

Richard Miller

I was very excited to have the opportunity to interview Richard Miller. Richard's teachings come out of his direct experience of living truth as echoed in the timeless teachings of nondualism found in Advaita, Zen and Chan. He is recognized as a leader in the field of nondualism, honored by Yoga Journal and featured in "American Yoga" and "Will Yoga and Meditation Really Change My Life?" Richard is the founder and director of the non-profit Center of Timeless Being, co-founder and co-president of the Institute for Spirituality and Psychology, and co-founder of The International Association of Yoga Therapy. Richard is the author of *Yoga Nidra: The Meditative Heart of Yoga*, as well as numerous articles including "Welcoming All That Is", in *The Sacred Mirror: Nondual Wisdom and Psychotherapy*.



Interview with Richard Miller

Nancy: What characteristics do you feel are most important for yoga teachers to develop?



Richard: 1) Curiosity, 2) the willingness to be comfortable with the unknown; 3) the desire to be open to the exploration of oneself, which includes both one's own psychology and spirituality. Only by knowing oneself completely, can we help another explore and know themselves; and 4) The understanding that we don't know what's best for another; each person contains this knowledge within themselves. Our job is to help them discover/uncover this fact for themselves. Most importantly, a teacher must respect his or her students.

Nancy: Can you explain the nondualism philosophy and how it relates to your yoga teaching style.

Richard: Everything is interconnected-not separate. This is the nature of everything-and our true nature. Everything is a facet of unity. When we recover this understanding, our heart truly opens, and love, empathy and compassion are recognized to be the natural expressions of our everyday living. This is what we discover/uncover during meditative inquiry. While not difficult, our mind, normally distracted by thoughts, beliefs and emotions, prevents us from realizing this simple understanding. The teachings of nondualism simply point us back to this simple knowing, to our true nature-pure being- which is what we already are. When our desire to understand takes precedence over all other things, realization is close at hand. This is what I teach in all the workshops, retreats and trainings I give. I utilize the various disciplines of Yoga, including bodysensing, breathsensing and meditation, but everything is designed to develop our ability to explore and realize our true nature.

Nancy: What tools have you found in your own yoga experience or teaching career that have helped you the most to help others?

Richard: The ability to listen and completely welcome another just as they are,

without any desire for them to be other than they truly are. Listening and welcoming are the two main tools I use in my work with people. This is what I do, and this is what I teach. All forms of yoga, be it bodysensing, breathsensing or meditation, are simply tools to develop and refine our ability to listen to, and welcome ourselves with radical acceptance. Only when we are able to welcome ourselves and another completely, are we able to see what each moment is truly asking. Each moment is always paired with a perfect response. The art of listening and welcoming refine our ability to respond, rather than react, in each moment. Yoga is responsiveness in action, and is based on the love of what is.

Nancy: Describe a typical week in your life as the founder and director of the Center of Timeless Being.

Richard: Currently much of my time is devoted to training teachers in the protocol of Yoga Nidra that I've developed, which we call Integrative Restoration - iRest Yoga Nidra (integrative in that it integrates our entire psychology; and restoration because it restores our understanding of true nature). I spend time each week mentoring individuals, writing our training manuals, and developing our teaching protocols. I am also a consultant on numerous research projects that are either currently underway, or in development, such as the study we're doing in conjunction with the military, working with active duty soldiers, teaching them iRest and helping them heal through their post-traumatic stress disorder. We also have studies going on with the homeless, both children and adults, as well as developing studies with people who are in chronic pain, or are suffering from medically non-responsive asthma.

Nancy: Describe your own yoga practice and what it means to you.

Richard: My practice is 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It consists of the constant recognition of the interconnectedness of everything in the midst of every circumstance. It has given rise to a spontaneous vigilance that has grown out of years of meditative awareness, which helps me understand what response each moment is asking of me, rather than the reactions that come out of our conditioned nature. On a regular basis I give time to meditation, breathing and hatha yoga. Each of these serves the constant inquiry that now goes on continuously. What I have discovered through my yoga practice is this interconnectedness of everything...every moment...every person...every event...everything is made of one fabric. Living this understanding has opened my heart to a spontaneous and compassionate empathy and kind heartedness. Reactions still arise, but they arise within a field of presence that allows them to be seen, and deconstructed, which always reveals the deeper response that life is asking for from me. To live this responsiveness brings a sense of order, harmony and open-heartedness that I could not imagine living without.

Nancy: How do you help students stay interested or motivated in their yoga practice?

Richard: I don't try to motivate students. I simply share what I have discovered through my journey in this life through yoga. I would hope that my living example would be the sufficient motivator. I don't know what another needs. Only they do. My desire is to help another explore themselves and discover for themselves what motivates them.

Nancy: What do you want students to gain in general from your workshops or classes?

Richard: A deep appreciation for the beauty and simplicity of life: that each moment always arrives paired with its perfect response. We know what our response should be because when we engage it, our heart feels full of love and there is always a sense of inner harmony present, no matter what the exterior action looks like.

Nancy: Which yoga organizations or groups do you think are helpful resources for new yoga teachers or experienced yoga teachers?

Richard: The International Association of Yoga Therapists, and the Yoga Alliance are two organizations that are working hard to develop a coherent vision of Yoga in the West. I would hope that all yoga teachers join these two organizations, in addition to the particular school in which they train. I also hope our own Center of Timeless Being would be a center that yoga teachers will be interested in. Here they can refine their understanding of the roots out of which yoga has grown, from Samhkya, to Patanjali, Advaita and Tantra nondualism. Our view of Yoga Nidra is a synthesizing perspective that helps yoga teachers understand the comprehensive view that yoga offers, from healing to awakening.

Nancy: Thank you Richard. It's been a pleasure.

The best way to find out about Richard's events and workshops is through his website at: www.nondual.com. There you will find information about workshops and their upcoming level I and II trainings. These trainings are designed to help students and teachers understand this exquisite nondual view of yoga nidra and how to integrate every facet of their yoga practice into a meditative perspective that awakens us to this timeless understanding that we are all One.

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