

What Is It To Be A Yoga Teacher?

~ Camilla Maling ~

I ask that in our choices for and against something; we are clear of why we're attracted, we recognise that this discernment is a collective right, that diversity keeps us fresh and that we are all, at any one time, an intersection of information and a filter of particular uniqueness. That in our choices for and against something, we recognise the implicit relationship – the understanding of which I believe is essential to inspired teaching.

I've been that teacher who says it's my way or the highway. I've been the one who shouts a forms name from the rooftops. I've thought that what I'm bringing to the table is going to revolutionise people's practices and lives.

I no longer look back on those times with cringing embarrassment but rather with a great respect for the dogmatic determination vital in getting me to here. (And here by the way is simply another point along the way.)

Now, as a dancer of many years and continuing practitioner in yoga and movement modalities, I can comfortably say I bring to the table knowledge in a range of movement perspectives. All these are essential to my growing understanding of what it means to do what we do - to teach about a moving life. (I use the word moving here as a verb and a noun. I invite a shift to the limited notion of 'moving' or 'movement' as taking a limb through space and call us to begin to see our self daily as wholly integrated moving beings.)

Yes, mine is an inter-disciplinary approach. But we are all inter-disciplinary. We are lovers and doers of many seemingly unrelated things. These various activities elegantly come together in you through you if you are willing to pay attention. I believe we must bring all that we are to our teaching.

In the same way a language arises from the specificity of cultural preference, so too does a teacher. A particular 'movement form' appeals for very particular reasons at very particular times in our lives. It's your way of moving through, digesting, making sense of and speaking about your world.

As yoga & movement teachers we've spent years moving, breathing, feeling, listening, reflecting, refining, returning, re-patterning - undressing and redressing all in the name of a profoundly intimate and visceral understanding of our self and our world. I realise now that what we as teachers do quite simply is share the tools we've gathered. We take people on a moving journey - something of our journey, as a way of igniting in them a fuller sense of themselves and of their integration in our collective environment. The ways to do this are indeed various; a cacophony of learning's as it were coming through you.

If we can come to our teaching with an attitude of inclusiveness, with our material as really truly lived and emanating from our cells, rather than teaching what has been preached to us, then we begin to take ownership and authorship of our experience in our chosen modality. Then we can also understand implicitly how someone can find solace in another form. And only then can we truly begin to share, impart our wisdom and discoveries and learn from others. Let's embrace the fascinating and provocative intersections and collisions of ideas inside of us and in our relations while adding our perspective to this delicious soup that is our moving intelligence. I strive to be this teacher now.

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