



turtle island  
**YOGA NEWS**

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"If the foundation is firm, the building can withstand calamities.  
The practice of Yoga is the foundation, so that the self  
is not shaken under any circumstances". - B.K.S. Iyengar

Dear Students and Friends of Turtle Island,

We hope this letter finds you well, and thoroughly enjoying this beautiful summer weather. These blue skies are especially welcome after the storms and floods this past winter. Please accept our deep gratitude for your donations of time and financial gifts to restore the hardwood floor in the studio.

Our goal is to communicate with you on a regular basis, alerting you to changes in the current class schedule, new classes or teachers and upcoming workshops and retreats. Each month we'll include an article or profile of interest. In this, our first newsletter, we offer a profile of Liz Levy, a well-loved, long-time teacher at Turtle Island Yoga.



## A Conversation with Liz Levy

When you first meet Liz you immediately notice her powerful presence; she is a tall, lively woman whose sparkling eyes and big smile say, "Welcome, how can I be of service"? Liz has been studying yoga for 17 years and teaching for the past 14. She currently offers a Therapeutics/Gentle Yoga class on Thursday mornings and a Level 1-3 class Saturday mornings. Her therapeutics students are urging her to teach a second class this coming fall.

**Turtle Island Yoga:** Liz, let's start with right now - what is foremost in your mind today?

**Liz Levy:** (Liz takes her time before she answers.) I want to help people move to a level of awareness and understanding using the yoga poses as a vehicle to explore one's ability to focus. Through this aspect of practice (asana) we receive great physical benefit. We are fortunate that our practice benefits us physically, unlike a practice of sitting on a cushion for an hour and a half.

**TIY:** Tell us about your own practice.

**LL:** My own practice is spiritual – my goal is to wake up – to wake up body, mind, sensitivities. I try to convey in my classes that, "yes, we do asana", but I ask my students to go to a deeper level; I ask them to be more awake. As the mother of two young boys, I hope to bring the same quality and attentiveness I practice in asana and in teaching, to my life. My practice is not isolated from my life. You cannot forget what you did and learned in class; you have to take that with you right into the next moment. Yoga is the backbone of my life – it is a huge support.

**TIY:** How did you come to teach yoga and how has massage informed your yoga teaching?

**LL:** In 1989 I was studying to be a massage therapist and a woman in my class suggested I come to yoga class with her. This was up in Seattle. My friend's teacher was Aadil Pakhivala, an Iyengar trained instructor. I very

quickly became a “yogaholic”, attending Aadil’s classes 3 times a week, taking 2 other classes as well. I was sore for 2 years but I loved it!

Massage and yoga are parallel paths. The knowledge of anatomy, physiology, body mechanics help me as a yoga teacher. When a problem arises with a yoga student I can see what is going on because of this massage training and when a massage client has problems I often prescribe yoga poses to help them heal.

**TIY:** What is, or has been, your biggest challenge in yoga teaching?

**LL:** As a teacher, especially a new teacher, I felt every class had to be groundbreaking, something that would immediately affect the students. This became a tremendous pressure to do this nearly impossible thing. Over the years, of course, my teaching has changed, has relaxed. I use a blend of humor, sternness, pushing people to meet themselves. As a teacher my work is adjusting to a particular person to help them find their balance point; everyone has a particular balance point.

**TIY:** Liz, one last question. Do you have any particular goals in mind for the next few years?

**LL:** As a householder, my practice is to balance the energy I exert outside and the energy I need for my family. My goal is to remain in the flow of my life with the ability to accept change, to stay present so I can shift my energy/practice in the direction of whatever is needed. My purpose is to evolve as a person and to support my family and students in their own evolution.

**Liz Levy** has been a serious student of yoga for 14 years, and was recently featured in a Yoga Journal article about yoga for large bodies. Liz is also a massage therapist, and her knowledge of the body enhances her teaching, giving her a firm understanding of anatomy, physiology, and body mechanics. She has traveled to India to study with the Iyengars and brings to her teaching a deep appreciation for the wisdom of Yoga and a passion for sharing with others what has brought great fulfillment and meaning to her.

## ***Teacher Training with Tony Briggs***

Tony Briggs has been Director of Teacher Training for the past 14 years, first in Marin County and currently at The Yoga Loft in San Francisco. Tony's many years of training teachers have developed his skills and insights into what it takes to be a skillful Yoga Instructor. The next Teacher Training session begins in September and [it's not too early to register](#). For information about Tony's Teacher Training Program, including a program overview and complete details, please visit The Yoga Loft website – [www.theloftsf.com/training\\_tony](http://www.theloftsf.com/training_tony).

## **Changes to the Class Schedule**

Please visit our [Class Schedule](#) on the [Turtle Island](#) website: [www.turtleislandyoga.com](http://www.turtleislandyoga.com).

**Thank you** all for continuing to support our neighborhood studio. We appreciate your feedback so please feel free to write back.

Namaste,

Tony