish out of water, flopping wildly and gasping for breath.

Then Master's voice would come again: "Dive deep!" And I would say, "But I'm too exhausted and confused to find the ocean, Master. Please send help!" Voilà! Help arrived in the form of two students. The first was a Japanese woman who had just moved into the area and found me in the yellow pages. She really liked the spiritual focus of the class and started coming several times a week. She told me about her husband, the CEO of something or other, that he was really stressed out, and that she planned to bring him to class the next time he was in town.

A few weeks later they both came to class. He sat right in front of me, straight as an arrow and became completely still. Pretty unusual for a stressed out businessman, I thought. A few weeks later they came for another class, but this time I had a substitute teacher because my knee was swollen, my back was out, and my shoulder was pretty torn. (Did I mention that a pretty clear sign of burnout is physical injuries?) After the class I came out of my office to speak with them. He handed me some books, we exchanged a few words, and I went home.

I took the books with me to bed and boy, was I embarrassed! That "something or other" that he was CEO of was the University of Science and Philosophy, based on the work of Walter Russell. He had also been a Zen Buddhist priest for many years. No doubt

his wife told me all this, but it just didn't get through the static at the time. Just as well, because I would have been too freaked out to teach him. Sometimes, maya is good.

One of his booklets, *Awakening the Genius Within*, particularly helped clear the static. In my own words, here is the message I got: "I am not Moses! It is not my job to change or save anybody. My only purpose is to go deep in meditation, to touch that special light that is mine, to come back out and let that light shine.

Through my inspiration, others will be inspired to seek their own source and come back out and shine in their own unique way. Each time that happens, the world has more light."

Boy, did I feel lighter! I know that's what Yogananda and all the other masters say, but I had too many old tapes playing at once, and all their words started being filtered through duty, obligation, burden, etc. I needed to hear it in a new way.

### G: What else helped?

F: I mentioned my old tapes—it's bad enough when one or two play, but when they're all playing at once, it can get pretty scary. That's when affirmations, japa or chanting really help. In my case I needed all three at once. Trying to stop thinking a thought only makes the thought bigger. So I found a chant that was also an affirmation and chanted it continuously until it became japa. The affirmation and the vibration flowing through me for long periods of time weakened the hold of the old tapes. Energy started to have space in which to rise. All the techniques—pranayama, asana, affirmation, visualization, deep relaxation, etc.—are so valuable, like rungs in a ladder. Each one gives you a firm place to step as you move closer to the source of strength that is found only in meditation. Sometimes you find yourself clinging rather than climbing, and it is those times when you send out a call, "Master, I'm too tired and confused. Please, send help."

### G: Any new inspirations from your revitalized sadhana?

F: Oh yes! I feel a real transformation coming on. Everywhere I look I see Hatha Yoga. Today when I got on-line, the MSN home page had someone in shoulderstand (no blanket, head completely turned, looking at the camera!) with the caption, "Check out the hottest new fitness trends from yoga to boku ball." Well, I am a Yoga Teacher, not a postures instructor. I make that very clear to all my students and all those who inquire. But I'm starting to feel like I'm locked in a closet, and I want out. Jyotish Novak (Ananda's Spiritual Director) inspired me with his new Meditation Therapy videos. I feel the Meditation Therapist emerging from the heart of the Yoga Teacher. Perhaps soon my students will believe me when I tell them that, whether they know it or not, they really came to learn to meditate, not pretzel-ate.

"In stillness, I touch my inner strength."

### Doug Andrews

When I called Doug, he was at his "real job," running Business with Pleasure (a copy & quick print business) with his wife, Brenda, near his home in Boulder Creek, California. He had just taught a 9:00 A.M. class, followed by two private lessons, then a few hours at "work," followed by two evening classes. (He teaches at Ananda Sangha of the Redwoods, a beautiful Ananda center/bookstore that he and Brenda and a number of other dedicated souls have manifested—with God's help. Given that

## Member News

### A Change in the Level 2 AYTT Certification Requirements

Effective immediately, there is one additional requirement for certification as a Level 2 Ananda Yoga Teacher: At or near the end of your Level 2 training, you will need to present an Ananda Yoga class to the AYTT staff at The Expanding Light, demonstrating proficiency in teaching (and integrating) the Energization Exercises, asanas, pranayama and Hong-Sau meditation.

To arrange a time for this special critiqued class, please contact Gyandev McCord (see page 12). If you would like to receive an updated copy of the Level 2 curriculum and certification requirements, please send an e-mail or self-addressed, stamped envelope to Gyandev.

### Want a Free Membership?

Are you enjoying the articles in *Awake & Ready!*? Why not consider writing your own—short or long—to share some of the wisdom you've gained? You don't need writing skills; we'll be happy to help you manifest it. Short articles might be in the "Inspirations" section (see page 11)—and if we use your longer article of at least 1500 words, you'll get a *free year's membership!* For more information, contact Gyandev (see page 12).

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# What Is Therapeutic Yoga?

by Nicole DeAvilla

What is “therapeutic yoga”? Is it just the latest yoga marketing hype? After all, isn’t all yoga therapeutic by nature? Gyandev invited me to write about this for two reasons: First, he knew that many people want to know more about the *Therapeutic Yoga* program (a Level 2 offering) I’ll be teaching at The Expanding Light (May 19–24). Second, the whole subject of yoga therapy has become a hot—perhaps even controversial—topic in the U.S., so he wanted me to offer some thoughts on it.

## Yoga is Naturally Therapeutic

When I was still a very green yoga teacher nearly twenty years ago, I had a regular student about whom I knew almost nothing, as she was a shy, quiet type. One evening after class she came up to me and began to thank me profusely for helping her so much. I was momentarily taken aback as I could not imagine what I might have done. She said that she had been a smoker and explained that the yoga classes made her feel very good. After class she would go home and smoke a cigarette, and the good feeling would go away. She liked the good feeling she received from the yoga class, so she began to go longer and longer periods of time before smoking a cigarette until she was able to quit altogether. I had not done anything—I was simply teaching an 8-week beginner Ananda Yoga course, still using notes as I taught, so I could remember what I had planned to teach.

Was that a “therapeutic yoga” class because, through it, someone was able to overcome an addiction? Or because another student’s back problems were eased, another one’s pregnancy went more smoothly than expected, and others found themselves more and more often in good moods?

