ART of ATTENTION

A YOGA PRACTICE WORKBOOK

for movement as meditation

ELENA BROWER

and

ERICA JAGO

SOUNDS True
BOULDER, COLORADO
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## WELCOME

III

## FOREWORD

IV

by LINDA SPARROWE

## CHAPTER ONE

1–38

REDUCE TENSION & FIND FORGIVENESS

preface by MC YOGI // photography by MICHAEL CHICI

## CHAPTER TWO

39–80

LET GO OF BLAME

preface by GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN // photography by CHLOE CRESPI

## CHAPTER THREE

81–104

BREATHE AND FIND STILLNESS

preface by DONNA KARAN // photography by ALICE MARSHALL //
mandala artwork by SOFIA ESCOBAR

## CHAPTER FOUR

105–152

EXPLORE YOUR HIGHEST POSSIBILITIES

preface by GWYNETH PALTROW // photography by MICHAEL CHICI and DOMINIC NEITZ // portals by HARLAN EMIL

## CHAPTER FIVE

153–210

LET YOUR LIFE REFLECT YOUR PRACTICE

preface by CHRISTY TURLINGTON BURNS // photography by DOMINIC NEITZ

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

211

## APPENDIX

213–218

POSE SEQUENCES
FORGIVENESS DOESN’T ALWAYS HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY, BUT THE PROCESS CAN BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. Actively engaging in the forgiveness process begins our journey toward deeper understanding, and the remembrance that everything happens for a reason. When we’re able to extract wisdom from our past dramas and traumas, we’re able to gain direct knowledge. Looking back, we can become grateful for the things that happened to us in the past, for helping us to grow and become more aware.

The art of attention and the cultivation of compassion can often take a great deal of work, but it’s important to remember that this work is extremely rewarding. When we forgive, we feel ten times lighter. We’re able to think and see more clearly, and we can gain greater access to the storehouse of energy that’s inside us (and all around us). Energy that was once being consumed by the past can now become an open resource (re-Source) for living more fully in the present.

When we forgive ourselves and others, the entire orchestrated universe conspires to help support our healing process.

The forgiveness process can also be very humbling; we know that there’s most likely someone out there who needs to forgive us as well.
When we start to gather wisdom from our experiences, the yogis suggest that this process is similar to a bee that gathers pollen to make nectar. The bee is said to take a little poison along with the pollen, and when it’s brought to the hive, it’s carefully transformed into nectar. Learning to turn a negative situation into pure wisdom is an indication that we are progressing in our yoga and meditation practices. As we become more skillful agents of love and compassion, the heavy load that we’ve lugged around in the back of our mind begins to soften, and gradually dissolves. When we’re able to reach the place of gratitude in our forgiveness process, we’ll know we’ve made it through to the other side.

*Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.*

MAHATMA GANDHI
Fast-paced flow sequence; focus on increasing speed and stability while decreasing tension in your body. Applicable to your poses, interactions, and relationships, this sequence will make you feel more porous, lighter, stronger, softer, and more forgiving of yourself and others.
I forgive, heal and release everything that consciously or unconsciously could delay or block the complete evolution of my being.

—MARIO LIANI
SANKALPA
WELCOME, TAKE A NICE SEAT.

Close your eyes, rest your hands on your thighs, and bring your chin to your chest. This is a sequence of flowing, delicious, increasing speed. We are practicing how to increase speed while decreasing tension in the body.

Once there was a man who described painting houses during his teens with his father, who was an expert house painter. His father was in his 60s, more than three times his son’s age, yet was able to work twice as fast. The son asked his father how he was able to work so quickly and efficiently; his father replied that he had learned to increase his speed while decreasing tension in his body.

There are definitive turning points in our days, in our poses, in our thoughts, when we can choose to turn the tension level down, even amidst an increase in velocity.

Practice this: feel sharp, more awake, more porous, more lit up; be spacious enough to stay forgiving, no matter the context.
Fold your hands in front of your heart. 
Call to your heart, connect to your heart, and slow it down.

If at any time you feel disconnected, 
that is your sign that you are longing for more connection.

*Inhale deeply.*

*[ princípio de yoga]*

Bring your chin to your chest. Stay close to yourself throughout the practice, no matter how quickly you move. The closer you stay to yourself, the less contraction you’ll experience, and the more connected and forgiving you’ll feel.
REDUCE TENSION AND FIND FORGIVENESS

WAVE ONE
SUN SALUTATIONS AND STANDING POSES

CONNECT feet

STAY CLOSE TO THE EARTH
stay close to yourself

SOFTEN

BREATHE INTO SIDES OF ♥

UPPER BODY = WHERE WE MAKE space + patience

GET SENSITIVE
without slowing the speed

WE CAN CHANGE THE WAY WE SEE EVERYBODY IN OUR LIVES, and the way they see us

WAVE TWO
HIP AND SHOULDER OPENERS

SLOW EVERYTHING DOWN
space between thoughts

SMILING
we are so lucky to be practicing yoga

Water Breath
BREATHING no thinking

NOTICE THE PACE
and the ease in your body

GROW TALLER through inner legs

ONE-MINUTE HOLD

WAVE THREE
INVERSIONS AND BACKBENDS

KEEP THIS EMPTY SWEET VOID
between your thoughts

STAY CLOSE, CONNECTED, AND SUPPORTIVE of yourself

NOTICE THE BASELINE OF HEALING AND SOFTNESS always present

ONE-MINUTE HOLD

UPPER BODY SOFT
foundation is clear

LEGs ARE LIKE
lightning bolts

jump/switch

jump/switch

jump/switch

keep this empty sweet void
between your thoughts

stay close to the earth
stay close to yourself

connect feet

soften

breath into sides of ♥

upper body = where we make space + patience

get sensitive
without slowing the speed

we can change the way we see everybody in our lives, and the way they see us

slow everything down
space between thoughts

smiling
we are so lucky to be practicing yoga

water breath
breathing no thinking

notice the pace
and the ease in your body

grow taller through inner legs

one-minute hold
TADASANA | MOUNTAIN POSE

Close your eyes and feel where there is tension in your body. Soften your toes; breathe into the back of your belly.

SURYA NAMASKARA A | SUN SALUTATION

Become more sensitive to your own breathing. Send your breath to the spaces in your body that need your attention the most; this will have the effect of slowing down time. Our aim is to slow ourselves down enough to truly listen to what is going on—to the people around us, and to ourselves at the deepest level.

Begin at the top of your mat
palms facing forward

Reduce the tension
without slowing the speed

Be sensitive
without slowing the speed
UTKATASANA | CHAIR

Soften your eyeballs, the sockets of your eyes, and the spaces behind your eyes. Soften your thighbones down into your groins; soften the back of your belly and lift it gently up toward your lungs. Spread your collarbones wide to the sides.

Stay close to the earth

Stay close to yourself
VIRABHADRASANA II | WARRIOR II

*Practice reverence here.* Even as you expand through every limb in every direction, close your eyes, soften your skin, and let there be reverence. Reverence is a form of respectful listening, a sensitivity to all that is. Your listening is what stops contractions of any kind in your body, in any way—cellularly, muscularly, in your nervous system—allowing you to stay in the flow of the present moment.

Your legs are, at all times, sturdy, steady, concentrated, and earthy. The rest of your body is open, sweet, soft, listening, and reverent.

Bend your front knee more deeply by bringing the middle of your front seat all the way beneath you. On your front leg, lift the inner thigh up and around to your outer thigh. Bend your front knee a little more deeply. Feel for any place in your body where there is tension. Soften; keep your legs strong.