



Do Your Om Thing: Bending Yoga Tradition to Fit Your Modern Life

Rebecca Pacheco

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Yoga, Meet Life.

Sometimes an hour-long yoga class is the only chance we get to connect meaningfully with our bodies and our minds during a week otherwise full of work, family, and the daily grind. Have you ever wondered how would it feel to bring that experience of awareness and calm out of the yoga studio and into your everyday life? After all, we know that practicing yoga can give us a leaner body and more sculpted limbs, but isn't its most important benefit the way it makes us *feel*?

In *Do Your Om Thing*, master yoga teacher and creator of the popular blog OmGal.com Rebecca Pacheco shows us that the true practice of yoga is about much more than achieving the perfect headstand or withstanding an hour-long class in a room heated to 100 degrees. "Yoga is not about performance," she tells us, "it's about practice, on your mat and in your life. If you want to get better at anything what should you do? *Practice*. Confidence, compassion, awareness, joy—if you want more of these—and who doesn't?—yoga offers the skills to practice them."

In her warm, personal, and often hilarious prose, Rebecca translates yogic philosophy for its twenty-first-century devotees, making ancient principles and philosophy feel accessible, relatable, and genuinely rooted in the world in which we live today. And by illuminating how the guiding principles of yoga apply to our modern lives, Rebecca shows us that the true power of a yoga practice is not physical transformation, but mental and spiritual liberation.

Do Your Om Thing: Bending Yoga Tradition to Fit Your Modern Life Details

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Janna Dorman says

I really enjoyed this! I've always heard there's so much more to yoga than posing on a mat, but I never felt like I had the right resources to figure out what that meant. This book is the perfect answer. Pacheco provides readers with a blend of yoga history and easy ways to incorporate aspects of yoga into their daily lives. I've already incorporated a few things I learned and I plan to continually reference this book. I highly recommend this book for anyone who does yoga or has an interest in yoga, but more importantly for anyone looking to make small changes that can have a large impact on their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Longer review to come on LiteraryQuicksand.com. I received this book in exchange for my honest opinion from TLC Book Tours.

Jessie Trager says

This review is a little bit late (seeing as I technically finished this book nearly a month ago) but it's taken me awhile to form coherent thoughts about it. I've also gone back and re-read it twice now and annotated the entire thing very VERY thoroughly.

It's clear I'm in love with this book! I've always had an obsession with self-help books and this one is of a better caliber than most as it suggests ways to improve upon your life by following a more yogic lifestyle/viewpoint. Why does this make the book of a higher caliber, you ask? Yoga has always been something people like to turn to for personal betterment, but no one really understands the lifestyle aspects of it (they focus primarily on the asana limb of the 8-Limbed Path). By explaining these lifestyle aspects of yoga, Pacheco presents a new way for people to improve upon their lives, one that many may not have expected. Pacheco makes it very clear that she is not telling you how to live your life, but that one can incorporate any range of the many yoga principles she outlines into their lives.

As a person who constantly struggles with stress, anxiety, and good intentions but bad actions, this book helped me to outline ways to improve upon myself. This came as a surprise as I thought the book was going to be more about how to work yoga into a modern, fast-paced lifestyle, not how to make your fast-paced lifestyle more calm and peaceful, and how to be a good person. Overall pleasantly surprised, a bit touched, and in love with this work. Thank you Rebecca!

Mandi Beam says

Amazing

It took months to finish this book! Not because it was hard to read, but because I was constantly going back and re-reading chapters over and over again. If you are a Yoga student, Yoga teacher or simply wanting to get into Yoga, read this book. You will learn about the tradition of Yoga, the poses, the breath work and so much more. She writes in such an engaging way that you feel like you are sitting down and talking over coffee. I will read this book again and again. Five stars!

Rebecca Scott says

My oh my was this a wonderful book! I first noticed this book at my friend's house and thought "that is an interesting title" (and also the fact that I share the same name as the author's). This book discusses the background of yoga philosophy (from past to present), the body as yoga tradition views it (koshas and chakras) and how to balance and integrate each of these, the mind (meditation advice), and yoga's spiritual roots and the profound impact they can have on day-to-day life. Throughout the entire book the author has questions and practices to help guide the reader through their journey, i.e. "Think of a time when you experienced unbroken, laserlike concentration. How did it feel physically, mentally, and emotionally? What were you doing? How can you do more of it every day?". This book also contains advice from some amazing yogis and experts (Depak Chopra anyone?).

