

Bobbi Ewing, student, October, 2011

The pumpkins are out in all their orange glory. The leaves are losing their green and taking on new hues. The days are getting shorter. We are entering into the holiday season, the “most wonderful time of the year.”

When a significant relationship ends in your life, the traditions that became a part of your life are taken away, lost, changed. Instead of the holiday season being the most wonderful time of year, it is a very painful time of year, especially the first holiday season post ka-boom. For that season in my life, I gave myself permission to not participate in holiday traditions – no tree, no decorations, no presents, no cards, no cooking, no baking, no holiday music. I decided to stop celebrating Christmas until I had a reason to celebrate again.

This year I am going home for the holidays. For me, going “home for the holidays” is complicated. I often say that I have relatives but not a family. My family relationships are strained, weakened, non-existent. I do not feel emotionally supported by my family. Many of my immediate family members have passed. All of my grandparents, my father, and my brother have passed. There is no anchor that grounds my family or brings us together. And the family around which I became rooted in my previous life was broken, shattered...ka-boom. I’m going “home for the holidays,” but *am* I going HOME? Where is home?

I am going to a new home I’ve created for myself, embracing new traditions, creating new memories. I am going to COSTA RICA!! I am returning to the place where I said good-bye to 2010 and welcomed in 2011, to the beach community of Nosara, a place I call a yoga mecca. And...I have a reason to celebrate again: ME! I am gifting myself with a holiday yoga retreat, with peace and relaxation, fun and adventure, with travel, with the promise of a new family.

Part of what makes this place feel like “home” is that it is a familiar place, with familiar faces. Tamika, of [DevaTree](#), a familiar face and one of the nurturing yogis who took care of me last year, is organizing our holiday yoga retreat. She says that the gift actually begins the moment we start dreaming about it and preparing for the journey. So here I am, a few months before we are truly immersed in the holiday season, beginning my celebrations, beginning my holiday preparations, feeling the joy and excitement of what is to come.



In my joy and excitement I thought, “I’m going to write a blog about going home for the holidays.” This prompted me to reflect on the concept of HOME. What makes a place home?

Where is home, the destination to which one can go for the holidays? Here is one way to think about this: the earth is our home; our bodies are our home; our spirits, our heart centers, are our home. If our bodies, our hearts, and our spirits are our home, then isn't home with us everywhere and aren't we always at home, so long as we are present? Wouldn't this mean that we could take our home with us anywhere on this earth? And speaking of EARTH, isn't the earth our mother? Isn't she the giver and sustain-er of life? She holds us and supports us, she nurtures us, she grounds us. She is our anchor, she brings us together. We are her children. The bodies she gave us allow us to experience our lives, to breathe, to feel, to be present, to just BE.

We share this earth, our lives and our experiences, with many living beings, with other human souls. We all have the same earth mother, therefore we are one big giant family, right? Family units as we know them are microcosms, smaller community or relational networks, rather than a giant earthly family. A family is tied together by its bonds, relationships, intimate connections, and histories. So I'm taking my body to Costa Rica, a place I can call home because I'll be present in body and spirit, experiencing richly and deeply in my heart, but what about a family? Well...I will be sharing the holiday season with my yoga family.

A yoga community, or Kula, is a family. In Sanskrit the word "Kula" means family, clan, or community of the heart. A yogi is always at home in the community of the heart, welcomed, embraced, accepted. The yoga community offers love, support, and encouragement. Yogis give and receive. If you are practicing Urdhva Dhanurasana, or wheel pose, your community is there to support you in body and spirit. You will feel the hands of your family holding and supporting your body as your back bends, as your hearts lifts and opens, encouraging you in your efforts. If you are practicing your Pincha, your family will be there to hold or steady your hips, helping to stabilize your center. You will feel the OMs of your family vibrating, in unison, around you and in your heart.



Sharing a holiday retreat with a yoga Kula provides a special opportunity to create new relationships, to create new bonds, to start new histories. When members of the Kula show up to celebrate, to participate, to be present, each brings their most beautiful self. We give and receive many gifts. One of the most special and unique gifts is mirroring. In your yoga family's

eyes, you see what others see, you see the best and most beautiful parts of you, what you yourself may have trouble seeing because of a cloudy lens or a blockage in your heart. How will you see? Your yoga family will give you a clear and vibrant picture of your beauty freely and without condition.

A yoga retreat experience is a gift that keeps on giving. Seeing and claiming your beauty will be one of many lasting gifts you receive. The peace and relaxation of a yoga retreat will live on and shine brightly in our hearts. We leave with new friendships, a new family, new memories, new experiences filled with joy, fun, and adventure. Our hearts and minds are opened, expanded. Our joy and growth continues as many of its gifts are not revealed to us until after we return home, to the place we experience our day to day lives.

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To read the final part of this blog, please visit [My Inner Mystic](#)