

HAPPINESS WARRIORS

Happy against the odds :

THE WARRIOR TALE OF ABIGAIL

VOL. 1

HAPPINESS WARRIORS

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I believe it's time for us to make happiness a priority. Not just happiness for ourselves, but universal happiness as well. My mission in sharing these stories is to give my readers a platform of self-empowerment and the tools necessary to accomplish two goals:

1. BE HAPPY & HEALTHY

We don't have control over other people or many of the situations we encounter in life. In order to be happy with our lives, we must start by taking responsibility for ourselves, our bodies, our minds, and the vibration we emit. I help my students achieve these aims by passing on tools handed down for thousands of years by seasoned masters of yoga, meditation, pranayama, and lifestyle techniques proven to help cultivate happy habits. I invite you to practice and integrate these into your daily life in order to enrich your own happiness. Remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi: *"If you want to change the world, start with yourself."*

2. BE BRAVE. BE A WARRIOR!

I ask you to be a part of this project by reading or even contributing to future editions. In each issue, I'll introduce one happiness warrior, and you can be the next! You can also contribute by sharing yoga retreats and teacher training programs you recommend. Tell me about happiness experts or coaches who have provided you with valuable advice, or resources like TED Talks, YouTube videos, or books that have inspired you. This is just the first issue of Happiness Warriors. I hope you'll enjoy and share your feedback.

"You can only be happy in the present moment, not the past or future."

Thank you for reading. Let's be warriors for happiness together. Sending you much love and light,

-Amodini

Amodini is a.k.a Bettina Maul

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BE THE KIND OF WOMAN
THAT WHEN YOUR FEET
HIT THE FLOOR EACH
MORNING THE DEVIL SAYS:

"OH CRAP. SHE'S UP."



FEATURED WARRIOR: ABIGAIL PATTMAN

A journey from victimhood to happiness. One woman's story of unique challenges, wisdom and her dreams for a happier life.

Abigail makes living a life of happiness look easy, but her journey was wrought with difficulty. Many might call Abi's experiences extreme. In spite of that, I've chosen her to feature in this first issue of Happiness Warriors, mainly because I've never seen someone make a complete transformation from not only feeling like a victim, but actually being one - to living as a giving, loving, inspiring being.

Many people are victims, but some choose to stay in victim mode while others make the choice to transform their pain into power and create the life they deserve. And that is the focus of this story. Abi suffered from abuse as a small child, was used as a tool in toxic rituals, and worked hard to heal herself from post traumatic stress disorder and other effects of severe trauma. To give you a better understanding of Abi's background, I'll start by sharing an excerpt from her blog post, *My Father Was a Sociopath*.

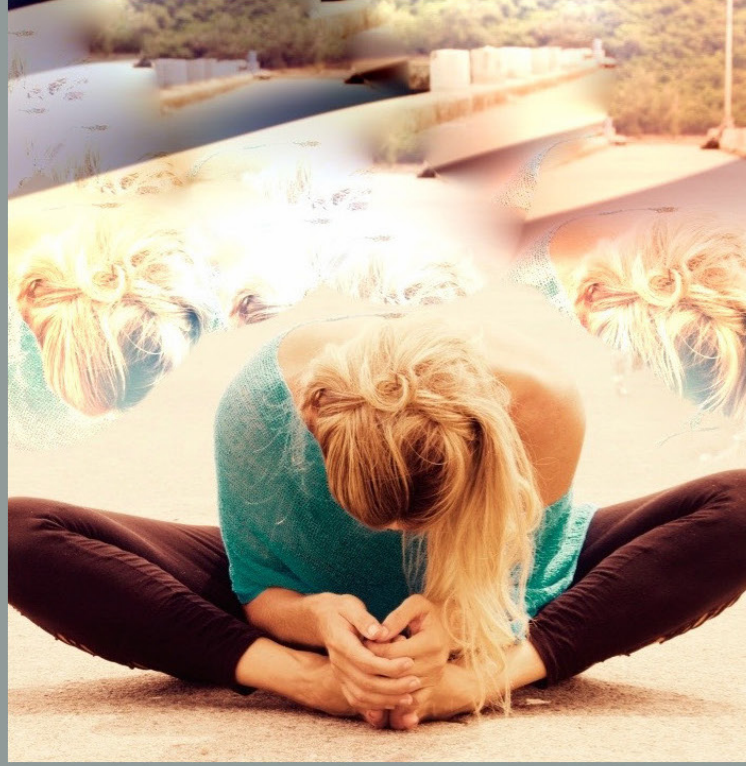
"My father sacrificed me. The first memory I had was a flashback at 14 years old. I was so small I could barely walk and he was dragging me through a forest. I was beyond terrified, people in dark hoods, chanting carrying fire torches. The rest of the memories didn't start coming back until I was 33. My life in between was a series of sexual abuse, physical abuse, self-harm, addictions, trauma, and attempted suicide. I didn't know what was wrong with me. I was frozen inside. I felt numb and dirty. Now, today, somewhere to someone, this is happening and it needs to stop. The only way for it to stop is for people like me to come forward and say no. People like me to tell others what abuse does and how it destroys you. It takes people like me to have the courage to bare their souls."