This is not your typical "self-help" book (which I find sometimes only explain the why and not necessarily the how and can be very formal). Rebecca explains why yoga can be beneficial (not just on the mat but in everyday life)- "...your inner life, the one with which yoga is chiefly concerned, changes your experience of everything"..."The fittest athletes and most seasoned yogis I know will concur that their lives and performances are most elevated by the states of mental and spiritual clarity evoked by yoga, as opposed to physical performance". She then of course explains the how- how to feel more connected, joy, compassion, confidence and awareness in your everyday life (body, mind and spirit).

I also like how funny the author is (who knew yoga had a sense of humour?). On meditation: "Let's be candid though: while its key principles are simple, meditation is not easy. By way of a confession, I fell off the meditation wagon around the holidays once. Funny visual, isn't it? I picture an actual wagon pulled by reindeer, through a snowy scene, with a bunch of people quietly meditating in the back. Then, I literally fall off. It makes one wonder, would people just shrug and continue meditating? I'd be left to gather myself, on a cobblestone street, dusting off the reindeer dung."

On being a lifelong student: "There are no elegant poses named for Saraswati (goddess of creativity, writing, music, and education) and you're not likely to see her image emblazoned on chic yoga-inspired garb. Trust me. I always try to find her. I would own that garb".

As much as I wanted to devour this book in a few days, I took the time to truly understand the concepts and "do my om" reflection. There was so much to this book I can only scratch the surface. This book is for anyone looking to add more meaning in their life, improve their outlook, feel more connected, be at ease, feel joy and gratitude.

Nadja (fit-and-beautiful-heart-reads) says

I needed some time making my way through it reading it whenever I felt for it. Its incredible informative and I learned a lot not just about yoga but also about myself. Although its a lot of information its easy to read, the examples are amazing and the humorous take on some aspects the modern world adds to this traditional practice really made me smile.

4.5 out of 5 stars. I am pretty sure I will pick this up again and read through some of it again when needed.

Brenda says

Took me a while to finish, not because it was a tough read, but because I wanted to pay attention and didn't always have the necessary lack of distractions.

Fabulous book. I have dog-eared pages and plan to keep this close by as I travel my yoga journey.

I first heard about Rebecca Pacheco when I was reading an article about yoga for runners. This book was a give-away a conference I attended in November. Ms. Pacheco writes in about as honest a manner as one can...she even admits to thinking she was done with yoga at one point during the book because writing about it was taking away her love of the practice.

If you want to know more about yoga and the practice of yoga and the history of yoga...and mediation...read "Do Your OM Thing."

Katie says

LOVED this book! I have many (blue) flags/markers all over the pages of quotes or exercises I want to remember. One of my favorite parts was in the meditation section where she talks about stop waiting for the perfect condition to meditate. It goes on to read "You just need to start. And while you're at it, throw out the perfect life plan in which a relationship, job, marriage, or family happen according to a schedule. You're not a train. You're a person, with a soul." It goes on to say that "The conditions you need to be happy are not outside you. They are contained within you; right here, right now." Ahhh... I read that over and over again and felt like I was given permission to breathe. Thank you, Rebecca! <3 I will be re-reading this book many times.

Amanda NEVER MANDY says

****I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.****

I have danced around the idea of Yoga for quite some time. It's something I should probably try but have failed to commit to because I'm kind of lazy and super uncoordinated. When I saw this book on the giveaway page, I thought why not. I mean I seem to be real good at reading up on things and not actually doing them, so winning a book like this would be right up my alley.

This book is excellent at giving the basics on the why of Yoga without hardly any of the step-by-step on actually doing it. It's like a, "So you want to learn more about Yoga and you are kind of a moron" read, which is perfect for a person like me. No really, the author covers the basic history as well as the benefits and gives the reader a beginner's taste of it all. I loved how she was so laid back in how she described everything, which made me instantly feel less intimidated and more open to giving it a try.