To me, the answer in all these cases is “no.” These were simply instances where the therapeutic nature of yoga produced positive results for people—physically, mentally and spiritually. There was not a conscious effort on the part of the teacher to obtain any additional specific results for individual conditions. The benefits were reaped naturally by the innate power of yoga to bring us balance in body mind and soul, thus bringing about therapeutic effects.

## Working with Special Conditions

I feel that for a class to be labeled “therapeutic,” much more needs to be involved. After much practice as a yoga teacher, the notebook no longer was needed. As I began to work more intuitively, I was able to focus more on the individual needs of each student. That meant learning who might be a smoker in class—and wanted to quit. It meant discovering who had had knee surgery from a skiing accident—and needed to strengthen the muscles around the knee without aggravating the injury. In short, it meant changing the class plan to accommodate the needs of the moment. Then I was able to go beyond simply “doing no more harm” for someone with an injury or special consideration, and actively working with them on ways to improve their condition through yoga. But I think that even this type of yoga class should not be considered “therapeutic”—it is simply a

teacher doing her job to serve each student personally.

Now, if I speak with a student’s health care provider to learn the exact diagnosis of her condition and ascertain whether the practitioner advises moving into certain positions and avoiding others, *and* if I ask a student a series of detailed questions in order to individualize his program in either a private session or a group class, *and* if I create special classes for groups with special needs, then I consider that what I am teaching is “therapeutic yoga.” I am applying knowledge gained from additional courses/workshops, books and articles, research, trial and error, on-the-job medical and research training, plus my deepening intuition as I deepen my own practices of meditation, and devotion.

Designating a class as “therapeutic” implies that an instructor has additional training and experience in a particular type of therapy that can be implemented through yoga practice. This could be the application of musculoskeletal (bones and muscles) knowledge, counseling training, or Kriya Yoga experience to the teaching of yoga. Designing classes for special groups with special needs is another way that a therapeutic class can be differentiated from a traditional yoga class. Whereas some schools and individuals have focused on gaining knowledge in psychological areas and applying them to and integrating them with a yoga practice, I personally chose the route of gaining musculoskeletal and sports medicine knowledge to integrate with my yoga practice and teaching. For me it addressed the immediate concerns of most of my students, and for myself as well. Over the years, working with people therapeutically on deeper psychological and spiritual levels has evolved naturally in the work that I do. I try to demonstrate how a personal practice of meditation and prayer can be of great assistance.

## The Therapeutic Yoga Program

When I teach *Therapeutic Yoga* at The Expanding Light, the first thing I want everyone to learn is how to do no harm. Prevention is the best medicine in yoga, too! Then I like to arm the



*Nicole DeAvilla has taught Ananda Yoga for 18 years. She has developed teaching expertise in a variety of special needs areas, teaching all ages and levels of students. These days she spends most of her time being a mother, but she also occasionally teaches in preschool and primary school and offers semi-private classes in Marin County, Calif., as well as programs at The Expanding Light.*

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## What Is Therapeutic Yoga?

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students with knowledge of anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, alignment, sports medicine, injury first aid and terminology. Then we cover therapeutic asanas: when to use certain ones, and when to avoid others. Next we go a little deeper and cover the connection between the asanas, physical and mental imbalances and the subtle energy of the chakras. I also like to emphasize the importance of the affirmations—whether you are working with students on a spiritual, psychological or “purely” physical level. I try to demonstrate how a personal practice of meditation and prayer can be of great assistance.

So I like to define “therapeutic yoga” as applying the techniques of yoga to alleviate specific problems (physical, mental and/or spiritual) coupled with a combination of knowledge (specific to the problem), experience and intuition. Happily, most students find that using yoga as a therapeutic tool has very positive side effects, as their whole being comes into a healthier state of balance. Learning more about therapeutic yoga is beneficial not only to someone who would like to excel in the therapeutic applications of yoga, or to a teacher who just wants to safely aid students who have challenges in a general yoga class, but also for an individual student who wants to learn more about his/her own special needs and how to address them for a safe and rewarding yoga practice.

Obviously, learning to teach therapeutic yoga in this sense takes much more training than can come from a five-day program! The important thing is to get started, to “get your feet wet” in the basics. My hope is that you’ll leave *Therapeutic Yoga* with tools to continue a lifelong exploration of therapeutic yoga. ♦

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## Burn Bright, Not Out

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this was not an utterly unusual day for Doug, I knew that either he would be a great source of advice on this topic, or else he was in desperate need of advice. In fact, it was the former.

### **Gyandev:** *Have you ever been burned out as a yoga teacher?*

Doug: Not from yoga, but certainly from the sheer crunch of everything in my life put together. In fact, the yoga teaching has been a real blessing for me. However, as I began to teach more and more classes, I realized that burnout can also come in the form of becoming mechanical, flat, stale—where you’re not feeling what you’re doing, so you’re simply repeating words that you’ve said before. Not good for the teacher *or* the students.



Doug Andrews

### **G:** *What do you do to prevent that?*

One thing that has really helped me is to teach a variety of levels of classes. Teaching lots of different levels requires that you not be saying the same thing in every class. You not only teach different poses, but you teach the same pose in different ways to

different groups. That means you have to stay awake, and when you’re awake, everything is more fun and interesting.

Also, giving private classes has been real important for me because it makes you focus on a single person with perhaps a complex set of needs. You have to address his/her needs and limitations in a very specific way that you’d just never do in a regular class because it’s far too detailed. It requires that you ask questions, explore the situation, almost become that person to a certain extent.

### **G:** *What about your personal practice?*

Maintaining my own yoga practice has been crucial. My main emphasis is always on Kriya Yoga, but of course I also do postures. I’ve found that the more I cultivate my attunement with Master, the less chance there is of being burned out, because it’s not me doing the teaching; rather it’s him teaching through me. Certainly the same thing could be true for others who are not disciples of Yogananda, because the important thing is to focus on a particular ray of the Divine so you can zoom in on its uplifting vibrations. I think that many teachers miss this point.

### **G:** *Do yoga classes put a squeeze on your personal practice?*

They certainly can, but I’ve made it a priority because I realize it’s so important. Sometimes that takes creativity.

