

How The Tabu Topic Taught Me To Teach YOGA

Something a very successful career as a High School Teacher does not prepare you for.....

Facing Death & Learning To Teach Yoga!

“I have come to realise that I now have to learn a new way of teaching that is about being authentic, breaking down those protective barriers, making connections with people at a deeper level and allowing people to meet the real Kathy Mansfield not the Mrs Mansfield – high school PE teacher”

By Kathy Mansfield (Behan)

On 5 December 2012, I was at work (High School Phys Ed Teacher – Head of Department) engaging in my usual frantic day with students and staff when I received a phone call from my mum who was distraught. She had rung to tell me that my Dad had just been diagnosed with progressive bone cancer. My whole world bottomed



out, I knew from nursing many bone cancer patients that our road ahead was going to be devastating and that I didn't have much time left with my beautiful dad. I collected myself and continued with my day, because that is what I thought I should do at the time.

Fortunately, it was the end of the school year and the start of our 6 weeks Christmas holidays. Knowing this I decided that I was going to Nurse Dad during this time. We immediately flew down to Brisbane to see some cancer specialists and every day Dad's pain grew more intense. He commenced on palliative radium treatment in the early new year – earliest appointment available. During this time he lost his mobility due to the pain, so I had to have him admitted to the Wesley hospital, sadly he never came out. Dad died on January 22. I had a lot of trouble dealing with his death and losing the one person in my life that was always a tower of strength for me. I was very lost and angry, but all the same I went back to work the following week.

Work was an excellent distraction from my pain and also from having to deal with my mum and brothers and sister. I have always been the one who was there for all of them, pulling them out of trouble, listening to their problems, supporting them etc. but when dad died, I couldn't be there for them, nor did I want them to be there for me, I guess I was internalising my pain so I didn't have to deal with it. I just wanted to be left alone. I even sent an email out at work, asking people not to talk to me about my dad, because



Dear life, I've had enough bullshit to last a while. Can we take a little break please?!

I just wanted to focus on work. I have never been very good at letting my guard down and accepting help from other people.

Things at work became very volatile and I was reacting to everything and everyone around me. I felt like my whole world was folding in on me. I felt like the people that I had come to trust and admire over the 9 years that I had worked in the school, had deserted me. I was moving into a very bad place and I believe I would have spiralled further from there had I not come across this yoga opportunity.

I had been thinking about doing the yoga teacher training for a few years, but could never afford the money to actually do the course. There was a 'come and try' yoga



teacher training weekend advertised, and I decided to go to this and find out if the course was for me. I have attended thousands of professional development training sessions with my work, and have yawned my way through most of them – often using the time to do marking or lesson planning – I was convinced that I was very good at doing multiple things at once! But this was not the case at this course! I was immediately captivated by Tammy and her yoga journey. I could not get enough and for the first time ever I was fully present and loving every minute of being there. I think also this was the first time since Dad had died, that I was able to let go of my broken heart and focus fully on something else.

I remember Tammy saying that **the Teacher training course would change my life**. Change my life? I remember thinking to myself that there are only a few life changing moments in my life and that is the birth of my two very beautiful children. How could yoga training ever compare to this???? But, thank God, she was right!

When my mum (who was suffering her own heart break and grief) heard how much I had gotten out of the weekend and how much I wanted to do the course, but probably would not be able to afford to do it, she offered me the money to do the course as a gift from Dad. I was elated and could not think of a better thing to do in my Dad's memory. So for the first time in a very long time I accepted her help to pay for the course.(my first step in getting over my Ego) I made a secret commitment to Dad that I would be fully present in the course and hoped that I might be able to help the rest of my family with the things that I learnt.

I knew that I couldn't make this commitment and do the course while my life was in such turmoil, so I had to make some changes and fast. One of the biggest changes

A man once told The Buddha,
"I want happiness."

The Buddha replied,
"First remove 'I', that's ego.
Then remove 'want', that's desire.

