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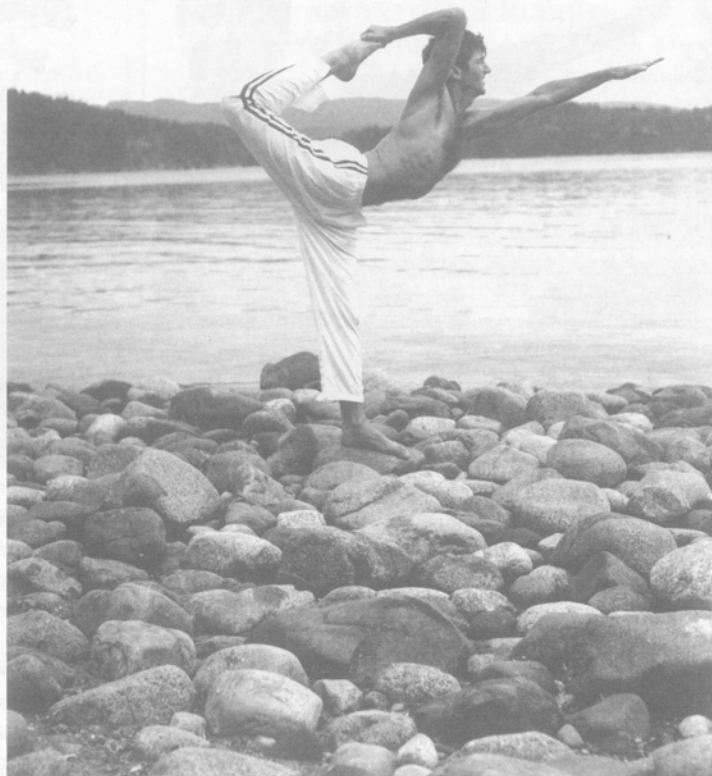


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Interview with Ken Nateshvar Scott

By Lisa Miriam Cherry



LISA: How did you get into Kripalu Yoga and when?

KEN: I arrived at Kripalu in the summer of 1980 after having run a dance exercise studio in Toronto. When I arrived, I was ready and needing a break from the routine of teaching any kind of aerobic stretching. I had seen a video of Amrit Desai doing posture flow and one of my students had suggested I come down to a 10 day seminar called *YogaSadhana*. The journey inward and slowing down including breath awareness and meditation inspired and intrigued me.

LISA: How has Kripalu Yoga in particular helped you?

KEN: Kripalu taught me that Yoga has many stages of its flowering, many aspects to each posture including the whole process of the posture - getting into it, getting out of it and the reflective pose within the pose. Kripalu taught me 'meditation in motion' and the beginning understanding of the guru-disciple relationship. Kripalu also opened the gateway to understanding aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism more deeply and embracing the Eastern pole of thought.

LISA: How can Kripalu Yoga (KY) help different emotional states?

KEN: Kripalu Yoga teaches you to move from your core, to move from your centre, and to integrate the many aspects of the pose and the many levels of the being. Moving from the fluctuations on the pendulum swing of association and identification with time, body, and the fluctuations on the wheel of natural process. Everything is in constant change.

On the inside, there is a point of witness. This source of

witness consciousness watches the swing and the tides of all that is in flow and change. Kripalu Yoga taught me to look internally to the 'peace that passeth understanding', the calm eye of the witness and I believe this is the direction of all Yogas and can be attained through any modality of practice. It's the intent that counts. I believe this is also Kripalu Yoga.

LISA: Please talk about the 'healing grace' that has helped you.

KEN: Grace is the product of being in surrender and balance. It is the balance of making it happen and letting it happen. Grace comes from being able and willing to surrender to life moment by moment as it reveals itself, realising that an all pervading perfection exists in the universal dance of all the elements, attitudes, and beliefs, karma, attracting one's life to oneself.

Receiving this moment to moment truth is to surrender without resistance, struggle, attachment or aversion. From this stance we receive life as it is, with open heart and consciousness, all the things we would just as soon avoid, dislike, find painful. Receiving the unpleasant is the ever-widening doorway to grace. As well what feels painful in the body, we can include in the list repressed emotion, shut down of trust and love, blockages in being vulnerable and open, identification with the ego's projection of self. All these things close the doors and windows to the flow of grace being perceived. The elixir or 'amrit', the nectar of immortality and the flow of grace radiates moment by moment in one's life.

LISA: How does KY look at prana?



“Prana and consciousness are directly related and are of the same source and substance.”

KEN: *Prana, chi*, life force, universal energy - all refer to one and the same energy. Prana and consciousness are directly related and are of the same source and substance. Prana flows out of and from the field of intention and prayer and meditation. Breath, movement all stir and direct *prana*. When *prana* or *chi* is harnessed and directed, powerful results can be attained.

LISA: How can KY help us to remain in equanimity?

