MISS INFORMATION by Amy Bauer

LIVING LA VIDA YOGA

WHILE SITTING CROSS-LEGGED on my yoga mat, forearms resting gently on my knees, middle fingertips kissing the tip of my thumbs, I try to calm my mile a minute mind down to a leisurely stroll so that I may get in touch with my inner self and fully enjoy the benefits of yoga.

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. Ummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm?

I concentrate on being present in the moment, yet the more I concentrate the more my mind wanders. Did I remember to write the rent check? Do matinee prices cut off at 5 p.m. or 6 p.m.? Wow, I really need a pedicure. Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

I am no stranger to yoga, but yoga is still strange to me. The poses, the people, the language. It all feels very foreign-like walking in high heels on grass. One minute I am completely in my Zen zone, feeling at one with myself. The next minute I am wobbling around on one foot, trying to keep my balance and win a staring contest with myself in the mirror.

"I am a tree…I am a frog…I am a goat…I am a toy for ages three and under."

Mirroring my teacher, I try to feel centered and spiritual and not hokey and ridiculous.

By not plunging into the depths of all that is yoga I must admit I feel a bit of a imposter. Sure, I have done my fair share of sun salutations and if you stir up a batch of chai tea, I can pretty much drink anyone under the table. But I have yet to learn the background on chakras and connecting with my "jivatma". I'm not sure how or where yoga originated or how it came to be westernized and condensed into DVDs containing 80 minutes of widescreen exercise and enlightenment in the privacy of your own living room.

I move into the warrior pose, and try to focus on my breathing, making the connection between mind, body and spirit. I invision myself as strong, serene and invincible. Before finding yoga, I never would have considered becoming an exalted warrior, but why not? I'm a twenty-something gal trying to find my true self. I wonder if an exalted warrior gets paid salary or hourly.?

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

I sink into the child's pose and rest my aching warrior bones, feeling peaceful and accomplished. Maybe it's the fact that yoga is a magical combination of meditation and working out that keeps calling me back to the studio. Who knew it was possible to combine relaxation and exercise? When I relax on the stationary bike I just end up with thirty minutes of wasted time and saddle sores. Yet when I relax into my flow series, my body bends and twists more easily, giving me an even more intense workout.

What I do know is that there is something about practicing yoga that just makes me feel like a better person, and it seems that I am not alone in my appreciation. Legions of gym goers are sidestepping the cardio room to experience the classes being held in those dimly lit studios off to the side of the gym. In they enter as sport drink guzzling, iron pumping, gym junkies, and out they emerge as tea drinking, mantra chanting, gravity defying, solid muscle yogis.

I bring my hands to prayer position at the end of an hour class and instantly feel physically stronger and mentally mellowed. Just as class is about to let out, my levels of stress flat line and my mind finally comes to a place of rest.

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.