

And I Really Got to Dig Into Myself

*I wrote this in November of 2026.*

*And I love reading it today {September 2022} and feeling the truth + sincerity of my word. It's a feeling that still lives in my tissues.*

*So I'm sharing it again now for your consideration. Or your entertainment. Or whatever you might get out of it.*

This yoga thing has taken me for quite a ride.

When I look back at who I was and how I was when I first started practicing (home, 1999, Kathy Smith Yoga, VHS tape), I hardly recognize myself. That was a different Tracy, for sure. She was anxious and fearful. She had a head full of worries (only half full today) and ran a tight ship.

Everything organized just so. She used exercise to deal with the stress and emotional pain of single motherhood and messy divorce-ness. A lot of exercise. Flat abs were a distraction from the pain and fear associated with daily life. Cycling for hundreds of miles ensured that she would be too tired to feel the sadness and fear hidden in her heart and soul. The funniest thing: She thought she was fine.

It took me a couple of years to move beyond that VHS tape to a yoga studio until I noticed an advertisement that showed a picture of Baron Baptiste in crow pose. A studio called Strong Stretched and Centered was advertising the first class free.

I couldn't get it out of my head. I was curious, but skeptical: "It will cost money. I can't afford it. Am I strong enough to do that? When would I have the time?" Finally I couldn't stand to hear my doubts any longer. In the summer of 2001, I sucked up the courage to walk in the door of that yoga studio. And yoga took me on a magic carpet ride that continues today.

There have been countless 'aha' moments, breakdowns and breakthroughs, and miseries and miracles since that day. I mean, yoga is like gravity. It works whether you believe in it or not. Gravity has a purpose which is fulfilled as it holds you on the earth. Yoga has a purpose which is fulfilled when you're free from all that binds you. And I was bound tight...tighter than I realized.

Here's one example: I was sitting on my mat at Cleveland Yoga (at that time it was called "Strong Stretched and Centered"). It was a Wednesday noon class taught by one of my favorite teachers. She was a favorite teacher because she is striking and beautiful and joyful and magnetic and lovely in her lovingness. And that's attractive. Well, when she walked in the room on this day, she exchanged greetings with many people. Those who knew her asked where she had been the past week. She said, "I was in Costa Rica for a retreat! It was beautiful!! The food was amazing, and I really got to dig into myself."

Hearing that, my brain came to a complete stand still. I did not know it was possible for someone who wasn't a movie star to go to Costa Rica for a yoga retreat. I was absolutely

wowed.

The contrast between her life and my life in that moment was like black and white. We might have well been from different planets. The distance between us suddenly felt insurmountable. And yet, she was my favorite teacher because she was approachable and accepting. I started thinking about that space between us and recognized that it was created by my own mind. I dared to think a thought that sounded like this: Someday I want to go to Costa Rica for a yoga retreat.

Now, if you just skim through the book of my life, you'll catch the little moments that began to align in a divinely orchestrated way to make to manifest this thought. But you'd have to skim through many, many years because I had a long way to grow. I didn't just put COSTA RICA YOGA RETREAT on my Saturday morning shopping list, toss it in cart and trot off for the party. The inner work needed to be done. Quite a bit of inner work. As I've indicated, I was bound by many limiting beliefs.

Here are some of the highlights:

Bind #1: I can't take the time away from the kids.

Truth: I need to take time to care for and nourish myself. I need to take time to create grace within myself so I can be the loving mother I truly am.

I opened my mind to the 'maybe' of finding time for myself around my motherhood schedule. Once I allowed the 'maybe,' the calendar shifted and I found slivers and slips of time for myself. For example, if I needed an hour after work before picking the kids up from school, I allowed them to stay with the sitter extra. Or, when the grandparents would stop by, I slipped out for a walk by myself.

Bind #2: I don't have the money.

Truth: Anything my heart truly desires is possible and the money will be provided.

Seriously, if I only did what I could afford in life, I'd never leave the house. To break free, I started noticing how financial energy flows and taking the time to responsibly organize my finances. If there was something that I wanted in my heart-of-hearts, I offered gratitude and waited. Life inevitably rearranged to grant my request. Thank you!

Bind #3: I'm not good enough at yoga to go on a retreat.

Truth: Yoga is for every body.

Trust me - yoga is a beautiful art form. I did some asanas in front of the mirror and saw that I look alright. I opened my eyes to the people practicing around me and saw all kinds of ages and shapes and sizes. They all look great doing yoga. I must look okay too. Gradually I began to appreciate and my edges started to soften. I stopped pushing my body and a compassionate relationship was created between my body and my mind. I enjoy me now. And what does 'good

enough at yoga' mean, anyway?

Bind #4: I'm just not the kind of girl that can do something so exotic.

Truth: I am the creator of my life. Like, seriously.

Nothing is too exotic or too adventurous or too farfetched. It sounds kind of corny, but it's true: If I can dream it, I can achieve it. This is the yoga. Once the sweat poured out of me, the love could soak into me. And love knows no limits. Love is pure potential and possibility. I took baby steps. I signed up for a Team in Training fundraising century bike ride and raised the money to go to Sante Fe. I went to Sedona for my birthday. I went to Guatemala and hiked through the rainforest to the Tikal Ruins. Incrementally the practice released me from the binds of the mind. The freedom became something that I could trust and play with. I'm the kind of girl who can do anything!

So as you're reading this, I'm in Costa Rica on a yoga retreat!

Not only am I enjoying beautiful scenery and amazing food, but I'm also leading the retreat! I am the guide that will facilitate an exciting and inspiring adventure for 17 participants. It's a dream-come-true experience for me.

And it's an experience that bridges the gap that I felt that day on my mat: the gap between someone living vibrantly and someone stuck in their stuff.

Do you see what I mean? Now that I've stepped across the gap, I'm reaching back and offering YOU a hand in stepping across ....

It will be beautiful! The food will be amazing, and you'll really get to dig into yourself.