For example, we now offer early morning “commuter classes.” (Many locals commute to Santa Cruz or Silicon Valley.) It takes six months to build a successful class, so I wasn’t surprised that the initial turnout was low. Still, it was impacting my sadhana, and I wondered whether it was worth it. (It certainly wasn’t worth it financially—not yet, anyway.) So I turned it into a “sadhana class,” with Energization, postures, chant, and at least a 15-minute meditation. After the class, I did the rest of my meditation. Now there’s no struggle; it’s not pulling away so much from my own sadhana. And if no one shows up, well, I’m doing exactly what I’d be doing anyway. So until the class grows and evolves into something else, it’s sadhana, which is great. I could get carried away and turn this into *just* my own sadhana, neglecting the students, so I have to be careful there, but so far it’s working.

Another example: One of my classes has people who have been with me for a long time. It’s more a mutual exploration of asanas than me teaching them. We work on developing the strength, flexibility or awareness to do new poses. That gives me a chance to do yoga myself, and to expand my own practice as well as my teaching. Sometimes we don’t give ourselves the time to develop new things in our own practice because it’s so hard just to find time for what we already know. This can make for a stale practice. Of course, I can’t get lost in my own practice in this class—I still need to be there primarily for the students.

### **G:** *What else do you do to stay fresh?*

You can’t let inertia get you. You need to continue to study yoga philosophy even if your life is getting crunched, time-wise. It deepens your practice and opens up new dimensions of understanding. The weakest area of most yoga teachers is philosophy, but if we take the time to explore that more, it gives us a broader base of knowledge so that if other people come with past exposure to other yoga traditions, we will know where they’re coming from and how help them come to an understanding of what Ananda Yoga is all about. And isn’t that what we’re here for?

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# Teaching Yoga for Round Bodies

Part 2 of a 3-part series by Kay Erdwinn, M.D.

In this issue, Kay continues with adaptations for asanas in the *LAYTT* manual to suit the special needs of fat people. In the last issue, she discussed general issues with teaching fat people, and addressed four specific poses, ending with *balasana* (going in alphabetical order by Sanskrit name).

Kay will join Jyoti Spearin, David Ramsden and Barbara Bingham, PT, as a teacher for the Teaching Yoga for Special Needs Level 2 program, June 16–21.

## Bhujangasana

This asana is usually not harder for fat people than for anyone else. However, there are a couple of items to keep in mind. One, usually the hardest part of the asana is lying prone with the head on the ground. It's hard for a fat person to breathe that way, since some abdominal and chest fat is compressed upward. Once one enters the asana, it stops being a problem. Two, it is very difficult for a fat person to keep the legs together. The normal difficulty with this is exacerbated by the need to tighten the buttocks and press the pubis and thighs into the floor. This "squishes" the thighs, and once again, the fat has to go *some-where*, and it ends up on the sides. I haven't found that spreading the legs slightly creates any problem as long as the buttocks are tight and the pubis is pressed to the floor to protect the lower back. However, one may use a strap to help keep the knees from separating too far, if necessary.

## Chandrasana

The only real problem here for some fat people is the need to keep the legs together. I don't think the student risks injury if s/he has a slightly wider stance, but it does tend to decrease the feeling of the body being in a smooth, compact crescent-moon arc—an important part of the "energy" of the asana. I don't have a solution to this, but I do think that if keeping the legs together causes pain or creates added balance problems, then widening the stance is justified. Anyone, fat or thin, may have a swayback, and it's important to protect the lumbar area by tucking the pelvis. For a fat person with a very large belly, the lumbar area may be vulnerable even without a clinical lordosis, and in my experience it is safest to teach this asana assuming the need for extra lumbar protection for most fat people. Also, the additional weight in a fat person's arms may make it difficult to hold the pose very long.

## Dandasana

The only caveat here is that when fat people place their arms at their sides, their arms are not hanging down perpendicular to

the floor. Consequently, when a fat person supports him/herself in this asana, the angle of the arms makes them less efficient in strength for the task. This may make the asana difficult even if the student otherwise has enough upper body strength to lift his/her body. Of course, the arms don't lift the body clear of the floor in this asana, so it's not as serious a problem, but it could still present difficulties. As for any student, sitting on a cushion will

facilitate a straighter spine, just as the arms *would* have if not for the angle. In addition, if the student has a very large belly, s/he may need to spread the legs.

## Dhanurasana

The difficulty for fat people with this asana is the tendency for the legs to splay open when bringing the feet to the buttocks—another case of "the fat has to go some-where." Holding a strap around the feet, and fastening another one around the lower thighs (don't suggest this last unless you're sure the strap will be long enough for the person) can help with this problem. However, I still allow a few extra inches even with the straps. It's critical that the student be able to protect the lower back by tightening the buttocks and pressing the pubis to the floor, since the wider apart the legs are, the less protection there is for the lower back.

## Garudasana

Because of extra flesh in the upper arms and thighs, it's hard for a fat person to wrap one limb around the other. If the student

has good balance and is otherwise fairly flexible, I have him/her place the foot of the raised leg on the lateral part of the knee, rather than the back of the calf. This allows more room for the thighs, although admittedly it sacrifices some of the twist. It does provide the same ankle strengthening and balance practice that the full posture does, though. For the arms, I simply allow whatever approximation the student can perform while stressing that the forearms and hands should be (close to) vertical even if the full wrap-around is not possible. This prevents the upper body from losing proper alignment. You will likely need to use a strap to "unite" the arms; that will also help with balance. Remind those who use straps to keep a loose grip with the hands.

## Halasana

I don't personally teach this asana because my neck won't allow me to perform it (yet ...). However, difficulties I can foresee for the fat person are twofold: First, as always, finding room for the tummy is hard. Practicing the asana by bringing the feet over onto a chair seat instead of onto the floor will largely

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Kay teaches "Yoga for Round Bodies" in Placerville, Calif. She also volunteers at the El Dorado Women's Center, a local domestic violence help resource.



## Teaching Yoga for Round Bodies

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solve the problem, allowing the student to breathe more easily.

Second, although the torso is out of the way of the upper arms once one is up in the asana, it can be difficult to get the arms into position. I suggest holding on to a strap with both hands to allow the arms to be slightly further apart without strain. One can also tie a strap in a loop and bind the arms just above the elbows so they won't slide apart; however, it's awkward to get the arms into and out of the loop, as well as awkward to get up into the pose.

