



From the Beginning

As we begin our practice, we make the effort to let go of all our Yoga experience. For some this means hundreds or thousands of hours on the mat. In martial arts, even the black belt practitioner is encouraged to put on the white belt – to return to the beginning.

- A classic Zen tale - Carrying an Empty Cup

A university professor came to the home of a nineteenth century Zen Master. The professor came to inquire about Zen philosophy, but rather spent more time talking than listening. In response, the Master began pouring the professor's tea until it flowed out of the cup onto the table. The professor exclaimed, "What are you doing?" The master replied, "Like this cup, you are full of your own ideas." "How can I teach unless you first empty your cup?"

Unless we 'empty the cup' preconceptions will get in the way of our practice: I will have a good practice when...as long as...if...as soon as...As if we might reach a quintessential moment when all is perfect and all expectation has been satisfied. As if...Recalling the words of the late great philosopher, Roseanne Roseannadanna, "If it's not one thing, it's another -- It's ALWAYS something!"

By letting go of past experience, we are receptive to the benefits of today's practice. Once again, with resilience and patience, we return to the beginning.