

Thoughts from the Founder of 'Budokon'

Last year we were lucky enough to listen to [Cameron Shayne](#) at the Yoga Show in London. Here are some of the thoughts we brought away to share with our friends in the Earth Sky community. Jo & Pete

Meditation is simple. It involves sitting, and listening. Treat it with simplicity – simply practise it; don't aim to be 'better'. The answer to the question, 'What am I here for?' is: 'Whatever you choose to be here for'.

It's important that you notice when you make a mistake - whether in your yoga or meditation practice, or in your behaviour towards yourself or towards others. But it's important that when you make a mistake (in yoga, meditation or life), you should not only acknowledge it, but you should also *do something about it*. Don't let yourself just move on saying 'Oh dear, I made a mistake'.

Consider two types of behaviour. Some of us tend to be quite calm, and avoid conflict, sometimes running from challenging situations or shutting down challenge with silence – Cameron Shayne calls this 'Unicorn'. Some of us tend to want to deal directly with conflict or problems, sometimes even to fight against them – he calls this 'Lion'.

Very often you find these two types in human relationships – a 'Lion' who can often be strong and critical, and a 'Unicorn' who can withdraw and shut down, and often 'punishes through silence'.

You can find these two types in yoga or meditation practice, too – 'Lions' who really attack their asanas but can be really self-critical, and can try too hard; 'Unicorns' who are just here to practise, not to engage in self-criticism or internal dialogue, and tend not to try anything they're not really comfortable with.

The goal for both types is to move away from being either aggressive 'Lions', or passive 'Unicorns'. Instead, we should all aim to be *assertive*.

Instead of practising *judgment* ('you are good/bad'; 'that is good/bad'), try to practise *discernment* - 'this is a healthy way to do it/to be'; 'this is an unhealthy way to do it/to be'.

Judgment tends to put something/someone in a good/bad box; *discernment* recognises a sliding scale and encourages you, with loving intentions, to move along the scale towards the healthy end.

In yoga, there's no need to expose yourself to *pain* - but we should be ready to feel *sensation*. A good teacher will correct your practice, with loving intentions to help you accept the correction, acknowledge your mistakes, do something about them and deepen your practice - not just let you do what you like. The teachers we remember the most are those who gave us the most positive challenges.

Similarly, in personal relationships, it's good to be stretched and challenged by another person, if it helps you acknowledge and do something about your mistakes. It's not healthy if one of you always gives in. Your aim should be to give to those you are in relationships with - challenge is fine, if it's given and accepted with that spirit of loving intention.

We live and grow - in our lives and our practice - through how we respond to challenge. The lessons we learn on our yoga mat about accepting challenge and growing as a result, apply just as much to how we practise as parents, as partners, as people.

Om shanti