

DOES A YOGI HANDLE STRESS?

By JJ Gormley-Etchells

Dennis (my husband) and I have been building a beautiful home in the country. A process that has been going on now for over a year is finally coming to fruition. The final labor of this birthing process being the most difficult. Trying to get all the little details finalized has been stressful. But the most complicated part was in the coordination of the moves. We are moving from one house to two: the country house and a new condo in Arlington. The process of dividing the furniture and the contents was not enough stress in itself. We had to complicate the matter by buying some new furniture and giving some old furniture away to relatives or donated to a good cause. A garage full of furniture was picked up in several different loads over several weeks time. A truck load of furniture and belongings was delivered to the new home in the country. Another truck load of furniture went to my mother. The old patio furniture went to my sister. And yet another truck load went to storage.

It was the last truckload going to storage that caused the most stress. If only the timing would've been a bit better we could've moved that last load into our new condo in Arlington. But alas, as all building going on these days, there were delays upon delays and the new condo was not ready back in February as originally promised, nor in Mar, nor May nor June, etc. In fact, as of this writing the condo still is not ready. The house in Arlington sold quickly as many of you know how the market is. The closing date approached way too fast. It was to the storage bin or bust. Luckily Alexandra came through with an empty basement for our belongings to rest while waiting to be rebirthed in the condo. And Virginia came through with a place for Dennis & I to rest while in Arlington (now known as the city!). But still, it was the timing. Kala, the goddess of time was not on our side—or so it seemed at the moment (pun intended)!

All of this moving of my home to several places at once was right on top of the renovation/move of the studio. So much disruption all around me all at once, I began to see how stress was affecting me. I did not lose my temper at others (as I have in the past under stress), I was not angry at people causing delays—I knew everything would happen in good time. In fact, I was beginning to think that all the yoga was actually working. I seemed to be handling everything just fine.

And then it dawned on me. It was my mind that went. No longer could I remember simple things, like what the Level 3 forward bends are—thank you Enid for coming through. I always knew that I was a survivor and even thrived on chaos. I was always the calm one during chaotic times. I was the one you could count on to think clearly during the madness. I handled stress so well—it just didn't affect me. Or so I thought! During the chaotic madness—I was fine. But it was during the peaceful times, my quiet oasis time of teaching yoga, my passion, that was when I was most affected. Remembering Left from Right was my biggest lasp of memory on my best non-stressful days in the past. Now with all the stress of buildouts and moving, I had to just forget

about ever getting that right (or left!) it was the other things, like talking about the shoulder instead of the elbow or saying move “in” when I meant move “out.” Looking at my “syllabus” for the day and seeing that I planned to teach Level 3 forward bends. (Usually that’s quite enough information for me to have to go on) But that day, I looked at that syllabus and quite honestly couldn’t remember what the Level 3 forward bends were. The only forward bend coming to me was *Janu Sirsasana* (Knee & Head forward bend) but I knew that was taught in Level 2. I whispered to Enid, “what are the Level 3 forward bends” and she just simply rattled them off to me! Enid, my stress reliever—thank God you were assisting me that day! Although I’m sure I would’ve just taught something else and that would’ve been just right!

So the light bulb went on. My God, that’s how stress affects me. I simply just lose my mind! Oh well, who needs that anyway.