

HEALING WITH WATER

BY KAITLYN VITTOZZI

No matter the time of year I can conjure up the feeling being parched on the hottest of days: leaving the beach and taking a big sip of cool water and perking up almost instantaneously. Similarly, on winter afternoons when I just feel cold and damp all the way to my bones, sipping on a big hot mug of bitter herbal tea. Both gifts we get from water.

Anyone reading this section of the magazine knows that you are supposed to drink lots of water every day to stay hydrated. Almost every weight loss plan I have ever heard of or read about includes drinking more water. Sometimes our body is craving nourishment – and we assume it’s food, when it’s simply thirsty. Animals need it. Athletes need it. The elderly need it. The fight for clean water carries on in many areas around the world unfortunately.

I’ve spoken with several naturopaths and ayurvedic specialists who recommend hot lemon water as the best detox for your system. Forget the fancy pills and supplements. This hot lemon water ritual is how I start each day even before my coffee and I just feel better. I couldn’t tell you for certain if it’s detoxing my body but it certainly detoxes my foggy morning brain and any negativity left over from the day before.

So those are some of the physical benefits of water – and arguably energetic (proper

hydration = more energy), but what about the mental and emotional healing that the water can bring?

“When life places stones in your path, be the water. A persistent drop of water will wear away even the hardest stone.” Autumn Morning Star

At the hardest points in my life, finding a body of water has almost always provided some clarity, or at least a little bit of



relief. Here are my three go-to practices (besides that lemon water) for when you’re feeling unsure of your next steps. Jumping in. I teach Paddleboard Yoga on Canandaigua Lake. Before I was teaching, I nervously stood as a student of Leslee Schenk Trzcinski’s on the beach of Kershaw Park. Once in the water – I was so terrified I would be the first one to fall off the board and into the lake. I moved, very rigidly and in a calculated fashion from posture to posture on the board. I was afraid of embarrassment.

At the end of class, I attempted to push myself into a full backbend and propelled myself directly into the lake. Cue “Jaws” theme song. It was a safe space. I emerged, soaked, and laughing. That was 2012 – before I was teaching the classes. Since then I have seen a similar student show up to almost every class since; neck and toes clenched for dear life, afraid a breath might topple them into the water. So often as humans, we are afraid of what will happen if we

give ourselves over to something fully. We dip one toe into the proverbial water while still holding on onto what is comfortable. The fact of the matter is, we can try to control life all we want – but the world will never let us be in complete control. Take a risk. Get soaked. Jump in. Constant holding in of your body creates unnecessary tension that might follow you around the next day.

Water just moves, without fear and certainly without judgement.

Feeling the water. There is a definite change in the way the water and the air feel in Upstate New York from hot and sticky mid-July to late August when it gets a little bit cooler, and goose bumps start to pop up. I know most of us prefer one or the other. What I love about teaching in the water is that it makes me FEEL the physical sensations. Maybe the roughness of the

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wind on my skin isn't my favorite, but I have the privilege to get to experience it. And sitting in discomfort, is a skill. I of course would recommend getting up early and hopping in the lake to anyone – but if that's a bit of a stretch for you– consider playing with water in your sink. Or ending your hot showers with cool water to switch things up. The next time you go to get in the pool drop any preconceived notion of what is hot or cold and just simply feel and notice. Water watching meditation. In my late twenties I felt a bit stuck. I needed something to be different, so on a bit of a whim I got a job in Portugal, teaching yoga at Salty Ways surf camp. It paid me in room and board. To say that all

of the employees and staff would get along on a daily basis would be a lie.

Personalities just don't work that way. But every evening, we would walk out to the road or the beach and watch the ocean waves for about an hour before sunset. Watching the water was a unifier. Simply sitting and watching, no story is perhaps the best meditation I can offer anyone. Go to your nearest lake, creek, ocean and just get lost in the watching. Your takeaway may be different than mine. Mine was that the Atlantic Ocean was here long before me and will be here long after. So any miniscule judgement, or negative thought I had about myself – was utter bullshit.

I complete this draft after teaching a yoga class to a bridal party on a dock on Seneca Lake. I didn't know the group, but after surrounding ourselves with the feelings of the lake for the hour - the bride sighed, “I didn't know how much I needed that.”

What other ways has water helped you heal? Shoot me a note at TozziYoga.com, I would love to hear it!

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