

Trainer Spotlight - Ryan Morton

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Ryan has been practicing yoga for about 6 years, but within the last 3 years, yoga has become a consistent daily routine. Ryan is still young in “yogi” years and has a lot to learn, but he is very much looking forward to what’s ahead. 15 years ago, Ryan was living in New Orleans playing jazz, with not a clue in the world about yoga. If someone were to ask him about yoga he would have said, “what is that?” Today, Ryan is a proud certified yoga instructor teaching at Corepower Yoga in Chicago. I took my first ever yoga class with Ryan, and here is what I learned:

When did you start working in the field?

Ryan began his yoga instructing career, officially, in Spring of 2014. It was in this year that Ryan became a certified yoga instructor. However, he began his career at Corepower Yoga in March of 2016. He actually used to be a cleaner for Corepower Yoga when a different employee mentioned the idea of teaching to Ryan. Ever since then, the stars aligned. He received a financial scholarship and then later received his official teaching certificate from Corepower Yoga.

Before starting his career at Corepower, Ryan would teach free yoga class at the Hyde Park Yoga Center. However, these were typically one-on-one sessions and he wasn’t introduced to larger classes until he started working at Corepower.

What made you decide to pursue a career in yoga?

Ryan was inspired to start a career in yoga because he saw the impact that it had on his life, and he wanted others around him to get the same impact. He figured that he could learn the practice and then teach it to his family and friends to help them with what they are going through in their own lives. More specifically, Ryan wanted to teach his younger cousins about yoga so that they could grow into strong, productive human beings.

What is your favorite aspect of your career?

Ryan’s favorite part of his career is being able to meet new people all the time. He thrives off of creating new relationships with others and hearing their stories and what brought them to his yoga classes. Some of his clients might want to lose weight or just experience yoga for the first time. Whatever it is, he enjoys acting as their guide and getting them to where they aspire to be. When I took a yoga class with Ryan, he said he was so excited to hear that I had never taken a yoga class before, because it meant that he could teach me his practices and introduce me to the world of yoga.

What is the most challenging part of your career?

Ryan believes that the most challenging part of his yoga career is finding time for rest. Even though he may sometimes only teach 4 classes a week, he is constantly studying, reading, watching documentaries, or working in private classes. Therefore, he is always trying to better his practice and way of instructing. He explained that there is so much knowledge to gain just from one version of yoga, and he is constantly trying to take in as much knowledge as possible.

In addition, Ryan explained that getting certified at Corepower Yoga is only an 8-week process. Therefore, you take in so much information in just a short amount of time, that it just goes to show how busy his career truly is. However, once he started teaching at Corepower, he knew that it was the place he wanted to be.

Who/what was your biggest influence when you were starting on your path?

Ryan explained to me that his biggest influence has always been himself. Ryan never had anyone to look up to, and so he was always making decisions he thought were going to better himself. Ryan also told me that when he first started taking yoga classes, he felt so out of place. He seemed to be the only male in the classes and constantly felt awkward; however, he kept going because he was genuinely enjoying himself. No one was telling him to keep pursuing yoga at the time, it was just himself wanting to be healthy and have a better life.

What advice would you give someone just starting out in your field?

The piece of advice Ryan would give to emerging yoga professionals is to use joy and passion as your motivation. He states that it's all about the love and why you got into yoga in the first place. He admits that it might sound cliché, but that it is truly what it comes down to. Some people are too focused on the money, and how the yoga industry is rapidly growing, but that aspect doesn't occupy much matter. Instead, it is about how much you love it and enjoy seeing people change their lives.

What sets you apart from other fitness professionals?

Ryan believes that he stands out from the rest because he isn't caught up in physical appearance or what people are "supposed" to look like. He has built his practice around looking at the inner part of a person and what brought them to practice yoga. He realizes that everyone is different and that yoga teaches each individual person to be a higher self or a better person. The higher self that yoga gave him, isn't supposed to be worried about what people look like or what they can and can't do, it's supposed to get others to realize who they truly are.