ABSTRACT: How Yoga Breaks You Down so You Can Break Through
By Dutch Martin

As a certified yoga instructor, I strive every day to provide students with a practice that not only moves their bodies, but moves their spirits and feeds their minds with what they need to become the best version of themselves. This involves non-judgement, compassion, meeting each student where he/she is on his/her mat, and assuring them that, no matter what, they are good enough.

That being said, as a husband and father, it took going through yoga teacher training for me to finally unload over forty years of excess emotional and psychological baggage from my upbringing, punctuated by poverty, growing up without a father, and discovering a family secret about me that nearly pushed me to the breaking point, before I was finally able to have the emotional breakthrough that I so desperately needed. It has helped me to be a better husband, father and instructor. Thanks to a pivotal moment during teacher training, where I broke down in tears in a room full of like-minded souls, I have finally been able to not only accept who I am in a loving and nonjudgmental way, but I would like to share my story with the conference attendees (especially ***men***), and show them that **we have to break down in order to break through.**