KEN: Through reflections gained by practice, finding a method that is balanced and which works for the individual and can be practised regularly with joy,

seeing the outcomes flowing naturally and deepening every day. It is the practice itself that is the teacher - not so much Kripalu. I believe any practice, done consistently with the intention of seeking equanimity and joy with balanced heart can

achieve this state. KY Yoga points toward the direction of this centred, calm, balanced heart filled with equanimity.

LISA: Does Kripalu look at the heart centre differently than other types of Yoga?

KEN: I can't really speak for Kripalu as a system or organisation that might have a different or unique slant. Perhaps in ways similar to Hinduism itself, there is an all-inclusivity of the many ways home. Some start their journey at the bottom, the top, in the middle ...

Certainly, for me in my exploration of what it meant to balance or surrender the head into the heart and all that that meant over the years in the practice, meant to learn, posture by posture, situation by situation, through life what Namaste means. Hands placed in prayer at the heart centre, 'I bow to the light within'. From where and through what centres does this light shine and originate? Some would say the source is the fountain of the heart.

LISA: Which other teachings do you bring to your Yoga and how do they help?

KEN: Studies in the native American medicine wheel and their teachings and relations with the totems in the natural world. Cross cultural studies of mythology, numerology, sacred geometry, the healing property of sound.

Yoga meaning 'union' - the study of all the sciences in the field of union. All seem to help and enhance deeper states of relaxation, lightness of being, health and happiness. Truly learning the art of letting go. The conscious and artful practice of applied Yoga off the mat is, for me, being able to utilise all the elements of being through the study of the practice. 'The elements of earth, my body; water, my blood; air, my breath; fire, my spirit: I am one with thee Lord'. This is an old Native American chant. Balancing the physical body, mental body, emotional body, etheric body. All these studies makes the ever-deepening study of the vastness and potential within more clear.

LISA: Why do you practise KY at this stage in your life?

KEN: I love its ever-unfolding nuances. I have preferred different modes or styles of practice at different times and stages in my life. KY teaches us to be sensitive and attuned to these nuances and their needs and to follow the guidance from within.

LISA: Who were your key teachers?

KEN: Of course, Gurudev, at Kripalu; and then the whole Kripalu family also became my teachers; my three boys, now 28, 25, and 23, - my greatest teachers. My ex-wife, significant others and my newly beloved - all my biggest teachers. I was also blessed with years of coaching from an elderly German gymnast (when I say elderly, really he's my age now), Conrad. He inspired me to see that youth had no age and age held no shackles in his body. His body was free to flip and fly. I have benefited from so many great teachers in each of the fields of practice - practices I've gone through - Art, Dance, Music, Gymnastics, Yoga.

LISA: How did Gymnastics help your Yoga and how did you make the switch?

Lisa Cherry is a freelance writer and Yoga enthusiast. Ken Scott lives in Nelson, British Columbia and teaches at Hollyhock and at Omega, as do the Desikachars'. Further information from www.hollyhock.ca and www.eomega.org Photos by Gladdis Hills.

“Yoga teaches us to be here now with all of our presence, available to give and receive all that each moment requires and offers.”

KEN: Looking at it from where I am now, Gymnastics was like moving Yoga using momentum and dynamics of re-bound to fly. That experience of freedom to fly got translated into many levels of Yoga, stemming from meditation - being ‘at one with’ alignment to the light. Similarly in gymnastics, to lift the body up into the light felt to trust, to let go, as well as to align the body in perfect vibration and balance necessary to initiate and complete a movement. Years of practice turned this same impulse toward a deeper study of the science, art, dance, of Yoga. I switched from gymnastics to Yoga. I slowed down and balanced my physical drives with spiritual aspirations.

LISA: Describe the importance of the legs.

KEN: The legs are an extension of the root chakra and form the base for the alignment of the posture itself. The legs, the earth chakra, hold and stabilise the elements of water, air, and fire.

LISA: How does Kripalu Yoga break our concept of separation?

KEN: By returning us to our connection to the elements themselves and their flow within our body, being and life. Yoga teaches us to be here now with all of our presence, available to give and receive all that each moment requires and offers. Yoga continues to awaken the consciousness of the witness, undivided, all pervasive, inclusive of all the poles that seem so apparently different: the you and the me, the light and the dark, the here and the there, the now and the then - all pointing toward separate slices of the pie. Yoga offers the whole pie.

LISA: Could you describe the “fire that burns” that you speak about.

KEN: The fire that burns begins with a dream and is sparked into possibility and often agonised into probability and then relaxed into inevitability. The fire that burns transmutes and transforms our raw impulses into actualities, refines the unorganised into the organised, and delivers the night into day. The fire that burns cleanses and destroys what is unwanted, unnecessary, and the part that seeks decay. The fire that burns leads us to come out and play, let go of all the dead ways.



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