

I was asked in 2011 to provide 'expert quotes' in response to three questions for a media article by a freelance journalist on a Yoga related topic. These were my reflections that I am reposting unedited, especially given the surge in what has become labelled as 'Yoga Therapy':

**Q1. What are some examples of illnesses or ailments that can improve or be cured with the use of Yoga?**

"It is not possible to give examples of illnesses or ailments that can be improved as it all depends on the matrix of the person who may also have certain combinations of problems. A student with cancer may improve or a student with a history of colds may experience little change.

The viewpoint of Yoga is to look at people as individuals and work from there rather than the more usual view of making lists of problems with flash card like answers to a specific problem. e.g.. Sciatica, High Blood Pressure, Insomnia, Osteo-arthritis, Crohn's Disease, etc.

Yoga says that we are all individuals who also have from time to time chronic or acute illnesses or ailments. In this view one hallmark is that the practice must be adapted to the individual and their current situation and immediate potential rather than expecting the individual to adapt to the practice.

This means that two individuals with the same symptoms may need very different approaches to practice and lifestyle choices because of their history, mindset and opportunity and intentions for implementing change.

Yoga also tells us that nothing is destroyed so nothing is 'cured'. We can perhaps reduce the symptoms to the point where they are dormant. Given the right sun, soil and moisture they can 'sprout' again. So cure is not a term that can be applied.

Yoga Psychology says being symptom free also implies that we still have to take care as the seeds can be re-activated given the right stimuli."

**Q2. Is there a certain type of Yoga which is more beneficial, when it comes to health, than other types?**

"Any approach to Yoga which facilitates meeting with a student, developing an understanding of their unique background, looking at the opportunities for change which exist for the student in the immediate and near future, being able to propose a personalised practice appropriate to their situation and meeting regularly to both review and progress the practice according to the experiences and feedback from the student.

This is really only realisable through 121 lessons, though not of the type offered by many which are comparable to a group class for one. A more comparable example would be to consulting a homeopath, or acupuncturist, or medical herbalist, or counsellor, where there is time, attention and personalised support and treatment offered."

**Q3. Is there a certain type of Yoga that can prove especially beneficial to those with asthma, and if so, why is this type of Yoga particularly good?**

"As the physical basis of asthma is experienced through its effects on the breath, any approach that sees the breath as the canvas on which the pictures of the poses are painted could be helpful. Along with an approach that has the integral and intimate use of the breath in practice as a first priority, the study and application of the principles of Yoga Psychology would be very relevant to working with issues that could well underpin the student's history of symptoms and personal experiences."