

PRESS RELEASE

Is yoga really more than stretching? *Yoga Off the Mat* book launch

You may be able to tie yourself in knots, but does that really count as yoga? Perhaps not, at least according to according to Sydney-based author and yoga school director, Katie Manitsas.

In her latest book, *Yoga Off the Mat* (published by Live Yoga Life, February 26), Manitsas conveys to the curious and the converted how to ensure their yoga practice is far more than simply stretching. The work is a follow up to her earlier book *Spiritual Survival and the City* (published by Hardie Grant as Katie Spiers).

Now that yoga has been embraced as a mainstream activity in Australia, Manitsas says it's time practitioners realised the ancient practice is about far more than simply staying fit: "Where yogic philosophy becomes really useful, and much more difficult to apply, is in everyday life – off the mat. Our everyday situations give us plenty of chances to apply this broader understanding of yoga; it can impact everything from how we relate to the planet through to our own self esteem," she says.

As she explores how the full teachings of yoga, including its ethical and philosophical backgrounds, can help us Manitsas explains how yoga has much to offer the mind as a meditative art. It also helps us see ourselves in a more positive light: "We may have grown up in a culture that tells us we can be whatever we want to be and a credit card can buy us anything we need, but this has left us embracing the message that who we are, how we see ourselves and how others see us is based on what we have and what we look like," says Manitsas.

"Yoga teaches us that true self-confidence comes from within and that once we are grounded in knowing who we really are; a confidence will arise that is unshakable, regardless of our bank balance," she says.

For those already practicing yoga 'Yoga Off the Mat' provides a valuable resource for learning more, particularly in the context of social ethics and 'spiritual activation'. Newcomers to the practice will find Manitsas' easy to read style offers a good starting point to the full yoga practice.

Author Katie Manitsas (formerly Spiers) is Sydney-based Samadhi Yoga Studio Director and Certified Advanced Jivamukti Yoga teacher.

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