



WHY I TEACH NAKED YOGA

Doria Gani started yoga in 2010 as a form of rehabilitation after a critical illness. Here, she explains why she now teaches naked yoga to other women as a path to self-acceptance and self-love

Years ago I was diagnosed with stage three cervical cancer. I still remember sitting in that chair at Ealing Hospital holding the results in my hands and not feeling anything. I was in a bubble: no sounds, no voices around, I couldn't hear anything. In my head, it wasn't even real. For the following months, I spent my life between home and the hospital. Surgeries, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and all the side effects that come with it were part of my daily routine. After my treatments, I was looking for some gentle rehabilitation. I attended my first yoga class at Macmillan Centre at Charing Cross Hospital. I fell in love with this discipline and four years later I flew to Goa in India to embark on my yoga teacher training. I wanted to become a yoga teacher.

As a result of the cancer treatment, I became infertile. Whilst I have never felt particularly maternal, it was good to know that the option to become a mother was available to me. Having this option taken away as a result of the treatment I

undertook was difficult to deal with. Not being able to conceive left me feeling like I was not 'woman enough' and punishing myself for being 'incomplete'.

Discovering naked yoga helped me to re-evaluate this negative perception of myself.

I practiced naked yoga for the first time at a festival in Nevada (Burning Man) and it felt so liberating that I wanted to share the experience with everyone. In that moment I had no barriers, no inhibitions, and no restrictions. This freedom I felt is what I had been missing. It was a world with open-minded people, no economic or social barriers, a judgment-free and safe space for vulnerable people to express themselves.

Naked yoga finally taught me to accept my body and accept myself exactly how I am today, with all my imperfections.

It's about knowing, accepting and loving yourself at your core.

Naked yoga is a tool we can use on our road to self-acceptance. Just being naked can make us feel vulnerable, not to mention the core pain that 'comes up' when we

practice yoga. By facing these vulnerabilities with this brave and bold approach to yoga, we become more grounded and comfortable with ourselves.

As I struggled for many years to accept my own body I'm now helping people to feel confident in their own skin.

I am passionate about working with women that don't feel comfortable showing their bodies, or women who have experienced cancer, anorexia, bulimia. Helping these women to accept and love their bodies is a privilege.

The greatest reward for me is seeing the change I'm making in their lives and how confident they become. I feel my purpose in life is to free the world from body shame and to remove the negative connotations from the word 'nudity'.

I love sharing the knowledge and freedom I have found through doing this with as many people as possible. ☸

Find out more about Doria Gani and her work at: doriayoga.com