



# Basmati

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I'd never considered myself a "teacher" before teaching yoga. I'm TEFL certified, completed the so-called authentic way (which means 60+ hours in a traditional classroom in Latin America is under my belt). I taught sophomore supplemental courses during my graduate program because it halved my tuition. I taught Kindergartners in Seoul for a year in the afternoons, right on the heels of teaching executives in the mornings. I taught culinary students who didn't want to be in their required English class in Costa Rica, and I taught a small group of Fulbright scholars while completing my Master's in London. On paper, I've taught. A lot.

But it never felt natural. *I* never felt like a natural. It wasn't until I began teaching yoga regularly that I hit my stride.

The "trick," if you want to call it that, is simple: It's just the golden rule. Treat others how you want to be treated. Teach others how you'd like to be taught. At least, that's what's working for me.

There's not a *single* yoga class or instructor that every yoga student in the world will love. You can't even get close. As yogis, we seek out classes and teachers that give us what we want and need. If you're looking to become a better yoga teacher, a better student, or to just get more out of your practice, ask yourself how *you* want to feel in a yoga class. Not what you want to look like, not how many calories you want to burn, or if this is the class that will finally let you nail that impressive looking pose for Insta-likes.

Everyone's different, but here's how *I* want to feel in class—and how I direct my students:

- ***I want to feel strong.*** Yoga, when practiced regularly with other forms of fitness, will definitely make you stronger. However, I want to feel that strength in class. If you're in a class that never challenges you or offers modifications, or one that makes you feel like everyone else is flawless while you're stumbling along, that's not the right fit for you. I choose poses and series, as well as a myriad of modifications, so that every single student will feel strong. They're challenged, yet successful.
- ***I want to feel sexy.*** There's more to feeling sexy in yoga than getting those pants that make your bum look great. When you feel sexy, you gain confidence and joy. I'm a firm believer that students should feel sexy at least once in every yoga class and preferably much more.
- ***I want to feel powerful.*** Powerful and strong are closely related, but not identical. Throughout the class, you should feel in charge -- in charge of your practice, your body, your mind and your environment. Power shouldn't be a constant feeling in yoga, but it should definitely be there.
- ***I want to feel wobbly.*** Again, not all the time! I also want to feel comfortable and encouraged to wobble. When I tell my students, "Wobbly is good!" I often get a, "Thank God!" in return.
- ***I want to laugh.*** Seriously—why is yoga so serious? The majority of my classes are instructed and I lead students through a series of poses and flows. I model the poses a lot because many students are beginners and unfamiliar with the terms. Plus, some are visual learners, some prefer getting explicit descriptions, and some need a mix of both. For a few minutes in every class, we have directed play time. Today's was practicing getting up and down from the floor any which way we could without using our hands. People stumbled, came up with crazy options, and everyone laughed at themselves. Let's bring some joy and silliness back into our practice.

- ***I want to feel like I achieved something.*** Nobody wants to do anything for an hour or more and feel like they just kept failing. Nobody can master yoga, but all of us can get better with each practice. It's even better when we can pinpoint an exact moment in yoga class where we achieved a goal, no matter how big or small. Pointing our achievement milestone examples at all levels helps students realize just how amazing they are.

These are just a few examples of the feelings I chase in each practice and what I want to give my students. How do you want to feel?

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