The only negative was it did drag on a bit towards the end, but that issue may have been more of a personality flaw on me and less of a hit on the amount of material that was presented. See, I had made up my mind earlier in the read that I was going to go ahead and pursue doing it so reading more on it was like, "Get to the point already because I want to get started".

Hayal says

The yoga book I was waiting for. Loved it and will keep referring to it in the future. Here's an excerpt that I believe accurately represents the premise of the book: "Yoga is not about performance. It's about practice, on your mat AND in your life. If you want to get better at anything, what should you do? Practice. Confidence, compassion, awareness, and joy-if you want more of these-and who doesn't?-yoga offers the skills to practice them.(...) Yoga is about attaining a clearer sense of who you are, how you feel, what you want, and how you interact with the world around you. It does enlighten and brighten your whole life, but only if it comes from you, from the inside out-not from a yoga teacher or guru pedaling their agenda on you."(p. xii) That said, the book also made me appreciate some of the great yoga teachers I have crossed paths with so far who don't push their agenda on you but honor you for who you are to support your "om" journey. :-)

Audrey says

I appreciated all of the prompts and full understanding of yoga beyond just the moves

The Laurax says

I loved it! I recently started practicing again and I was reaping the physical benefits but the sense of calm I used to have attending classes was missing. Pacheco talks to the reader as a beginner, giving a history and spiritual context to what a lot of Americans only see as a workout. Yoga is so much more and those of us who practice physically can benefit tremendously by applying some of the principles to our time on and off the mat. 4.5/5

Rebecca says

I really enjoyed this one. It was full of yoga wisdom and tradition but in a really approachable manner. It gave some really good advice on how to apply ancient yogic teachings to today. I would definitely recommend reading this one.

Amber says

3.5 stars. On the one hand, I liked the premise of the book- to take what works from yoga for yourself. The author had a conversational voice and good sense of humor. I enjoy the physical aspects of yoga, and occasionally make an effort at meditation, though I find the latter very difficult. The author presented a good overview of the history of yoga, and the different traditional components of the practice. On the other hand, I struggled to maintain interest during a few chapters which delved into some of the more "woo-woo" practices associated with yoga. This is likely because I don't give any credence to chakras, or attribute supernatural powers to stones (no matter how pretty they are), or enjoy chanting. I'm on the fence about this book. I hoped for something a bit more rational/less "spiritual". Still, I think it is a worthwhile read for any

yoga practitioner.

Victoria Klein says

Oooh, have I got a Yoga book for you.

Wait, don't close the window yet!

I know there's a seemingly endless number of Yoga books on the shelves these days, but this one is for YOU. Yes you – the real person on the other end of the screen you're reading this post on right now.

You have a job, friends, family, lover(s), commitments, hopes, dreams, fears, and bills (among other things). You make it to a Yoga class when you can, or maybe you have a dedicated asana practice but it just isn't what it used to be.

Like I said ... oooh, have I got a Yoga book for you!

"It takes courage to begin, but it gets easier. Yogis seek to prepare the best conditions for success, and then it's a matter of repetition, momentum, and perseverance. At the core of a meaningful life is the desire and capacity to take the steps needed to create what we want."

Enter: Rebecca Pacheco – or for web-savvy Yogis, Om Gal (omgal.com). I've been a fan of her realistically quirky Yoga blog for years and when I heard she was writing a book, I nearly fell out of my chair (or out of Utkatasana as it were - Yoga humor!).

This Massachusetts gal has no trouble keeping it real – like yours truly. Her writing style always makes me feel at home + like I'm talking to a good friend who just "gets" me.

Naturally, her first book, "Do Your Om Thing: Bending Yoga Tradition to Fit Your Modern Life", is written in that same down-to-earth, non-hippy-dippy tone that we can all relate to.

"If we didn't have illusions, we wouldn't need Yoga ... The Yoga you are doing is not lessened by your daily distractions or stress. It is fueled by it; the distractions and stress are the kerosene for the karmic burning we need to do, to slough off the old and ill-fitting parts of ourselves and become clearer and closer to who we really are."

There she goes – keepin' it real!

