Why Most Yoga Advice Fails: The Ancient Mindset That Actually Heals Transcript

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Introduction and guest welcome

Can you touch your toes? That's actually something I work on often. And it may sound a little weird, but flexibility as we age is hugely important. It really dictates how we aged.

I'm so excited to introduce you to my next guest, Duran Hanuk. He is a purpose-driven teacher, entrepreneur and leader with over 30 years experience in yoga, mindfulness and holistic wellness.

We actually met in culinary school, oh my gosh, over 20 years ago. I immediately connected with him. He's got lovely energy in his groundedness. It's extremely desirable.

And he's very infectious. Join me in welcoming Duran Hanak on Everyday Ancestral. Thank you so much for joining me. Thanks for having me, it's really an honor to be here and a really great pleasure to connect again.

Yeah, I'm really excited to kind of bust some myths open around yoga. We hold certain practices, whether any health practice, but we hold some of them on such high levels in that for many, they're very, almost unobtainable.

They're either un-obtainable based on stories we tell ourselves, or they are so accessible that they water down. So I'm hoping that we can go into that.

But first, before we dive into the myths, why don't we just explore, how did you get here? You've been in this field 30 years, have you not? Yeah, more than 30 now.

What got you on the path of studying yoga and just in general, your interest in the body and health? Amazing. It's I would say a bit of a non-conventional journey because it started, I think, with me as a teenager skipping school and going to the forest, this little bunch of trees in Jerusalem that want to consider themselves as the forests, but they're just a few trees.

And I would lay down there and look at the sky and ask, what the hell? Like, who am I? Why am here? What's the meaning of all this? And, I think people imagine that people ask these things only later on in life, but really I was 16 and I, was curious.

And then came the first golf war where I had to serve in the military. Again, it was kind of, why are people fighting? what's, the, meaning, of this. I don't even know what I'm fighting for.

So when the alarms would come out and would be like, I would just hop on my motorcycle and ride on the highway seeing Scots flying above. And I said, if I have to go, I go.

But there was something powerful freeing about escaping a bit, the fear of death. and then I went to Asia for two years and that's where I really started to understand yoga and meditation.

traveling there, meeting different leaders, different gurus from Osho, Dalai Lama, Sai Baba, you name it. I wanted to get answers. What's the meaning of it all?

I did take a, what we consider today, a yoga class. So I just thought they were nuts. It was holding warrior one forever. And I started shaking and I'm like, not for me.

You guys, I don't know what you're up to. Just finished the military service and i can't do this.

Doronu2019s path into yoga and mindfulness

But I knew yoga was just not in my career or my life. But mind training, yes. I realized that unless I train my mind, the body doesn't really matter. So I traveled for two years, went back Israel, Italy, got to New York, where we eventually met, was a photographer.

But more than anything, though, I did start doing in New york more of the physical yoga. I did keep going with the Tibetan Buddhism and later on with Zen to really understand the mind.

It was always more of a priority than the physical. Eventually I realized it's like a car, right? You can have a Lamborghini with flat tires. Not going to go anywhere.

If you have an Lamborghini with a windshield that's all muddy, you'll drive right into a wall. So all my life, everybody's like, niche out, I'm like you can't niche this, right?

You have to work on everything. You has to understand the mind, you have have a healthy body, You to eat well. And only when you got the good package, then you a Ferrari that's gonna win the race.

Otherwise you're just gonna do a half-assed job. you, can just ignore parts of it. So that was the beginning of my journey. Wow. Yeah. So much when we met, like just how you to me really had a, you had certain energy that I didn't experience in the others in our culinary program.

You know, a lot of them were younger than us. They were, um, just kind of still finding themselves, and you had sort of a resonance of someone who, no, I know who I am, but I'm still learning to expand who am.

But you have a grounding to you, that always stood out to me. Are you finding though, that as you, well, let me take a step back. What is yoga to you actually?

Cause I think that's even something that is really not that understood. We had this idea, oh, it's a class and you hear, Oh, its hot yoga. It's this kind of yoga, It is that.

And I thinking inherently people in America just think, Well, stretching. But what is it to? So you're absolutely right. I think one of the big missions I have in the world is to try and help people understand what yoga is or how to really benefit from it.

So yoga in a traditional way where it started was a mind training. It had almost nothing to do with the body. The body was the vehicle to help train the mind and potentially maybe one the famous texts from the past.

was treating yoga as a way to start to control the mind. And some would even say it to master the mine. So in a ways, yoga, Buddhism, Zen were not very different than one another.

Yoga does mention the body, but very, very briefly as finding a good, comfortable, steady pose. And that could be that they're talking about a steady pose for meditation, for training the mind, or being able to sit, to find stillness in an undistracted world of any time, particularly today.

But you are right in that most yoga today, people look at it as the physical. A lot of it is stretching. Some of its are power yoga. People see it does a form of even a bit of cardio stretching mixed with strength.

And a few people are still fighting for it to be as the practice of mind mastery. In reality, yoga is all of those things together. Because yoga, as most of my students that come to do my teacher training, ask them, what is yoga?

And they look at me, huh? Like, wait, you signed up for a teacher's training of what? Of yoga. And you don't know what yoga it is. What are you coming to learn to teach?

At least know the basics. I'll teach you everything. And the classic answer is yoga is union. Great. Union. So many things are union, what are we uniting?

We're unitting the body and the mind. This is the number one classic I get. I have to disagree. How are the mind and body separate? If I am now, I recently had dengue.

When I was in dengu, when I in the state of deep illness, my mind was not functioning. I could not think, could open my laptop, did not write, was completely off.

