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Family Karma: My Soul's Dharma. ~ Katherine Austin



Yoga has been a way of life for me for a long time.

My studio in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan is full of students seeking what we offer—a path to the divine, an elevated stint here on earth. But that doesn't mean everyone in my family, or my life, sees the beauty in yoga. Sometimes that can create an opportunity—challenging or growth-filled—in my relationships.

Truly living my yoga has created shifts in all my relationships. Just one family member doing yoga, meditating and living by **spiritual awakening can shift the energy of the entire family**. I saw it happen in my own recently. My 84-year-old father has always been a religious man, but he is certainly not a student of yoga. Ironically, the faith I've built in spirit through my yoga devotion mirrors the one Dad lives every day—and it's brought us closer. So much so that Dad was open to me bringing some healing practices into his recent heart operation journey. After 40 years serving as an executive in Philadelphia, living a high-stress, high-power life, Dad was diagnosed by a heart surgeon with a failing aortic valve that needed

replacing; he also required bypass surgery. I was thrilled when I learned that Dad's surgeon in Florida, where he now lives, uses crystals for healing the heart in addition to medical care.



The heart chakra is the most powerful energy center in the body; we learn to beat, to establish the rhythm of our lives, here at the center. Interestingly, **the heart forms first in utero before the brain**. Dad doesn't know much about yoga, but he's been my biggest advisor in running my yoga business. Dad's serious heart condition came on quickly. Three dizzy spells in ten days, nausea and a couple of fainting near-misses led him to realize something was wrong. The doctor was amazed that Dad had three chances, three wake-up calls, without slipping into the next world. But Dad wasn't convinced that he should undertake such a complicated and risky surgery at his advanced age. **He spent two weeks praying and pondering the pros and cons and ultimately decided to take a chance.**

I believe God was sending Dad messages to have this surgery, that it wasn't yet his time to go.

Many years ago, yoga ignited my spiritual awakening journey. In all my life, I've never been as spiritual as I am now and it began when I stepped onto a yoga mat—not in church as my dad might have hoped. Twenty years ago, had my father undergone such a precarious situation with his health, we wouldn't have been able to connect in this way. Church didn't work for me and I had lost my connection to a higher power. I just wasn't there yet. That's when I saw yoga as mere exercise. I hadn't experienced it yet as a transformative, healing spiritual practice.

If you look back on your life, you'll see that everything that happens sets you up for what's coming next. **Everything is in divine order.**

Before Dad's surgery, I brought him a rose quartz to help his heart recover. I played healing chants by his bedside when he was still unconscious. His doctor was excited to see me and welcomed this alternative approach to guiding Dad on his healing path.



Any complications Dad faced cleared quickly. I'm not afraid to say I called in the angels for help. I did Reiki over dad's heart center when he was in the ICU. All of this happened as I was planning a major shift in my own business.

Over a long and uninterrupted period of time, the path of this practice transforms you enough to see what's needed in the world. I became aware at a soul level how yoga can affect us all.

I've worked with adults for 16 years and have witnessed radical transformation of people's lives. As they grew emotionally, physically and spiritually, my students brought their children to me for help navigating through the stresses of life. A year ago, I was in Los Angeles at Golden Bridge Yoga, which is run by Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa, when **I received divine "orders" that I needed to take yoga to the beginnings of life.** I was speaking with a teacher after class when her eyes penetrated mine. "You need to do this," she said, almost as if it wasn't her speaking. "We need you to start bringing in new light beings and more conscious families." She was talking

about offering prenatal yoga and family yoga at my studio back in Michigan. It was a full moon night. I had the strangest sensation when she spoke, one that brings chills from head to toe when I remember it. I didn't even question it. **I just knew it was my mission.**

After that meaningful moment, I went to dinner with a friend and the ideas poured in. I couldn't write them down fast enough – prenatal yoga, family yoga center, parent-child yoga, do this, do that. What a gift to take yoga back to the root, to help people aim for conscious conception—and continue all the way through at every life stage—experience the benefits of living yoga. I trust that this is my calling—I've never been about growing my studio bigger or becoming a huge yoga personality. **It's about serving in the best way I can.** Rather than “fix” tweens and teens struggling with stress and anxiety, why not eliminate it altogether—or equip them as newborns, toddlers and small children to handle stresses as they arise? Dysfunctional relationships within families make family members “sick” in a slew of ways.

How refreshing it might be to consciously create a mindful foundation underneath a family at the start with fewer karmas to resolve down the road.

We're all doing the best we can with the cards we've been dealt. Yoga helps clear old habits and patterns that aren't working. **The scriptures say that a person who meditates can heal seven generations before and seven generations yet to come.**

The other night, a woman left my class crying; she was so broken open with love. So many people never get to feel that, the real feeling of love. It's not boyfriend love, not husband love, not possessive love. And, it is within reach.

Thankfully, Dad is doing really well. He's home from the hospital and almost back to his old self—but even better than that. His repaired heart is literally—and metaphorically—better able to receive the love that's all around him. The yoga mat isn't the only place we can experience the union of body, mind and spirit. In fact, it's only the beginning. It's what can get us started on a spiritual path and leads us down the road of karmic living. I feel closer to my father today than at any other point in my life. **Our hearts are connected.** And I know it's not a coincidence.

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