

YOGATM MAGAZINE

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My journey from **INJURY** **TO YOGIC BLISS**

Words: Omileye Achikeobi

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I remember enrolling and completing a kid's yoga course. I was excited. I had just finished a series of yoga paintings driven by a passion to see more diversity in yoga images and images of children of colour being peaceful and doing yoga. At last I would be able to teach the kids the fun yoga poses from my paintings. Then suddenly, I hurt my hip, doing of all things *Qi Gong*. I could barely move my left leg or rotate my body to the right or left. All my well thought out plans just fell apart right in front of me. What was I to do? One night in a moment of frustration, I remember staring at my paintings and having a sudden 'aha' moment. Even though there was movement in the paintings, the main character was travelling in her mind through breath and imagination. Her yoga poses were internal ones that took her on a magical journey of self-discovery.

It was after that moment that I began to connect with yoga as an internal practice, inner *asana*. I sunk deeper into my meditative practice and art as a yoga inner experience of oneness. The more I let go of resistance of my injury was the more my new perspective opened doors.

Soon after I was asked to teach children in the Asheville City School district, how to use my therapeutic mindful art process to overcome their issues and tap into their joy. I was really excited to have the opportunity to teach kids how to tap into the true power of yoga – where breath and imagination takes us to total promised union of yoga. To date, I have taught hundreds of school kids how to tap into their magic, without having to do lots of yoga poses. Together we use breath, art and imagination. It's cool and I am now so grateful for my hip injury.

Omileye Achikeobi is the author of *My Heart Flies Open*, published on September 7, 2021 by North Atlantic Books and Penguin Random House.

My Heart Flies Open is the recipient of a Kirkus Starred review, "Achikeobi-Lewis' lyrical prose and visual art combine to offer a beautiful experience of mindfulness and movement perfect for meaningful time between children and caregivers that will feed the spirits of both."