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Bikram Yoga

The first time I tried it was in the summer. All I could think of was the smell and the hairy overweight guys with no shirts. A bit of a turn off. The yoga- not a problem. I've been doing yoga for quite some time. The heat- I loved. The sweat- made me feel good. Yet, I didn't like getting shouted at by someone with a microphone on. It was very American. A Richard Simmons like yoga Barbie on uppers.

Something kept me from going back.

Eventually I started studying with Ema. Under her tutelage I found all my perceptions about the yoga world changing. I began to scoff at such questions as, " What kind of yoga do you do?"

My knowledge and understanding became deeper and deeper. It began to assimilate with my very being until the core of myself was yoga. Like an illumined rod of Heroclitus. When I close my eyes I find inside is the eternal. My life in every aspect has changed. I have begun a grand transformation. I can no longer go back to anyway I used to be and even when I do; my yoga-witness- conscience is inside of me. Overruling everything. I've started to learn about myself. But that also means realizing that all preconceived notions aren't applicable anymore and also that I will never really know.

In this journey I got a little vitamin-D deficient, a little weight gain, a little too introspective. When I got an email in early January from a friend- a deal, 10 classes for \$20 at Bikram Yoga. I decided to give it another shot. Mostly driven by an extreme want to get more physical and tone my sedentary winter body. I convinced my roommate to go along and I was prepared. It'd be a challenge though used to doing yoga, I'd become a little lazy.

I'm an actress and a person who needs a particular environment, setting, scene, ambience- if you will to really do anything. And productivity in my small living space has been on the steady decline. As soon as I opened the doors to the building it smelled like feet. Climbed the stairs, went into the humid lobby and found it was incredibly poorly laid out. Eventually I got settled in the 105 degree room. Amidst a whole host of other people the class was crowded to the brim. Most likely making it more hot and humid with all of the mouth breathing these people do. This is not a joke but a very real statement.

After class I felt like an over educated yoga snob. There are good things about Bikram yoga but there are also some very real potentially dangerous problems that perhaps only I know because of my extensive training. First class, two people left the room to throw up. Ew. As I continued going I (unfortunately) had the same instructor. Speaking in a tone of what my articulation professor would

refer to as " voice beautiful" this particular instructor was a glorified semi pissed off woman in a bathing suit. The headset microphone gives someone authority, apparently. At the end of one particular session I went to sit in siddha yoni asana, accomplished pose for women as we started to do pranayama.

She yelled at me, pointed me out- " No, don't even bother attempting lotus pose right now!" As if I were a child. Yes, a child who knows the difference between full lotus pose, half lotus pose, and accomplished pose for women. In another Bikram yoga attempt (this was quickly becoming more of a weight loss attempt/enjoying somewhere that was hotter than recently blizzard stricken Michigan than anything) I sought out the brand-new state of the art Bikram studio in Northville, around the corner from where I work. This studio really is nice. They have some speciality carpet that makes it not smell like feet, so cutting out that factor, the whole experience was much nicer. Through this studio I experienced a whole host of instructors. Some of which were mere puppets repeating the same audio track on loop. One special instructor would actually get personal, walk amongst the room- in contrast to standing on the podium at the front middle of the room. Otherwise I had a few times when I kept

thinking to my self- wow I really want to close my eyes right now, and wow I want to do a different sequence of asanas. In bikram you aren't allowed to close your eyes and you always do the same exact sequence. One day I was pining for Surya Namaskara quite badly. Once my deal ran up I stopped going back. In fact I still have some classes at the other studio in Ann Arbor but I really don't want to deal with that strange woman again. All in all, Bikram yoga might be good for a particular group... but I don't think I belong to whatever group that might be. A customer at my work was talking to me once, she said she had a professor from India in college and he used to joke. Saying something along the lines of- In Southern India we don't have air conditioning. Now you are making a business of it?!