



## Teachers & Alumni Newsletter

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*Dedicated to enriching your life through the art, science and philosophy of yoga.*

April 2023 Newsletter

### A Message From Val When is a Calling a Calling?



#### ***When is a Calling a Calling?***

Is it when we pursue a lofty ideal?

Is it when we feel a tap on the shoulder by an unseen hand?

Is it when we find ourselves striving for excellence?

If you have a calling to return again and again to mastery, that is a calling.

My calling was always to be a teacher and I know it is for many yoga teachers. It is an unmistakable nudge from a spiritually felt place. It seems to gel with maturity and when one's practice is daily and solid. It is confirmed when you see students respond to simple instructions. Their body relaxes. Their breathing deepens. They step away from thoughts and begin the process of disidentification. They settle into stillness and silence. And then yoga begins.

Practicing the meditative state of '*dhyana*' is a good way to clarify your calling. When the 'wanting' mind is parked, intuition can flow more easily. Fears are abated. In *Dhyana*, there is a stream of consciousness that is completely bare and uncluttered, timeless and egoless. This is often a fertile time to hear where we want to go next in our life and where best to unpack our precious gifts.

I really believe that when we regroup in these times and face new choices in our lives it begins with the question.... *where I am called from here?* Then of course we need to trust the answer and take small steps towards it.

Here are a few tips to help you recognize and follow your calling.

- Listen to the still small voice inside.

- Start small. Mother Teresa said do small things with great love.
- Look at what you give away freely as a clue.
- Ask yourself '*who benefits?*' Be discerning.
- **After** practicing discernment, be generous. Mentorship is most successful when it has no strings.
- Find someone worthy to emulate. It will become your own.
- Keep up the helpful tools of affirmations and journaling. They are character shapers.
- Keep recommitting to a meditation practice. It is your compass.

We all came with a suitcase full of gifts and we should let nothing and no one stand in our way of unpacking them. Whether our experience comes from a formal school or school of hard knocks, following a calling means we are willing to share who we are at our fundamental core.

Knowledge isn't knowledge until we give it away and it becomes useful in someone else's hands. And wisdom isn't really wisdom until it is offered generously to someone who is struggling. Remember, you are the match to someone else's candle. Sometimes we may not even know we are answering a calling. We are just trusting that tap on the shoulder. It's a beautiful thing.

*Valery Petrich*

Director  
Yoga Studio College of Canada  
(est. 1996)

## Teacher News



### Anne Harris-Freed

When Anne Harris - Freed walked into The Yoga Studio North in Calgary in 2008, she stated in no uncertain terms she wanted to become a yoga teacher and teach in a spiritual place, like her church. She was the picture of passion and purpose!

Setting about to make it a reality, she took the YSC training, opened a studio in her home, built community and taught at her church in Kincora in NW Calgary.

Years later, Anne retired to Nanaimo where she rented a hall and also taught classes in her back yard – biding her time during covid until the new Brechin United Church was built. You can join one of her classes there today!



Anne Harris-Freed teaching at Brechin United Church, Nanaimo BC

*In Anne's words...*

'In the early 1990's I read in Prevention magazine that yoga was good for stress management, which I was experiencing due to my job loss after hospital closures. I took up classes through Calgary Parks and Recreation which I found very beneficial and attended Karma classes at the Yoga Studio North.

When I began work as a Chiropractic assistant, the Chiropractor raved about yoga and took classes himself. In fact, part of my job description was to show patients "stretches" that were not unlike yoga poses.

When I lost my job again at age 58, I knew it wasn't going to be easy! I didn't waste any time. I turned our basement space into a Yoga studio and started inviting people. Eventually I had 8 classes per week and found time to teach at my church.

I LOVED teaching and I realized it was the best job I ever had! I advertised in our neighborhood bulletin and my beloved studio became a community of neighbours and friends. Eventually, I added yoga therapy to my training and began to design classes for seniors and those with health challenges.

When my husband and I chose coastal living for retirement, the transition was made so much easier due to the teaching skills I brought with me and was eager to share, particularly for age 60 plus. It helped me make new friends and share something which I considered valuable with my new community. From my Christian upbringing, the *Parable of the Tenants* has often guided my actions. (Matthew 25:23). You can't hang on to valuable things! I experience a deep sense of satisfaction to know I have been 'on purpose', sharing the youth- giving and spiritual benefits of yoga all these years!'

