

Julie Bernier

Julie Bernier is an Ayurvedic practitioner and yoga teacher who specializes in Ayurvedic bodywork therapies. She trained both in the U.S. and India and owns True Ayurveda in Los Angeles, California.



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By Hannah Fell

In a small village in India, surrounded by hot springs, temples and waterfalls, there’s a rooftop café where Julie Bernier taught yoga every morning for five weeks. This place is called Vashisht, and it overlooked the Himalayas lining the horizon in the mid-distance.

“It was a special, holy place,” she said.

Backpackers came to her class as well as students from all over the world. Not all her students spoke English, but that didn’t matter. She taught through body language and demonstrations.

Although Bernier has been practicing yoga for about 14 years, it was the vehicle that led her to Ayurveda—yoga’s sister science. Ayurveda translates to the knowledge or science of life, and it teaches us how to become our best and happiest selves.

“Yoga is medicine for the spirit, and Ayurveda is for the body,” she said. “They are meant to go together.”

Bernier said she knew that massage combined with yoga was the right career for her because of Vedic wisdom. “When you’re fulfilling your *dharma*, or purpose in life, you’ll feel happy, joyful and uplifted,” she said. Work won’t feel like work.

Ayurveda is a practice with Indian roots. It is one of the oldest practices in the world and is “a science of self-healing [that] encompasses diet and nutrition, lifestyle, meditation, postures, breathing exercises and medical herbs along with cleansing and rejuvenating programs for healing body, mind, and spirit,” according to The Ayurvedic Institute, a school in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Ayurveda led Bernier to massage therapy since external bodywork therapies are an important aspect of the treatment. “Yoga and massage aren’t separate entities but integral parts of my work as an Ayurveda practitioner,” she said.

Massage was therefore a natural fit for her. She has spent extensive time in India studying yoga and Ayurveda besides the five weeks she spent in the village. She felt called to study there and learn from where Ayurveda came from.

She has been to India five times. The shortest trip was three weeks and the longest was six months. She spent four months in central and northern India focusing on yoga. On that trip, she stayed in a few different ashrams, which is a sanctuary where people are immersed in

spiritual living. This meant that living was strict—no drugs, alcohol or meat. The teachers lived with the students.

Today, Bernier isn’t attached to the type of practice she provides to clients.

“A client might come for massage, but eventually our work together leads to yoga and vice versa,” Bernier said. Combining the modalities allows clients to make shifts in who they are, which will bring their bodies back into balance, feel at peace and live with purpose.

She added that there’s a saying, or rather, a common belief in India: Anything’s possible. Simply put, whatever it is you want to happen in your life, you have the power and ability to make it happen.

“When I was starting out, I tried to do everything on my own—even tasks like building a website and accounting, which I knew nothing about,” Bernier said. She said her goal was to save money but she just wasted time that kept her business from expanding as much as it could have. “Now, I hire experts to do anything beyond my skillset, which I wish I would have done from the get go.”

She said she recommends that people don’t stress and just relax and trust in the process.

“If you really believe in what you are doing, people will feel your enthusiasm and naturally gravitate toward your offerings,” she added.

Hannah Fell is *MESSAGE Magazine’s* associate editor.

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