

Chava Hudson

348 Rantoul, #304

Beverly, MA 01915

978-969-1910

chava@chavahudsondesign.com

Shouldn't I Be Enlightened By Now?

An old flame called me from Illinois on a business call, inquiring about having me designing a website for his insurance company. Naturally, I was delighted to hear from him since we'd hardly talked since high school. (I'm not telling how many years ago that was, but will admit to the double digits). He used the opportunity for to catch up with some gossip, but the timing was bad since it was time for me to leave for my yoga class. If you've ever gone to a yoga class, you know that it is definitely not good to be late. You might say, skip the class, right? But after sitting at the computer all day, better you should shoot me first before I strangle on my USB cords.

"How many years have you been doing yoga?" he asked, when I explained that unfortunately, I needed to reschedule the call.

"Over twenty," I said.

"If you don't mind me asking, don't you know how to do it yet?"

I laughed, but maybe the real question is shouldn't I be enlightened by now? And unfortunately, the answer is NO! However, and I tell you this with much humility, but there is a place during my yoga practice, where there's a transition; a point where my cares dissolve into my breathing and I'm feeling somehow softer, more content. By the time the class is over, I'm as loving as the Dali Lama, having forgiven everyone and everything. Even thoughts of killing my ex have evaporated. As usual, I'm still mellow as I drive out of the parking lot and make a left onto Eliot Street. But what's this? Someone (obviously not a yoga student) in high Massachusetts style honks loudly as he screeches past me and cuts me off in the right lane.

My blood races from my recently opened heart chakra to my temples and some very un-yoga like words escape from my mouth, which are not printable here. My moment of peace is shattered, and all my work for the last hour evaporates.

Life always seems to surface and interrupt my yoga bliss, my mini-enlightenment. I want to hold onto those moments, to stretch them into hours and days and then to weeks. Imagine if the world had mandatory yoga and everyone was feeling as mellow as me after class? I love this idea, but in reality, I don't imagine that a few downward facing dog postures would have done much for Hitler or Hussein.

Perhaps the answer is being open to calm, open to wholeness. If you're like me, you get wrapped life's business and lose your center. I love yoga since it connects me to my authentic self, where there is calm and wisdom, but once I make contact, it's so fleeting; I lose it and sometimes can't find my way back until the next class.

Dogen, who first brought Soto Zen to Japan (1268-1325) and popularized Soto Zen, laying the foundation for the large religious organization, which it is today, said:

"To study the Way is to study the self.

To study the self is to forget the self.

To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things.
To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between one's self and others.
Then there is no trace of enlightenment, though enlightenment itself continues into one's
daily
life endlessly” - Dogen

and maybe more relevantly and hopefully for me: “Do not think you will necessarily be
aware of your own enlightenment.” - Dogen