On the opposite, if my mind is super stressed, super worrying in a place of distress and not feeling comfortable, joyful, happy, my body will get sick.

So the mind and the body are so united that this is the number one biggest misunderstanding of what is yoga. Yoga is not uniting the Body and Mind. It's maybe finding a union that already exists between who we are, me, Doron, the little thinking self.

and an expanded consciousness. Some people call it God, some people it the universe, energy, it doesn't really matter. But the understanding is that there is to this world more than just my physical body, my thoughts.

And yoga really, just like Ven, is a way of training the mind so that eventually we can transition beyond our thinking mind. The whole body thing, whether hot yoga, cold yoga freezing yoga cold bath after sweaty yoga.

All of those are fantastic tools to help us train the mind. Yeah, that's so interesting. I have to wonder, how long has yoga actually been in existence that we're aware of?

Are you aware that? Beautiful question as well, because it depends what you define yoga. I say yoga, this Patanjali guy that we consider yoga is around 2000 years, let's say.

Even then there's argument, he was before Christ, after Christ. Don't really care. care about the teachings, not how old they are. If there are shitty teachings from 6,000 years ago and they say kill other people.

Old is not always better, right? Some old is healthy fermented and some old, is rotten. So we have to distinguish that. But even before this Satanjali, sorry.

No, I was going to say that's such a great distinction. And even before this Patanjali, Yoga is mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita, which is definitely older.

Yoga's mentioned earlier and earlier. However, it's never mentioned as anything physical in no way whatsoever. Patanja is the only one that about 2000 years ago mentions the physical, but I would say that's maybe 1% of his teachings.

And so we know of yoga from a long time ago as a mind training, as way to understand this unity. that we know that Patanjali mentioned some physical, and I won't say that there wasn't physical back then.

I would say probably because everything was. transcribed past orally, then there's a very good chance that they didn't need to write the physical because they don't have graphic designers.

What yoga really means

They just showed to the student what to do. And then the students did it. We're starting to find the idea of designs of poses in the 1400s and 1500s, where the atayoga is starting come to life.

Over there, we're understanding that there are poses. not half as many as we know today or even 10%. Most of it is talking about breath control, mantras, different mudras like hand positions, et cetera, and mind control as well as some of the physical poses.

One would look at them and realize that a lot of them are poses that help the person, the practitioner, it more comfortably so they can meditate better.

Though even then, when we're starting to find some more poses, there's definitely no handstand, for example, which people consider yoga and I would call it gymnastics and fun to throw it into a yoga class.

It's in the 19th century, in 20th-century, I would say, that we're starting to see the rise of more physical. It didn't exist, but it's starting grow in popularity and it really started to explode with Shibananda, with people like Krishnamacharya, and eventually it started spilling over to the West and becoming One of the fastest growing things in the world, especially the physical, right?

I would say 70, 80 years ago, it was very obscure, barely anybody did it today. You don't have to be spiritual in any way and you're practicing these going to yoga class.

How do you look at the kinda popularity of it or the increasing popularity? Do you see that as a good thing? And do see it as taking away from the original purpose?

How does one kind of merge or kind combine the ancestral concept of yoga with our modern lives? I think everything has all different sides, even if it's not what the original intended, as long as it's helping people bring it on.

If they don't know anything about mind training, but they're still getting more flexible, stronger, more awareness about how they are eating, what they eat, beautiful.

A lot of people come to me after they've done Bikram class, which I would not say anything about it. But I would say that, you know, they came from a tradition which I wasn't following.

And they realized that in my physical yoga classes, I was bringing a lot of I'd say breaking cliches, breaking ideas that people have even not only in yoga, but about their lives, offering people in Silicon Valley that are not capable to look into the eyes of the other person, maybe that they don't know, to be in a pose in Yoga and they're facing each other and I'm saying, guys, we're going to stay here until you look at each and give them a smile.

And of course, people were freaking out for a moment, But I think these back to basics, are so essential, especially in this day and age of disconnect, that I find that if we use the tools of yoga correctly, we can definitely bridge tradition into what's happening today and to what is needed today.

And what happens in yoga oftentimes is people go to where they feel like, not what they need, which are not the same thing. Does that make sense? It makes sense to me, absolutely.

It's one of the big issues I have with some of younger generations, because I feel it mostly from them, that they're so involved in the feeling of something versus, well, what does the situation actually need?

Sometimes we need to step out of our, the feelings and just help someone or be of support to whatever the present situation is. We've as, over the years as parents, we have faced younger people who we were either like helping out and letting them live in our house, or maybe they were supporting us with childcare or something like that.

And we would be in, our judgment, very generous with them. Then when we asked for support, it was always like, well, let me, I just need to see how I'm feeling instead of like oh my God, yeah, you guys are in need.

Let me help. You're so right. And I'll mention about the feeling that the problem with feelings is that oftentimes people don't know how to interpret them.

Meaning the feelings send a message to the mind, to brain and to mind later on, where it may give And interpretation, according to the conditioning, According to what we were brought up with.

So I may have this feeling now and not understanding that this is actually caused by something when I was five years old and I'm repeating. reliving the same thing over and over again.

And so part of what I consider as yoga, really, if you ask me one word, Doron, can you choose one that

summarizes everything you care about? I would say awareness.

If I had to choose two, it would be awareness and service. But the first one would the awareness because without awareness, I'm not going to do service or beneficial service, but if I have awareness I can be aware of my emotions and ask, where are they coming from?