I'll be honest: I lost Yoga recently. My physical practice fell off to nearly non-existent, as did my vital daily morning meditation practice. I became someone that I didn't recognize, but she also seemed very familiar. She was me, is me – the true me. The flawed, curious, creative, passionate me that I'd been ignoring for over a decade.

Reading "Do Your Om Thing" reminded me of all the things I love about Yoga. No matter who you are, where you are, how much money you make, or what you believe spiritually, Yoga can help you become more present, compassionate, open-hearted, and focused (plus maybe a bit more flexible). This book reminded me of why I started teaching Yoga, and why I needed to take a break from teaching.

This book is for real Yogis, modern Yogis who don't pure on airs about being perfect in every asana,

obsessing about the latest juice cleanses, or boasting about how everyone at the local lululemon store knows their name. This book is for the perfectly imperfect among us – that's you and me, my friend!

You'll learn a bit more about asana, sure, but you'll also get a joyous dose of the expansive world of Yoga you may have never heard of before. Even if you're a Yoga teacher like me, naming off chakras like celebrities in the latest tabloids, this book is a delightful reminder + a fresh perspective on timeless topics.

Yes, there are a lot of Yoga books out there (I even wrote one! 27 Things to Know about Yoga), but every book is written by a different person. A person with a different background, different perspective, different insights on a subject that people have been studying for thousands of years. And Rebecca's book, Do Your Om Thing, is unequivocally worth your time, your money, + the space on your bookshelf.

Ryan says

This book reminded me why I do/teach yoga. Serious knowledge bombs in this book.

Here are some of my favorite excerpts:

My questions about a career path and listening to gangster rap only confused me more. Were Tupac and Biggie putting me at odds with becoming the yogi I wanted to be? Have you listened to the lyrics that fueled the infamous East Coast/West Coast feud of this era? Great for rap. Bad for ahimsa, the yoga teaching of non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi put it this way: "Happiness is when what you think, what you do, and what you say are in harmony."

Yoga is like weight lifting for the spirit.

Practicing yoga for its myriad health benefits, while wonderful, is limiting. It's akin to traveling to Italy, with all its exquisitely fresh, local cuisine, to eat PB&J sandwiches the whole time.

The emphasis on yoga's physical practice belies its most fundamental intention - the one from which we can benefit most - an inability to slow down our overstimulated, overtired, incessantly multitasking minds.

Yoga doesn't manufacture a feeling of completeness; it offers tools for becoming present enough to realize it's been there all along.

Deepak Chopra: "You must never, ever, use someone else's map." He was referring to how we lay plans and set intentions, and his point was one I needed to hear. What I eventually came to realize was my truth wasn't their truth. My path wasn't their path. I needed to create my own map.

Happiness is an inside job.

Happier people do not have easier lives, with less hard work, grief, divorce, or financial strain than the rest of us. They're simply more grateful for what they have and choose to be conscious of their contentment more often.

I often joke that no matter how impressive, graceful, or fun a yoga pose looks, it cannot change the quality of their lives in any major way.

How should it be? Notice how your response to this question is an expectation. Not reality. If we are discontented with reality every time it does not go as planned, we lose the skill and gift of santosha.

A belief in the goodness of humanity and one's highest Self are also life-affirming forces cultivated by the practice.

We must be careful not to over-prioritize outward appearances. What would it say about us if we only wanted to be present for ourselves when doing something fanciful? I only want to be with you when you look impressive. That sounds like a death knell for any healthy relationship - with the self or anyone else.

Leave enough gas in the tank to get home safely.

If you struggle with meditation, spend 5-10 minutes contemplating a single image.

In standing balances, remind yourself that the point of the asana is not balancing on one leg, it's focusing the mind on one task at a time.

The purpose of meditation is not to stop thinking. That's impossible. The purpose of meditation is to observe our thoughts and develop the strength to unhook from them, to see them for what they are: passing and impermanent. Random/racing thoughts are not wrong, bad, or a sign of meditating ineptitude. It's simply the way the mind works and a gentle reminder of how infrequently we are fully present in our daily lives. Herein lies yoga's biggest gift: the ability to reconnect and wake up to who we truly are.