And now all you're left with is
H a p p i n e s s."

had to be my work. I needed to reduce my 12 hour days and obsessions with perfection. With this I made the decision to step down from my Head of Department position. I started in this position 9 years ago and had built it from nothing to a very prestigious department with a team of 10 staff. I gave my life to the job, and that had to change! It was a big shock to everyone at school along with my family and friends. I had no idea if I was doing the right thing, and if I could handle letting go of a job that I considered to be my best asset. (My second step in letting go of Ego) I felt the fear and did it anyway. I had no idea what lay ahead of me but I was

cautiously optimistic and excited to start the journey.

The course started, and I couldn't get enough! Fortunately, Fiona and Carla opened their studio which allowed me to practice power yoga as often as I liked. These two girls have no idea how they have impacted my life by opening their studio. Through my study and my practice I am learning to be fully present in my every day.

I am also learning to be mindful, which I believe I have actively avoided for many years. I now realise that if I was being mindful in the past, I would have realised how poorly I treated my body and how little I regarded my own value over that of others. I would have had to realise that I was not being a good mother, friend, daughter, wife, sister or teacher. Actively avoiding these realisations was easier than recognising them and doing something about them. I didn't realise that my being present in all of these people's lives would be better for them and for me. Thank God I have had the opportunity to find that out through my yoga teacher training. I am also very excited to be learning so much more by taking part in specialised mindfulness training later this year. I cannot believe it took me 40 years and two university degrees to finally arrive and be present!!!

Last weekend I was privileged to attend two of Brian Kest's workshops in Brisbane. I was elated to find that he was so down to earth and 'real'! Every word that he shared reinforced everything that I wanted my Yoga to be! He is an amazing person and I now understand why Tammy chose him as her mentor and why I chose Tammy as my mentor. I have a very long road ahead of me, but I feel I am finally on the right path and I am looking forward to being enriched with every moment of every day.

6 months later....

What have I discovered about teaching YOGA?

I have found enlightenment after contemplating my current teaching style (as "Mrs Mansfield the School Teacher")

I have come to realise that my 15 years of successful high school PE teaching have not prepared me to be an affective yoga teacher. I have to work toward being a different teacher to the one that I am at school. Throughout my teaching career I have intentionally gone into my classes with my poker face on and played a guarded role, rather than allowing students to get to know me as a person. We are taught that this is the right way to approach the teacher student relationship. I have become an expert in the ability to care from an objective place. I have come to realise is that I have never allowed myself to trust my high school students – you would be crazy to trust an adolescent! However, I do need to develop trust in my yoga students, so that I don't feel that I have to be guarded all the time.

WHAT LEARNING TO TEACH YOGA HAS REALLY TAUGHT ME...

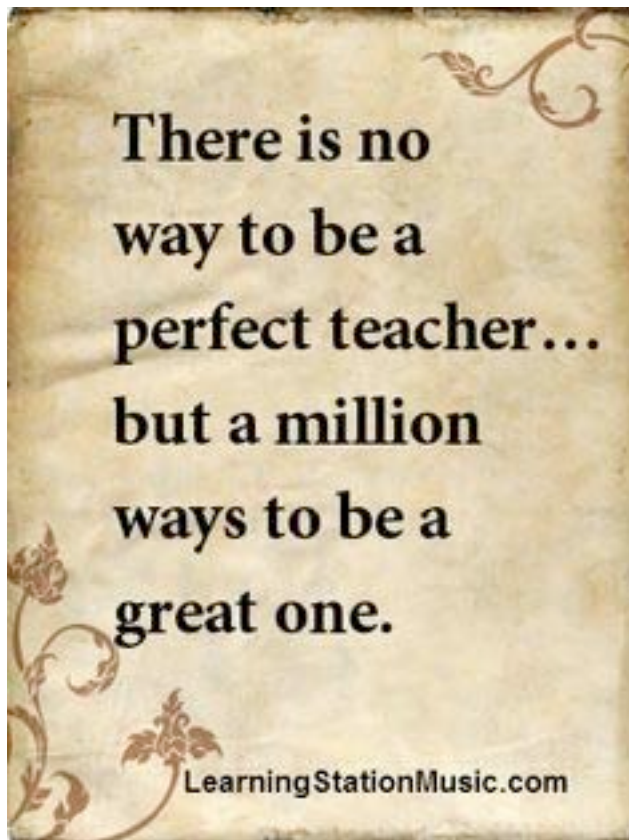
- ☒ bring down the protective barriers that separate me from my students
- ☒ begin to trust in my students to be responsible for themselves and their practice
- ☒ stop trying to control every situation in the yoga class

☒ begin listening to my students rather than focusing on the curriculum that we have to get through to tick the boxes

☒ being able to make mistakes without the fear of being open to extensive criticism from all directions.

