



IT'S TIME FOR BREAKTHROUGHS: ENOUGH FIXING, LET'S FLOW

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excerpted from the Willow Street
Summer 2017 newsletter

When something isn't working, a knee-jerk reaction is, "Fix it." So often we come to our yoga mats wanting to fix: the cranky shoulder, the anxious mind, the confusion around alignment in triangle pose.

We assume: if it's not working, it's broken. If it's broken, fix it.

What else is there to do?

Not all breaking is bad.

Language has deep roots, and when I dig down into the etymology of break, I expect all ruins and shards.

But among them, there is possibility.

Break can mean "to burst forth," "to spring out," and "to break into."

Daybreak is a beginning.

We break bread to share and connect.

We create comfort by breaking the ice.

We recharge with a lunch break - or we used to, anyway, when we still took them.

When we are boldly original, we break the mold.

We have a breakthrough, and expand our sense of what's possible. What is.

Some things are ready to be broken.

Jessamyn Stanley, breaks all the stereotypes of Famous Yoga Teacher. A self-described "fat femme," she speaks and writes openly about white-centric beauty standards, cis-gender privilege, and fat-phobic tendencies in the yogic world.

Here's what she writes in her book, *Every Body Yoga*:

*Yoga is for everyone, and body shape/size/color is **completely** irrelevant. Whatever your shape, shade, whatever baggage you're carrying around with you, put it down and get on the mat.*

When you walk into a Willow Street class, we hope you see our intention to practice what Jessamyn preaches. We have long insisted that yoga (and Pilates, and Barre and Kettlebells) is for Every Body. We are grateful that our classes look way more like town hall meetings than lululemon ads.

At the same time, we know very well that we still have plenty of overly-constrictive areas to bust open. Bit by bit, we're evolving.

We are intent on demystifying yoga so we all remember it's for Real People. Maybe because of the preponderance of images of yogis folded into pretzel shapes, so many people assume that if you can't touch your toes, you shouldn't go to yoga... when the reverse is more true!

We understand that images and language are important, and we're getting better at seeing where ours inadvertently play into the stereotypes of yoga, rather than challenge them.

Finally, we are committed to reminding ourselves - and also you - that contrary to popular portrayal, yoga is not only for looking good, achieving fancy poses, or "fixing" your broken posture/heart/knee/ego/mind.

Yoga is here to help us navigate change: in our bodies, our lives, our world. Practice gives us steadiness and ease to breakthrough.

Re-pair and flow

We understandably lean into our practices when we feel ourselves evolving: when we want more from our lives, or when our lives are demanding more from us.

Practice can help us embrace these intense moments of lifeforce breaking through, and to be with the confusion, the scariness, and not-knowing those times often bring.

In these moments, practice helps us not to fix, but to find a new flow. It helps us to embrace the truth of that well-worn Leonard Cohen lyric:

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in.

When things break, the life gets in: the truth, the vulnerability, the power, the mystery. Practice helps, because through it we can return again and again to embodied presence, and to build strength and grace.

Practice helps us to be present with the reality that life is extraordinary, evolving, destructive, creative, multiplex, and mysterious. And so are we.

Each time we come back to embodied presence, we re-pair with lifeforce. We sync our evolving selves with the shifting reality; we find new ways to break free.

We create new balance.

We don't fix.
We flow.