

The Yin Yoga Institute

Master Paulie Zink's Yoga Teaching Philosophy

Teachers are not required to follow Master Zink's philosophy but they must be familiar with it in order to qualify for registration.

I encourage students to be self motivated, not to be dependent on a teacher for their practice. Therefore, I never physically adjust a beginner. Instead, I offer the students verbal instruction on how to properly position themselves into postures. On occasion I do adjust the more advanced students to help them grow further into the posture.

I believe in open systems of thought and practice. I disregard rigid formulas or concepts. My intention in creating the art of Yin and Yang yoga was to develop a style of yoga that has universal appeal and application, a style that can be adapted to a variety of interests and needs and is compatible with all other styles of yoga, to provide a practice that benefits the mental, physical, and spiritual health and well being of students, promotes healing and growth, and helps students restore their physical mobility, enabling them to move naturally as an animal moves, the way our bodies are intended to.

I always teach in harmony with the flow of the group of students, in a manner that accommodates their specific needs and mood. I strive to teach in such a way that at least 90% of the students are happy and benefit from the class. I hope 100% of the student body is satisfied. But it is not always possible to please everyone.

I never use timers in class, nor do I follow the dictates of a clock. The classroom door always remains unlocked. Students are welcome to join the class and to leave class whenever they want or need to. I would prefer to not teach according to a clock at all, but rather to let the class follow its own course of beginning and ending.

I encourage students to open to their intuitive heart, to flow with their own unique expression of the practice. In this way students learn to develop the artist within instead of copying a teacher exactly. Copying a teacher is mimicry not creativity.

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Proficiency of yoga is achieved through the practice of yoga postures and movements, not through the study of theory. The benefit of yoga comes from doing it and becoming one with it. For me, yoga is a way of life. I have incorporated the practice into everything I do, into my way of being. When we are in harmony with the Tao then our minds are not busy thinking about theory. Theory and practice are two different things. It is not necessary to study theory to be able to embody the art of yoga.

True understanding of theory comes from engaging in the practice of yoga. It comes from direct experience. However, the experience of yoga does not require scientific explanation in order to be advantageous. My master did not teach me theory until after I had developed advanced skill in the art. Our primal nature is not preoccupied with intellect. Too much emphasis on the intellect during practice can prevent us from being fully present in our bodies.

The western mind-set is of the belief that more is better, the harder you try the more you achieve. It is always rushing into the future. By contrast, in Taoist thought the harder you try the less you achieve. This is because the body will resist force. I always encourage students to take their time, never rush, never strain. Excessive force and the tension caused by rushing can lead to injury. If students injure themselves, then they are doing it incorrectly.

As long as we are alive our bodies are growing. New cells are being created to replace old and dying cells. I never impose a limiting belief system on students. If we believe we are limited then we are. I encourage students to believe that healing, growth and improvement are almost always possible. A good teacher leads by example. A good teacher teaches students to realize their potential and to liberate themselves from presumed limitations. Ultimately, within the pulsing ebb and flow of the creative power inherent in the universe, anything is possible.