

Spotlight Interview – Dori Beals



Background Information

Dori was previously a Licensed Professional Counselor but retired from this career about a year ago. She is now solely pursuing her career as a facilitator of Yoga and the Healing Movement Arts, in Portland, OR.

When did you start working in this field?

Dori has been teaching yoga since 2000.

Why did you start working in this field?

Dori began working as a yoga instructor because she had come to love it. Prior to getting trained, Dori practiced yoga religiously for about 10 years. She was also working as a Therapist, specializing in healing movement arts. Dori designed a Sacred Dance class at Linfield College in Portland, OR.

The Nursing students enrolled in this course were overwhelmed, stressed and wanted a class that let them unwind after a long day. As her boss was working on scheduling for the following term, he expressed how nice it would be to have a Yoga Instructor around. That's when Dori stepped in and offered to take the job. She has been teaching yoga ever since.

What is the biggest challenge for you as a fitness professional?

Dori believes that the most challenging part about her Yoga career is maintaining consistent attendance among her classes. She explained that she does have a few “die-hard” students who never miss a class; but that she also has a lot of students who come and go based on their busy schedules.

Another challenging aspect is making sure that students don’t test their limits and try crazy positions or techniques. Preventing injuries is a challenging part about any career in fitness, and something Dori finds to be difficult at times.

What is your biggest accomplishment in the fitness industry?

Dori’s biggest accomplishment is teaching students how to do a head stand. She explained that it is difficult to teach this position/technique. However, Dori was taught so well by her mentors that she is qualified in teaching this.

Dori said that learning to do a head stand without the help of the wall, can take over 6 weeks to master. You have to take it one step at a time and it is a very gradual process. However, it requires you to build abdominal strength and to use this strength to execute a proper headstand.

What advice would you give to people thinking about a career in fitness?

The biggest piece of advice Dori would give to emerging Yoga Instructors is to take a lot of yoga classes with variety of different teachers. This is because you will find out what you like and what you don’t like along with what teaching styles you adapt to. By taking numerous classes, you will be able to build your practice based on the experiences you’ve had.

Who was your biggest influence when you were starting your career in fitness?

Dori’s biggest influence when starting her career was Diane Wilson. Diane and Dori studied together for 10 years, and Diane actually opened the first yoga studio ever in Portland in 1983. Dori explained that Diane was the best of the best in Portland, and learned everything she knows from her.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

The most rewarding aspect of Dori’s career is when her students feel really good about themselves and their accomplishments. Whenever someone does something for the first time and their face lights up with excitement and pure joy, Dori feels as though she’s done her job.

In addition, the most rewarding aspect is seeing students feel good about their body. There is constantly so much negative attention coming in and people are so down about their image, that seeing students realize how strong and capable their body is, is very rewarding.

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