Passionate Why Essay: Yoga and Aging

As people age, can they become stronger, more limber, and more alert? Can people improve their spiritual and mental capacities? I believe the regular practice of yoga and healthy living can help people achieve these goals, and I believe this because it has happened to me. I changed my habits, and I know through personal experience that goals can be achieved and behavior can be changed permanently. Sharing what I have learned through yoga is a goal I am working toward.

After my first year of retirement, I began to feel a depression where there should have been none. Now that feeling is gone. Once I began to practice yoga I realized I had been sedentary with no personal goals. Now yoga is the one thing I really love. Every day I wake up and look forward to being in the studio and being with other people. Yoga is energizing and exciting. Since beginning the yoga teacher training with Clayton yoga, I feel I am moving forward with something I love. Michelle is a charming, pleasant teacher who inspires confidence and joy. Now my goal is becoming a reality. I’ve always been attracted to the grace and beauty of yoga. It has always been an inspiration to me, and now it is a major part of my life. B. K. S. Iyengar said, “Yoga allows you to rediscover a sense of wholeness in your life, where you do not feel like you are constantly trying to fit broken pieces together.”

At the age of 68, I have seen many of my friends die or end up in nursing homes. I would like to be able to say I did everything I possibly could to stay strong and healthy. My own practice began eight years ago, and I couldn’t get enough. I wanted to be in the studio all day. I often walked into a class thinking I would never make it through. I felt ill. I had a stomachache. I was tired. My back hurt. No matter what was wrong, I invariably felt better after every session.

Yoga is important for many reasons, but I believe a better quality of life can be achieved through yoga – the yoking of the mind and the body – because it focuses on postures, breathing techniques, meditation, ethical thinking, and integrity.

There are many studies about aging, and the ultimate conclusion is that with age come degeneration, compression, and lack of mobility along with a host of other negative symptoms. Perhaps this is the norm, but then why have I seen videos of men and women in their 90’s who are still sharp mentally and still as limber and mobile as young men and women? Ravi Ravindra said, “The practice of yoga itself transforms. Yoga has a magical quality. . . . ” Herein, I believe is a great transforming secret that will negate study after study in this century.

I would like to see myself and many other people my age prove these theories wrong. Whether in a studio, a home, a corporation, or a park, I would like to share what I have gained from yoga with other people. If we diligently practice yoga along with healthy eating and healthy living habits, I believe we have the ability to show the world that Western civilization has learned how to defeat many of the ill effects of the degeneration involved with aging. For men and women my age, living a healthy vital life going forward is the most important territory yet to be conquered, and I would like to take part in that exploration.