Physical yoga *asana* practice is an excellent tool for opening the channel to our higher self. Life can distract us from feeling this place because we get busy, focused on our wants, or caught up in our dramas. The power of yoga is that it allows us to see that love is at our core, but we have built a wall of tightness around it. Blissology yoga is about systematically removing these walls so that we remember the radiance of who we are.

> *Yoga is the art of getting out of our own way.*

To the uninitiated, yoga is just stretching that makes us more flexible. The more profound truth is that our thoughts show up in the body as tightness. The issues live in our tissues, making the body a storage depot for mental and emotional residue.

The power of the practice is that the opposite is true: Intelligent yoga practices create a space where breath and conscious movement release stored issues, resetting our minds and emotions.

This emotional recalibration turns the body into an antenna that picks up this frequency of love again. This love is always accessible to us, but feelings of anger, stress, worry, anxiety, and unworthiness are like static that block the clear reception of the love we are capable of.

Is Yoga Physical or Spiritual?

Most people typically associate yoga with physical postures promoting flexibility and health, but this phenomenon is recent. Historically, yoga's primary function was to prepare the body to be steady and comfortable during long hours of meditation. The goal was to calm all mental chatter to link back to peaceful, universal consciousness.

The word link is the key. In 1987, when I was a wide-eyed philosophy student at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, my teacher, Ravi Ravindra, told our class that the closest translation in English to the word yoga was "religion."

He explained that the word religion comes from the Latin word *religiō*. Re means "again," and *ligiō* means "to bind or link." According to his theory, religion and yoga both mean *relinking* to our source.

Yoga derives from the Sanskrit word ***yuj***, which means to make two things one. The reference is when an ox and a cart join to become one thing called an oxcart. There is no longer an independent ox and a cart, but two things have become one linked unit; they are in union.

Many Indian yoga schools have different names for this energy source, including ***purusha, shiva, and brahman***. However, I believe we can still use their ancient meditation methodologies to connect to other sources of consciousness. Theoretically, we can use yogic tools to experience union with a higher power as Christians, Jews, Muslims, or other spiritual traditions.

A calm mind and quiet heart are necessary to open the door to a power greater than us. The more we are distracted by our ego's wants and desires, the less we feel our connection to something greater.

Conversely, the greater our relationship to this divine place in our hearts, the less caught up we remain with our day-to-day dramas. We let go of clinging to ego desires and worries to remember the bliss at the core of who we are. I like to say, "Yoga is the art of getting out of our own way."

Ancient *yogis* found other methods of relinking with our highest source consciousness besides meditation. Many practiced prayer, chanting, studying sacred texts, and practicing physical postures called *asanas* to help us quiet our egoic minds to rediscover the sublime.

Historical records show that many yogis eventually realized that practicing physical yoga in addition to meditation was a way to relink to their spiritual selves. They shifted from just the practice of meditation to including physical yoga *asana*.

Yoga May Be Spiritual, But Physics Still Apply

The spiritual and the physical intersect in yoga. Gravity is the through line of this story. It's powerful that my first spiritual experience was about our relationship with gravity and the cosmos. Now, the circle is complete as we focus on the physical side of the yoga practice that calls for us to be in an intelligent relationship with matter.

Even though yoga is ultimately a spiritual pursuit meant to unlock our highest self, the problem is that we are making very sophisticated shapes in gravity where the laws of physics apply.

Being a kind, spiritual person is not enough; we must also be smart and educate ourselves about our bodies. No matter our spiritual intention, if we naively practice yoga without the high bodily awareness required, we increase our risk of injury. Before we get celestial, we need to get terrestrial.

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