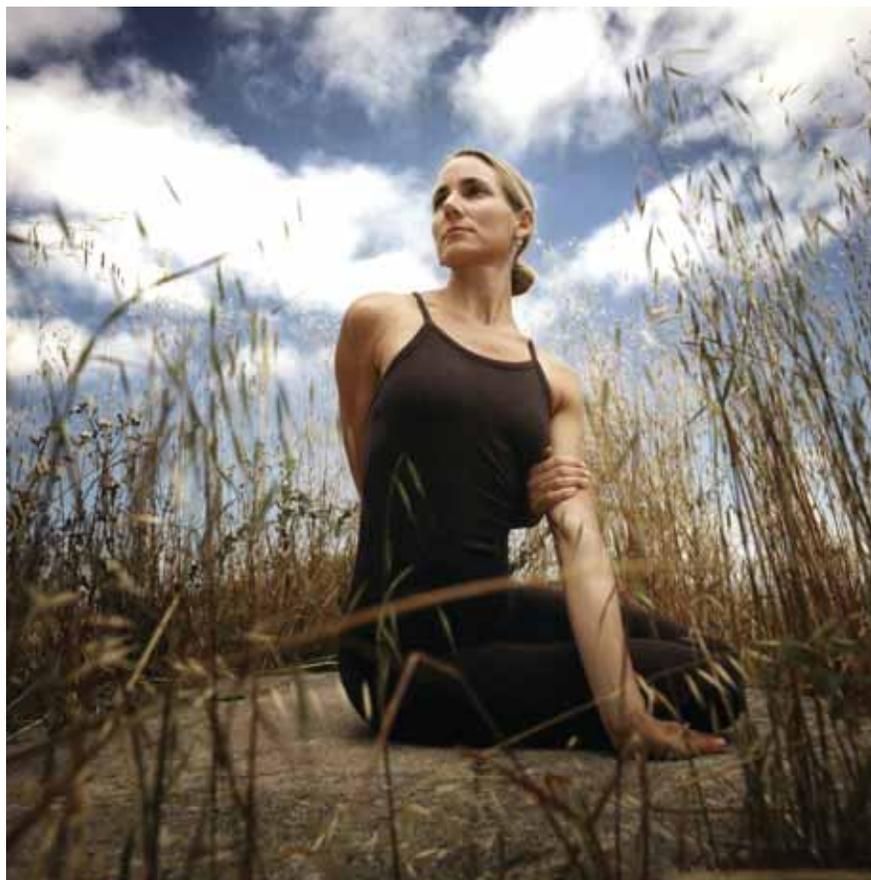


Sarah Powers

by Lisa Maria
photography by Michael Sexton



Thousands of teachers, students and neophytes of yoga know Sarah Powers through her trainings, workshops and classes, her numerous articles, and her audio/video tapes. Her teaching seamlessly blends Buddhist mindfulness with a blend of yoga styles into a powerful and transformative experience. There is a luminosity as well as a peaceful ease and strength that radiates from Sarah, reflecting the deep integration of her practice and teaching.

Eight years ago, Sarah and her husband, Ty Powers, moved from Santa Barbara to the Bay area when their daughter, Imani Jade, was four years old. Sarah began teaching at The Yoga Studio in Mill Valley, and stayed for many years, eventually leading their teacher training program. She also began offering workshops and leading retreats, as well as writing. She currently travels worldwide (with her family) to teach, and teaches locally at the Deer Run Zendo, a stunning hilltop temple with sweeping views and lovely gardens.

Sarah's journey with yoga began after her marriage, while she was getting her Master's degree in Transpersonal Psychology. As part of the curriculum, each student needed to study a body-oriented therapy. Sarah chose yoga, mainly because her brother had a book on it while they were growing up. She was so profoundly affected by the practice that she decided to become a yoga teacher instead of completing

her degree. Her first classes were in the Sivananda style, and her first teacher training was at the White Lotus Foundation. After about 6 months of study and practice, she dove into teaching. The first class she taught was at YogaWorks, right down the street from her home. "I was very new to what I knew, so they gave me a slot that had no people... then 2 people, then 10 people. It grew quite rapidly. It quickly became something I did, but I realize I have to thank my partner because he was willing to support us."

During this time, Ty's support as well as his years of dedicated study of metaphysics and consciousness expansion had a deep effect on Sarah. When she became a yoga teacher, she felt she had finally done something she could share with him, "I didn't really feel we had equal footing until I matured enough to start my own practice, learn from it and then have something to give back." Then, laughing, she says, "He was my first student." As Sarah's teaching has grown, Ty has remained an important part of her success. He continues to further his own studies in yoga and Buddhism, recently completing the Community Dharma Leader training program at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, and also teaching workshops.

While at YogaWorks, Sarah's studies focused on Ashtanga and included Iyengar and Viniyoga. Her main influences were Chuck

Miller, Richard Freeman, Erich Schiffman and Ana Forrest. She also studied with Pattabhi Jois during his occasional month-long visits. During this time, she became fascinated with Yin yoga, taught after her class by Paul Grilley. She found that Yin gave her the consistent ease that she had been seeking in her body. Soon she was experimenting with Yin and a blend of the more active (Yang) practices she had been studying. After ten years of teaching, she began studying meditation, and began to introduce silent sitting into her classes. Her classes evolved into a blend of Yin/Yang yoga with a strong focus on Buddhist mindfulness, as influenced by her studies with her Tibetan teacher, Tsoknyi Rinpoche, and her Zen teacher, Toni Packer.

After nearly two decades of teaching, exploring her own practice and raising a family, Sarah continues to refine the rhythms of her life in order to nurture harmony and balance. "Guarding a fresh, viable daily life from the overdoing, overexposure of the pieces that are all so beautiful—but in excess become toxic in their own ways. Like the balance and integrity of having a personal practice, family relationships, mothering and homeschooling—and having alone time." She pauses and smiles, "The ascetic in me, and then the one in the world, have found a friendship in the lifestyle that I have." sarahpowers.com