Are they helpful? And what is motivating me? Am I using these emotions because of my personal desires? I am using this emotions to avoid pain. These are most of the reasons people do anything.

And the emotions kind of give the spice on top of why I'm doing it and oftentimes distract us from what really we want to do. And if you'll give me permission, uh, give something from the food world.

Cause we both love the. Yeah. I'd say that. A common thing in the yoga world, another little busting myth, if you allow me, people say, listen to your body all the time.

Listen to you body, right? It's true. Obviously listen your buddy. You're dead tired. As Huberman or others say. If your grip is feeling like you can't have a grip, you probably need to take a rest day.

That's okay. However, if I am full of awareness listening to my body, most days, If I'm not in this routine and good habits of getting up, drinking water, doing my morning routine, what would happen is I would want to go watch Netflix and eat donuts.

Yogau2019s history and evolution

Because 1,000 years ago, or maybe 100, 000 years, ago I had to conserve my energy, not go and run on a treadmill going nowhere, right? If I ran after a rabbit to hunt, it's great.

But otherwise, why run, on the treadmill where you're going absolutely nowhere? And I have to conserved my calories because yesterday we had a rabbits, but I don't know when I'm going to eat my next meal.

So, instinctively, if I really, really listen to my body, I'm going to grow really fat, really big, and just watch TV all day long. But if I have awareness that I need to create healthier routines, because what to do?

We're learning from our ancestors, but we are not living the life of our ancestor. And if we don't have the wisdom, To take the good stuff from the past, but convert it, make it work for today, then we're just going to keep using cliches from past that don't function anymore.

And this shows, for example, what do I need to eat, right? I understand it comes from a past. But I'm not living in a cave. I am not suffering from no calories, et cetera, and I don' have to run after a rabbit to catch it.

So we have to have awareness, wisdom to understand how can we learn from the past, whether it's food, the yoga world, Ayurveda that comes from India and was created a long time ago, and how do we look at it intelligently and then use it, manifest it today in a way that's practical, that really works for what we need at this day and age.

I think those are all really great points. Let's dive even deeper into that. For those listening or watching, let's assume that most people aren't aware of what they need or the state they're even in.

As an expert in awareness and mindfulness, What are one to three things that someone could immediately do post this episode that would help bring them awareness to their physical and mental states?

Amazing. I love that. Making things practical. Thank you for that! The first thing is to pause. And most of us don't notice that. And people wake up, they're right at their phone and they just run, run run work run to the gym, ran to dinner, et cetera.

So there's no time to even develop any awareness. Forget meditation, right? Meditation is lovely. It's beautiful. It's

so far off for most human beings that we need to start way, way more baby steps.

I say the moment you wake up, that's the first step. So you've wake in the morning and you make yourself a new rule, build a habit that you're staying in bed for two minutes.

Most of us can afford two. Instead of hitting the snooze button, just stay there with awareness and see where you are. What happens is most of. Some of the dreams we had and realized, wow, I woke up.

Feeling amazing. I woke up having amazing dreams and I'm full of energy for the world. But more often than not, we will wake up feeling worried, feeling already distracted before we even got out of bed.

What do I need to do? What I do not need do. And if I am not fully distracted, why don't I bring my phone so I can get quicker distraction? And I would say the first hour even of the morning is so crucial to wake to put your phone in a drawer somewhere else in the different room, charging, so one can wake up, have that two minutes of awareness, right?

I feel my body, that takes about 30 seconds. I'm aware of my thoughts, my feelings, everything that's going on, maybe another 20 seconds, and then I take a full minute to recalibrate.

Recalibrating means For me, because the body and mind are so united, guys watching, try this with me. You're going to use your two fingers, bring them to the lips and just stretch them into the ears and then release the hands.

Honestly, I know I feel different than 10 seconds ago. It's weird, but you smile. And the whole body bubbles from within. It's like you just drank a bottle of champagne and it's free.

So that's what I do. I just start with a smile. And I come from a place of gratitude, right? Some people say think three things you're grateful for. Think this, think that.

That's all great. But for me, it is the mind with the minds with mind. Since we already know how powerful the emotions are, I try to be, be literally be in a state of Gratitude.

How do I feel like? There's joy for waking up. Forget all the stress, forget all of the work. It doesn't matter if you'll become a trillionaire. Stress will be there.

Work will there, it never ends. You'll always have to go and poop. Sorry people, even if your the great Princess Diana, she sometimes had diarrhea. These things happen, you cannot avoid them.

So start right now with the place of I'm happy, I am joyful. Joy is better than happy because I think it's more sustainable. Happy goes like a roller coaster.

And that's the first step. So you start with awareness, it changes your whole day.

Modern yoga, awareness, and practical mindfulness

I'll add to that one more practice, kind of building on that, maybe every hour, every two hours, ever lunch break and dinner break, starting with pauses.

That's it. Starting with a one minute pause, a 10 second pause. Closing the eyes. You don't have to say a prayer for the food. Finding that moment of silence, you'll suddenly feel all the energy of the food without the woo-woo stuff.

I don't like the Woo-Woo stuff, but you just really, it'll be there. And then when you eat and you taste a pineapple or anything you're putting in your mouth, You'll just be so aware of flavors of everything.

These are easy practices that are fun. And to help the mind come back to the present moment so we can be less

distracted and start to have awareness of what's out of balance.

Because really nothing is as sad as people think. All that happens is we're out-of-balance and we need to come to balance, it's that simple. Hey YouTube fam, 80% of you watching aren't subscribed.

If you're digging these episodes and haven't hit that button yet, now's the time. Every sub helps us grow, land bigger guests, and keep the good stuff coming.

