

LIVING Yoga workshop comes to Asheville

By Polly McDaniel

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ASHEVILLE — Hot yoga, Hatha yoga, fusion yoga. Asheville's expansive yoga scene is nothing, if not multifaceted.

There are many reasons to embrace the practice — flexibility and fitness among them. But yoga master Cathy Woods, of Robbinsville, works to get practitioners to embrace its deeper spiritual aspects by combining yoga with meditation.

Woods comes to Asheville Sept. 28 for a yoga workshop at Namaste Yoga Sanctuary, downtown.

"I tend to have my teachers focus on personal development of yoga, instead of just fitness yoga," said Derek Rinaldo, owner of Namaste. "I focus on how do we develop a healthy lifestyle. And we can do that through yoga."

That includes meditation and deeper spiritual alignment combined with yoga, he said.

"That's not to diminish other studios that don't do that all," Rinaldo said. "That's just the focus here."

Woods answered some questions about her approach to yoga, in her practice and her teaching.

Question: Let's talk about your view of yoga. How is it twined with spiritual practice? How is that different from taking a "yoga as exercise" class?

Answer: A lot of instructors are teaching the ABCs of yoga, focusing on the physical essence of yoga but not shifting to the spiritual essence of it.

Yoga is a practice of self-realization, purification ... not just on the yoga mat but throughout one's whole life.

Q: How do you integrate meditation with the yoga

YOGA WORKSHOP

What: "An Abundance Workshop: The Yoga of Abundance" by Cathy Woods. **Whn:** 3-6 p.m. Sept. 28, **Where:** Namaste Yoga Sanctuary, 57 Broadway St. **How much:** \$35.

To sign up: 253-6985 **For more information:**

www.namasteyogasanctuary.com or www.cathywoodsyo.com. Woods also offers a free DVD about her teachings through her Web site.

A: We practice meditative awareness into the postures. It's a great opportunity to observe not just the body but also the mind.

Q: When you teach "abundance," what does that mean?

A: When we learn to co-create with our own energy and the universal energies (through yoga/meditation), we can help direct the intentions for the life that we want.

Q: Your site says you teach "yoga of the heart." What does mean?

A: I choose not to label the style of yoga that I teach.

What I'm seeing is so much confusion in people who want to get into yoga in terms of what style to take, what kind is better than the other, what kind will bring you to spiritual enlightenment quicker.

The Yoga Alliance has even quit registering types or brands of yoga.

Because there are so many brands or types of yoga, it has become so confusing to people.

Yoga means unity. Yoga is about self-realization. My teachings come from my own heart from my own, self-realizations and god



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Robbinsville yoga teacher Cathy Woods has been practicing yoga since 1991. She travels around the country teaching at yoga centers, destination spas and corporate meetings.