

## People's Experiences with Yoga

Presented by Kate McGinnity & Nan Negri

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## What is Yoga?

- Relaxation
- Exercise
- Regulation/Organization
  - Emotional
  - Sensory
- Neurological integration
- Relationship building
- Positive life experience

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## Ways to do yoga

- Whole class
- Individual poses situationally

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*I will only go as fast  
as the slowest part of me  
feels safe to go*

**Affirmations**



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***Sticks & stones  
will break my bones,  
but words  
can never hurt me***

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***Sticks & stones  
will break my bones,  
but words  
will wound me  
forever***

*Bloch, 2003*

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# THINK BACK

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- Recall a negative statement someone made to you
- Close your eyes & repeat the statement 10 times
- Take inventory
  - How does your body feel?
  - How do you see yourself?
  - How are you feeling emotionally?

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## Volcano Pose



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## What are Affirmations?

- *Positive statements*
  - *Written*
  - *Spoken*
  - *Repeated in thought*

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**BE BELIEFS**  
I am always  
I am kind

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## Why affirmations?

- Correct perceptions of imperfection
- Help to change thinking patterns
- Help to manage anxiety

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## Benefits of Affirmations

- Increase in self-esteem
- Evoke positive emotions
- Shifts mind from negative to positive
- Can be calming
- Increases skill acquisition & performance

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## Liz's Little Red Box



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## The Wonder of Isis



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**I am smart!**

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**I breathe deep  
and I am calm**

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**I breathe deep  
and my tummy  
Feels fine**

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I am at peace

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My lips are  
loosening  
*in just the way I need*

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I am in charge of my  
life  
and making all the  
right decisions

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My writing is a  
source  
of energy and  
healing

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I am  
loved



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Hero's Pose with  
Peace Breath



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### Writing Implementation Tips

- Affirmations are stated positively
  - I am calm vs. I am not anxious
- Keep them short, simple & clear
- Keep them concrete & true
- Support building alternative responses

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### Child pose



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### Quotable Quote

*Relationship*

- "I liked the ones where we did the Walter stretch."  
» Sam

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Quotable Quote

*Relaxation*

- "I like yoga so much. It helps me get calm."  
» Meghan
- "I like how yoga feels in my body. It helps me relax."  
» Sam

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Quotable Quote

*Exercise*

- "It's an okay way to exercise."  
» Margaret

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Twisting Pose



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**Quotable Quote**  
*Emotional Regulation*

- “It just really makes me feel good.”  
– Meghan
- “I like playing this way.”  
– Ben
- “[Yoga helps me to] stay positive.”  
– Sam

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**Quotable Quote**  
*Emotional Regulation*

- “It kind of stops my worries, for awhile.”  
» Margaret, when reflecting on class
- “I feel anxious.” (beginning of class) “I feel happy.” (end of class)  
» Chris
- “It’s [yoga] an island of serenity.”  
» Roy

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**Quotable Quotes**  
*Emotional Regulation*

- “It’s the best part of my week.”  
  
– Roy  
– Elizabeth

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**Quotable Quotes**  
*Emotional Regulation*

- “I feel proud.”
  - » David

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**Quotable Quote**  
*Sensory Regulation*

- “This makes my engine go to just right.”
  - » Aiden

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**Quotable Quote**  
*Neural Integration*

- “Am I sleep walking?”
  - Judy, after class
- [A benefit of yoga for me was] “sleepwalking for a few hours one time, but the experience never happened again.”
  - Judy, reflecting on the class

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### Quotable Quote

*Neural Integration*

- “It helps her find her words. She talks more after yoga than any other time...for about 30 minutes.”

- Kayla’s mom

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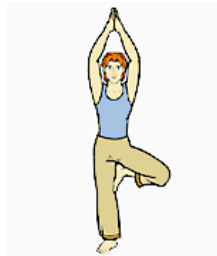
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### Tree Pose



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### Quotable Quote

*Relationship*

- “I like that I can make friends there.”

- Margaret

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### Quotable Quote

*Relationship*

- "It's something better to do with my workers."

– Margaret, while reflecting on class

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### Quotable Quotes

*Relationship*

- "I like having this way of connecting with my brother."

– Elizabeth

- "It's kind of like an anchor for us."

– Toni (Re: relationship with Margaret)

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### Partner Seated Side Stretch



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What's Difficult?

- "Sometimes, yoga hurts my body."  
- Margaret
- "This is kind of hard for me."  
- Sam (in regards to Child's Pose)

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What's Difficult?

- "I am afraid to do it alone as I sometimes get physically stuck for an undetermined amt of time, so in a group where someone would understand the physical stuckness of autism would be better. Unfortunately, the logistics of getting to a group negatively outweigh the benefits of participation."
- "Most of the positions and having the balance to feel safe."  
» Judy

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Quotable Quote

*Difficulty*

- "I'm stuck: I'm telling my hand to let go. I have it all motor planned out in my mind, but my body isn't responding."  
• Judy, after doing tree pose

*Solution*

- Physical touch on her hand.

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**Quotable Quote**

*Difficulty*

- “When I was sitting cross legged and had to raise one hand, I kept losing my balance and that was hard for me.”  
» Sam

*Solution*

- Verbal script for each of the poses

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**Collaborative Supports**

- Counting out loud (Chris)
- Visual tagging system (Kayla)
- Visual pictures to see (Several students)
- Visual pictures to touch (Roy)
- Verbal scripts (Sam)
- Move together (Roy)
- Move my body for me (Chris)
- Let me watch (Lisa)

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**Collaborative Supports**

- Video/DVD of class (David)
- “[I prefer doing yoga] individually, with a videotape.”  
» Sam

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**Respect the neurology; respect the person**

- Ask before touching
- Not too many words
- Timer
- Class schedule, as well as visuals of poses
- Pauses between poses & between words
- Review/reassure regarding personal schedule during class
- Sameness of music; class
- Choice within a visual/spatial routine
- Routine of setting up/cleaning up

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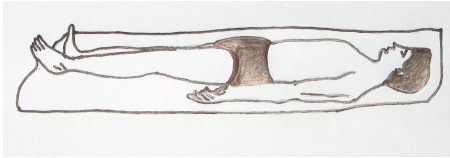
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**Savasana**



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- "Yoga is an island of serenity in my otherwise chaotic life."  
» Roy

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