

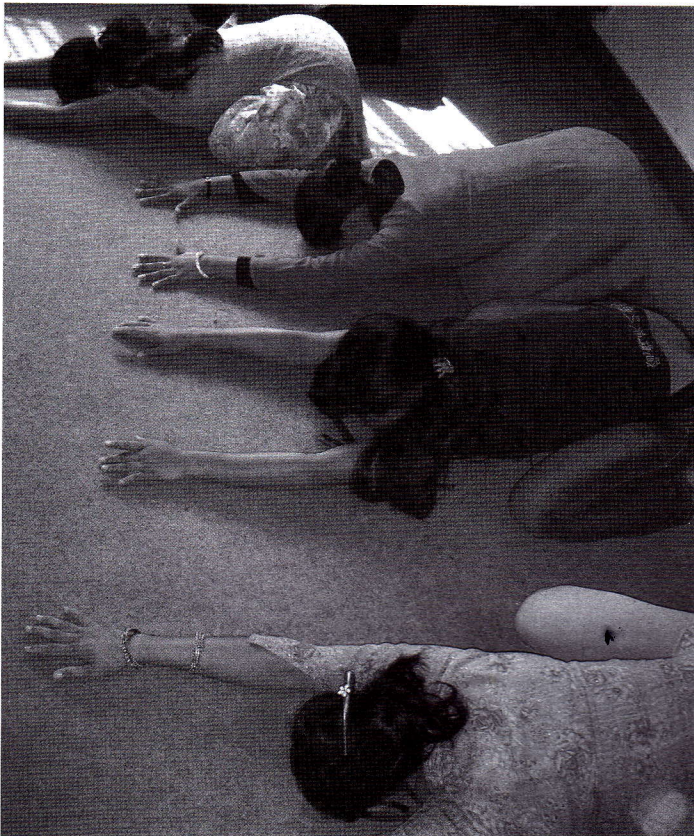
Karma Yoga

The Art2Healing Project

Joanna Pearce

While contemplating the *drishti* of contentment for this issue, I was inspired to share the experience of my friend and fellow yogini Lydia Tan. Lydia has been working with trafficked women (women sold into sexual slavery) in Asia since 2005 and has recently started an Australian registered non-profit organisation called 'The Art2Healing Project'.

She teaches yoga, meditation, women's menstrual health and art therapy workshops with trafficked survivors. It is truly humbling to consider what contentment means for these women and children. Lydia says "Since coming home to Australia in April 2009, I have felt so grateful to be supported by an amazing community of sisters and powerful women, and for all the blessings I have received. This includes the little things, like a beautiful home to live



YOGA IS PART OF THE HEALING FOR THESE TRAFFICKED WOMEN & GIRLS

in, the freedom to have a job that I love, the emotional support from my friends, being able to cook a nourishing meal for myself and the financial security to take workshops and classes that interest me. These are things that the trafficked women that I've worked with in Asia do not have the chance to ever experience. I live with a burning passion to love and to serve others less fortunate than myself. We can all share our gifts and many talents, meeting with folded hands to inspire and learn from each other."

The Art2Healing Project is about to start a one-year training project with Shakti-Samuha, a Nepali anti-trafficking non-government organisation. Shakti-Samuha is unique as 85% of the women who work there are survivors of trafficking, including its Director who was sold into sexual slavery at the age of five. Their commitment and dedication to the eradication of trafficking is both touching and inspiring to witness. However, the women are untrained in victim support techniques and are still addressing their own personal issues, having received no counseling themselves.

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Through this training the staff will be encouraged to explore their emotional, physical and spiritual selves to strengthen their own mental health and, together with art therapy tools, be able to support other vulnerable women and children at risk. They will be provided with basic counseling training, art therapy skills and re-education on women's health. Art therapies include visual arts, dance and movement, drama and creative writing. They will also be taught awareness practices such as yoga and meditation.

Each of us has our own definition of contentment but all of us are united by our desire to achieve it. The personal journey to contentment is often influenced by circumstances in this life. For the women of Shakti-Samuha the pathway to contentment will differ from that of many of those reading this article, yet we are all connected by our drive to take the journey. Seeing the artwork and reading about the experiences of the survivors touched my heart so deeply and reminded me of the strength of the human spirit in the quest for contentment. Despite our different personal circumstances, the journey towards contentment is one we must share together to strengthen each others resolve to reach it.

Lydia has a vision where the global community of women provides support to those who have suffered discrimination and are powerless to help themselves. She hopes that those with the power to act are inspired to help their fellow sisters reach contentment.

The Art2Healing Project is a volunteer-based organisation. They use volunteers in the administration, facilitation of workshops and training, fundraising, research and communication and program development. Interested art therapists must be qualified art therapists with suitable experience working with individuals at risk. Creativity, flexibility, commitment and an understanding of culturally diverse populations is essential. theart2healingproject.org



Joanna has recently completed a yoga teacher training and is a volunteer writer and copy editor for Namaskar.