



Kiss this Job

A photographer gets people to pose for him. A yoga instructor gets people to pose for themselves.

~T. Guillemets

by Lara Azzarito Ward

Whether a layoff is in the future or the reality of finding new employment looms, in today's uncertain economy many are taking a moment to review career options. This can be a good time to redefine a dream job. For some, sharing wellness has become a golden opportunity, enabling them to find work that is meaningful, encouraging personal growth while also being of service to others. In times like these, many find yoga teaching a fulfilling career choice. "Kiss my asana" is what they can dream of telling their soon-to-be-former boss while following their heart and health to become a yoga teacher.

Yoga teacher trainings and requirements vary considerably. There are no state or federal licensure requirements, so teachers do not need to be certified or registered, though that can make it easier to find employment. Inquiring at a favorite yoga center or asking a yoga teacher about options can help provide insight about courses. In the United States, programs that meet certain standards are registered by the Yoga Alliance, a nationally recognized

organization and registry system for yoga teachers and schools. The Alliance recommends a minimum of 200 hours of training for a teaching certificate. Seeking out Yoga Alliance certified programs ensures certificates will be of value when earned and students will have spent a specified number of hours studying asana, teaching technique, anatomy, and philosophy. Upon completion of a Yoga Alliance registered teacher-training program, teachers may use the acronym RYT (Registered Yoga Teacher) after their name.

There are many different types of yoga and education. Trainings range from one weekend to month-long residencies to programs lasting a couple of years. Most schools require a minimum of one year's yoga practice before training, though some accept students with no prior experience. A 200-hour training typically costs \$2200-4500. Some foundations and schools offer scholarships for these programs.

Regardless of prior job experience, becoming a yoga teacher is an option for people with varying personal and professional needs. Some use the prac-

tice to supplement income from other jobs. Others choose yoga as a fulltime career. Penny Cidri, former executive assistant to President/COO of a corporation, felt anchored to a desk, worn down by stress. "When I realized one day I didn't want to be there anymore I took time to search within and discovered I loved movement and exercise," said Cidri. Within two years she earned certifications in personal training and yoga teaching and now works in the Danbury area. For others, it's the challenge of balancing a full time job with raising a family that steers them in a new direction. Karin Terebessy was a social worker and mother who began to feel emotionally depleted by work, leaving little energy left for her self and family. She noticed when taking yoga classes she felt uplifted and radiant, so after several years as a student she became certified to teach. "I realized I was still dedicated to helping people heal and change their lives for the better," she said. Karin now teaches yoga in Southbury and is able to create a flexible schedule around her family's needs. Allowing the space for one door to open when another closes takes patience, faith and grace. Teaching yoga can be a fulfilling career for those who want to step into such a change.

Lara Azzarito Ward, founder and director of Lotus Gardens, LLC in Sherman, CT, is a certified 500 hour yoga instructor. Lotus Gardens was the first Yoga Alliance (www.yogaalliance.com) approved teacher training in Connecticut and has certified more than 150 instructors who now teach throughout the world. Lara resides in Sherman, CT with her husband, Will, and her two dogs. See ad page 23.