If I don't work on these qualities, I believe I will end up being a teacher that is very technical, a good demonstrator, attentive to modifications and cautions – but more run of the mill. I don't want to be a run of the mill teacher;

“ I want to connect with people and make a difference in their lives”



I have come to realise that I now have to learn a new way of teaching that is about being authentic, breaking down those protective barriers, making connections with people at a deeper level and allowing people to meet the real Kathy Mansfield not the Mrs Mansfield – high school PE teacher.

This is going to be one of my biggest challenges as a yoga teacher because I believe I am excellent at being a high school teacher with that professional line drawn in the sand.

Things in the yoga world are not all black and white. Wow, now that I have had this ah-ha moment, I am excited to start working on Kathy Mansfield Yoga Teacher.



Just 2 months after completing my Level 1 Yoga Teacher Training.....

Today is the Anniversary of my beautiful Dad's passing 1 year ago. In his memory, and on this day 22 January, I wanted to do something positive and something that would make him proud of me.

After he died I found sanctuary and strength in my Yoga Practice. I was so fortunate to have the opportunity to do my Yoga teacher training with [Tammy Williams](#), to have a loving husband that supported me every step of the way, to have the encouragement of my family and friends, especially my Mum [Trish Behan](#) – who gave me the financial support from dad's estate to do the course.

To receive the gift of Yoga in my Dad's memory is one that will never stop giving, and I will have it in my heart and life forever. I am so filled with Gratitude and humbled by the wonderful people who have supported and shared this journey with me. I hope that I am going to be able to give back to yoga as much as it has given me. My journey and practice would not have been complete without the support of the girls from [Yoga Fix](#), [Carla Hinschen](#) and Fiona have been an amazing inspiration to me – these girls have no idea what it meant to me to have a place to go away from the months of pain, hurt, sadness and hardships experienced through my grief and my family's grief. Yoga and the people who supported my practice, gave me the strength to keep going, to support my family and to Let Go.....

So I finally did it, today I launched my Yoga Business – [Hot Yogi's Mackay](#). I am so excited about what might be possible.....thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone for your support and love!! I am looking forward to seeing you all on the Mat.

This is for you Dad – thank you for being my inspiration – I love you and miss you dearly.

Namaste

Lawrence John Behan



Born into this life: 26 April 1949
Born into eternal life: 22 January 2013
I cried when you passed away, I still cry today. Although I loved you dearly, I couldn't make you stay. A golden heart stopped beating, hardworking hands at rest. God broke my heart to prove to me that he only takes the best.
They say that time is a healer, but as the time goes on..... I seem to find it just as hard to face, the fact that you are gone. You'll never be forgotten and every day I shed a tear,

STUDIO OPENING DAY
SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY @ 9.30 – 11.30 am

HOT

Opening Day
CLASS price
\$10
(CASH ONLY PLEASE)

AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT!!!!
Reserve a MATT Spot By
using the JOIN BUTTON ON
THIS Event Page.

YOGI'S

LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT & LIFE BEGINS TO
FLOW WITH ease.
(Sri Sri Ravi Shankar)

Find us on
Facebook

Namaste to Everyone.....the love in me honours the love in you!

12 Symptoms of Spiritual Awakening

1. An increased tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
2. Frequent attacks of smiling.
3. Feelings of being connected with others and nature.
4. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
5. A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experience.
6. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
7. A loss of ability to worry.
8. A loss of interest in conflict.
9. A loss of interpreting the actions of others.
10. A loss of interest in judging others.
11. A loss of interest in judging self.
12. Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything.

References....

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