

Biology Of Bliss

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Yogis throughout the ages have understood that the bliss we seek is not outside ourselves, but rather it *is* ourselves. Yoga helps us come back to our true nature: the dynamic, pulsing terrain of poets, mystics, lovers, seekers and saints.

Modern science has caught up with the ancient understanding that we are hardwired for bliss; neuroscience, cognitive psychology and psychoneuroimmunology all address the physiological underpinnings of our emotional lives. Science is increasingly tracking the benefits of meditation and other yoga practices.

Session 1 (2.5 hours) *Flooded with Joy*

Your brain contains a network of neurons, incomparably vast, with more connections than are stars in the Milky Way. Lit up, this luminous filigree would dazzle all within its sights. The threads of this delicate web are pulsing with shimmering molecules, tiny packets of ecstasy, spreading their dharma of delight. Deep breathing stimulates a cascade of bliss molecules to light up every fibre of your being; practicing asana and pranayam your body becomes a field of radiant sensation.

Our vinyasa flow practice will be a moving meditation on the breath as we flow from surya namaskar to standing poses, deep forward folds, twists and exultant backbends. We will sing the body electric and breathe the body of bliss. Come celebrate your senses!

Some discussion, mostly asana.

Session 2 (2.5 hours) *Exploring the Body of Bliss*

A look at some basic neurobiology in order to understand how yoga practices can alter your biochemistry and hence your emotions. We will discuss how to harness the benefits of yoga practice in light of scientific insights so that you can optimize the joy and wellbeing you experience in your life.

Discussion followed by yoga nidra.

Session 3 (2.5 hours) *Ananda, the Joyful Yogin*

Tantrikas believe that the spiritual heart at the center of the chest houses a lotus flower, its beauty reflecting your very essence. This heart of joy (*ananda*) is the center of your being; practicing yoga we come home to your true nature.

A juicy, heart-opening practice incorporating pranayama, visualization, Tantric meditation and mudra practice, expansive backbends, deep twists and long forward folds.

Session 4 (2.5 hours) **Neti-Neti Yoga**

Advaita Vedanta (non-dualism) says that to know the divine, you must taste the divine, concepts and names are not enough. So it is with your own nature; who you are is unbounded, beyond form. Who you are *Satchitananda* - being, consciousness, bliss.

Discussion of neuroscience and yoga philosophy; pranayama; light asana and yoga nidra.