I think you get the picture. I'm not sharing this story just because it's extreme, and indeed it is. I'm sharing this story to illustrate the fact that, in spite of incredible challenges, Abi never gave up trying to make the world a better place. I love how Abi describes herself now: "I'm Abigail. I refuse to settle for emotional numbness. I'm on a mission to help the psychically sensitive step up and discover your hidden potential. To inspire and empower you to believe in yourself, create high vibration changes, and discover your unique soul purpose. Once you 'tune' into YOU, the answers really are all within. But first of all, you need to know how to be clear and connect with your inner self. I'm calling on you to wake up and feel within that you deserve the best that you have to offer and you are worth it."

I first met Abigail in 2012, and I liked her immediately. On the outside she's a beautiful, stunning, exceptional woman. For sure you'd look at her and think, "I want to know more." From the moment I saw her, I knew there was more to discover. When I learned more about Abi's past, I wasn't just shocked, I was broken. Her story shattered my heart. I kept thinking, how is it possible for her to keep standing up again and again, like a phoenix from the ashes? The answer is that she persevered with a growing heart, rather than a hardened one. All our hearts can shrink for a moment because we are human, but they can also blossom bigger, as we are divine beings.

So how did Abi arrive at her current happy state? She decided to attack unhappiness from many different angles! Regular yoga and meditation have helped her immensely, but she's also participated in one-on-one therapy sessions and learned a variety of spiritual healing techniques in order to help herself and others. To learn more about Abi, follow abigailsinsights.com.

If you'd like to share your story to be featured in the next issue of Happiness Warriors, please email me at bettina@amodini-coaching.com. Your story could empower happiness in others.



*Yoga is not about
touching your toes, it's
about what you learn
on the way down.*

YOGA

An Introduction to Yoga.



THE BENEFITS OF YOGA

BY BETTINA MAUL A.K.A. AMODINI

Yoga offers so many benefits. Although many other activities can help you achieve your goals for physical fitness, yoga can also help balance the mind, breath, emotions, and create an overall sense of well-being. I can speak from personal experience that yoga has the power to transform your entire life along with your health.

Here's a handful of the positive changes that regular yoga practice can bring to your life:

- Live life more fully in the present moment.
- Release stress and inspire feelings of peace.
- Fall asleep more easily and sleep for longer.
- Relief from certain causes of chronic pain.
- Develop more physical and mental strength.
- Gain greater flexibility and ease of mobility.
- Boost organ function by releasing toxins.
- Improve your lung function and air capacity.
- Develop your sense of "proprioception".
- Build a stronger sense of self-confidence.
- Improve posture and strengthen your core.
- Boost your focus and your concentration.
- Unlock any stagnant energy in the body.
- Release any potential pent-up emotions.

Everyone is different. Some students learn best in a group environment. If you decide to start your yoga journey this way, I recommend you seek out classes designed for beginners, rather than signing up for intermediate-level Ashtanga or Vinyasa classes. There are many beginner-level courses that explain everything you need to know, step-by-step.

Other students prefer to learn one-on-one in private lessons, which is great if you're looking for personalized guidance to suit your specific needs. Another wonderful option these days is to learn yoga online. Contact me anytime if you want more information about these options.

