

# THE BATTLE WITHIN

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Have you ever uttered those words "I'm so rubbish at yoga" (or backbends, forward bends, hip openers....) Where did the idea come from that you were not up to scratch when it came to your yoga practise? I'm pretty sure it wouldn't have been from your yoga teacher, nor your friends or fellow class members. So where did that notion come from? That only leaves one person - you!

Why is it we are so obsessed with obtaining that 'perfect asana' in yoga? And what exactly does perfect mean? Why do we feel like we are a failure or have not succeeded in yoga unless that faultless asana that you have in your mind is achieved.

Are we forgetting the point of yoga?

Yoga can heal the body, YES! But it can also 'damage' the body and perhaps also the mind and our joy of the asana. The constant 'push push' mentality in yoga can maybe be blamed on some styles of yoga but most commonly, the constant barrage of video's and photo's that we are subjected to on a daily basis. We are told to just breathe and our body will ease us into a desired pose effortlessly. Yes, maybe. But also maybe not!

## The body you were born with

Did you every stop and think – does my body want to go into that particular arrangement and more importantly, is my body capable of doing it safely? Have you thought that actually, the body you were born with (your bone structure) will not actually allow you to get into that position in the same way that that perfectly formed athletic and bendy 'goddess' or 'god' is showing you in the video or photo.



Did you consider that if you continue to push your body, when you have reached a compression of a joint (bone on bone), you will start to cause real damage. Slowly wearing away and forcing to a point when your body will eventually give up thus causing deep rooted physical issues long-term. Forcing in this way will not only cause stress to the body, but also to the mind

and your total experience of yoga.

## Remembering why we do yoga

It is common to hear teachers talk about taking the focus away from the destination of the pose in our practise. Yoga is about the journey; the journey of the asana for the body and mind.

Are you one of those people who congratulates yourself when you 'get there' or beat yourself up if you don't; feeling that you have either succeeded or failed. Neither of these win/lose expressions are very helpful in yoga. This is the ego talking thereby taking the awareness away from the intuition.

By removing the focus off the destination and enjoying the 'here and now' will help to free up the mind, the body and the spirit.

## Making Salad

I attended an arm balance workshop recently. The teacher quoted an analogy from the book "The Zen Commandments: Ten suggestions for a Life of Inner Freedom" about how we view our obsession with getting into the perfect pose, with making a salad.



Let us just say we have decided we would like to have salad for our lunch and we then spend the next 10 minutes chopping and slicing our vegetables to put together this delicious salad. All the time our focus is fixated on this tasty and juicy salad we are about to eat; quickly and furiously chopping and slicing whilst continuously mentally gazing on the end product.



But what about taking a moment to enjoy the chopping and slicing; appreciating all the components that make up that wonderful tasty salad and actually enjoying the art of making it. Maybe having a little nibble at your tomato or olive therefore diverting the mind off the fascination of the target.

Of course you may not like salad! But you can take this analogy to all aspects of your yoga. Clearing away those obsessional thoughts or beating yourself up when 'today' it just didn't happen for you and instead being satisfied with your 'now'; appreciating the journey and all the components that make up the wondrous yoga asana.



Today may not be the day you get there or tomorrow, next week or even next year. But if you take away the anxiety and fixation of the pose, don't be surprised if something bigger and more beautiful happens that will change your yoga experience forever.

Apply that philosophy to your whole yoga practise and most importantly to all aspects of your life and then the battle is over. Ahhhhh we can relax now.

Stop, smile and enjoy your moment. It's yours and no one else's.

By Jo Wheeler, Yoga Teacher, [www.yoga-wheel.com](http://www.yoga-wheel.com)



## Jo Wheeler

Jo Wheeler is a 45 year old mum of three with a great passion for Yoga. Her training has been with the highly acclaimed Anne Marie Newland at Sun Power Yoga and loves sharing her enthusiasm for yoga in her Hampshire classes and workshops. Jo's creative nature means she is always on the lookout for the next morsel of inspiration to give that added 'edge' to her classes making each session fun, motivational and most importantly authentic.

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