(For large-breasted women, there is a third issue: it might be even more difficult for them to breathe in this position than for a man or less well-endowed woman. A sports bra may help if it doesn't dig in to the flesh too much.)

A note on blankets: The "fat pad" on a fat person's back acts as a blanket, helping preserve the cervical curve; therefore s/he may not need as many blankets under the body in this pose (and in sarvangasana and viparita karani) as a thin person. However, if the person has a widow's hump, as many fat people eventually do, they may want those blankets—not for preserving the cervical curve, but for padding the sensitive area of the hump. Whatever blankets are used for a fat person should have the folded edge farther above the shoulders than for a thin person, because the greater bulk of the shoulders means rolling farther backward when coming up into the pose.

### Janushirasana

Here's another asana in which the abdomen gets in the way. A partial solution is to practice the variation with legs wide apart. One still has to turn the torso before bending over the knee, so some compression is inevitable. It's easier than the standard, leg-forward version, however. A word of warning: if the student is very large, the displaced abdomen could pull the back out of alignment, so that a slight turn of the back (seen as the outside shoulder dropping) occurs. This can be solved by making sure that the student turns the torso while still fully upright, and that the student adjusts his/her belly until it is squarely on top of the thigh over which the bend is to occur (see me below). One simply has to be vigilant to make sure the student stays in alignment and backs off if needed.



### Jathara Parivartanasana

As with pregnant women, fat people need to accommodate the belly via less bend in the leg that crosses over. The difficult bend is at the hip joint, not so much in the knee joint. Holding the knee of the crossover leg may not be possible. I personally practice this twist with straight legs (not locked) and holding a strap around the foot that's crossing over. One must make sure the student isn't tugging at the strap and putting extra strain on the knee, though.

### Matsyasana

The difficult aspect of this asana for a fat person is the position of the arms. Ideally, the elbows are shoulder-width apart, but a fat student may have too much bulk in the upper arms and back to accomplish this. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that s/he may have a mild contracture of the deltoid, lateral biceps and lateral triceps. Thus it can be harder both to get leverage to lift the torso and to have the strength to support it (and "it" is heavier, to boot).

To work on this, one can bind the elbows with a strap, then have the student simply do the asana as well as possible. Be aware that s/he must have done some serious shoulder and arm warm-ups before attempting this asana. Also, s/he will need to be "spotted" to help with the strap. I always place my hand under the lumbar back to ascertain the amount of curvature, since it's more difficult to eyeball it than with a thinner student. Lastly, as in many asanas, holding the legs straight and together may be difficult. A second strap may be used for the legs, but I don't find it necessary unless the legs spread so wide that the student is unable to adequately use the buttock and thigh muscles to protect the lower back. Still, form is often improved with the strap.

### Padahastasana

A fat student will not be able to bend forward as far as a comparatively flexible thinner person, again due to the size of the belly. Bending the knees aggravates this problem, so be on the lookout for locked knees in your fat students. Another, related, problem is difficulty breathing. Taking a deep, belly breath may move a fat student's torso up a few inches, and then it will move down again with the exhale. This produces a slow undulation that I think is not harmful as long as it is not a bounce that would stress spinal discs or knees. Besides, it's proof that your fat student is breathing correctly!

The fat person will be tempted to open the legs to accommodate the belly. This provides a legitimate stretch in itself, but not the same as Padahastasana. I therefore encourage my fat students to keep the legs at the width with which they perform Tadasana, and to think of lengthening the spine rather than bending over as far as possible. However, I often have them perform the asana with legs wide apart afterward, to demonstrate both how the belly gets in the way in the proper asana and how well they can usually do the asana without belly problems. Obviously, this strategy could backfire if the student has difficulty with forward bends in general. Otherwise, it's a fine morale booster.

### Parvatasana

Most fat people find it difficult to draw the legs into a close cross-legged position, although many can do a loose version.

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# Confessions of a Closet Ananda Yoga™ Teacher

by Susan Hayes

My first experience of Ananda Yoga™ took place in May of 1999, when I attended a weekend yoga workshop led by Lisa Powers. After 25 years of studying various forms of yoga, I felt as if I had “come home” when I experienced the gentleness and inward focus of Ananda Yoga™. Plus, Lisa suggested that doing yoga was a way to get closer to our Higher Selves. I was amazed that I could move toward Self-Realization while doing something I loved to do. I knew that I had to come back to The Expanding Light, and soon!

I immediately enrolled in the July 1999 AYTT. My initial motivation for taking AYTT was not to teach but to achieve mastery over the asanas. However, about half-way through AYTT, I was struck by something that Anandi said about the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga, only one of which even *mentions* the word “asana.” She told us that yoga teachers are light bearers, holding up a torch to light the way along the path from Sankhya (loosely, our nature as created, matter-identified beings) to Vedanta (our true nature as spiritual beings). This image made me think that it might be worthwhile to use what I was learning in AYTT to teach yoga, rather than simply use it for my own personal satisfaction.

## “I Am a Skeptic ...”

Like all AYTT graduates, I was asked to write an evaluation of the course. My comments were eventually published in a subsequent Expanding Light program guide (right underneath a photo of Lisa Powers demonstrating “garudasana arms”) They began: “I am a skeptic ...”

Although I was not deliberately trying to be provocative, I think that I proclaimed these words almost proudly, as if to “strut my stuff” of rationality and discernment. This attitude persisted for the next two years. For example, when I attended the Advanced Pranayama and the Subtle Body course in February 2001, I told Gyandev McCord that the workshop’s premise required the suspension of disbelief—“as though,” I remarked, “one were taking a class in ‘How to Treat a Space Alien When He Comes Down to Earth.’ One has to believe in the existence of the Space Alien, first.” Same with the concept of a subtle body.

It wasn’t just cynicism or skepticism that permeated my thoughts and words. I suffered from constant doubt. (I still do; but then, so did Mother Theresa. Gyandev is more charitable: he says I have a “sincere desire to know and a questioning mind,” and that those are, in fact, assets.) I remember confessing to one of my AYTT teammates, during a student-teaching exercise, that I didn’t feel comfortable leading a yoga class centered around the “AUM” sound because “I don’t really believe in it.”

