

# What's Your Story, James Tennant?

written by CPH Insurance | July 20, 2016

James Tennant this week's trainer spotlight is a yoga professional based in Chicago that focuses on more than just the poses of Yoga, he enjoys the spiritual meditation side that allows people to connect with their being, while enhancing their overall health.

Enjoy his story below:

## **When did you begin practicing yoga, and what certifications do you hold?**

My first yoga class was in 1996 with Jerrilee Lucas of Esoteric Yoga. To this day, I consider her my spiritual mentor and one of my biggest influences. I then enrolled in my first 200-hour teacher training with Ana Forrest and shortly thereafter moved to Kiev, Ukraine to study with Andrey Lappa where I received certification in Universal Yoga. I also spent an extensive amount of time training with Dharma Mittra while living in New York for a year. I then moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico to pursue my studies in *ayurveda* (the ancient, East Indian "science of life") at The Ayurvedic Institute with Dr. Vasant Lad.

## **What made you decide to open your own studio?**

My current business partner, Jim Bennitt, encouraged me to open a place with him once I moved back from Albuquerque in 2008. We both felt Chicago needed a studio where people could expect to learn yoga's subtle practices, such as breath work and meditation, incorporated into every *asana* (physical posture) class. There seemed to be such a heavy influence on the physical poses with very little exploration of meditation and philosophy. We wanted to bring more of these components into daily classes, not just dedicated workshops.

## **What sets your studio apart from other studios?**

In every class at Tejas Yoga, students experience some form of breath work and time for sitting in stillness in addition to the physical postures. Our classes are categorized not by "levels" but by the tone or essence of the class. We believe you don't have to practice more complex poses to be "advanced" in yoga. We cultivate an environment where the practitioner is challenged based on how they are feeling on that particular day. We also weave ayurvedic subject matter into our classes for seasonal appropriateness and offer workshops and lectures on a wide range of yoga-related subjects.

## **Who/what was the biggest influence when you were starting on this path?**

At the time yoga came into my life through Jerrilee, I was doing a lot of soul searching. I had a lot of fear, anxiety and self-doubt to resolve and I found the system of yoga supported this process

immensely.

**What is the most rewarding aspect of owning your own studio and teaching other yogis?**

Being part of a person's journey as he or she begins to unveil all the potential that lies within is the most rewarding gift.

**What are your goals for your studio in 2015?**

Two years ago, we moved into a larger space so we now have two studios in which to offer a wide range of classes and events. We will continue to expand our offerings to accommodate the needs of our growing community. We are launching our *Tejas in the Workplace*(<http://tejasyogachicago.com/workplace-yoga-offerings/>) program in August 2015 to focus on local businesses wanting to offer classes at their offices.

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