So hit subscribe and stay curious. I talk about that mindfulness and pause a lot when I'm talking about just ancestral eating and how to get back to listening to the body, you know, that we were so confused in today's society about what to eat because we're being manipulated or the foods are triggering cravings that would not normally be there because of all the artificial flavors and whatnot.

So I love that the pause is so important. What is something that you think people misunderstand about what yoga is really meant to do? Oh, a little bit what we mentioned before, that people feel yoga will…

I guess there's a few different camps, I would say. The camp that believes that it's all physical and I'll get stronger or I lose weight because I'm doing a hot yoga and i'm going to sweat it out, though later you're going have to drink that water back in.

But anyway, so there is… the physical camps that says yoga will really get me flexible and strong, which I think it will. And I'm biased, but I would say it's one of the best practices if you do them in sustainable ways, in ways that are not pushing yourself to kill yourself, to get the handstand and then have wrist issues for the rest of your life or pushing something in the Ashtanga world.

We were I just followed the sequence and it was a lot of hip openers and eventually you sit with the leg behind the head and you're like, okay. And then eventually your leg goes behind your back and then you look really freaky, but it doesn't feel freakey, it feels like okay!

But I know for myself, I got so open that my hips, didn't balance it out with enough strength for my hip. And I had the, what they call the shanga butt syndrome, which was really, started having pain, like sciatic pain.

Which doesn't make sense as somebody as flexible as I was, but I started strengthening myself. Walking more, doing hip rotations and I found the balance.

So even within the yoga world, People need to look within the physical world a lot more at what they're being taught and not just take everything as a word of God, because most of this is still relatively new.

And there are few people, but not enough people that are willing excuse me, to question what was being taught and to say, okay, this was taught now for a few decades.

People love it. It does do great stuff. However, is this going to be sustainable? Let's look at people that did it younger. What happens to them at 60, 70 and 80? The about diets, let's see about the body.

So for me I've learned that I loved what I was studying when I But when I turned 40, I created my own system because I couldn't find something that was wrong enough, physically, opening enough flexibility, and yet sustainable enough that I'm not going to burn out.

And I can say today at, well, in a week 54. I'm feeling better than I felt when I was 27. A hundred percent, not just as a gimmick. I really do feel better.

So finding the ways that we can do it in the right sustainable way and not to say, Oh, I am Bikram, understand I my anger. The hell, the wrong yoga. All of these are just names.

What matters is what does the practice do and does it fit you personally? So still remaining, sorry, go ahead. Oh

he's going to see what, what are you doing differently because I know you break many myths around what people associate with yogis, which is, you know, one is they think they're all plant-based.

You know there is this kind of visual concept that they are very emaciated, and very thin. Not actually very, not very muscular. I mean, obviously they were toned, but they aren't very muscle.

And yet we're living in a world where, you know, at least in the circles I'm in, like where it's all about heavy, as you get older, should be heavy lifting because the heavy-lifting is going to support you from, de-grading of the muscles and it is gonna help you basically age better because you're stronger and you are harder to kill.

But those two seem contrasting. You're absolutely right. And I follow everybody from the Uberman to whoever that are talking about that. For me, the answer is somewhere in the middle.

So if I'm going back to what I did physically with my physical practice, and then I'll speak about the nutrition food area, I'd say that I realized I do like some strength.

I added almost calisthenic work into my. Physical yoga practice. But instead of rushing it, like a lot of people do in whatever practice they're doing, especially in a new modern power yoga, have slowed it down.

You can kind of say I've taken the Asanga mixed it with some Chi Gong and Yin, meaning I'm focusing on the transitions. I go to warrior one, I got up really slow and watch my hands as they go up.

One, i'm building more strength because the slower you go, the more muscles and you got to hold yourself steady. Two, controlling my breath to become longer as I come up And three, I'm controlling my mind because I am holding my gaze steady as I come up and I not looking around, not being distracted.

People talk about yoga as body and breath, etc. But most classes they just say breathe sometimes. Hopefully we're breathing all the time. I wouldn't be alive talking to you right now.

if I wouldn't be breathing. So this is another myth. Oh, vinyasa is movement with breath. Dude, when I go to the grocery store, I am moving with breathe.

When I'm playing tennis, am I moving breath? When i'm chopping vegetables, i am Moving with Breath. The idea is that it has to be a specific movement and a Specific breath, again, going back to awareness.

I need to Be aware of how I move. the number one is adding awareness to all my movements. Number two, slowing it down. Number three, adding a bit of strength.

I'm not doing heavy weightlifting. That is overrated today. Most of our ancestors did quite well with their own body weight, things like yoga, calisthenics, etc.

Doing pushups, doing certain things, I feel like will build enough weight without me needing to build massive muscles, but I am definitely strong. And so that's how I build the strength and keeping the flexibility, and that is by holding poses longer.

So I don't necessarily practice yin, but in my practice, if I've done yang, I have done something that was arm balances, movement, it got my heart rate going.

Listening to the body and avoiding extremes

Now I'm going to go and I am going sit in a pigeon pose and relax there for a while and really let my hips open while having awareness of my body, my breath, mind.

And I can both train my mind and go back to the ying. In a way, I'm going from yang, yin, yang and yen. A little bit like life happens, right? We have a moment of stress and then we have the moment to feel out.

But instead of having the stress go to burnout, and to just watching TV and eating chips because I am so burnt out, trying to minimize them and have them small waves, this way I'm getting a bit of stress and I can relax and enjoy.

