

CURRENTS - July 2007

Teacher Spotlight

The July Teacher Spotlight shines on Ross Rayburn of Los Angeles, California. Ross started practicing yoga in 1997 following a knee injury. A friend suggested yoga to rehabilitate the knee but the universe had bigger plans for him. Ross' life changed to one of greater balance as he discovered great respect for this method of manifesting freedom into day-to-day life. Ross went to a John Friend workshop in the summer of 1999 at the urging of one of his favorite teachers, Sue Elkind. Like so many, Ross was smitten from the first class, resonating not only with the physical and intellectual content of the class, but with the way the philosophy just made sense. It seemed so clear and inviting to practice yoga, not as an escape, but rather as a way to illuminate and glorify what's already present. Ross studied with John intensely for the next few years and was certified to teach Anusara Yoga® in 003. Since then he's owned his own studio and, along with his fellow Angelino Anusara Yoga teachers, has helped build one of the strongest kulas in the country. He now travels full-time teaching workshops and trainings.

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studentship to keep us going?"*

His dedication to the Anusara Yoga method has made him one of the most popular new draws around the country and recently, internationally. One of the greatest experiences of Ross' 36 years was being invited to co-teach a workshop with John Friend in New York City in May. Ross' philosophy is that our hearts and our world are places of overflowing abundance. Our work as yogis is to remember that daily, for our own happiness and for the joy so deeply needed by those around us. Ross wishes that we all know this abundance and never hold back the resplendent light of our heart. Ross has written on the fire element for this month's **Currents**.

"Get fired up,' 'Walk through the fire,' 'Out of the frying pan, into the fire' - how many different ways can we refer to this element? How many times along our path as students have we had to call upon the fire of studentship to keep us going? And how many of us have felt the heat from the first time you had to teach a pose in front of John Friend at a teacher training? Serious fire! The first time I heard John talk about the elements, he said that all of the elements have both expansive and contracting qualities. I was confused since my impression of "fire" was mostly based on things like warmth, light, clearing, even transformational aspects of fire, which seem so expansive. The solution to my confusion was present all along. The fact that something didn't make sense right away, that there was mental friction - there was the fire. The fire was in the focusing, the intensity of contemplation. Even though fire can't be separated from what it yields, light, heat, or transformation, the element itself is compressive.

But for me, fire serves a very real purpose. Now when life gets fiery and intense, I'm better at seeing those intensities as opportunities... opportunities with the potential to yield something higher, to illumine a life even brighter. For this I'm extremely grateful."