

## **Treading A Path Through Weight Loss and Tragedy**

A desire to lose weight, and a personal tragedy, led Vernetta Butler to try yoga. Now a yoga teacher and counsellor, she speaks of how yoga helped her tread a path through a difficult journey.

I first tried yoga years ago but never really dedicated any time to it. As with any other exercise - I had tried like running, aerobics videos, bike riding - the novelty always wore off.

Meanwhile, the weight piled on over the years from the usual bad eating habits, under active thyroid and also due to anti-depressants I was taking.



However, it was in 2002 at a weight of 13 stone (I'm 5'2), my heaviest, that I realised the time had come to do something about my weight gain.

I saw an advert on the TV for a yoga DVD that said you only had to do ten minutes of yoga a day; even I can do that, I thought!

So I bought the DVD and started doing ten minutes at first, increasing the length to 30 minutes, until I could work up to the whole 80 minutes. I hadn't changed my diet at all at this stage.

Slowly I felt my tastes and attitude towards food were changing and I only seemed to want or crave 'naughty' foods at the weekend and in smaller amounts.

After a year and half of doing yoga DVDs, classes and self teaching, I was six stone lighter and feeling better than ever before. I was also eating more healthily (although still had my weekend naughties!).

I even started teaching it to my partner, as he saw the obvious benefits it had given me. To my delight, he took to it, so we both started practising together and studying yoga history and philosophy.

All was going so well when I was suddenly struck out of the blue by the devastating news that my partner of nine years had committed suicide.

There are no words to describe how this feels. Your mind cannot comprehend in the slightest that he had chosen to die.

I was so numb and at first yoga, exercise or even eating was nowhere in my mind (except for trying to sit and empty my mind of the whirring bustle of emotions and thoughts that kept invading).

After what I believe was about a week, I felt a longing to do yoga, if only a little. I suddenly felt a strength within. Even to this day, I don't know where it came from or why.

Slowly, little by little, yoga crept back in and it helped. It helped calm the myriad questions and emotions I had swimming aimlessly in my head; it calmed my breathing when anxious and tired from crying.

It took nearly three years to get through it; I wouldn't say get over it as I don't think you ever get over it. But you learn to live with and except it and realise it was that person's choice, not mine. My life had to go on.

I found I could study study yoga - its philosophy and intention; even though, at times, I was unable to concentrate fully.

That is what's so rich about yoga; there is always something new to learn.

And it was this that led me to wanting to teach others yoga to others; I also wanted to counsel othes who had been through a similar tragedy.

I wanted to combine the two things - yoga and therapy - for both body and mind.



I had in mind yoga tailored to individual needs through yoga therapy and counselling.

So I studied for counselling, psychotherapy and yoga teaching/therapy and more, resulting in the umbrella title of 'Life and Fitness Coach'.

Born out of this was VERNYOGA Ltd and Sanctuary, my business dedicated to yoga, fitness, counselling and alternative therapies.

I hope that, if my late partner were here now, he would be proud that I carried on with something so wonderful and worthwhile. Yoga is the best gift you can give yourself.

For more information on anything mentioned in the article, please contact Vernetta Butler on 07906 337594

Visit Sanctuary: [www.vernyoga.co.uk](http://www.vernyoga.co.uk)

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