



Sweaty She Monday (9/28/09): Orgasmic Yoga? No Thanks.

By Susan Farago

Weekly Sweaty She postings can be found on the NEW "Sweaty She" FAN PAGE at www.facebook.com/sweatyshe or at www.susanfarago.com.

The first yoga class I ever took was about 10 years ago – a 90 minute Hatha yoga class which emphasized breathing and stretching. I had heard about yoga but didn't know too much about it. Like my stereotypes of people who live in Texas (big hair, belt buckles, twangy accents), I also had stereotype images of people who practiced yoga – calm, serene individuals in cute outfits who sat cross legged with arms in lap, and the really good ones were levitating three inches above the ground. Forever striving to be "calm and centered", I thought this would be a great way for my outer, rammy, loud self to get in touch with my inner, calm, quiet self. Five minutes into the 90 minute class I was bored out of my mind and my inner, calm self was screaming, "GET ME OUT OF HERE!!"

I didn't attempt yoga for another six years. And it was only after listening to all my athletic friends say things like, "I was so glad I went to yoga after that killer run workout" or "yoga really helps get the kinks out of my muscles" that I decided to give yoga another try. So I took a class at my local health club and after 60 minutes of stretching, strengthening, deep breathing, and a fair amount of sweating, I felt GREAT! I kept going to the same weekly class taught by the same instructor. Her name was Jai Kartar (also known as Naomi) and she looked and acted...well..."normal". She didn't bang on a gong to signal the start of class, nor did she insist that we center all our chakras and become rooted in the Mother Earth before we commence our practice. She would take a few minutes at the beginning and end of class to let everyone sit or lay in quiet solitude and to center our energies. I was good with centering my energies. But her military background would come through later on in the class when she would bark at us to drop our shoulders, relax our heads, or internally rotate our thighs (which to this day I still have NO idea how to do). This is when it occurred to me that a yoga class is only as good as the instructor. And my experiences haven't always been good.

I attended one class taught by a whisp of a girl who was incredibly flexible and apparently very talented in yoga "moves". But it was her breathing that I found so distracting. At the beginning of class we sat there with our eyes closed while taking in deep breaths. After about 30 seconds of listening to her "deep breaths", I had to open my eyes and see what exactly was going on because...well...to be quite frank, it sounded like she was having a perpetual orgasm with every inhale and exhale. And she was loud! I looked around the room and the guys in the class must have had the same thought because they too had their eyes open and were looking right at her. This continued throughout each and every pose: down dog, cobra, plank, sun salutation. Clearly she was on some different level and enjoying herself much more than I was. That was the first and

last of her classes that I attended. But it would explain the higher than normal number of male attendees.

Another class I attended was taught by someone much too hyper to teach anything other than a high intensity aerobics class. She would jump around, laugh, get into a pose, then giggle, then run around the room. And while I am all for progressive teaching, I didn't think it was part of the "yoga vernacular" to say phrases like (insert Valley Girl tone of voice here), Oh my God! Sun Salutation is like THE BEST pose EVER!" Her beyond hyper level of energy made me look like the Dali Lama. After 50 minutes of listening to and watching her, my nerves were more rattled at the end of the class than at the beginning.

I was talking to a friend of mine who took four yoga classes during Austin's "Free Day of Yoga". It's a fantastic event where many of the yoga studios open their doors and anyone can come in and take any of the classes. She had similar experiences to mine. She told me that three of the classes were outstanding and then there was one that was just horrible. Well, three out of four isn't bad!

Given everyone's hectic lives, it's a good thing to relax, take a deep breath, and get in some stretching. So find an instructor that meshes with your "inner chakras" and give yoga a try!

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