



March 15, 2007

My name is Joseph Encinia and Bikram Yoga has changed my life. I was diagnosed at a young age with Rheumatoid Arthritis, had a heart attack at age 13 and many other ailments growing up. As a result, my physical activities were limited and I was consistently taking pain medication. After many medical procedures and surgeries, I resolved myself to a lifetime of discomfort.

One day I decided to explore forms of exercise to regain control of my health. After a long journey, I discovered Bikram Yoga. I simply expected a physical workout. I found much more than that. I have transformed. I no longer suffer constant pain. I've lost weight and developed lean muscle mass. I can contort my body into positions I never thought possible. I have gained a peace of mind I previously never knew existed. I have transcended many limitations within myself – mentally, physically and emotionally. I am accomplishing things I once thought impossible.

I've learned to accept responsibility for making changes in my life. Bikram Yoga has taught me to look at challenges in front of me, smile and meet them head on. I have learned to focus on the tasks at hand and live in peace with myself and the world around me. To me this is the gift of yoga.

I decided I wanted to serve the community and inspire others the way I've been inspired. Teacher training was a top priority of mine for some time, but the investment was much more than I could afford. I was determined, however, to raise the funds for teacher training. I decided to take on a challenge to do so! On November 10th, 2006 I started a 150 day Bikram Yoga Challenge ending on April 7th, 2007. My goal was to inspire others and raise enough money to aid with my tuition and housing. With the help of Bikram Yoga Dallas, I asked my fellow yoga students to help support me through my challenge with a dollar donation for each class through my challenge.

At the start of my Teacher Training fundraiser, I set the intention to practice each class with 110% of the effort needed to make it to Teacher Training. Before I knew it, there were dozens of students signed up to pledge. I was in absolute awe when I saw this. With only one month until Teacher Training, I've risen over \$6,000 and I'm still receiving pledges. This has shown me that when you make up your mind, set a goal with purpose and use your "English Bull-Dog" determination anything is possible.

Namaste,

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