



YOUR FIRST YEAR CHANGES YOU

12 lessons from the teacher's mat

I STARTED TEACHING YOGA IN JUNE OF 2025. THIS YEAR HAS FELT A LOT LIKE A YOGA PRACTICE ITSELF – FULL OF EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION, CONFIDENCE AND SELF-DOUBT, STRUCTURE AND SURRENDER. EBBS AND FLOWS (PUN INTENDED).

SOME LESSONS FOUND ME THROUGH SUCCESS, MOST FOUND ME THROUGH MISTAKES. I GREW A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING WITH LEARNING HOW TO PAY ATTENTION. TO PEOPLE. TO ENERGY. TO TIMING. TO YOUR OWN BLIND SPOTS. TO THE MOMENTS THAT DON'T GO ACCORDING TO PLAN. IT'S A PRACTICE OF REFINING AWARENESS AS MUCH AS IT IS REFINING SEQUENCING.

WHEN I FIRST STARTED TEACHING YOGA, I KNEW IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM TEACHING IN A CLASSROOM, BUT I STILL IMAGINED IT AS A LATERAL STEP. AFTER ALL, TEACHING WAS TEACHING. RIGHT? IN SOME WAYS, IT WAS. BUT EVEN AFTER YEARS OF WORKING IN EDUCATION AND ADULT LEARNING, TEACHING YOGA RETURNED ME TO THE VULNERABILITY OF TRULY BEING A BEGINNER, QUIETLY TRANSFORMING THE EDUCATOR I AM BOTH ON AND OFF THE MAT.

I THOUGHT THE GOAL WAS TO BECOME A GOOD TEACHER. I'M LEARNING THAT THE GOAL IS TO REMAIN A TEACHABLE ONE. THAT TEACHING ISN'T THE OPPOSITE OF LEARNING, BUT ONE OF ITS DEEPEST EXPRESSIONS. TO GUIDE ANOTHER IS TO DISCOVER HOW MUCH REMAINS UNSEEN WITHIN YOURSELF. THE PRACTICE NEVER REALLY STOPS WHEN CLASS ENDS – IT JUST CHANGES FORM.

HERE'S 12 THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM MY FIRST YEAR ON THE TEACHER'S MAT.



Allison Banks



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MASTERY IS BUILT IN THE ORDINARY REPETITIONS

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Every forgotten cue and transition. Every time you begin again. Mastery is built in the mundane, over and over again, until the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

WHAT WE SEEK IS OFTEN WAITING IN THE PAUSE

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Some wisdom can only be received in the spaces between thought, breath, and sound. What words cannot grasp, silence can.

CREATIVITY EMERGES WHEN YOU MAKE SPACE FOR IT

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Inspiration doesn't usually arrive through force. It arrives when we become quiet enough to receive it; in the space between striving and surrender.

STRUCTURE CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR FREEDOM

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We are what we repeatedly do, therefore, excellence is not an act, but a habit.* Discipline will take you further than raw talent ever will.