I get a little bit more power and then I relax into the stretch, which normally doesn't happen because people go all-in. Let's just see in our own. Great.

Why not find the masculine and the feminine both? We have them both. why not manifest both of them in the best way possible? That's about the body part.

And I think really it is individual. Some people need to push more in Ayurveda. We have these archetypes and the kapha that's more heavy, more wanting to go to the ground needs to throw in another five pushups because they don't feel like it.

And then they'll last a lot longer. The vata that is all yay air and ether and moving means to slow it down. Oftentimes practicing speaking slower is enough.

The pizza that's like, let's do arm balances and handstands and headstand and go to the gym after. need to chill out a bit and say, okay, I've did a strong enough practice.

Now let me take practices that are cooling me down, softening me. So then I don't wake up at 52 dying and I know where it even came from because I just forced my life so strong, but there's no nothing to show for it.

Though it's really, this is another big, big big thing. I think both in the food world and in that physical world that people forget. My second most important word after awareness is it depends.

It depends if you live in a cold climate or a hot climate. If you are physical all day, maybe you don't need such a strong practice. The reason people don't like when I say this, because it makes it a little more complicated to figure out what you really need.

But if somebody learns to tune in to find this awareness, to understand what they feel like and what the really needs, then they can honestly be their own doctors.

And there's enough cultures out there that can help today people find and fine tune this. It is frustrating though, cause I think we live in a world, particularly the way You know, it's highlighted in social media, um, that we want it.

We want absolutes like, Oh, do this if that, right? We don't want gray areas and like well, we're all, even though Ayurvedic has three, you know three or these three characteristics or.

But technically we are all a little bit of. two or three of them, right? It's like, so, in many ways, the human nature is not black or white, it is gray.

And yet that's still hard for us as humans to really, to feel comfort in. Human beings are gray, I love that, that is so true. If we could accept that.

Part of it, is the fact that I think today people want quicker fixes and they want, you said it so nicely, absolute. But there isn't. Nobody, right? What I needed at 27 is not what I need today.

And the only, since I train teachers, what I really teach my teachers is to have awareness, to look at their students, not to just take a manual and say, okay, I'm going to put this teaching that I learned from a book, from wherever, and teach everybody the same way.

Especially when teacher, when people start working one-on-one or more particularly with people. I taught private for many years and I would say that even those same students during certain periods in their life needed different things because we all have all three of these doshas of archetypes, and yet one is more out of balance.

And we always have to realize what's out-of-balance now, how do we bring it back to balance? And when we can find more or less balance, How do sustain this balance in the long run so we don't keep dropping out balance and needing to come back?

You know, and that becomes exhausting for us, for the mind, the body. It's just, it doesn't last very long. Well, let's talk about how you've balanced your nutrition.

Cause I know when we first met you had done, you'd done pretty much everything. I think you now kind of embody it as flexitarian, right? Kind of embodied or encompassing everything you done or tried.

But yeah, please share, share kind what you follow now nutrition wise. I believed that we should do no harm. It's one of the things that yoga teaches.

So I went vegan, I want vegetarian, then I was vegan pretty quick after. I wasn't nasty vegan. Meaning I didn't have all the right knowledge. But I would go to the health food store and I find all these fake things I really wanted to eat.

So as if I was healthy, but really I'm eating fake cheese, tofurky, all these fake stuff. And if somebody's vegan, it's great if they know what they're doing and if you know how to really eat well.

and it depends on their body type and their blood type, and so many other things, because like I said, It depends. I Was suffering. My brother at the time was turned vegan a little after me.

He was in heaven. No problem. I read the book about the blood type and I remember Anne Marie Colbin saying, yes, no, kind of works. Doesn't always work.

started asking probably way over a thousand people, not a funded study, and it's just me out of my own curiosity. This is how I learn more than anything else.

And turned out he was blood Type A. And he was super happy with his veganism, and it worked well. According to that diet, if you're blood type B, you may need more dairy and eggs, then you could be a vegetarian.

And if your blood's type O, You could, but you'll struggle. And this is not, again, this was not a hundred percent proven. It's more complex, but I just, it gave me a bit of answers to realize that.

Yes, I understand that we want to create the least harm in the world, But also just me being alive. harmful to the planet. Nothing to do about it. I'm breathing, I walk, anything I'll do is harmful.

So, instead of going to one extreme, let's say being vegan, but then buying more being consumed by yoga products, which is still bad for the Planet, i figured I'd try to find the flexitarian method where I am balanced everywhere.

I got, at some point I was working as a chef in residence. It was an art residency and they had a position for the chef, which was the best thing in the world.

And I could do whatever I wanted. So I started doing dinners every day, something else as an event. But the big boss came to me and said, Jerome. I need meat.

And I don't do meat, and it's like, Doron, I know you do me. So I went, bought meat and I cooked meat but a little bit of a perfectionist. I couldn't serve it without tasting.

I'm embarrassed to admit how much pleasure I had from the first bite of meat, of chicken, and fish. And so I started bringing them back in on minute scales.

I was still eating mostly vegetables, but I starting adding it. My body felt stronger, better, healthier. Again, I am not saying this is true for every single person, it was 100% true.

I was going for a while embarrassed because there's so many cliches. You're a yoga teacher, you're of course vegan. Of course have tattoos. I don't have even one.

you of, course, have long hair, ideally dreadlocks. Don't know where that comes from.

Strength, flexibility, and sustainable practice

Maybe you wear orange. It just goes on and on about all these ideas that are so external, where really yoga is internal. It's what do you do with the mind mastery, with internal mastery of yourself from the inside, not from outside.

