



Addressing Psychological Trauma through Yoga

By Natasha Sagalovsky

Last month I wrote an article on using the power of intention in our yoga practice to program into ourselves our vision for transformation so that we can then stick to it as we move through our days. Bringing our intention into our physical work on the mat cultivates our capacity for focus, builds our confidence and refines our conscious presence.

This month I'd like to share with you a different aspect of the transformative power of yoga – but to do so I will defer to an expert in the field of fascia, Thomas Myers. Myers is the author of *Anatomy Trains*, a book dedicated to mapping the longitudinal myofascial connections of the body; meaning, how the whole of our musculature can be functionally traced through what he calls 'myofascial meridians' through the fascial webbing of the human body.

In the [linked interview](#), Myers says that it is possible to address psychological trauma by addressing chronic tension patterns and holdings in the body. He says we hold unresolved emotional trauma in the tissues, thereby locking us permanently into certain patterns of thinking, processing information, and behaving. Through yoga or similar forms of movement, these “stuck” patterns of thinking and behaving can be released.



“Most of these emotions are going to start in your nervous system. They’re going to be exported to your muscles. And the pattern in your muscles is going to determine what the pattern in the fascia is.

But by the time your fascia gets stuck in that pattern, the problem is how are you going to get out of it? General exercise won’t get you out of these things. They will not change the pattern of the fascia. You need long, slow stretches, such as during yoga.”

Fascia is the thin sheath of fibrous tissue that encloses our muscles and organs. It is woven into the whole of our inner physical world – and according to Myers, it is the final repository of emotions and experiences that do not get immediately resolved.

Put another way, tensions in the body *are* tensions of the mind, there is no separation.

Through our yoga practice, we change the structure of our physical body as well as our nervous and circulatory systems. According to Meyers, should you attempt to make these changes in your psyche only, through methods such as talk therapy, you would end up with what he calls the “Woody Allen Syndrome” — you understand more and more and more about why you cannot change.

“To have a greater understanding about why you can’t change misses the point.” He says, “The point is to change.”

Pattabhi Jois used to say “*Practice, practice, practice*”. Rudi used to say “*Work, work, work*”. Swami Chetanananda tells us again and again “release tensions and allow your creative energy to flow.”

There is no substitute for spending quality time on your mat and consciously working to unravel the tension patterns of the body. Search for them throughout! These patterns woven into your being ready to be unlocked!

Another way of looking at it is how the ancients considered that our karmas live in the body and considered yoga a practice of purification; it’s the same thing. Through our yoga practice, these stuck patterns begin to move and bring greater freedom to the whole system.



Even if you’ve been a practitioner for years – I encourage you to not let your practice wane. Which one of us is going through the complexities of life without it making some imprint in our hearts, bodies and mind? Which one of us is not feeling on some level the pinprick of things not being as we wish they could be? Which one of us is moving through this world without accumulating some tension in the body which then in turn affects the state of our mind and emotions?

For us earth-walkers and spiritual seekers, a regular yoga practice is part and parcel of the logistics of owning a human body and heart – and being able to release tensions and open to the flow.

If you haven’t found the right yoga class for you, keep searching. We are deeply blessed to have a lifestyle that allows us the luxury of yoga. And with pranams to our Guru Swami Chetanananda who opens great doorways within us that would otherwise remain untouched.

I leave you with some encouragement from The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali:

It is only when the correct practice is followed for a long time, without interruptions and with a quality of positive attitude and eagerness that it can succeed (1.14). Through faith, which will give sufficient energy to achieve success against all odds, direction will be maintained. Then the realization of the goal of yoga is a matter of time (1.20). The more intense the faith and the effort, the closer the goal (1.21).

You can read the full interview with Tom Meyers here: [Creating Change: Tom Myers on Yoga, Fascia and Mind-Body Transformation](#)

With love,

Natasha.



Natasha Sagalovsky is the Yoga Studio Director at The Movement Center. She is a registered teacher with Yoga Alliance at the 500 hr level and is grateful to be sharing, studying, and practicing at The Movement Center.

