



## Tias Little

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Tias Little and his wife, Surya, created Prajna Yoga, a profound journey inward. Through yoga poses, dharma study, guided meditation, the yoga of sound, and somatic awareness, their practice allows for unique, personal transformation.

My wife, Surya, and I built our dream practice space, from the ground up, on our 10-acre parcel of land outside Santa Fe. Built by a yogi carpenter, Robert Laporte, and designed by his wife, Paula Baker-Laporte, our home studio complements and enhances the mindfulness of the yoga experience. They used non-toxic materials and natural finishes, and the mud walls are made of straw clay. In building our practice space, we wanted to create a living structure that amplifies,

not detracts from, the *prana* (life force) within the practice space.

The studio has unique windows, situated to allow a glimpse of the natural world outdoors. Within the space, we've placed elements that remind us of the raw, nonlinear beauty of nature—black river stones, a gnarled juniper bough, irregular pieces of sandstone moss rock. Like Zen temples in Japan, where a spare and pleasing aesthetic inspires the mind to go still, our practice space often elicits deep calm.

I always do home practice. I don't like to leave my home until I commune with my inner guides, allies, and angels. When I do not yoke to the presence of the spirit inside and breathe life into my pranic sheath, then I am prone

to distraction, irritation, or carelessness throughout the day.

The pressures of the world and the demands of people tend to wither the pranic sheath. When our *prana* is depleted and our vitality is weakened, we are prone to disease of all kinds. The practice provides not only a physical buffer, but also a kind of psychic shield. We practice so that, ultimately, nothing can knock us off the center of our day.

I am a morning practitioner. I get up, take a pee, and go right to the meditation cushion in my practice space. This is when I am most permeable and open to the small voice of the Unspeakable Spirit that dwells within. This is the time before the recycling truck goes barreling down the road

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and the neighbors take their morning walks, yapping on cell phones. This is a time when my pulse is soft, my heart rate is slow, and my mind is a little bit empty. In morning meditation, I track my dreams. After 25 years of doing yoga, much of my practice is focused on the subtle (and not-so-subtle) churnings of my depth psyche. Impressions of fear, shame, and pride bubble up in the dreamtime. By sitting with the afterimages of dreams, I catch glimpses of my shadow. Early morning practice is best for being with the out-

lines of the shadows that surface in my dreams.

For me, it is paramount to ride the changing edge of being, for I am always in a state of becoming, never static. Thus, the practice should never simply be routine. For instance, I started in Ashtanga Yoga when I was in my early twenties. Now that I am over 50, I do a very different practice. I believe the practice should always stay fresh, creative, and interesting. It is only routine in that discipline and consistency are required to step onto the mat every day. However, as we age, we must skillfully conform our practice to be in accord with the changes that happen in our bodies, minds, and spirits. In this sense, the practice should always be evolving. ❸