I had never truly appreciated the (negative) power of the words (or the underlying sentiments) that I was expressing until I read Paramhansa Yogananda’s *Scientific Healing Affirmations* (1924 edition), in which he points out what skepticism really is: a form of spiritual disease. He wrote that mental and spiritual inharmony are the causes of all disease, and if the mind is free from “mental bacteria” and the Soul is free from ignorance of its true nature, “no material disease or lack can follow.”

This brings me to the point of this article: after almost three years of teaching hundreds of Ananda-style yoga classes, I have finally come out of the closet as an Ananda Yoga teacher and now use the affirmations as part of my teaching of the yoga postures. Here’s why I’ve made the transition:

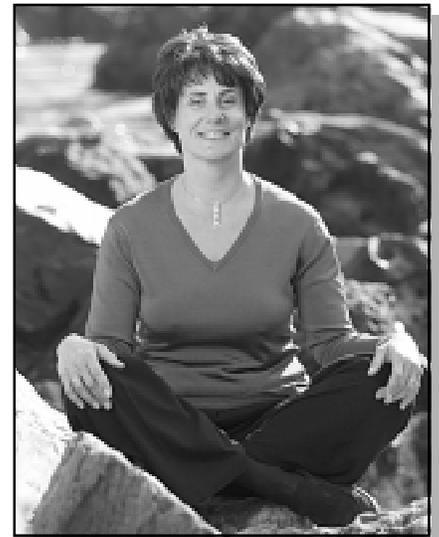
## Affirmations Are an Integral Part of Yogananda’s Teachings

As a former lawyer with an above-average understanding of the law of trademark and copyright, I always knew that the use of affirmations was a unique feature of Ananda Yoga™. However, I never realized that Yogananda himself espoused the power of words—in particular, of affirmations—*vis á vis* Self-Realization. In *Scientific Healing Affirmations* (1924 edition), he states:

“Man’s word is Spirit in man. Words are sounds occasioned by the vibrations of thoughts. Thoughts are vibrations sent forth by the Ego or Soul. *Every word that leaves your mouth ought to be potent with your genuine soul vibration.* Words in most people are lifeless because they are automatically put forth into the ether, without being impregnated with soul force. Too much talking, exaggeration or falsehood used in connection with words is just like shooting bullets out of a toy gun, without the gun-powder. That is why the prayers or words of such people do not produce any desired definite change in the order of things. Every word you utter you must mean it, i.e., every word you put forth must represent not only Truth, but some of your realized soul force. Words without soul force are husks without the corn.”

He continues: “Words that are saturated with sincerity, conviction, faith and intuition are just like highly explosive vibration bombs, which when let out, are sure to explode the rocks of difficulties and create the change desired. Avoid speaking unpleasant words, *even though they are true.* Words must be intoned according to the convictions within. Sincere words or affirmations repeated understandingly, feelingly and willingly are sure to move the Omnipresent Cosmic Vibratory Force and render you aid in your difficulty. Only appeal to that Force with infinite confidence, casting out all doubt and the spirit of looking for the

(continues on page 9)



Susan Hayes lives in Meadow Vista, Calif., and is owner/director of Mountain Top Yoga studio.



## Teaching Yoga for Round Bodies (continued from page 6)

Almost all fat people will need cushions under the knees, and it is unlikely that any will attempt anything more than sukhasana (the simple cross-legged position) unless they've been practicing for a long time. In time the hip joints will open, but fat in the thighs and calves prevent close folding of the legs. Also, the habitual contracture of fat students' external hip rotators means that all cross-legged sitting postures will be more challenging for them, on average. You may also notice fat students surreptitiously "adjusting" their belly out of the way of their legs. When I demonstrate, I call attention to the fact that I need to do this, but it's probably better for the average-sized teacher to reassure the fat student individually that this is an important thing to do. The only other caveat in this asana is that fat arms weigh more, and therefore the fat person is working harder than the thinner one.

### Paschimotanasana

This asana presents the same difficulties for the fat person as Padahasthasana. I usually teach it using a strap around the feet and held in both hands like reins, including with the same slight looseness one would use with a horse. Then I instruct the student to move the chest forward, keeping the back straight and the chest open. I don't even encourage them to bend forward, because in the fat person with a belly, this inevitably rounds the back. In addition, the more the fat student bends over, even with a straight back, the less efficiently s/he will be able to breathe. For the surrender phase, I have my students bow the head slightly, make sure there is no tension in the arms or shoulders, and breathe deeply. As with padahasthasana, the fat student may "bob" slightly, but as long as it's gentle and with the breath, this is okay. One last comment with this asana is that, again as with padahasthasana, I practice the wide-legged version after.

### Salabhasana

Keeping the arms close to the body and the legs together are the challenges here for the fat person. I generally let my students put their arms in an abducted position like airplane wings. The legs can be strapped together—not too close; allow a few inches—or the fat student can simply do the asana with spread legs. The danger here occurs when the legs are so wide it affects the thigh and buttock muscles protecting the lower back. I have found that most fat students prefer to do the "cross-extension"

## E-Mail Maya

Recently we've been having lots of *vrittis* of *chitta* on AYSutra. It appears that some e-mail services are blocking our bulk e-mails, perhaps thinking they're SPAM. Yahoo, Hotmail and Aol frequently (but not always) do this, as do some other providers. So e-mails intended for a number of you are coming back to us undelivered. Sorry!

AYSutra usually sends at least one e-mail every week or so. If you haven't been receiving that many, then there's an e-mail problem, and you should check with your e-mail provider to make sure that messages (especially bulk messages) from [AYSutra@expandinglight.org](mailto:AYSutra@expandinglight.org) are not being blocked. We can't do anything about it on this end.

version of this asana, lifting the left hand and right leg, then vice versa. This is safer for the lower back and is easier to perform.

### Sarvangasana

I don't teach this asana for the same reason as I don't teach halasana. However, the primary difficulty for a fat person in this asana comes in placing the hands on the back and the elbows close enough to the body to provide proper leverage. The strap-around-the-elbows strategy mentioned for halasana may be helpful. Other than that, the difficulties for the novice fat student would be similar to those of a thinner one, and therefore practicing with a chair or against a wall might be appropriate. As in halasana, the caveat about large-breasted women having difficulty breathing also holds true here, as does the note on using blankets.

