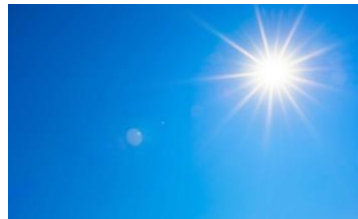


Springtime Musings 2021

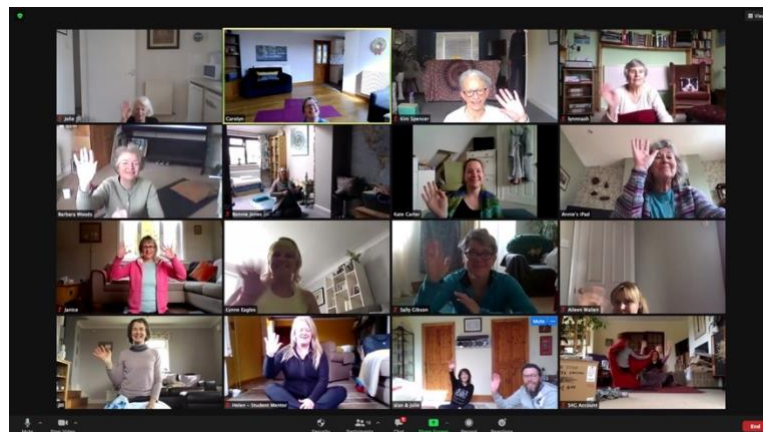
Hello Everyone and Welcome to Spring.



Hoping you are all well.

I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported the Yoga Stops Traffick event this year which we held on line on 14th March. This was surprisingly well supported, given that the day clashed with Mothers' Day. A staggering £605.00 was raised between the Freedom Yoga and Relaxation gang. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I know this will help the charity so much with their good work.

The event this year had more of a class feel to it than in previous events but we did include some sun salutes with a version to suit everyone. I was so impressed with each and every person on screen. We saw children, grandchildren and pets all getting Involved.



Recently somebody told me they really fancy trying yoga but they aren't flexible enough. I hear this said a lots. Its such a shame really. If you hear anyone tell you this, please tell them "Saying you're not flexible enough for YOGA is like saying you're too dirty to take a SHOWER!" If you can breathe, you CAN do yoga!

Yoga teachers worry far more about the very flexible people than they do the less flexible. You can



do more harm by over-stretching than you will under-stretching.

Meet Kathryn



Kathryn is a 45 year old busy married mum of two teenagers. Kathryn works part time as an administrator for a family business. She juggles her job, looking after her family and running her house.

In recent times, Kathryn has started to struggle with balancing her needs with the needs of her family and her job. She is becoming irritable and stressed. Less focused on the diet she is feeding herself and her family. She is finding less enjoyment in life. She is feeling resentful towards those she sees around her who appear to be sailing through life. Kathryn tries to cheer herself with sweet treats, snacks and wine. By evening time, Kathryn is exhausted but can't sleep, her mind is still busy ruminating over the day – what she could have done better, the things she didn't manage to fit in. Feelings of guilt about the time she didn't spend with her children and husband. Wondering if she forgot to pass on an important message in work. Then worrying about the next day, wondering how she could be more efficient, improve her memory. What shopping did she need to pick up? What do the children need for tomorrow? Are their uniforms clean for school? Did they complete their homework?

Kathryn tries more wine to help her relax. At first, it seems to help. She drifts off to sleep but then wakes in the middle of the night with thoughts whirling around – simply unable to shut them down.

Each day is much the same. Tiredness creates tension and frustration. The job she had been enjoying feels less rewarding. Kathryn's slumped posture reflects her state of mind. She doesn't smile as often as she used to. Her work and home tasks create habitual rounding of shoulders and the forward movement of her head, so creating pressure on her upper spine. Her low back begins to ache. Kathryn starts avoiding exercise due to the shoulder, neck and back discomfort. Soon, her general fitness levels decrease. She notices she is more breathless using the stairs at work and at home so avoids using them as much as possible.

Kathryn is feeling really fed up, her motivation waning, her self-confidence rock bottom. Her sparkle gone. She stops meeting friends. Her world appears to shrink.

A good friend treats Kathryn to a yoga and mosaic retreat day. At this event, Kathryn is introduced to some gentle yoga including breath-led mobilisation of joints, stretching, flowing movement. All modified to suit the needs of her achy body. She discovered space and lift of body and mind through the linking of body, mind and breath. During the relaxation practice, she dropped into stillness and although she didn't actually sleep, her body and mind were actually relaxed and in rest.

After a delicious, fresh, nutritious lunch and a few hours being creative with coloured tiles, mindfully absorbed in making a mosaic treasure to take home, Kathryn felt a real sense of wellbeing. Her mind was lighter, she felt more positive, her body moved better, her posture more upright. She felt a little stronger. Kathryn was really feeling the benefit of some time fully focused on herself.

Kathryn made the decision to carve out time in her busy week to join a regular yoga class. That ninety minute time slot for her, where there were no phone calls, no demands on her. Space for Kathryn to focus on her body, her breath, her mind. Space for Kathryn to experience how she felt in a posture. Space to gently open her shoulders, undo the effects of the posture that her job and her busy home life encourages of her. Space to recover and build her strength. She learns tips to better manage her stress. And most of all, she learns to listen to her body and its need. She learns to value her body. She began sleeping better. As she began to look after her body in yoga, she began caring more about how she nourished her body through her diet.

As Kathryn feels better in herself, this is reflected in her relationship with her family, her friends and her work.

By looking after herself. Kathryn is better able to look after those around her.

How do you look after yourself?



