

# CLEAN *your* POT

## SHOW UP *for* YOURSELF

### DO *the* WORK

You have *to* look *at the* pain *and* feel *the* pain *in* order *to* heal.

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**T**his week in class, I've been talking a lot about having to go through the fire to get to the other side.

When I first started to practice yoga, I had a lot of negative stuff moving through me and yoga was bringing it to the surface. I was embarrassed. I thought, this isn't very "yogic" to have all these negative emotions coming up in my practice. I didn't understand that this was the practice. Bringing these emotions to the surface, processing them, and learning to let go of things is a big part of yoga, healing, and a spiritual path.

Isn't yoga all about fun, though?

There is nothing wrong with you if your stuff is coming up for you in your practice. This is exactly what you want to happen. When you go into the fire, your stuff comes to the surface. And in the beginning a lot of it is going to be negative.

Emotions are one of the ways that we process stuck energy and tension that is stored in the body and in the subconscious part of our minds. These raw and powerful negative emotions that often rise to the surface during a yoga practice are not a bad thing. They are helping you to release a lot of tension. Let it go. Let it come up and let it go. This is the place to feel sad and cry. This is the place to feel angry and frustrated. This is the place to process grief and pain. This is the place to let it all go. This is also the place to laugh, to feel joy, to release, and to surrender. This is not a place where you pretend, where you fake it, where you pretend that everything is love and flowers and sunshine. You have to go through the fire first in order to get to a place where you find peace and quiet and calm. And when you get there, it's real and authentic and true, and it's as real and authentic and true as the stuff you had to go through and burn off in order to get there. It's earned. You earned it. You don't accidentally quiet your mind and achieve a state of enlightenment. You show up and you do the work. Whatever comes up for you in your practice is okay. Whatever things need to process, let them come up—and then let them go.

The fire, the practice, your teacher, the room being too hot or too cold, and the pose you are in didn't create these feelings that are coming up for you. All of these emotions that are coming up for you represent stored, unprocessed tension that is inside of you already and needs to be released. You can choose to look at it and bring it to the surface and then let it go, or you can pretend that it's not there.

Show up for yourself. Do the work. You have to look at the pain and feel the pain in order to heal.

There's an old story that is often told in yoga to illustrate what we are doing in the practice. Think of your mind like a dirty pot that is sitting in the kitchen after dinner. If you pretend the pot is clean and you put water in the pot, it's going to be murky, foggy, cloudy. This is our mind. It's cloudy. We're in a fog. We are trying to connect to the present moment, but there's all of these patterns, habits, attachments, and things that are constantly pulling us out of the moment. We have to clean the pot before we can fill it up with water again.

What happens when you clean the pot, though?

It gets dirtier before it gets clean. When you start to scrub all of the stuff off the sides and the bottom, it comes to the surface. The water in the pot gets way dirtier than it would be if you just used the dirty pot as it is, and things get way messier before they become clean.

It also takes some work to get the pot clean. You have to put in some effort, especially if your pot is really dirty. But it's worth it! It's so worth it. Eventually the pot becomes clean again. It's like it was brand new. You can pour water into the pot and it's clear.

The tapas in our yoga practice is cleaning our minds. We're scrubbing away old patterns, habits, impressions and letting go of the physical and mental tension that is holding us back and keeping us from seeing the world clearly and being connected to the present moment.

You can pretend that your pot is already clean, but everyone else can see the dirty water in it. You can pretend that everything is love and flowers and sunshine, but if you are repressing things, if you are pushing down against the tension, one day you are going to explode and things are going to come rushing to the surface anyway.

Go through your stuff and get to the other side.

Clean your pot!

Garth Hewitt is an E-RYT and teacher trainer who is certified as a yoga therapist and DharmaYoga teacher. He is passionate about yoga, sharing the teachings of his teachers, and living a healthy and balanced life. He regularly leads classes, workshops, retreats, and teacher trainings in LA and around the world.