By increasing your strength, flexibility and physical awareness, you'll be able to relax easily. Living with a calm body and mind will allow you to focus on the present moment, further enhancing your overall sense of well-being as well as increasing your productivity.

"Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self."

“

FEATURED QUOTE ON HAPPINESS VOL. 1

Happiness is a choice.

Kosta Miachin, founder of Vikasa Yoga in Koh Samui believes that happiness starts with self evolution. **‘Happiness is a choice.’** is his favorite quote and his personal daily mantra. What’s your daily mantra? Let me know: Bettina@amodini-coaching.com

“Your state of mind, body and energy can easily be overlooked as we are all wrapped up in the small tasks of life. When we begin to approach life with awareness and intention, we become conscious of our state and the state of the world around us. This can be achieved through yoga, meditation, self love or simply by making time to focus on what’s really important. From a foundation of a stronger self, you can be in a better frame of mind to help others and give your best to others. This connectivity is where a sense of purpose and real happiness comes from.”

Kosta Miachin

Vikasa Yoga Retreat

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY FROM YOGA STUDENT TO YOGA TEACHER

A preface from Amodini

Working with aspiring yogis and yoginis gives me so much inspiration. They bring an inquisitive and youthful energy to my life and it keeps me motivated to continue my path of teaching yoga, meditation and happiness. Without fail, these eager young stars always have the same question for me: ***“Hey Betti, which yoga teacher training do you recommend?”***

It seems there is a new teacher training popping up everyday. What used to be a unique and exotic experience can now be found in every city and town with every variation from beer yoga to goat yoga. (!) The quality of training varies and its so important to do your research before committing to any particular program.

I decided to make the following guide to help students step foot in the right direction about this important decision. This question cannot be answered for you, but hopefully by outlining the important parameters, you can make a more informed decision.



WHERE AND HOW TO FIND THE BEST YOGA TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

THESE 4 EASY STEPS CAN HELP

I remember feeling completely lost when I first started researching yoga teacher training (YTT) programs. Despite having years of practice as a yoga student, I was still confused by the different certification options, available yoga styles, and plethora of options offered in various countries.

To help make the process of choosing a YTT program easier for you, I'd like to share my 4-step plan, followed by my top 5 recommendations for yoga teacher training programs.

1. Find a yoga alliance-approved program.

Whether you're intending to teach yoga professionally or just looking to deepen your practice, your best bet is to go for a training program that's registered with the Yoga Alliance, an international organization focused on guaranteeing a standard of quality in YTT programs. By choosing a program with Yoga Alliance approval, you can be confident that you'll be covering all the crucial content you need to learn about yoga anatomy, history, methodology, and more. Start by finding a registered 200-hour YTT program.

2. Figure out which style will suit you best.

You're likely to come across a variety of yoga styles during your search for a YTT program. This can be a bit confusing and overwhelming if you're not familiar with these styles and what makes them unique. The most common style of yoga today is Hatha, and most schools out there simply offer their unique variations on Hatha methodology and sequencing. I recommend trying some of these variations, such as Ashtanga, Vinyasa, or Kundalini, to get a sense of what they're like before choosing your YTT. I hesitate to recommend 4-week Ashtanga or Kundalini courses as these programs can be quite intense. Stick with a Hatha-based program if you're unsure of which style is for you.

3. Decide which group size will best serve you.

Personally, I would never want to join a YTT program with 40 or more participants, so I won't go into trainings designed for large groups. Even with smaller numbers of participants, you'll have a very different experience in a class of 12-20 students compared to 21-40 students. Bigger class sizes usually signify that the school is well established. This can be a good thing because each training module is likely to be taught by an expert in that specific field, and the program is likely to have run for a number of years with good results for graduates. However, you'll receive less attention from the main instructor than you would in a program with fewer participants. Alternatively, fewer classmates means more personalized attention for you. The main instructor will have time to make deeper connections with each student, there will be fewer distractions, and the class dynamic will typically bring everyone closer together. The main drawback of smaller YTT programs is that most of the curriculum will be taught solely by the main instructor, who is less likely to be a specialist in specific fields such as yoga philosophy or anatomy. For this point, it all comes down to whether you prefer a course that runs like a well-oiled machine, or the individual guidance available in smaller groups.

