



## All was going well when my life turned upside down... September 24, 2011



Vernetta Butler

I tried yoga years ago at school, but I was never really dedicated any time to it after I left. This was because I thought it was closer to meditation, something I wouldn't have thought of as exercise at the time. Instead to lose weight, I tried running, aerobics videos, bike riding, etc. The novelty always wore off and the weight piled on over the years. However it was in 2002 at a weight of 13 stone (1'm 5'2), my heaviest, that I felt the need to do something about it. I saw an advert on the TV for a yoga DVD that said you only had to do 10 minutes a day. I just thought, "even I can do that," and I remembered how I felt when we did the yoga meditations at school!

So I bought the DVD and started doing ten minutes at first, then thirty, until I could work up to the whole eighty minutes.

Within a week of doing just the ten minutes however, I had lost four pounds. I hadn't really changed my diet or anything, so I thought it could only be the yoga. That

seemed a remarkable amount to lose in just a week and it spurred me on to continue the yoga.

From then I was hooked on doing it, sometimes even twice a day! I loved the way it made me feel, both physically and mentally.

Slowly I felt my tastes and attitude towards food were changing. I only seemed to want or crave 'naughty' foods at the weekend and in smaller amounts. The rest of the time I just didn't want or need that kind of food.

After a year and half of doing yoga DVDs, classes and self-teaching, I was 6 stone lighter and feeling better than I ever had, and was eating healthier (although still had my weekend naughtyies!). My body looked and felt better than when I was 18.

I even started teaching it to my partner as he saw the obvious benefits it had given me, and was into it much more than I thought he would be. So both of us started practicing together and studying yoga's 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.

What can be said about this; there are no words to describe how this feels. Your mind cannot comprehend it in the slightest, that he didn't die naturally or by accident, but chose to.

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 (although everything seemed to be going in slow motion), I felt a longing to do yoga, if only a little and the obvious need to eat. I suddenly felt this strange sense of strength in me that even to this day, I don't know where it came from or why, but things I previously felt unconfident in regards to, were no longer an issue.

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. Eventually I felt I had to do it for him, so there was this need to focus. A sense of focus was what I so desperately needed at that time and yoga gave this to me.

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 accept it and realize it was that person's choice, not mine. My life had to go on.

There have been other situations since then that have tested me, as in everyone's life, and yoga has been there for me, to see me through them. Even if I wasn't able to concentrate fully on it, I could still do a little when I needed; I could study its philosophy, I could still learn.

That is what's so rich about yoga: there is always something new to learn, some new inspiration from its teachings that you can implement in everyday life, not just on the mat.

And it was this that then led me on to wanting to teach others yoga, but I also wanted to counsel other people who had been through what I had.

A lot of the time I just wanted to talk to someone who knew how I felt and had been through it. I didn't know who to turn to as there didn't seem to be any group, that I knew of, solely for suicide 'victims' (or 'survivors' as I prefer).

I not only wanted to teach yoga but I wanted it to be more one to one, as at my heaviest I never wanted to go a class because I was too self-conscious and didn't know if I would be able to do it. Well of course I could've done it and anyone can. But I didn't know that before I started and a lot of people feel that way.

I wanted to combine the two things for both body and mind even though yoga already does this. I wanted to expand on that: yoga tailored to individual needs through yoga therapy and counseling for the times when you just want to talk and someone to listen or when you need help with certain issues.

So I studied Counseling, 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 own website, and business, entirely run by myself dedicated to yoga, fitness, counseling, and alternative therapies to which I have had many positive responses and outcomes.

The wonderful satisfaction from seeing contented, calm, smiling faces at the end of my classes or sessions is something I feel blessed to be able to bring to people.

I hope that if my late partner were here now, he would be proud of me carrying on with something so wonderful and worthwhile.

You can find Vernetta [here](#). This story has been reposted with permission. You can find the original post [here](#).

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