

LET YOUR *Joy* LEAD YOU TO HEALING

What are your joys? Gardening, traveling, singing, playing the piano? Mine include yoga, dancing, and music. Yoga is not only a joy for me; it is one of my self-healing practices, along with meditation and play. Spending time each day in one, if not more, of our joys is where healing often occurs.

Recent research has discovered less of a cellular protein, nuclear kappa B, in people who regularly practice yoga. This protein is associated with inflammation (joint/muscle pain, including fibromyalgia), so less of it means feeling less pain. Not just yoga, either! Meditation, Thai Chi, Qi Gong and other mind-body modalities have proven to produce less of this pain-related protein in those who practice these joys on a regular basis. That's why we feel better afterwards.

I believe ANY joy we have contains the recipe for healing. Spending time in Joy increases dopamine, serotonin and other mind-healthy chemicals that give us a natural "high" that no natural or artificial drug can give. Yoga certainly does that for me!

Yoga means union of mind, body and spirit. Meditation creates a similar connection. According to this recent scientific research, documented in WebMD Magazine, we don't even need to DO physical activities to create this natural high.

Years ago, I was diagnosed with arthritis and fibromyalgia. I took prescription pain medications over a short but intense time, until I started to feel like I was slowly withering on the vine. I became suicidal. During this period, yoga was the only thing I could do with myself, for myself, by myself, that made me feel better. Practicing yoga empowered me with a self-love and respect I'd lost and desperately needed.

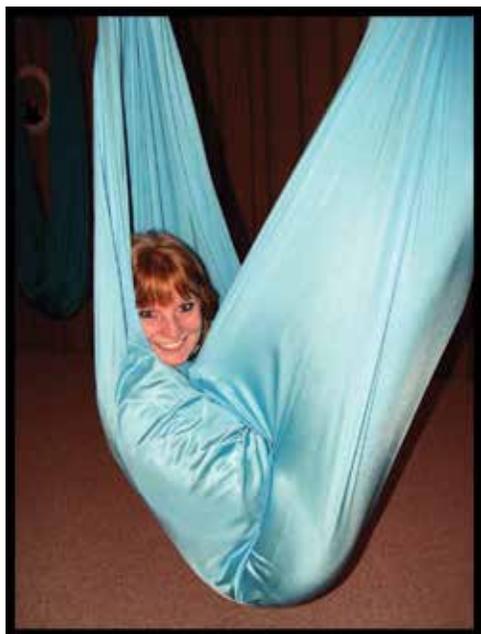
Today I teach 3 types of yoga in my Cradle Yoga studio in Flint Township and surrounding areas.

Wall Yoga is quite gentle and kind. We prop our legs up against a wall to relax our backs while stretching and strengthening our legs, hips and feet. Beginning with simple floor poses, we focus on our upper bodies, targeting tightness in neck and shoulders, where many of us carry our tension. The last few minutes we lay still for the deep relaxation period, a vital part of yoga.

Cradle Yoga is a playful form of yoga using silky stretchy fabric like a hammock. We perform a variety of poses in and out of the cradle, working EVERY major muscle group in our bodies...while having a total blast. In fact, laughter is strongly encouraged! Cocooning our body in complete comfort while immersed inside the cradle is the last, and everyone's favorite, part of the class.

Acro, a partner-based yoga, is more advanced, and a ton of fun. It teaches us trust and non-verbal communication skills. It also creates community and improves self-confidence by encouraging our Inner Child out to play. As kids, many of us flew in "Airplane"- with our hips propped up on another person's feet. In fact, if you've ever flown in Airplane, then you've already done Acro Yoga.

If yoga isn't your thing, what is? Explore it, join a class or group of like-minded individuals practicing it regularly – or create your own new community. Let your current joy lead you to discover even greater joys, and possibly even guide you to your own personal healing!



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