Self-Care During the Pandemic

COVID-19 caused many people to experience post-traumatic stress disorder. But a novel form of yoga provided an effective way to respond.

November 30, 2020 By Karen Taylor-Bass

We African Americans are stressed and predisposed to many illnesses. But yoga, an ancient practice that connects the mind, body, and soul, is a way for individuals to enhance their physical and mental well-being.

Yoga is an amazing tool for self-care because it's such a personal practice. It draws you inward, and self-care, of course, starts with you. Self-care asks you to truly tap into yourself and listen to your needs. In the practice of yoga, we are constantly inviting in that vulnerability and self-reflection. We're taking time on our mat and in meditation to convene with ourselves.

Breathing and meditation is the best healing. Sitting still for 30 seconds can reset the parasympathetic nervous system so it can heal.

The most challenging posture in yoga is Sukhasana, easy pose. This position is a simple cross-legged sitting asana (posture) that quiets the mind and allows one to scan their body. My brand and offering of yoga is called Soulful Yoga. Soulful yoga is a deeper connection of mind, body, and soul with purposeful yoga asanas, movement, music and affirmations from the diaspora (India, Africa, Caribbean) with a splash of western influence. As a yoga instructor, I meet people on the mat where they are. No judgment.

Courtesy of Karen Taylor-Bass/Sebastian Bass

Black people have experienced PTSD (trauma) from systemic racism, health disparity and the pandemic.

I suffer from anxiety. Yoga has encouraged me to release my fear, calm my body and stay hopeful through inhaling, exhaling and counting to 30 when I feel my triggers coming on. When I had my daughter at 40, I hemorrhaged. I had two blood transfusions and was postpartum for two years. Yoga saved me. I had to fight to come back to my loved ones.

In response to police brutality and extreme stress, we must incorporate wellness, daily meditation, a nutritious diet and exercise into our lives. The foods we eat can add to our anxiety and depression and affect our overall mental health.

I wanted to bring together a community of Black men and women to breathe, release, heal, and feel using yoga as a central focus. The world is in a state of mourning and hopefully, this offering can bring love, movement, dialogue, and good vibes.

People of color are suffering the most from the pandemic. Yoga connects the mind, body and soul. I have been offering my brand of soulful yoga at no cost to frontline workers, and at a reduced rate for others.

Courtesy of Karen Taylor-Bass/Sebastian Bass

My community is predisposed to everything, and the pandemic has further compromised our health and wellness. If I can provide one hour, or even a few minutes, of relaxation, via meditation, laughter and yoga to communities on the frontline via Zoom, Skype and Google Classroom, then that is what I will do.

Soulful yoga is dedicated to self-care and self-love. Learning to put ourselves first supports preservation. I like to call it a healing yoga party with music. Musical selections vary from jazz, reggae, rhythm and blues, gospel, blue-eyed soul, hip hop, popular music, and more.

My brand of yoga offers a deeper connection that taps into trauma, stress, pain, joy and love, with easy yoga movement and affirmations from the diaspora (India, Africa and the Caribbean) with a splash of Western influence.

To learn more about Karen Taylor-Bass, International Yoga Day and Soulful Wine Down Yoga Virtual Self-care Party, click here to visit her website.

Karen Taylor-Bass is a PR expert, speaker, author and yoga teacher. She has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Sirius XM, Network Journal and Dr. Oz.

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