

## Small Town Yogi

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A few days ago I caught Angel in a weak moment, and before she knew it we -- along with our friend, Beth -- were on the interstate headed to Hot Yoga. What was the catalyst for a spur of the moment, mid-week trip to a facility that boasts a 110-degree room and instructors who encourage students to clear the mind of all distractions? Honestly, I forgot.

I had been once before so knew what to expect. But Angel and Beth only had my descriptions to go on. When we arrived, the instructor led us to the studio so we could “focus on the journey and not the destination.” Which in Yogi speak means, “Keep your mouth shut so you don’t distract others,” a rule made clear to us when one person pantomimed that our whisper was distracting his peace chakra.

A little bit of advice for new yogis: don’t, seriously, don’t EVER mess with the regulars. They are the ones who arrive early to ensure their spot, and unless you want to get into a brawl with a woman who has more pit hair than your husband, pick up your mat and quietly move on.

When the little “Bikram” hall monitor sat back down, Angel looked at me and ever the perfect student said, “If you say another word, I’m telling.”

Halfway through the 26-pose series I glanced at my two friends. Beth and I have been working out together for nearly a year and she’s in incredible shape. Like me, Beth was standing in a puddle of sweat, legs shaking and trying not to fall while performing the warrior pose.

Then I looked at Angel. She had a tiny bit of perspiration around her hairline. Meanwhile, I looked like I’d just stepped off Splash Mountain. She noticed me staring and whispered, “I’m better at this than you.” Maybe it was delusion caused from the excruciating heat but I still swear she stuck her tongue out at me.

It's harder than you'd think to learn to pose correctly. Every time the instructor would encourage students to clear the mind I would try to interpret the meaning of tattoos a lady in front of me had on her calf and back. Then began making a mental grocery list and planning the following week's work schedule. One more time our super fit instructor walked by and said,

"You can do this. Let your mind go. Forgive the past. There is nothing to worry about."

Nothing to worry about?! Was she joking? Apparently she didn't have a mortgage, children, husband, bills or a mother-in-law who lives next door. Instead of leaving, I stayed and desperately tried to accomplish the breakthrough everyone talks about in hot yoga.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, the class ended. We made it. Angel was like a duck in water. She barely broke a sweat and insisted I must have something wrong with me because of all the perspiration.

The instructor was right. The toxins had left via sweat glands and we were free from some harmful radicals. Now that the toxins were gone I didn't want them back. I was halfway through an ice cream sandwich later that night before I realized my mistake. If there's one thing hot yoga has taught me, it's forgiveness... Namaste, ya'll.

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