

Katie Irwin

Katie Irwin started going to yoga 15 years ago, at a small studio in Northern California. Some people go to yoga looking for answers of some sort; Katie went looking for questions. Growing up in a Southern Baptist home in deep Georgia, answers were readily available. By the time her family moved west, and Katie began college in California, she was ready to expand her understanding of just about everything. She liked the new perspectives she heard at this yoga class; the edgy beliefs; the ancient language; the far-out doctrines. She liked how different it was, how uncomfortable it felt.

Over time, Katie's practice has evolved. While yoga was once her getaway, provoking new thoughts, now it is her solace, one that often confirms the beliefs she rooted within herself along the way. Katie works as an ICU nurse, and her shifts are filled with quick, demanding, often-nightmarish scenarios. Death is a very present part of her life. By the time she's off work, she needs something... other. Katie says,

“Yoga allows the time to have quietness in my heart, and in my mind. It's important to be able to go to class to check out of the other stress. Time where I'm allowed to be okay, where I'm not attached to everything going on at work.”

The meditative qualities of yoga are most important to Katie, but she points out that movement is key to that meditation. “I'm pretty integrated, with my body and my mind,” she says, “but it's always been hard for me to just sit quietly and meditate.” She says especially now, in her line of work, her mind runs, and it's hard to catch it. So yoga is something she does, “...to flush out the day, to ground myself, to use my body physically to slowwww down my mind.” Sometimes, she says, at the beginning of the class, she isn't able to connect; but she knows she'll be there by the end of class. She'll be a little farther away from the hospital; a little more slow with her thoughts; a little more like herself.