### Sasamgasana

This asana usually makes fat people laugh and make jokes about "Maybe in my next lifetime ..." There is simply too much tummy and thigh and possibly chest on most fat people to roll into a ball. I don't teach this asana per se, although I do sometimes start with the "frog" variation of balasana and invite my students to lift the buttocks and tuck the head for a gentle upper back/neck stretch. The weight stays on the arms or hands, not on the head, as described in the manual under variations for sasamgasana. ♦

*Kay's article will conclude in the next issue as she takes us through the remaining 12 poses in the current AYT manual.*

## New Programs in the Level 2 AYT

Below are some of the latest developments for the Level 2 certification curriculum at The Expanding Light. See the calendar on page 10 for the dates of all Level 2 programs.

1. *Special Needs Teacher Training* (June 16–21, 2002) will explore how to work with students who have injuries, chronic illness and/or very limited flexibility. Valuable for any yoga teacher! Led by Jyoti Spearin, David Ramsden, by Barbara Bingham, PT, and Kay Erdwinn, M.D.
2. Jyotish and Devi Novak will teach both the *Bhagavad Gita* week and *Yoga Sutras* weeks in 2002. The AYT staff will also teach you how to practice and teach a number of asanas that are more advanced than those in Level 1 AYT.
3. *Meditation Immersion* is a new 4-day program that takes place at Ananda's special Seclusion Retreat. Program leader Diksha McCord will help participants focus on how to deepen and lengthen their meditations.



## Confessions of a Closet Ananda Yoga™ Teacher (continued from page 7)

desired result. If you don't do this, your appealing attention is deflected and side-tracked from its objective mark. Besides you cannot sow the vibratory prayer seed in the soil of Cosmic Consciousness and then pick it out every minute to see if it has germinated into the desired result or not." (*Italics are mine.*)

Thus, I know that in order to more effectively "hold up the light" to help guide my yoga students along the spiritual path, I must utilize the affirmations that Kriyananda created for the asanas when teaching authentic Ananda Yoga™.

### My Teaching Reflects My Spiritual Development

Now, more than two-and-a-half years after graduating from AYT, I have come to the conclusion that the evolution of my yoga teaching style reflects my own spiritual development.

Since 1999, I've frequently gone back to The Expanding Light, ostensibly to obtain my Level 2 certificate. However, I don't just go there for programs. Sometimes—because I'm lucky enough to live only an hour's drive away—I go there to do sadhana, or to help out in the kitchen. What I find is that the deeper I dive into Ananda Yoga, the more I realize how ignorant I have been with each step I have taken along the spiritual path.

My experience as a yoga teacher is a prime example of this. My first job after AYT was a two-year stint as a yoga instructor at the Auburn Racquet & Fitness Club. I loved teaching there, because the students were, for the most part, as wary and unconscious as I was about the power of yoga to affect our lives, except perhaps on the grossest physical level. I discussed the anatomical and physiological effects of the asanas on particular systems of the body. I emphasized the sports-conditioning, stress-reducing, and medically-proven healing possibilities of the postures. If I mentioned the affirmations at all, it was in a tongue-in-cheek, cavalier fashion. My rationale for teaching this way was simple: "I am teaching at a gym, and that is the form of yoga that I'm supposed to teach. If I try to teach spiritual yoga, I will be fired."

After two years, I left the Racquet Club and opened up my own yoga studio—Mountain Top Yoga—in Meadow Vista, the small town where I live. However, I still had a hard time forcing myself to use the affirmations, primarily because I was embarrassed and did not fully believe in their efficacy myself. And so, I characterized my classes as "Ananda-style" yoga. Even after opening up my own studio and quitting my job at the Racquet Club, I couldn't bring myself to say the affirmations. Then, when I was at the Advanced Pranayama course shortly after opening the studio, one of my fellow AYT grads asked me why I was still afraid to say the affirmations. "After all," she pointed out gently, "you can't be fired for using them; you own the studio!"

However, as I find myself attuning to Yogananda more and more, it has become impossible to cling to my old security blankets of skepticism, doubt, and cynicism. I find that I have to utilize every tool I have been taught—including affirmations—in order to teach yoga effectively.

### Students Respond Positively to Ananda Yoga

In the year since I opened Mountain Top Yoga Studio, students have been coming at a gratifying rate. The schedule of classes has increased from one Thursday morning class per week (taught by

me) to more than 16 classes a week (taught by three teachers). [The studio's success has allowed me to retire from law and devote myself to teaching yoga full-time.

Most recently, in response to requests from several of my students, I began offering a Children's Yoga class, based on the theories I learned at the *Sharing Yoga with Children* program with Michael (Nitai) Deranja at The Expanding Light. I was nervous, because, even though I love children, motherhood has never been my favorite job. The first day, 11 children showed up, and the class was a *total blast!* Students have requested more Children's Yoga classes, more evening classes, afternoon classes for school-teachers, and a meditation class.

Gyandev said that it all has to do with magnetism, but I am reluctant to ascribe such a lofty characteristic to myself (until I realize that when I teach yoga, I am merely a channel for God). All I know is that the students keep coming, *even though* (or perhaps *because*) I am incorporating more and more of the affirmations into my yoga classes. The same is true for the Energization Exercises. I've even started to make reference to that Space Alien, the subtle body!

A graphic illustration of the possibility that I should come further out of the closet about teaching Ananda Yoga occurred just a little while ago. I was teaching a private class to a former Racquet Club student who had won it in a fundraising raffle at the Placer Nature Center. At the end of the class, the student asked me to write down two of the "beautiful" things that I had said earlier in the class: "Environment is strong than Will," and the affirmation for savasana ("Bones, muscles, movement ..."). Too bad I had taught her yoga for two whole years at the gym without introducing either of those two phrases into her life until now.

The Divine Mother is forcing me out of the closet in many ways. For example, I have a new yoga student who just moved to the town of Gold Run, a good distance away from Meadow Vista. She had absolutely no idea that I taught Ananda-style yoga. However, it turns out that she and her husband had once attended a weekend workshop at The Expanding Light, long before she ever moved to the Sierra Nevada foothills, and that she loves The Expanding Light and Ananda Yoga!