4. Find the right location for your preferences.

In a country like India, culture helps create an environment conducive to training. Indian culture makes it easier to eat healthy, as well as abstain from bad habits such as drinking, smoking, and partying. Depending on the location, you may not have access to reliable WiFi which limits distractions. In a country like Thailand, you'll be encouraged to enjoy the sun and laid-back lifestyle of the locals. In the end, it's up to you to choose how deep you'd like to dive into your studies, how much "fun" you'd like to have, and how strict you'd like the program to be. There will always, of course, be students who can stay focused in a party-oriented atmosphere, and those who find a way to sneak out of an ashram at night!



5

MY TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOGA TEACHER TRAININGS

TRAIN WITH VISHVAJL
RISHIKESH, INDIA
www.akhandayoga.com

TRAIN WITH GEORGE
SOUTH EAST ASIA
www.sajeevayoga.com

TRAIN WITH KOSTA
KOH SAMUI, THAILAND
www.vikasayoga.com

TRAIN WITH ALICIA
KOH SAMUI, THAILAND
www.yogaliciacasillas.com

TRAIN WITH MIKE
INDIA OR GERMANY
www.gaiatreeschool.org



*Quiet the mind
and the soul
will speak.*

MEDITATION

Quiet your mind and invite awareness, focus,
and peace into your life.

ABOUT VIPASSANA & WHERE TO TRY IT

VIPASSANA MEDITATION

Vipassana, which means “to see things as they really are,” is one of India’s most ancient meditation techniques. It was rediscovered and taught to the masses by Gautama Buddha more than 2500 years ago. It allows us to examine the true inner workings of our bodies and minds, to identify and work through our issues, and discover our untapped potential. There are a few different options available to those who wish to learn Vipassana meditation.

1. S.N. Goenka’s Vipassana Meditation program www.dhamma.org

The Dhamma Organization offers donation-based 10-day silent meditation programs at residential centers all over the world. Participants learn the basics of the Vipassana method, and practice enough to sufficiently experience the benefits. All programs involve 10 days of silence, with 10 full hours of meditation per day.

Pros of this program:

10 days of silent meditation practice is a good amount of time for practitioners who want a fundamental understanding of what Vipassana is all about. I’ve never met anyone who finished this course and regretted it. In my opinion, it’s the best way to learn the Vipassana technique.

Cons:

Many people have trouble completing the entire program. It’s tough to meditate, or even just sit, for a full 10 hours a day, and doing so in silence can be challenging. Accommodation at Dhamma centers can also be quite basic, making an uncomfortable experience for practitioners who are used to amenities. You must have 10 consecutive days to invest in this program in order to sign up. Despite this considerable list of cons, I still recommend S.N. Goenka’s Vipassana Meditation program above all others!

Bonus tip:

I recommend Center Kuantan in Malaysia. You can book a private room with an en-suite bathroom if desired. The accommodation is surrounded by palm trees, and offers private meditation spaces for advanced practitioners. Staying there was like heaven on earth for me!

2. Buddhist monasteries

Monasteries can be similar to Vipassana retreat centers in some ways, and wildly different in others. The techniques taught are, naturally, more closely aligned with religious teachings, as meditation is taught in accordance with the original techniques passed on by the Buddha.

Pros of Buddhist monastery programs:

Many monasteries offer shorter and longer courses than the 10-day option offered by Vipassana centers, such as 3-day, 7-day, and extended retreats. The schedules are often more flexible as well, with some courses offering an hour-long yoga class in the morning or walking meditation as part of the practice, for example. This tends to work better for people who would rather not sit for 10 hours a day.

Cons:

These courses don’t allow practitioners to go as deep as Goenka’s program. They’re also not ideal for practitioners who prefer a non-religious approach to meditation.

3. Non-residential meditation courses

All over the world, you can find Vipassana classes or week-long courses taught by private teachers, organizations, meditation centers, or religious centers. Personally, I prefer the Western approach, which involves teaching meditation step by step over weeks. One or two sessions can be enough for those looking to understand the basics of Vipassana.