*The Story of Philosophy by Will Durant

SELF-TRUST GROWS IN THE PRESENCE OF UNCERTAINTY

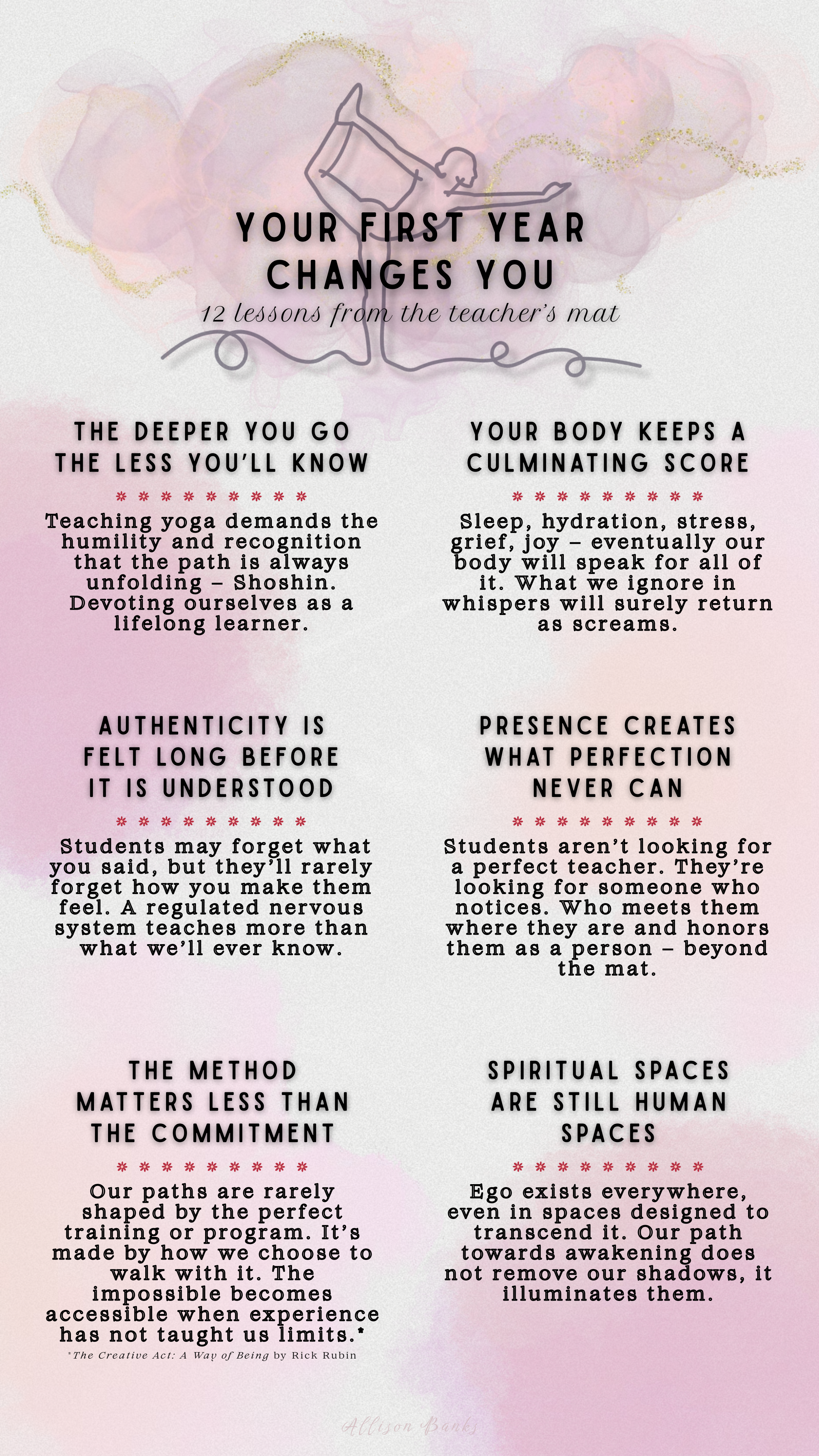
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Loosen your grip on certainty. Master your willingness to adapt. Pull yourself up by the bootstraps and keep going. We'll meet whatever comes next. How exciting.

OUR BREATH REVEALS WHERE OUR EGO TRIES TO HIDE

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Our minds like to negotiate, our breath rarely does. Our body knows long before our mind is ready to admit. Listen closely.



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**THE DEEPER YOU GO
THE LESS YOU'LL KNOW**

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Teaching yoga demands the humility and recognition that the path is always unfolding – Shoshin. Devoting ourselves as a lifelong learner.

**YOUR BODY KEEPS A
CULMINATING SCORE**

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Sleep, hydration, stress, grief, joy – eventually our body will speak for all of it. What we ignore in whispers will surely return as screams.

**AUTHENTICITY IS
FELT LONG BEFORE
IT IS UNDERSTOOD**

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Students may forget what you said, but they'll rarely forget how you make them feel. A regulated nervous system teaches more than what we'll ever know.

**PRESENCE CREATES
WHAT PERFECTION
NEVER CAN**

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Students aren't looking for a perfect teacher. They're looking for someone who notices. Who meets them where they are and honors them as a person – beyond the mat.

**THE METHOD
MATTERS LESS THAN
THE COMMITMENT**

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Our paths are rarely shaped by the perfect training or program. It's made by how we choose to walk with it. The impossible becomes accessible when experience has not taught us limits.*

*The Creative Act: A Way of Being by Rick Rubin

**SPIRITUAL SPACES
ARE STILL HUMAN
SPACES**

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Ego exists everywhere, even in spaces designed to transcend it. Our path towards awakening does not remove our shadows, it illuminates them.