Looking forward

Im eagerly listening out for the announcements regarding the easing of restrictions. I am hearing excited announcements from lots of people who have had their first vaccinations and some having had their second. I gather there is uncertainty about distancing rules that might be in place on return to Indoor classes and what effect those might have on viability of classes but we have to wait

and see. Hopefully, we will have some nice enough weather and be able to hold a few out door yoga sessions in the not too distant future.

Who has been getting out and about for walks in this recent lovely weather? Aren't we lucky, living where we do with access to the fresh outdoors. Have you noticed the abundant wildlife and the emergence of spring flowers and leaves beginning to appear on trees. The slightly slower pace of life certainly enables us to take more notice of what we have around us doesn't it.

I got out yesterday between classes and before the weather turned. I decided to search for things in the colours that represent the chakras and got a full house. Not sure how many stiles I climbed over but I was glad I had been doing the "dog peeing up a wall pose" early this week!



We have been focusing on individual joints this month. We have moved through joints, warming them up and then flowing and breathing through the spine and into some bigger movements and some gentle sun salutes. Im now planning for April classes and taking inspiration from a garden pond.



Over the last several weeks, the pond has changed from still, dark and murky waters with no apparent interest to a little world of growth. The frogs noisily returned and left their spawn. The mature fish are closer to the surface soaking up the sun's rays. Young fish of various size are evident. The iris leaves are shooting. What I cant see yet is evidence of the lilies. However, I know that deep in the pond, in the brown, slimy mud, the tubers are beginning their cycle. The water lily or lotus is considered in many cultures and religions, as a symbol of purity, enlightenment, self-regeneration and rebirth. The characteristics of a lily rather like a the human

condition: Although the lily's roots sit in the mud, dark in the bottom of the pond, far away from the sun, the lily eventually produces the most beautiful flower.

“According to Buddhism, every person has the potential to become perfect and enlightened, and it is just a matter of time until each human reaches the light. Buddhists believe that it's necessary to be reborn thousands of times, polishing one's being through many incarnations, until one reaches nirvana – the highest state of consciousness that humans can access.

So, the Buddha is sometimes depicted sitting on a Lotus flower, symbolizing the one who overcame the pain of that prevails in the material world and became enlightened, just like the Lotus flower which starts to grow in the dirty and muddy water but manages to surpass the water and produce a perfect flower. Many Hindu gods are depicted sitting or standing on a Lotus.”



Our lives can be a bit like the lily. We experience dark times and struggles through the mud of life but with effort and learning, we grow, we respond to changing conditions and we eventually emerge and blossom. I think many people can apply this analogy to the last 12 months, hoping there will be many blossoming lilies over the coming months as we emerge cautiously from lockdown.

If lockdown has been a dark, still and muddy experience for you, what have you learned from it? How has that experience fed, prepared and stored potential in your roots, ready for growth, and emergence? How many petals will your lily produce? What colour? How big? How bold? How will your lily impact those around you?



Here is the link to the April Yoga sessions timetable.

https://1drv.ms/w/s!AjPCWdPtAZICsBRNwNK_tfhoz3AB

I will send out the April links document as usual to those who have been regularly attending and others who have paid for April sessions. (I don't add the link info here to protect our yoga space from "Zoom bombers" (yes, it's a real thing!))

I have set up a restricted YouTube Channel for the purposes of saving the Zoom class recordings and other little demo videos that might prove useful. This means that I can give you a link which will not

expire and you wont need to download the recording – simply click and join in. My governing body and insurers stipulate that I don't allow my videos to be shared with anyone that I haven't already assessed for appropriateness to use the content. When I record the sessions, its only me that appears on screen (as long as I press the right buttons). Occasionally, I mention somebody's first name I don't believe this identifies them in the video but am trying to avoid references.

I am happy to pass on these links to those who have attended the class and those who have paid for but missed the class.

I am considering offering up some video class recording for payment. Again, this can only be for anyone I am confident can practice safely. I have been asked for a video demo of a couple of specific sequences and postures for a particular condition. Do let me know if you think of anything that might help you.

Talking of Video. Its such a privilege to be invited into your homes to deliver yoga. I get to meet pets, children, grandchildren, partners, postmen. I love the way some of you set up your yoga space with candles, fires lit or flame effect switched on. I admire the way people make the best of space available and know some have to negotiate with family members for the space and/or quiet time.

Sometimes lighting can be a bit tricky. If I am looking out for students alignment and safety, I need the best view possible. If light is shining from behind you, it often means that the best view I get is your silhouette. At night, its often no view at all. I created this little video to show you how sunlight can affect a view. <https://youtu.be/43dviMFgDQs> Its similar with lamps. The best solution is to have a lamp behind your computer, tablet or phone directed to shine on you.

This is what happens in one house when the yoga mats go down ready for class!



I also see pooches snuggle up to or even on top of students as they go into relaxation. Its almost like the pets sense or tune into the change in brain wavelengths their owner emits.

I even get a bedtime wave from a little grandson who stays fortnightly. He's such a little cutie in his PJs coming for a kiss and a hug goodnight from his Nanny mid class.

Perhaps soon, we will be Zooming in our gardens again?

I so love your sharing and connection.

Not sure if it's the sense of hope for end of lockdown or spring weather feel but I have suddenly received a trickle of lovely messages of appreciation, and comments about enjoyment and feeling good from people. Thank you so much. I really should be promoting myself better and reviews and testimonials are so valuable.

If you feel able to add a Google review, this would really be helpful in pushing my business further up the search listings. It is possible for you to post a review by clicking on this link.

<https://g.page/freedom-yoga-and-relaxation/review?rc>

Stay well. Keep in touch. See you soon one way or another.