Not even about any pose. Sure, I can do pretty much any fancy pose, but that's not yoga. fun Instagram posts, but it's not what yoga is. So for me, the journey was thanks to this guy, I kind of started to experiment and I went in all different directions.

I tried to do the once a week meat. On Sundays I would have burgers or something. And we grew a lot of our food. It was amazing. We were serving vegetarian, meaning all the dairy and eggs were always as a separate option.

You could add them or not. we did add different things, nutritional yeast and tried to balance all of the proteins without it. But I was still craving it, so on Sundays I would go and splurge.

Now that I'm not necessarily running that center anymore, I still own it. But, i've found that i'm balancing it throughout the week. I've definitely added even a little more than what yogis supposed to.

What is a yogi anyway? And like I said, I feel stronger and healthier than when I was 27. So it goes back to awareness. It goes to letting go of dogma, letting of all these rules and trying to be as of service as good people as we can on every single level, whether it's using plastic bag, am I buying takeout, which is creating so much waste and so many horrible stuff.

In most of the world, some places have healthier take out containers. But can I do all these things in sustainable, but not go fanatic in any one way or another?

And the same goes for my diet. And by doing that, that's where I call it being flexitarian, then I'm being wise about every decision. I am being conscious.

Right now, I look at the menu and their veggie options are so horrendous. Would I rather eat something chicken? Sure. Or I went to my best friend at that time.

He invited me to see his fancy new fiancé. And she cooked. She cooked her best meal of the day, which was a beef stew. He didn't know he came back from work.

We're both in New York City. I go there and there I am sitting in front of the beef stew. He freaked out. It was like, and I just trust him and they ate it.

And then later he asked me, Jerome, what did you do? This was when I was vegan, actually full on vegan. me, your best friend, that she was showing her love for you by doing something so meaningful for her, I don't need to impose my beliefs on her.

The cow is dead. It's right here. I'm going to enjoy it. And I feel the love of all three of us here, and I am going support this. Then when I go home, it's my choice.

But for me This is an important distinction, being smart versus being right. Being right, I'll be righteous. No, well, how dare she? How come you didn't tell her?

What's that gonna do? It's not gonna help anything. Not her, not him, it's gonna be a disaster of an evening. Be

smart? Okay. He didn' tell him about my diet.

This what we have to eat right now. How can I make the best out of this particular situation? So people, be smart, don't be right? That's probably one of the most powerful stories of what that flexibility that yoga provides mentally, physically, right?

Of you here you were in this moment and you are truly flexible, despite at the time of being very contradictory to your day-to-day practice of diet, I mean.

But I think that's really powerful that if anything, you modeled yoga very well in that moment, with that Thank you. And I think it is. This is about flexibility.

It's not only the mind or the body, it's everything. Add to that what I said earlier about awareness and service. Service is not about going and saving the whales or planet, though that's obviously wonderful.

But it' s about noticing in every day, every little action. How can we help somebody else? How we can make somebody feel a little better? What action, what little something can be?

Sometimes all it takes is, I used to practice this in New York, walking down the street. I was a freak. Maybe I still am. And I would just smile at people.

Some people would smile back and some people were like weird and turn their head away. Never spoke to the person and never did anything. But again, it's like this creating connection, creating again this This ancestral union that we used to have with nature, with people on all levels.

And yes, we can adopt it to today, but yeah, it's just that people, maybe it is the cause of branding. I don't know. But I find oftentimes, especially in the yoga world, in order to brand oneself, the person normally tries to distinguish themselves from others, and we see that in politics, it's more how bad everybody else is compared to me.

I'm kind of like, no, just think about how great you are and what you're going to do good, forget the other people. And when we can do that, then we focus on doing good and doing the right thing at the moment, even if it doesn't sit 100% with our overall values, because the value of service for me is more important than the values of my own personal diet.

Right, or your self-righteousness. Yeah, I really love that. Or self righteousness. Thank you for sharing that! Okay, let's dive into a couple things.

Let's just assume that there's someone out there, they're not being very physical, They're that couch potato you talked about that we would probably choose to be if we weren't being more mindful.

What is there a yoga pose that would be a good first step? And I'm not talking them going to a class, I am talking that they can do it at their home. that they could start with to, you know, start to crack the clay, the hard clay around their shoulders and their body and start wake up their bodies so that are inspired to maybe go take a class or to go and experience something outside of their home.

What would be a pose that you would recommend as a first step? And I love how you're breaking it down to the first step because so often, and this happens a lot in my yoga classes, people would say, I would ask people, do you do yoga?

They're like, no, i'm not good at it. And there was this notion that unless you already did gymnastics and yes, you can touch their feet when you forward fold, unless can do a headstand, then no you are not going to yoga.

I've seen this a lot with men as well that would come to yoga class and freak out because the women were most of the time more flexible, not always, but very common.

And I would always ask when you sat on your bicycle the first time, were you just riding the bicycle or did you fall 17,000 times? Did you have to learn?

Do you, do you to practice? I don't know any one person that's a master in anything without going through the process. And there's nothing more important than recognizing exactly what you're saying that even the simplest pose, just one little thing, 30 seconds a day, two minutes a, day is about 200,000 times better than nothing.

So thank you for that question. And this is just my encouragement to all people that are debating about taking the first step. It is hard. There's no doubt.

Even just deciding that from now on, you park your car further away and you walk further. Anything you try to do is going to be difficult.

Nutrition, flexitarianism, and service

But just keep reminding yourself that it's going be worth it. Because once you'll do it and see people that do do, usually happier, healthier, kind of glowing, right?

