



Teacher's Tales:

## Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Like learning a new language, there's nothing wrong with repeating yourself in class now and then. *By Paula Hines*

**A**t times I think I sound like a broken record when I am teaching. In fact, I am pretty sure I do sound like a broken record. I repeat myself accidentally on purpose. There is value in repetition, I feel.

When I first started teaching, I used to worry about repeating myself whether it was verbal cues or sequences. I felt pressure that I ought to always be coming up with something new. Now I view the idea of repetition slightly differently. For my own practice, repetition was and is how I best learn. Repetition helps me see where I am on that day. For instance, today my Pigeon pose feels like bliss. Tomorrow Pigeon pose reveals that my hips are telling me they feel like concrete – and we all know hips don't lie! (These things also so often relate to what is happening in our lives away from the yoga mat.) This is repetition with a purpose and awareness rather than simply going through the motions. To be clear, this is not about being lazy but gauging the sufficient amount of repetition to be of benefit to the student in front of you. I don't think this is easy – it's an on-going practice and is something that I find students teach me the more I can stay present and pay attention.

Judith Lasater, one of my teachers, with some 45 years of teaching experience talks about teaching the same students year in, year out always instructing, “left foot in, right foot out,” and then one day, maybe two years later seeing a light bulb switch on for the student as they ‘get it’: “Ah! You mean left foot in, right foot out.” Without repetition these light bulb moments might not occur. So, on one level, repetition can also be a way to measure progress. In addition, it can teach patience, build discipline and cultivate positive habits and resilience.

That said, we do all learn in different ways. As much as I look for different ways to express the same thing, I am still ultimately repeating myself. And that's okay.

I saw the following quote from respected teacher, Jason Crandell: “Imagine you are teaching someone a new language, or how to do math, or play an instrument. Would you be concerned about repetition then? By embracing repetition, you are embracing education.” I couldn't put it better and I wholeheartedly agree. 🙏

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