Meditation is the natural, graceful state of being yourself and knowing who that is. When we are fully absorbed in the present moment, paying attention on purpose and without judgment, we are meditating.

Enlightenment is not about learning airs or affects, becoming a monk or perfect yogi, it's about regaling your life with realness and compassion.

We're all the same. Everyone has the desire to have a happy life. Consider the magnitude of that statement for a moment. If we could all live by it, it would revolutionize and remedy so many issues of inequality and social injustice.

Stop fleeing the moment and your Self in favor of quick comforts. Look inside. Pull up a chair in the quiet room of your own mind and learn to be comfortable there. Find happiness there. If you can't, you will not find it elsewhere.

It's not about what you do, but rather, why you do it.

What do you want to embody? Seriously. Think about it. Because the answer will be telling, and the actions needed to achieve this state will become easier to identify. If you know how you want to feel, you'll make better choices about how to get there.

The ways in which we choose to move our bodies and nourish ourselves are two of the greatest gifts we are given every day.

The best wellness resource at your disposal is one you already have: your mind. Changing the body starts with changing the way you think.

A spiritual six-pack, if you will.

Celebrate what your body does before how it looks.

We can become so wired that we live our lives through our devices more than our hearts and minds.

We are the most sleep-deprived, in-debt, addicted, obese, and medicated adult generation in history.

The only way to meditate badly is not to meditate at all.

This misconception is what makes meditation difficult. We think we're doing it wrong because we ascribe values of performance to it. We grow frustrated that we can't stop the thinking mind. But here's the thing: the thinking mind can't be stopped, and meditation is not a performance-based activity. Unless there is someone out there who is better than you at being you?

It's only when we're insecure about who we are, what we believe, or what we're practicing that we become anxious or judgmental about how others choose to live.

Gary Snyder: "All of us are apprenticed to the same teacher that the religious institutions originally worked with: reality. Reality-insight says . . . master the twenty-four hours. Do it well, without self-pity. It is as hard to get the children herded into the car pool and down the road to the bus as it is to chant sutras in the Buddha-hall on a cold morning. One move is not better than the other, each can be quite boring, and they both have the virtuous quality of repetition. Repetition and ritual and their good results come in many forms. Changing the filter, wiping noses, going to meetings, picking up around the house, washing dishes, checking the dipstick — don't let yourself think these are distracting you from your more serious pursuits. Such a round of chores is not a set of difficulties we hope to escape from so that we may do our "practice" which will put us on a "path" — it is our path."

Ralph Waldo Emerson believed that everyone should make his/her own bible. "Select and collect all the words and sentences that in all your readings have been to you like the blast of a trumpet," he advised.

There's a popular Zen saying that the easy path leads to the hard life, and the hard path leads to the easy life. Modern life's easiest path is one that supports and valorizes high-speed distraction, disconnection, entertainment, avoidance, numbing, or shielding by any means necessary. If we're not careful we can stay distracted every hour of every day, while our wholeness remains unknown to us. Modern yoga, by extension, can reinforce or release the energy behind these choices.

We are what we repeatedly do.

We prefer that the elevator doesn't get stuck, it doesn't rain on our wedding day, the economy never tanks, or loved ones never fall ill, but when they do, the spiritual path has not failed us. It's showing us that our devotion to our version of how things should be versus how they are is what causes our suffering. It's giving us a chance to connect to a reserve of strength, empathy, or equanimity we might not otherwise know we had.

"The supreme prayer of my heart . . . is not to be rich, famous, powerful, or too good, but to be radiant. I desire to radiate health, calm courage, cheerfulness, and good will. I wish to live without hate, whim, jealousy, envy, or fear. I wish to be simple, honest, frank, natural, clean in mind and clean in body, unaffected, ready to say I do not know if so it be, to meet all men and women on an absolute equality, to face any obstacle and meet every difficulty unabashed and unafraid. I wish others to live their lives, too, up to their fullest and best. To that end, I pray that I may never meddle, interfere, dictate, give advice that is not wanted, or assist when my services are not needed. If I can help people, I will do it, by giving them a chance to help themselves; and if I can uplift or inspire, let it be by example, rather than by injunction and dictation. That is to say, I desire to be radiant, to radiate life." -Elbert Hubbard