Then we know it's better. And if we can convince ourselves that it is worth it, the process, not even the outcome, because the outcomes, nobody knows what will happen, but the processes is going to be worth that.

Then, we're motivated to take the first step. Now, what is the First Step? When I started yoga, The Baby Step used to beat cat-cow, meaning people would come onto all fours and arch the back, forward and down.

Wonderful. Why? Because it really gives the spine some movement. And I thought this is super healthy. It's one of the main places where, especially today, we hunch down a lot and it's super helpful.

Over the years, I realized it's so crucial that I developed my own cat cow, and it is called Delicious Pose. People that go to my classes know that we always start with Delicious pose.

And on days when you can't do anything on your mattress in bed, you do Delicious Pose. Which simply means… You go onto your mattress, onto you mat, on to your carpet, anywhere, just had your knees a bit, you're on all fours.

But instead of just arching and containing the back, pull forward and back. You move in all directions. Since I love food, I always tell people imagine that right now we poured a full bottle.

of extra virgin, cold pressed olive oil throughout all of your joints, definitely through your spine. And you're starting to move up and down, but then you starting move your head and then start to your shoulders and your hips.

So the biggest, most important part is that the hips start move not only up down but also in circles. This releases so much tension in the back, tension that connects into the hip and to the legs.

It releases stuck energy. In yoga and in many other traditions, most of us suck emotions. are actually stored in our hips, in this big, massive bowl that holds all of that.

So we're just moving it. And if you visualize this really good quality olive oil, I don't care where it comes from, you choose the country, but it's flowing there, moving, releasing, your smiling as you do it, because it called delicious.

You gotta smile. and you're starting to feel how it releasing any suck energy. It goes up your spine, You move your head, neck, shoulders, elbows. Before you know it you just gotta go for a while.

Important thing is obviously move it to the other direction as well. So do both directions. And even if this is the only thing you do, sit in child's pose for a moment, then sit, close your eyes and take two minutes just to feel the joy in your body.

For me, this yoga, This is powerful. I got to now do a video only on this for my YouTube channel. Cause I always take requests and Hey, I would say this is a fantastic request.

First step in yoga. I love that. Thanks for the inspiration. Absolutely. Yeah. Really do feel strongly. No matter what path I've gone down, um, exercise wise, whether it's heavy lifting, running, biking, any of it.

I have always since college, since I learned about yoga, that was in my early twenties when I first started to learn about it. Um, I seem to always come back to yoga realizing like that there's, there are gifts in that mindfulness of stillness that you talked about.

There's gifts and the movement in all directions of my body. And as you said, There is also strength that comes from holding poses and holding your gaze.

And so no matter where I am in life, it seems to always come back to that, particularly as we age, that need for movement in the body and with the mind, the flexibility that comes with that because I even noticed it in my young daughter.

I think we are born into this world and then the stories continue as were alive and they get held in our body. And sometimes we forget that our shoulders are up to our ears.

We don't even realize it cause we're so used to it. And the only time we were able to even be aware of where our shoulders is because we are moving them or trying to move them.

So if we don' even make the effort, then that storyline that's playing out, that lifetime that is playing on your body will just kind of stick and start to, like I talked about earlier, start solidify and become like hard clay.

You're so right. You are so, right, and that's why movement is so important and movement with awareness is important. And I think that yoga for me, at least, taught me how to do squats better.

Taught me to even when I do my little bit of weights once in a while, it taught how do them better because I just slower. I'd do more conscious. Actually use my breath.

Inhale. as I lift up and I exhale as they go down. And sure, maybe I'm not lifting big crazy weights, but those weights with the awareness actually caused me to tighten my grip more and build some more strength with my grit.

Though it really is important to have awareness in everything we do and how we chop vegetables, right? Take the feet slightly apart, relax the shoulders.

I remember I used to touch up vegetables like this. It took me a while to realize, oh, what are you doing? But it was the consistent practice of awareness with movement that then, and this is the biggest secret, right?

If your yoga is on the mat for 60 minutes a day, for 30 minutes, or even 90 minutes. But then you go back to your rest of the life and you forget about it, not useless, but you're missing the point.

The mantra should be yoga 24-7, or awareness 24 seven, service 24 7, really living life to its fullest with purpose 247. I'll give you another quick example, I used to be pretty strong, the stanghi at the time, practicing a lot of yoga.

And I would go back to my cute little Mazda and I was sitting in the car completely slumped. And my girlfriend, the yoga teacher at the time, she was, well, my girl friend at a time.

She probably still is a yoga. Told me, Doron, you're slumping. What's the use of all your beautiful real work, working on your body. If then you go and you do this.

That's when I started teaching and practicing as much as I can remember. I'm far from being a saint who practice yoga 24 seven. Even in this podcast, I am sure there were times where I slumped a bit and then I remembered and

I pulled back up.

Right? So the idea is. never to be too harsh on ourselves, because then we'll stop doing everything altogether, whether it's yoga or anything, but to come from a place of compassion, which is very important in yoga, and practice and fall, and pick up again and practice again, and start with baby steps.

And almost always after the baby step, I know for me, if I just do delicious, i'm like, oh, maybe I'll do one sun salute. That's it. I don't feel like more.

Maybe I do another one. Well, they'll just add a few pushups. Okay. maybe i'll Just do a bit of hip openers. and before I knew it, had a practice. So doing the first step and doing it with awareness for is the first ingredient to then take off for the rest of your day and having a great day with awareness.

