

BYRON BAY

NO. 2



Saturday, December 19, 2009

On Friday, we all made the trek out to Goonengerry to Dena and Jack's "farm." Dena has lived on her land for over 20 years. She has changed the structures over time. She spent about six years living in a tent. Now she has a beautiful stone home with a large yoga space and hand dug swimming pool.



JACK



NOAH & ISAAC ON THE TRAMPOLINE



ZOLIE

Ashtanga Yoga December 19, 2009 continued ...

Dena and her family live simply and with nature integrated into their daily living. They have a compost toilet, a vegetable garden and have built their home themselves.

Noah and Ren thoroughly enjoyed spending time with Dena and Jack's children - Zolie (9) and Isaac (6). They jumped on the trampoline, swam in the pool and wandered around the property.

I first met Dena and Jack while taking part in a yoga teacher training in 1999. I then studied with her in 2001, 2002, 2004 & 2005 - all in the Bay Area. The last time I studied with her, Ren was 10 months old. Ren turned 5 last month. This trip has been a long time coming.

The drive out to Dena and Jack's property took us through many twists and turns, trees, farmlands and finally to the little town called Goonengerry. Jack had said, "you'll feel like you are getting lost and driving off into the jungle, but you're not. Don't give up, just trust the drive and keep on coming." I kept that thought in my mind as we were driving, heading off into the jungle and definitely feeling like we were getting lost.

More than once (or twice) I second guessed the directions I

thought I understood. I never turned back, but instead trusted the drive (even without any street signs) and kept on the path.

This is often how I feel about living my life and doing my yoga practice - trusting the drive, even though I can't quite tell where I am going. This is what I have been doing for much of this last year.

Studying with Dena is a gentle squeeze to the heart and a gentle kick in the butt. As we were sitting talking by her pool, she told me she likes to get to know her students over time so that she can "poke at them." I love this about her. It helps me remain a student and uncover the places where I have so much to learn.

She pokes at her students so that they can continue to be the best they can be. Nothing more. Nothing less.

This poking is done through the various asanas, but in many ways it has nothing to do with the asanas themselves. It has to do with the unearthing of the cells and the nervous system and the muscular system and the ways that we live in our bodies.

So much of what I do as a yoga teacher is about taking care of my students and helping them along their path. When I have a chance to

get to know my students consistently, over time it allows me a fuller understanding of their yoga practice on an individual level. It allows me to approach each student in a way that speaks to them, their body and their life. It allows me to poke at them with more knowing and love them more fully

What works for one yogi may not work for the next. This is how Dena teaches. This is how Dena lives. This is how Dena moves through her life. I am inspired by her. I am learning from her, both as a student of ashtanga and a teacher of ashtanga.

This journey for me continues to unfold. This journey of ashtanga yoga. This journey of life. This journey of love.

I am truly grateful to teach this practice and to have the amazing students who are on this path with me.

Om. Shanti.