



TEACH AN AWESOME CLASS

Rosalie e'Silva offers some insight and tips on how to create a great yoga class every time

Do you know that euphoric feeling you get at the end of a great yoga class? Empowered, you float out of the studio, ready to take on the world. It's an amazing state of being and one of the true gifts of yoga. But have you wondered what elevated that particular class to this high vibrational, super state of awesome-ness? As a yoga teacher, wouldn't you love to inject every class with that special, magic ingredient?

I've come to realise that it's a combination of a few things that elevates a class from 'good' to 'great'. These are my personal tried and tested favourites for creating a truly exceptional class.

1. Invite a sense of lightness and fun

Every student that walks into your class arrives with his or her own luggage. They've been carrying around a suitcase full of worries and storylines - whether it's about work, a relationship, health, or something else.

I encourage my students to leave their luggage at the door and have a bit of fun.

That means not taking anything too seriously. To flow, sweat, move with the breath, and maybe make some shapes they haven't made before. But to keep it light, to approach everything they do with a sense of play and curiosity.

By doing this, you're creating a mood that inspires laughter and

brings everyone together. Laughter completely changes the energy of the room - so seize any opportunity to laugh, whether it's at yourself or at something someone says!

I've found approaching everything in this light-hearted and easy-going way also produces some really surprising results.

When everyone knows they're not striving for perfection, they're willing to try things they might not otherwise attempt. They stop focusing on achieving a certain result and just have a play. Chances are they'll surprise themselves and sometimes even fall into a state of flow. An incredible state where things just unfold effortlessly and time ceases to exist.

2. Make it challenging, but achievable

As a teacher, I love taking students to their edges, helping them do things they once thought was impossible. Coming into the full expression of a pose for the first time is an amazing feeling - and helping a student get there is incredibly rewarding.

But it's important to make sure you're teaching at the right level for the students in your class (and giving lots of options). Challenge your students, show them ways to push themselves further, but make sure what you're inviting them to do is within their reach.

This will help make sure your students leave your class feeling accomplished by what they can do, rather than deflated by what they can't do.

3. Be relaxed and present when teaching

I still remember teaching my first big class. I was nervous and kept 'rehearsing' my sequence in my head. I felt that I had to stick to it precisely or everything would fall apart! I was holding on tight, gripping to my 'script' and everything I was going to say and do.

But with every class I've taught since, that grip has loosened more and more.

I've discovered that the secret is to breathe, to relax, and to feel completely present. Try to clear your mind and meditate for at least a few minutes before your class starts. I also have a little ritual I do before a class, which includes connecting to a higher source. Remember all you have to do to get some help 'from above' is to ask for it! All these things help you to teach in the moment. They help you tune into and feel the energy of the room and adapt your class accordingly.

I know it's easier said than done, but try it... relax. Let go of the gripping. Let go of the fear. Let things flow. Be yourself. Breathe. Be fully present. And just enjoy sharing your love of yoga.

4. Connect with each and every student

Everyone who walks into your class has made an effort to get there - perhaps they've had to sort out childcare, rush after work or make another sort of arrangement to devote those 60-90 minutes to be in your class.

Make them feel welcomed as soon as they walk into the room - either by having a little chat, visually acknowledging them with a smile, or simply by placing your hand on their shoulder. This is even more important if someone is new to your class.

Acknowledge the effort they have made to be there and the contribution they are making to the collective energy of the group.

Continue this throughout the class - walk around and connect with your students either through eye contact, a subtle touch or by calling out someone's name. We all know how motivating it is to be singled out and acknowledged for doing something well (or at least for trying!).

Make every student feel special.

5. End on a high note

I have a ritual that I do at the end of every class - it brings us to the end of a journey that we've all taken together. It's something that just evolved very naturally and all my regular students know it well.



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If you don't already have a ritual, think about ways of closing your class on a high note. Here are just a few ideas:

- With their hands placed over their heart space, ask everyone to think about all the things they're grateful for and just bask in the feeling of gratitude for a few moments.
- Ask your students to let go of all the stuff that no longer serves them and leave it behind on their yoga mats.
- Instruct your students to fill themselves up with all the goodness of their practice and offer it up to someone they love.

However you choose to close your class, make sure it brings the whole group back together as one. And then send everyone on their way feeling lighter and happier than when they first walked in. ☺

*Rosalie e'Silva is a Strala guide and also leads Vinyasa Flow and Yoga Nidra classes on the Channel Island of Jersey (RosalieYoga.com)
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