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The Aussie Issue

A Twist of Fate



Leza Lowitz just returned to Tokyo, where she lived in the early 1990s, to open her own yoga studio, Sun and Moon Yoga, in Meguro. The studio is a warm blend of East and West, designed to be a sanctuary in the heart of the city. Lowitz, who's also a writer, wrote a best-selling book, "Yoga Poems: Lines to Unfold By" that marries her love of yoga with her love of poetry. We met up with her to talk about our New Year's resolution to start stretching.

Japanzine: How did you first get into yoga?

Lowitz: Ten years ago, I discovered yoga after returning to Northern California from an eight-month trip to Tokyo that lasted 5 years. I was in culture shock, and decided to try a yoga class. I was an expatriate in my very own skin. Since I love to travel, I thought, here's my next trip! My bags were packed.

Japanzine: What attracted you?

Lowitz: Being Type-A was burning me out. Through yoga, I found out that there was a way to "do less" and "live more." So I did my teacher training, studied yoga philosophy and history, and got certified. I've been teaching in California for five years and had my own studio. Now I want to bring that California style to Tokyo.

Japanzine: Many people are thinking about their New Year's resolutions. Is yoga a good way to lose weight?

Lowitz: Definitely. Yoga a great way to get in shape and the benefits are real—reduce stress, release toxins, tone, strengthen, and increase flexibility. You gain a new appreciation for your body. Actually, I feel there's too much emphasis on the physical. You have to remember that there are over 840,000 yoga poses, and there's no way someone can do them all! It's not about doing the perfect pose or having the perfect body. It's about accepting and enjoying where you are. What about a New Year's resolution to relax more? That's my goal!

Japanzine: In your book, you talk about how yoga changed your life. Have you noticed any changes in your student's lives?

Lowitz: One of my students fell in love with her breath and quit smoking. Another did Restorative yoga after heart surgery, amazing his doctors with his quick recovery. One woman found the courage to quit her dead-end job and pursue her dream of being an artist. And an older man had great fun "playing" in headstand and handstand, poses he never imagined he could do over 55!

Japanzine: What kind of classes do you teach at Sun and Moon?

Lowitz: My main influences are Kripalu, Iyengar and Ashtanga. We have beginning and gentle yoga to more vigorous "Power Yoga" to deeply relaxing Restorative Yoga, which is great for people of all shapes and levels. You just relax on bolsters, blankets and props and let them open you up. It's like a slumber party. That's why I shipped props from California. Customs sure had fun with the eyebags! We also offer special workshops.

Japanzine: Can anyone do yoga?

Lowitz: Definitely! You don't have to be young, thin, or even happy. All you have to do is show up and let the breath move you. When you do that, magical things can happen. ☐

If you're looking for a great way to get in shape, let off steam, relax, or find your inner sanctuary, Sun and Moon Yoga is for you.

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