It was obvious to me from the start that she could perform the asanas far better than I can. I thought to myself: "What do I have to offer this woman? She doesn't need to be in my class." I told her that there was a yoga studio in Dutch Flat, a community that is much closer to Gold Run. The student told me "Yes, I know; but that is YogaFit yoga. I am here for the spiritual aspects that you can teach me." Gulp! As Alfred E. Newman used to say in *Mad Magazine*: "What, me worry?" (She also sends her 6-year-old son to my weekly kids' yoga class.)

Since students are coming to my classes for other things besides the asanas—i.e., for the affirmations, Energization Exercises, and/or spiritual aspects of yoga—then it behooves me to get my act together and really learn my stuff. And so, as I timidly evolve into an Ananda Yoga teacher—one class at a time—I vow to earnestly apply myself to really learning all of those spiritual concepts that I struggled so mightily with two years ago at AYT. Wish me luck.

*Susan Hayes can be reached at [susan@mountaintopyoga.com](mailto:susan@mountaintopyoga.com). Her website ([www.mountaintopyoga.com](http://www.mountaintopyoga.com)) has photos and information about the studio. ♦*

## Burn Bright, Not Out

(continued from page 4)

Being open to new directions is also a big one. For me, the thrill these days comes primarily from walking people through the path itself, with meditation as the emphasis. Hatha Yoga is more a means of drawing people into that, and for me, it's tremendously rewarding when the light bulb comes on and they begin to get the bigger picture. Then the asanas, too, become even more fun.

And of course, the occasional—or better still, regular—retreat experience is absolutely vital. I haven't been getting enough of that lately, but I know from my own experience that it's crucial. I simply have to recharge my batteries.

It's attitudinal, too. Some yoga teachers are *so* serious, and that's good in a way, but we have to keep in mind that the practice is about being joyful. We can't afford to lose that. We need to do whatever it takes to maintain that joy. When the joy disappears for the teacher, it disappears for the students, too—and that's a drag. If you're not having fun, then it's no different from anything else in our lives: it feels like a job, and it simply won't work.

### Trina Ford

Trina is the owner/director of Integrative Bodyworks in North Augusta, South Carolina, a center for yoga and bodywork. Many of you will remember her inspiring piece in the AYTT manual on teaching asana affirmations. In addition to running her center (employing other teachers, bodyworkers and administrative staff), she teaches yoga and does bodywork herself. When I called her, one of her regular staff teachers was at The Expanding Light taking AYTT, two others were on leave for personal reasons, and one massage therapist had just resigned. So burnout was definitely in the air.

#### **Gyandev:** *Have you ever been burned out from teaching yoga?*

Trina: Oh yes. Right now, in fact, partly because of the intensity of my whole life, but also because we've added a lot more classes and teachers, and three of the teachers are on leave. This happens, of course, and I always have to be prepared to take up the slack.

It's happened before. When I began teaching, it was mainly just to have folks to practice with, to have fun. Then people started asking me to teach here and there, plus I was doing massage and working full time. I got spread a bit thin, but I managed.

## A Change in an Asana Affirmation

Swami Kriyananda has made a minor change to the affirmation for virabhadrasana (warrior pose). He has added an exclamation point and switched the order of the words "manifest" and "joyfully." It's now, "I joyfully manifest the power of God!" Flows better, doesn't it?



Trina Ford

When I opened my own center in 1999, I thought that would give me a break because everything would be under the same roof. Less travel, no sweat. And it did work for a while—I was teaching nine classes a week plus doing massage therapy—but then the studio started growing (which of course it needed to do for financial reasons).

We needed more class time, because we could only fit 16 people at a time. I had no one to help me, so it was a bitter-

sweet experience of seeing it grow, but grow too much for me to handle. I began to burn out.

#### **G:** *How did the burnout manifest?*

T: Mainly exhaustion and stress. I was fine while I was in class, but what got me was the thought each day of what I would have to do that day: four therapies, four yoga classes, a 12-hour day. I thought, "Won't all this please go away?" And I wanted to do other things too, like teach meditation. But of course you don't want to quit something you love. And the center needed income.

#### **G:** *What was your solution for burnout?*

T: A big part of it was adding more teachers, although it added new kinds of stress: working with others, being a boss, and all the administrative things that go along with that. I'd never done that before, and I'm still learning. I think of myself as a yogi and a massage therapist, but all that other stuff came with it. The operation has become smoother with experience, of course.

Also vital has been my own meditation and yoga practice, and making sure I stay healthy. But what's helped me the most is affirmations. Every morning, I pick an affirmation from Swami Kriyananda's *Affirmations for Self-Healing*, one that seems right for the way I'm feeling. If I'm a little down, for example, I'll pick one on joy, write it down, and keep it going all day. Later, if I start getting a negative thought—I'm sad, or overburdened, or tired—I go back to the affirmation. If a feeling comes up that doesn't relate closely enough to that affirmation, I simply make up my own short, sweet affirmation to turn it around. For example, if my affirmation was for joy, but all of sudden I'm worrying about money, I might affirm, "This is God's work. He will provide."

I'm also very prayerful all day long: speaking to God, asking for guidance in everything. Where is the money going to come from? Where are the teachers going to come from? Before making a decision, I ask for guidance and decide based on whatever comes. I think Yogananda or Swami Kriyananda said, "The only bad decision is a decision not made." And there's an old rabbi's saying, "Pray with your feet moving." That's how I do things, and I feel I'm really supported.

Anything I have now, I know has been given to me for God's work, and that's the big thing that gets me through the tough spots. Constant partnership with God rather than everything being on my shoulders. In fact, I've seen that it's really only when I feel that everything's on my shoulders that burnout happens.

#### **G:** *What other things have helped?*

T: Support from my family in it being okay that I'm working so much, especially with all my night classes. I'm gone a lot of the

(continues on page 11)



## *Inspirations: "Left and right and all round ..."*

### **In the Restaurant with a Five-Star Chef**

In one of my classes I have someone of regional celebrity status: a five-star chef (he was Maine's first) with a restaurant and large catering service. He's known for being passionate and outspoken, and he has a temper. He loves the asana affirmations and often repeats them out loud in class with a smile on his face. My friend works for this chef and says he is much calmer now and has everyone in the kitchen repeating the affirmations.