I teach Vipassana both online and in person. My teachings are influenced by Buddhist monks in Nepal and Thailand, who I was fortunate enough to study with.



*You'll never change your life
until you change something
you do daily. The secret of
your success is found in your
daily routine.*

HEALTHY & HAPPY RITUALS

Find and create magic in your daily routine.

DEVELOPING A HEALTHY ROUTINE

TIPS FOR ADDING JOY TO YOUR DAY

As the saying goes, people overestimate what they can do in a day, and underestimate what they can do in a lifetime. When we want to make big changes in our lives, less is more in the beginning. A central aspect of my anti-stress programs is understanding that personal daily practice is key to changing habits. I encourage you to do your daily practice for 10 minutes a day, for 30 days in a row, in order to cement new healthy habits into your life.

Why are daily habits so important?

Research shows that if you do something for 28 days in a row, it becomes a habit. I encourage my students to continue their daily self-practice, (including yoga, meditation, pranayama, or a mix of all three,) for 30 days in a row to guarantee satisfying results. At that point, it will be easier to continue your habit than to break it. Limit your daily self-practice to 10 minutes during these first 30 days, so you'll have no excuse to skip a day. Everybody has 10 minutes of time to invest in their own happiness. After 30 days it's okay to miss a day of practice here and there, and you can lengthen your practice sessions as desired. I discourage you from starting with 20 or 30 minutes in the beginning, as this can feel overwhelming and cause frustration.

When's the best time for a self-practice routine?

It's helpful to practice at the same time every day. I recommend doing your self-practice in the morning, right after you wake up. Wait to check your email and phone messages until after you've finished.

Some points to keep in mind:

- Do your self-practice on an empty stomach. The digestion process can hinder your potential.
- Try to approach your self-practice with an empty mind, right after you roll out of bed.

- If you skip your self-practice in the morning, make it up in the evening whenever possible.

Additional Tips to Boost Your Daily Routine

- Set an intention for your self-practice to maintain awareness of why you've created your routine. By adding an intention, your self-practice becomes a ritual with real meaning in your life. You'll stay motivated and happy to complete it each day.

- After completing your 10-minute self-practice, start each day with a glass of warm lemon water, which has amazing cleansing properties for the body. (You can switch to a divine cup of coffee afterwards!)

- Choose a specific time each day to practice gratitude. Think of a number of things you're grateful for and why. This will gear your brain toward a more positive mindset.

- Check in with your breath at several points each day, such as when you enter a room or after you finish a call. When you notice that your breath is shallow, consciously practice belly breathing to smooth it out.

- While falling asleep, practice belly breathing in bed. There's not much room for random thoughts if you put your full attention on your breath. This can be a great technique for people with insomnia or those who wake up at random times during the night. Quiet your wandering mind through awareness of your breath.

- Practice self-love by treating yourself to something nice at least once a day. Take a walk, chat with a friend, drink a cup of tea - just be sure to do the activity with awareness and intention. Stay in the moment and give yourself permission to enjoy it.

TED TALK RECOMMENDATIONS

SELECTED BY AMODINI

TED Talks are an excellent resource for learning new information and tips for living your best life. I've selected a few TED Talks for you that relate to releasing stress and developing happy habits.

Stroke of Insight

This TED Talk introduces information about how the left and right sides of the brain function, and why it's worthwhile to focus on activating the right side more often. It also explains how yoga, meditation, and other practices help us take greater control of our minds.

How to Make Stress Your Friend

This video provides an alternative perspective on our relationship with stress. The information presented can serve as a great starting point for your own research and exploration.

Hardwiring Happiness

Another fantastic TED Talk covering a new way to understand our minds. I also recommend the book, which shares the same title. I share these resources because I know that not everyone out there has the time or energy to devote to meditation or yoga on a regular basis. There are always other ways to invite more happiness and positive ways of thinking into your life.

Happiness is an inside job.

My stroke of Insight






How to make stress
your friend.



Hardwiring Happiness



HA.WA.II SEPT 2018 VOL.1.1: FEATURING: ABIGAIL

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR READING.
KEEP SMILING UNTIL NEXT TIME!
STAY IN TOUCH W AMODINI:   
BETTINA@AMODINI-COACHING.COM