

## tips for finding a yoga or spiritual teacher

Finding a yoga or spiritual teacher can be challenging. It's easy to go to a yoga studio and just take a class, but if you're looking for a deeper approach to practice it's important to find someone who can guide your experience. It's just like looking for a spiritual director – you wouldn't just take any old person for such an intimate quest, but you'd want to find someone with whom you're really comfortable.

Try to establish clarity about what kind of teaching you are seeking, what kind of relationship you hope to establish with this person, and how comfortable you are with the arrangement. This can be a process of personal exploration. You may not even know what's important to you until you explore different teachers and approaches.

Here are some questions that can get you started:

### Content

- What is this person presenting?
  - Does the type of practice resonate with you?

### Philosophy

- What is this person's teaching philosophy?
  - Are you given very explicit instructions or left to figure things out on your own?
  - How does the approach mesh or not with your personality and needs?

### Comfort

- How do you feel around this teacher?
  - Are you comfortable asking questions?
  - If you're uncomfortable, examine what could be the source.
    - Is it your personality to be uncomfortable around teachers of all kinds?
    - Are you awed by something this person does or says? Or are you afraid? Intimidated?
    - Or maybe this teacher just isn't the right match for you?

### Expectations

- It's important to remember that spiritual teachers are people! So don't expect your teacher to be a saint, but be sure your ethics are not being violated. You may be challenged by things you see and hear, but it's important to ask yourself what's really important to *you*, which might be very different than what's important to your friends.
  - What would you look for in a teacher? What's most important to you?
    - Kindness and a loving personality?
    - A strong intellect?
    - Someone who challenges you to change bad habits?
  - Where would you draw the line? What kinds of behaviors are unacceptable in a teacher?
    - Questionable practices around money (like charging a lot more than the going rate)?
    - Questionable personal relationships (sexual or otherwise)?
    - A big ego? Swearing? Eating meat?