

Namaste 2.0: Balanced Practice...Balanced Life

Dane A. Vemb

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A testimonial guide to pursuing well-being, Namaste 2.0 recommends an idiosyncratic approach to yoga.

Part memoir, part manifesto, and part charismatic guide, Dane A. Vemb's *Namaste 2.0* is a maverick take on practicing yoga and achieving personal health and satisfaction.

For Vemb, yoga—his answer in a decade-long search for effectual methods of well-being—became an all-encompassing spiritual practice into which he incorporated meditation, cannabis, and ayahuasca, too. He faced challenges along the way, as with multiple hamstring injuries and confronting past emotional traumas. Still, he moved toward mindfulness with yoga as his guide. Modeling his practice for others, the book introduces a combination of high-intensity Bikram yoga, at-home practice, and low-intensity yoga traditions. Along the way, each recommendation is embellished with personal reflections on the difficulties of embarking on a new path later in life.

The chapters break the book into useful sections, distinguishing between the memoir portions of the book and its practical parts well. In the latter case, it suggests that its methods can function as a cure for injuries, chronic pain, and the illusory despairs of modern life. Its instructions are colloquial; it arrives at conclusions by way of personal experience, relying on Vemb's charisma to be persuasive. His language is conversational, and his use of photographs and minute instructions make the book's training block program comprehensible, even for the uninitiated. Special chapters devoted to injury rehabilitation, critiques of yoga positions, and nutrition broaden the project's reach.

Off-the-cuff humor abounds: Vemb recalls arriving at a yoga class on marijuana and drinking energy drinks after a day of construction work, for example. Such moments of levity belie the seriousness of the text as a whole. Further, some aspects of the book are underdeveloped. Dana, a friend of Vemb's, appears at key moments in his story, but her identity and connection to Vemb are insufficiently explained. And Stephanie, Vemb's daughter, appears in a similar manner, illustrating moments in the development of his practice while held at a distance, just outside of the story's frame. These elisions raise questions about the relationships undergirding the book's recommendations. Other personal details—as about Vemb's love of hockey and his life-changing trip to Australia—dilute the project further. Helpfully, some of the book's asides and anecdotes are separated from the general text, funneled into discrete bubbles.

Modeling an unorthodox approach to yoga, *Namaste 2.0* is an entertaining guide to spiritual well-being.

WILLEM MARX (January 8, 2024)

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