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April 2011

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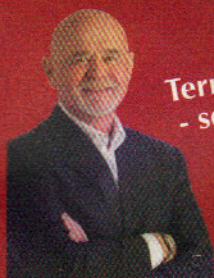
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Marlene Beadle surrounded by family and staff with
an anniversary carrot cake baked in our natural deli kitchen.



Present Moment Pose: *Cultivating the Most Difficult Asana*

by Lorrie Jones

Whether you are an advanced student or a new beginner, the practice of yoga offers itself each moment as a deeply transformative experience. The heart of yoga is to bring you back to your true essence ~ a journey rather than a one-time change. Instead of leading you toward being someone new, yoga guides you home to a deeper understanding of yourself. It honors your innate goodness.

Yoga encourages transformation by inspiring and supporting us to shift unhealthy attitudes into healthier, life-affirming perspectives. Attempting a new yoga posture or coming back to a pose after injury or illness often asks us to take on a new shape, in body *and* mind. We come face to face with all we are able to do and all we are unable to do. Many times judgment and criticism arise and the moment is clouded with disappointment and discouragement.

When faced with what is often called a "limitation", we have the choice to respond to our body's abilities with patience, love and compassion or to react with impatience, disappointment and frustration. Our choice determines our stance. We have the opportunity to be open and expansive, flexible and balanced by being

who we are and by meeting our mat with dignity, strength, compassion and love. When we meet a challenge in this way, we participate directly in our own transformation.

A year ago, I was run over by an SUV and nearly lost my life. Being on life support rendered me unable to move, talk or breathe on my own. I had taught an advanced vinyasa flow yoga class only two days before the accident, so finding myself helpless, seriously injured and close to death seemed unbelievable. My healing journey had begun and each day would present new challenges and opportunities.

Today I am able to walk without assistance and to write this article while on a celebration trip to Bacalar, Mexico, enjoying the healing, turquoise waters of the Yucatan. I can now practice a few asanas, the most challenging being the "present moment pose". This pose is not found in any textbooks yet weaves itself throughout all yoga practices, asking us to be aware and accepting of ourselves *no matter what*, and to align ourselves accordingly. This means we bring a curiosity and openness to the moment along with acceptance and love for ourselves.

Sometimes this is a tall order. When I find myself longing to be more physically agile, more balanced and, well, more like

I "used to be", I laugh at myself. There were always times of wanting things to be different! The present moment pose invites me to surrender my thoughts and to embrace the beauty and truth of my personal yoga practice rather than long for an ability to perform in a certain way. *Yoga is the practice of celebrating what is, not distressing over what is not.*

Once again I have been given the opportunity to welcome each moment without comparison or judgment. In doing so, I gain the ability to be more of myself and to transform obstacles holding me back from being fully present and welcoming all that is in my life.

I invite you to welcome each moment in your life as an asana, an opportunity to embrace transformation, by breathing deeply, sitting or standing in a dignified manner, and dwelling in acceptance, gratitude and love. Each moment is a gift and an opportunity to bring excellence, fluidity, grace and tranquility to your yoga practice and your life.



Lorrie Jones is author of "21 Days of Eating Mindfully", an interactive eguidebook created that supports women in changing unwanted and unhealthy eating habits by transforming their relationships with themselves.

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