**HAPPY 27TH BIRTHDAY FOR THE YOGA STUDIO OF CALGARY**

There have been a few twists and turns since I sold the Yoga Studios North 6 years ago BUT what is obvious is that Community longs to fulfill itself! The Yoga Studios have proven to be indomitable in spirit, buoyed by committed students and teachers who are the wind in its sails. I birthed the Yoga Studios in 1996 in order to generously spread the exemplary style of Iyengar Style asana. Now under the stewardship of Jodie Hansen and her solid team it is taken forward into the grand future!



Debby Sereda, Martina Walsh, Lilli Duska, April Borne, Monica Espinosa, Jodie Hanson, Vanitha Naik,

**A Long Covid Sequence  
recommended by Val Petrich and Fr. Joe Pereira**



Bishmasana with one block under shoulder blades and one under head. 5 minutes.



Setu Bandha Sarvangasana 5 - 10 minutes



Viparita Karani as shown. Up to 10 minutes.



Savasana II with Ujjayi Breath for 10 minutes, twice daily.

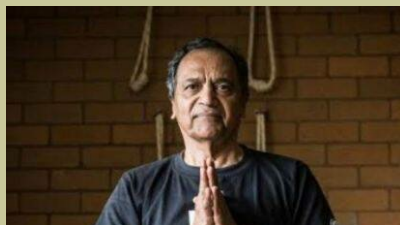
If you have questions on the long covid sequence, drop Val an email.  
[1yogalady@gmail.com](mailto:1yogalady@gmail.com)

**A Tribute to Dr. L. Martin Jerry  
January 2, 1937 ~ March 21, 2023**



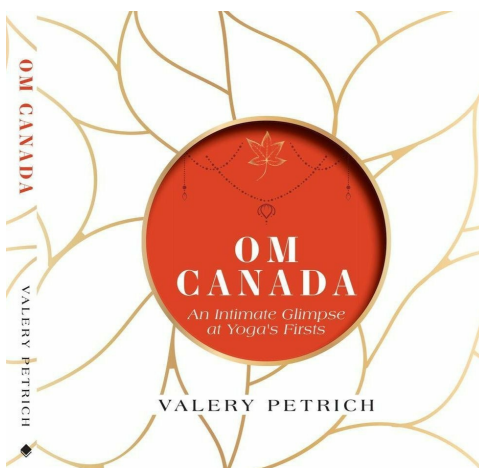


Martin was not only a brilliant academic, physician, scientist and professor but a devoted student of the Himalayan tradition along with his wife Marian. They formed the Foothills Yoga Society in the 1980's and opened their home to meditation on Thursday nights. Later they hosted a first ever yoga conference at the University of Calgary. Martin was always supportive of me, the Yoga Studio College and the training of teachers for the future. He said once that people place value on mastering a piano or an instrument, why not meditation? His breathtaking accomplishments were surpassed only by his gentleness and compassion, a testament to his devoted practice. Truly a luminary ahead of his time, Martin gifted us 3 books for the ages beginning with 'Sutras of the Inner Teacher' co written with Marian. It is an unmatched treasure of homework. Truly someone who answered his calling, we are all so privileged to have known Martin and we will miss him.



**Mark Your Calendars**  
**Workshop with Fr. Joe Pereira**  
**Sep 29, 30, 31.**  
**[www.theyogastudiocalgary.com](http://www.theyogastudiocalgary.com)**  
**Details soon.**

**Om Canada is available to order.**



*"This is a phenomenal book of the history of Canadian Yoga. OM CANADA by Val Petrich had me be very nostalgic of our history. I loved the photos I would never have thought existed."*

Chip Wilson  
Founder of Lululemon Athletica and author of "Little Black Stretchy Pants"

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You can also order through [1yogalady@gmail.com](mailto:1yogalady@gmail.com) for \$35.00 + \$15 shipping + handling fees.

“Love your calling with passion. It is the meaning of your life.” —Auguste Rodin

“When the flower opens, the bees will come.” —Kabir



The Yoga Studio College of Canada

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