

LIFE

Yoga slows chatter of the mind



By Melissa Carr, Special to 24 hours
Thursday, August 21, 2014 1:39:21 PDT PM



Yoga heals the mind and the body.

On Aug. 20, one of yoga's great teachers, BKS Iyengar, died at the age of 95. Born in southern India into a poor family, he suffered poor health due to malaria, typhoid and tuberculosis. At the age of 16, a family member introduced him to yoga, and over time he created his own system, using techniques and props that allow anyone and everyone, regardless of their body limitations, to practice yoga.

With 14 books translated into 17 languages and studios in 72 countries, Iyengar became a bridge to carry yoga out of India, helping it flourish around the world. Iyengar taught a practical approach, finding precision in the poses, focus on breathing work, and dedication to practice to help improve physical health and slow the chatter of the mind.

Iyengar asserted that yoga is a spiritual practice, and said, "Penetration of our mind is our goal, but in the beginning to set things in motion, there is no substitute for sweat." Due to his studies of anatomy, physiology, and psychology, he pioneered modern therapeutic yoga, and many today can attribute their improved health to a regular yoga practice. The National Institute of Health has

listed some studies that demonstrate yoga's positive effects on chronic lower-back pain, depression, stress, insomnia, and high blood pressure.

Like yoga, traditional Chinese medicine addresses the whole person, observing and treating the integration of body, mind, and spirit. The Eastern traditions treat the individual, while the Western traditions focus on the disease. There are many parallels between the philosophies and principles of yoga and TCM. Exercise, breath, calmness of mind, and healthy food choices are key features of both studies, and the vital energy centres of yoga are also acupuncture points.

One of the most sought-out benefits of both yoga and acupuncture is the feeling of deep relaxation that they bring. In this go-go-go-always-on world we live in, many of us seek calm. As our fight or flight response winds down and our relaxation response is activated, our muscles let go of tension, our digestive systems can function normally, our immune systems better regulate, and our bodies can heal.

As Iyengar stated, "Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind, and spirit. When one is free from physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the soul open."

Dr. Melissa Carr is a registered doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine, caring for patients in an integrative medicine clinic in Vancouver.

Chinese Medicine / TCM

pcucollege.ca/TCM

Learn Traditional Chinese Medicine. Condensed Training, Clinic Intern.

Reader's comments »

If you already have an account on this newspaper, you can login to the newspaper to add your comments.

By adding a comment on the site, you accept our terms and conditions and our netiquette rules.

0 Comments

Vancouver 24 hrs

 **Login** ▾

Sort by Best ▾

Share  Favorite ★



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

 **Subscribe**

 **Add Disqus to your site**