*Cynthia Edmonds  
Bath, ME*

One time, I showed the class *sasamgasana* and pointed out that it's good for headaches. The chef obviously took that in, because some days later, he practically dragged a delivery guy into the dining room when the guy said he had a migraine. The chef "showed" him the pose and the guy felt immediate relief. So, our chef actually shared the credit for "the cure."

Now I am known in this area as "the yoga woman with affirmations who can cure headaches"! Not exactly the way I would've "shared" yoga, but our chef is a somewhat forceful personality, to say the least. And he's sending a ton of students my way.

I thought you'd get a chuckle out of the way Ananda Yoga spreads. (*Cynthia Edmonds, Bath, ME*)

*Do you have an inspiration to share? Teaching tip? An amusing yoga story? Please send it to Gyandev (see page 10) for possible inclusion in a future issue.*

### **In the Gym**

I do a Friday evening class at a health club for people to put the stress of their weeks behind them. It has been very popular, averaging about 16 people a class. I'm happy about that, because the club director never thought it would go! One evening a woman came up to me after class (she'd not been in the class) and said, "I'd been looking forward to this class all week, and I somehow got the time wrong." But she wanted to tell me how much the class means to her. I told her there was another class tomorrow morning with another teacher. She said, "Yeah, but does she do the affirmations?" It has been so fun finding ways to present the affirmations and the essence of Ananda Yoga to the best of my ability in accessible ways, even in the middle of a pretty grunty (for lack of a better adjective) sort of gym!!! (*Erika Osmann, Myersville, MD*)



*Erika Osmann  
Myersville, MD*



*Janet Burrell  
Kokomo, IN*

### **In the Bible Belt**

My class loves the affirmations. When I say they can "mentally affirm ...," they all say it out loud. I tell them they don't have to say it out loud if they don't want to, but they say they like to. Also, this being the Bible belt of the nation, they love to say all the affirmations just exactly the way they were written. (*Janet Burrell, Kokomo, IN*)

### **Burn Bright, Not Out** (continued from page 4)

day, and since I have a young daughter, I need the support from both her and my husband. They give it.

I think that many people, especially women, have a tendency to want to be everything to everyone: perfect mom, perfect wife, perfect yoga teacher, perfect business person, perfect boss, perfect massage therapist. We want to please everyone. We can't do it, of course, and when we try too hard, we burn out.

For example, I recently had to increase my prices, and one woman complained. I explained that we had to be able to pay the higher quality teachers that we now have. You have to do what you have to do. If you try to please everyone, it won't work.

So I keep going back to: What's in the highest interest of everyone? If what you're doing leads to a burned out owner and/or burned out teachers, that's not in the highest interest of anyone.

### **G: So now it's all a piece of cake, right?**

T: R-i-i-i-ight. We now have 17 classes, and although I usually teach only a small number of those, I still do bodywork, manage the center, and give private lessons. I still need to go to classes and see what's happening or adjust people. I still need to evaluate my seven wonderful teachers, give them feedback. As director, I have to make sure that the students are getting what I want them to get. That can have its challenges. I want teachers to have the space to grow, and I realize there are different ways of doing things, but I need to be clear in what I'd like done. For a person like me, that can be stressful.

I've realized that sometimes I simply have to let go of some things in order to preserve my own sanity. I have my own way of doing things, and part of my process has been to be able to let go a little bit without stepping out of directing teachers in the way I need to do it.

(continues on page 12)



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# Upcoming Level 2 Programs

AYTA Members receive a 10% discount on all Level 2 programs, which more than pays for your membership! In the schedule below, “★” indicates a required Level 2 program. For details, see The Expanding Light’s program guide or [www.expandinglight.org](http://www.expandinglight.org). (You should have recently received the new program guide for May–October 2002.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 5/5–12 ..... <b>Kriya Yoga Preparation</b> (with Dianna Smith)  | 6/30–7/7 .. <b>Kriya Yoga Preparation</b> (with Dianna Smith)                                  |
| 5/8–12 ..... <b>Meditation Immersion</b> (with Diksha McCord)   | 7/4–14 ..... ★ <b>Meditation Teacher Training</b> (with Savitri Simpson)                       |
| 5/12–19 ... ★ <b>Advanced Pranayama and the Subtle Body</b> (with Gyandev McCord, Uma Meshorer and Savitri Simpson) | 7/14–27 ... ★ <b>AYTT Assistantship</b> (with Jyoti Spearin)                                   |
| 5/19–24 ... <b>Therapeutic Yoga</b> (with Nicole DeAvilla)  | 9/18–22 ... <b>Meditation Immersion</b> (with Diksha McCord)                                   |
| 5/30–6/9 .. <b>Yoga of the Heart</b> (with Nischala Joy Devi)   | 9/19–22 ... <b>The Healing Path of Yoga</b> (with Nischala Joy Devi)                           |
| 6/16–21 ... <b>Special Needs Teacher Training</b> (with Jyoti Spearin and David Ramsden)                            | 9/22–29 ... ★ <b>The Essence of the Yoga Sutras</b> (with Jyotish and Devi Novak & AYTT staff) |
| 6/23–30 ... ★ <b>The Essence of the Bhagavad Gita</b> (with Jyotish and Devi Novak & AYTT staff)                    | 10/6–13 ... <b>Kriya Yoga Preparation</b> (with Dianna Smith)                                  |
| 6/30–7/5 .. <b>Sharing Yoga with Children</b> (with Nitai Deranja)  | 10/10–20 .. ★ <b>Meditation Teacher Training</b> (with Savitri Simpson)                        |
|   | 10/20–11/2 ★ <b>AYTT Assistantship</b> (with Jyoti Spearin)                                    |

*“Forward-stretching poses should always be followed by others that stretch backward. ... It would seem, at least from our experience, that the forward-stretching poses open the nerve channels in the spine, but that the backward-stretching ones help to pour energy through those opened channels.”*

— Swami Kriyananda  
Ananda Yoga for Higher Awareness

### Burn Bright, Not Out (continued from page 11)

I couldn’t do all this without staying tapped in to the teachings and to God, and putting that first. That’s where I am now. I’m still growing, and our studio is still growing. That doesn’t mean that stress won’t happen, but I know that what really matters is how I respond to whatever does happen. ♦

*Have you found other remedies and preventatives for yoga teacher burnout? If so, please send them to Gyandev.*

## The Expanding Light

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*Here’s Your Next Issue  
of “Awake & Ready!”*