

they wish someone had given them when they started teaching: Tiana (below), who teaches private classes, explained a Swami Satchidananda teaching: "In yoga: dig one well, and dig it well. It is important to focus on one thing whatever it may be and dedicate yourself to just that. In life we tend to spread ourselves too thinly: we want more, need more. But, if we just simply stick to one thing without expectation, all will come."



"Teaching yoga is not just having a certificate," said Icy. Serena who teaches at mYoga explained: "Different students have different bodies." The need to remember patience, thoughtfulness, consideration, and encourage everyone, was repeated again and again.

As I realised watching two experienced yoga teachers teach in the past week, demonstrating pleasure in a student's achievements; a shared joy in mastering, or even just attempting an *asana* (posture) is the key to real teaching. Serena summarised this

perfectly: "If my practice is wonderful, but I don't care about the students: it doesn't work!" Sam at Planet Yoga, repeated a beautiful quotation from Swami Rama's book *Living with Himalayan Masters*.

Swami Rama describes how he was instructed by his guru to cultivate more love by serving his disciples and students through meditation, speech, and action. When Swami Rama asked for clarification, he was told: "the sages, yogis, and spiritual masters served the world by going deep within to the central fountain of love and expressing that love without using any method of communication known so far to modern man. This, the finest of communication from the very active in the deep silence, helps the student to resolve all fears, doubts, and problems. Any selfless wish experienced by the master during that time is always fulfilled." As Sam explained, that is how she tries to teach.

The last word should be from Geshe Michael Roach, the Buddhist monk who we were privileged to listen to in Hong Kong recently. Geshe Michael used the analogy of giving a pen to another person as an example of *karma* or *karman* (action) which is often translated as "destiny" or "fate" over which we might think we have no control. Only acts completed without the ego are nonbinding and in this way the vicious circle of *karma* can be stopped, preventing future *karma*, and harmlessly playing out past *karma*. As he explained, slowly lowering the pen in to his partner Christie's hand, his mind was making 65 judgements about the

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Teacher's Voice



Kathy Cook

What is your most challenging asana and why?

Urdhva Dhanurasana is a backbend that always challenges me. My body and mind require a lot of preparation for this asana. Physically it is particularly demanding for me to open my shoulders, get enough extension through my back and openness in my hips, as these areas that are particularly tight when practicing this asana. In addition, this posture requires more mental concentration and single mindedness. I must draw on my inner and outer strength, concentrate and focus to connect my body and my mind with my breath. Important issues such as facing my fears, softening, surrendering and patience seem to resurface. Some of my biggest challenges to deal with, within my self. ..

What have you learned from this asana?

It has taught me and continues to teach me to be present, have courage, patience and determination. I have

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