And as you said earlier, if it hurts, it's okay. That doesn't mean stop. that means, you know, go gentle and then next time do it again and continue to practice until hopefully it stops hurting.

We can add a tiny bit because we don't want people to break anything. It goes again, sorry to repeat that word so many times, but awareness. So when I'm going, it does hurt and it goes beyond what I feel like.

People think that after 30 years of practice every morning, all I want to do is get up and do yoga. I don' I still wake up and need to practice my habits with awareness.

It's become more naturally, of course, with less resistance.

First yoga steps and daily breath practices

But if you told me to run, wake and do nothing and eat, I don't know what. I may say, yeah, give me a coffin croissant. Let's go down to Paris streets and forget the class.

However. It's both taking the first step and having the awareness that as I'm moving through it and it's uncomfortable, I am still moving though it. If the pain starts to become sharp pain, don't push through the paint.

One has to have the wisdom and that's where listening to the body is important because we're listening the to body with awareness. Not, do I feel like practicing?

No, this I will do even if my body tells me I don´t feel I´m going to practice always. But after we started practicing the awareness that right now I feel like it's getting too much.

I've done pushups and it' burning and its hurting. No, there's no need to push. We're not here to become. yoga, Olympic champions. There's no such thing.

And hopefully there will never be. That's the whole idea of yoga. It's a lifestyle. You do it to the level that it feels good. you push a little further.

Absolutely. But when it starts to feel uncomfortable, you stop you move to. So expanding on that, I would say I always practice even when injured because let's say my shoulder is injured.

I can work with my legs. My legs, my knee is injured, I do all my sun salutes seated on the ground. I've actually had a student of mine come to me with a full on cast, her full leg.

And she just sat on ground and we did sun salute with her seated. We did twists, we do the whole practice. Neck rotations, breathing. There's always something to do.

You can't move, you're in a cast up to here. Actually I had quadriplegic. student for many years, and we started with breath. Later on, I realized that the breath actually is moving her body, though she couldn't move her own body.

So we start working with draft, with mind mastery. And she slowly, slowly started to gain better movement. She's still not like walking, running or anything.

This woman is married, successful business owner. Like it's unbelievable from somebody that was, I would say suicidal, if I may share that. But really coming to that place of just finding what it is that we can do, working with that, going beyond our discomfort, but not pushing to the place.

Injury, which is oftentimes the places where the mind or the ego is pushing us to noticing if we're moving out of ego or out a sustainable health. Excellent.

Before we go, do you have a quick answer for this? I think a lot of people do breathe shallowly. Do you a simple tip that people can do to be that mindful of where their breath is and how to actually go a little deeper?

Just take a deep breath when you ask that question. Again, like any habit, it's practice. I believe that I'm sure there's an app for this, but if not, put a little sticky note on the corner of your thing or set a timer for every 10 minutes.

10 Minutes is great, if it is too much for you, do every 15 minutes As the timer goes down, ding ding, you head stop. You take three deep breaths, really just inhale.

I would say count the breath because when you count you know how you're doing. Let's say you can do only three and then try to let the exhale go to six.

It's easier to exhale longer than inhale longer and you go exhale long. What this does is it shifts the body from the sympathetic to the parasympathetic.

From the fight or flight to the digest, relax. And so now, just by taking one, one time even, forget three, but even one round every five, 10 minutes, I'm going…

My shoulders will relax… I'll speak softer and calmer, and I will go back to work with much more clarity and be more efficient in whatever I'm doing at much higher levels than if I were just go, go go.

My new book, If I may mention it, Undistracted, is all about these little tips, these tools, not just to become a master meditator or to have awareness, but exactly what you're talking about, finding these mini Don't love the word hacks, but life practices, life systems that really bring us to the place where we can have awareness and constantly improve ourselves.

Because if we stop every 10 minutes and take one, one round, ideally two, even one around of inhale, let's say four, exhale eight, before you know it, this starts to become a new habit.

And you won't even need the timer. Do this one week and you'll see you need to put the time once an hour just to make sure you didn't forget. This is the really great practice.

It's also useful before somebody goes to sleep. because it helps them remember to breathe through the nose, right? Don't exhale through their mouth, even though everybody tells you to.

Start learning to breath only through your nose. And it really calms the nervous system, so anybody struggling with insomnia will have a much, much easier time falling asleep and feel better as they go to sleep.

Oh, that's excellent. Well, thank you, Duran. How can people find you? Doron Yoga is my YouTube channel where there is a lot of physical practices, but more and more guided meditation and again, tips about how to master life, mind, finding purpose, really just live this life to its fullest.

And doronyoga.com, my website will have everything else from the books that I've written, to any new things that i'm going to offer. I'm building the Dharon Yoga Academy, which are a lot of these courses to help support people

in this day and age using the ancient wisdom, but converting it to becoming very practical and accessible to everybody in the same age.

Love it. And we'll put the links for your books and then your socials as well. Dhron yoga. Yeah. Excellent. Well, thank you again for your time. It's so wonderful catching up.

And I really hope people do take their first steps with yoga if you haven't already because I have found it to be an incredibly powerful tool. So I'm grateful for you coming on this show so you could talk about how they can do that.

Hopefully we busted a few yogic myths as well so that anything that's keeping you from just going down this path you can now kind of just take the first step.

So thank you again and thank all for either watching or listening. If this show resonated with you, please share it with a friend, leave a review. It really helps us to expand our audience and to even get additional guests.

Thank you. Be curious. Thank you so much for joining me on Everyday Ancestral. If you enjoyed this episode, hit subscribe so you don't miss the next one.

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