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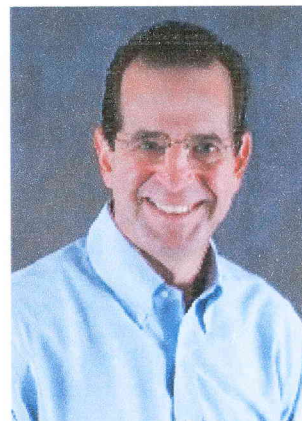
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A Few Good Suggestions by Mike O'Krent

About six months after I started my new business, LifeStories Alive, LLC I began working with a wonderful business coach, Michelle Ewalt. It was July of 2006 and, according to my notes, I wanted to get "two hours of sleep per night back." To that end, and as a way of balancing my career and personal life, Michelle suggested I start taking yoga. She recommended starting with Hatha classes, and seeing where it went from there. I wanted to change my life, of course, but I had no idea what a profound role yoga would play in my journey.



After about five months of taking Hatha and Hatha Flow classes, I asked Michelle what "brand" of yoga she got the most out of. She quickly answered, "Ashtanga," and that she thought I would enjoy it, too. After taking a couple of star classes, I admitted to the instructor that I just wasn't "getting it" the way that other people in class seemed to be. He wisely suggested that I take a Beginners Series.

I took his advice, and was fortunate to have Eriko as my instructor in the Beginners Series. She covered the basics, but she also introduced us to the unwritten benefits of a regular practice.

I started taking regular Ashtanga classes, and was touched by the empathy of the other students. At first I was frustrated that I couldn't be one of those "pretzel people" as I called them (you know, those contortionists that got into those seemingly impossible poses). But soon I learned from the patient, professional instruction of my teachers (Matt, Sharon, Eriko & Selena) that Ashtanga is a long journey with small, joyous steps along the way. It is truly a discipline, not a single skill or endgame goal to be met or conquered. Through their instruction and guidance, I learned to enjoy my practice. I don't care if I can reach the full "pretzel" expression of every posture. As I look

back to those early star classes, I see myself in positions I could never have dreamed of three years ago.

Michelle was really on to something. I feel more balanced now than ever before, and I'm getting good sleep every night. My body feels better than it has in years, and the only pretzels I think about are the kind that you find in a bag!

Many thanks to all Ashtanga regulars at Yoga Yoga, the teachers and students who continue to encourage, enrich, and inspire me along on this wonderful journey.