

The TSY Newsletter

Fall 2013 - Issue 4

In the last few weeks, I've been thinking a lot about the word Commitment. This reflection was spurred by a self-assessment of a skill I've been working on for two years, and the assessment showed I had made no improvement. I actually cried from disappointment, discouragement. Hadn't my commitment been enough?



I think about commitment and the work of the trauma-sensitive yoga instructor, and I realize that commitment is equal parts dedication and trust. Dedication to the cause of healing from trauma, trust in that our work is contributing to the greater good of our clients and students.

In this newsletter, our colleague David Prescott writes of his commitment as a therapist and yoga instructor.

Celebrating David Prescott!

Current home: Portland, Maine

Current occupation: Director of Professional Development and Quality Improvement

First yoga experience: I grew up when the Beatles' were making news studying meditation in India. I learned about meditation when I was 11 and have practiced it one way or another ever since. I only started studying the physical forms of yoga a few years ago. My first experiences with yoga classes were actually nerve-wracking because I had the mistaken belief that I would be the only man there.



What motivated me to become a yoga teacher: I find the most amount of meaning in trying to be helpful to others. I wanted to find ways to be a better therapist and to help other therapists. I actually became an RYT-200 with the sole intention of getting into the 40-hour trauma-sensitive yoga classes that the JRI teaches at Kripalu.

A memorable story or teaching experience: I worked in a high-security setting (just like a prison) with people at high risk for crime. Almost all had backgrounds of severe trauma, and many could teach and run group therapy as well as the staff. When they left the treatment room, however, they would become immediately violent. This made clear that self-observation is the foundation on which all positive change takes place. I was a talk therapist, but as Bessel van der Kolk points out, "words often come at the end of treatment, not the beginning". That's why I'm doing the certification course.

Favorite form: There is always something magical about the first downward-facing dog. As much as trauma can live in the body, so do happiness, joy, gratitude, and acceptance...

3 Fun Facts: 1. Prior to the collapse of the Berlin wall, I was active in finding ways to publish music in the West composed by people in Eastern Europe, often against the will of their governments. 2. I recently reconnected with two of those composers, from Romania and the former East Germany. 3. I have two absolutely, wonderfully crazy dogs who remind me every day of the value of stretching, focusing on important activities like Frisbee, and breath-work (which in their case involves panting).

When I complete my Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Certification... I will try my best to make others aware of its importance in reducing the harm of trauma.

In one word, yoga is...Freedom.