



Fly and be free

Lauren Sund lifts them up

I found acro yoga when I was travelling. I was living in Asia, and just kind of having my fun as a teacher but also experimenting, learning, studying different types of yoga. And so this was the one that really just caught my attention in a way because it allowed me to bring my background as a gymnast, and then my now growth as a yoga teacher and combine the two.

I started as a gymnast when I was about four. But it's super competitive and it requires a lot of discipline. It's fun because you're getting to tumble and move around and you're learning new tricks. But I don't want to teach that. I don't want to teach, "point your toes, and if you're not arms by your ears, you're doing something wrong".

I want to teach the basics. I want to teach people how to breathe, connect with their breath, be aware of their body, trust someone else, and then ultimately learn how to fly, learn how to let go and find that sense of freedom.

At age 21 I was working in corporate America. I was wearing my fancy outfit and making my business meetings and I was just really stressed out. I was going through a wave of anxiety and depression because I felt like I wasn't using my gifts, but at the time I didn't

know what they were. But I was going to a few yoga classes a week just to let go some stress. And I decided that the practice was actually finding a place in me that felt so real and it felt so divine. It was a connection, something that no

LAUREN SUND FROM THE USA.



one can make you feel, it's just deep within.

Here in Braidwood at Miss Emma's dance class we're doing exercises where basically you don't get to pick your partner. We walk around in a circle and when I stop the music, the person that's standing in front of you, that's your partner. So you don't get to play this whole game of, I'm going to pick the people I'm specifically going to trust.

Because in life, we tend to say, "I like *these* people so I'm going to trust them. But I'm going to judge *those* people and I'm not going to trust them".

So in this class, we don't get to pick who we are going to trust and not trust. We're just paired based on when the music stops. It's just a little exercise to get people used to having to figure it out in the moment, not being able to fall back on their mind's pre-plan. You keep practising how you're going to respond in the moment.

Showing people acro yoga is super fulfilling for me, I get to do what I love and I get to see them light up. Like, they're so excited and they're so thrilled to be able to play and try these new tricks — and really fly. ■

UP UP AND AWAY



[LEFT] LEELA BASING, ELANOR FLYING, HOLLIE AND LAUREN HELPING; GEORGIA BASING, FERGUS FLYING, REEGAN AND MISS EMMA HELPING. [ABOVE] LAUREN BASING, REEGAN FLYING. [RIGHT] HOLLIE BASING, KIAH FLYING, LEELA WATCHING, ELANOR AND LAUREN HELPING.



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