

# ENGAGING ABLEISM WITH AN OPEN HEART

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Introducing...

# Somatics Vogue!

How do we respond to  
injustice?

# Postures of Courageous Action: Standing Up for Justice

“Stand Up for Justice!”

“Stand Up for Yourself!”

“Stand Up for Others!”

# Postures of Courageous Action: Standing Up for Justice!



Postures of Alliance:  
Sitting With Injustice, As Justice

Sit With Yourself.

Sit With Your Ally, Partner,  
Friend, Enemy.

Sit With the Pain and Injustice  
of the World.



# Postures of Alliance: Sitting With Injustice, As Justice



# Postures of Courageous Action: Standing Up for Justice!





# How Does this Energy Show Up in Social Movement History?







# How Does this Energy Show Up in White Feminism?



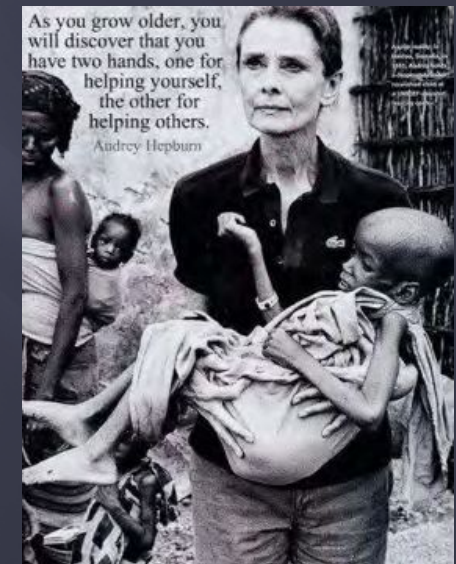
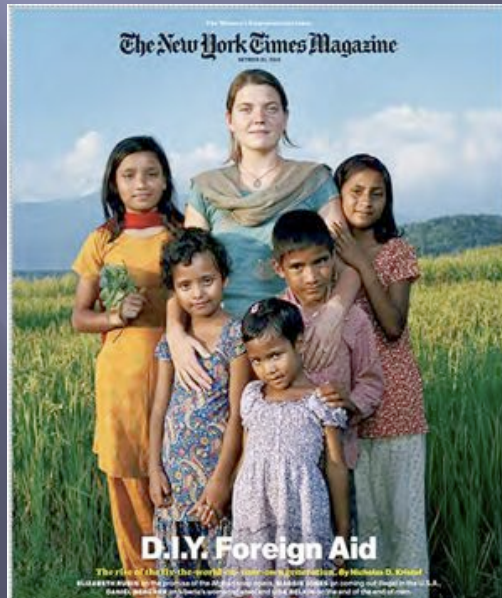


# How Does this Energy Show Up in Communities of Yoga Practitioners in the US?





# “Standing Up for Others:” Postures of Service, Help, and Charity





# How Are These Postures In Relationship with Disability?

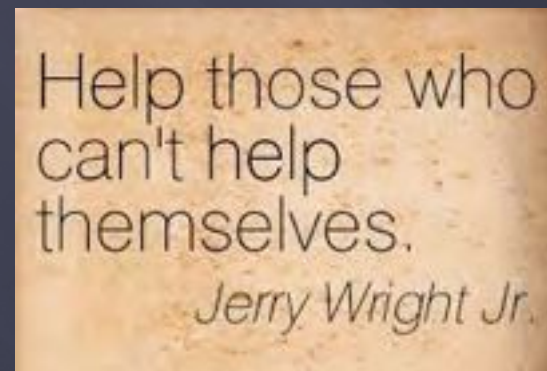


Imagine never being able  
to eat or speak properly.



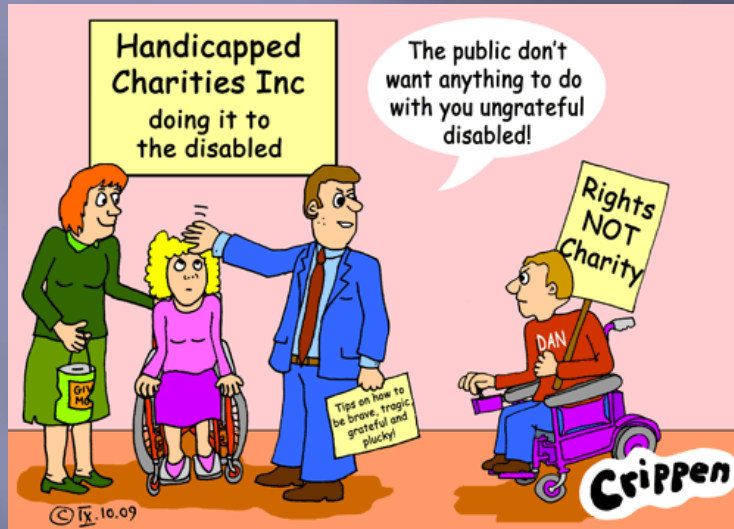
# What 'Feels Good' About These Postures?

## What is Familiar About Them?





# How Does it Feel to Be on the Receiving End of Help or Charity?



# Breath





# What is Disability?

**Disability** is one of many forms of human difference. Disability communities include people with many different kinds of physical and mobility impairments. They also include people with mental, cognitive, intellectual, emotional and psychiatric disabilities. Disabled people can be Deaf, blind, or have extreme sensitivity to chemicals, smells, sounds, or light. Some disabilities are temporary conditions and others are permanent. Some people are born with disabilities and others acquire them later in life. Some disabilities result from working conditions, violence, war, or poverty. Some disabilities are more visible or easy to notice, and others are less apparent. Some disabled people are legally recognized as having a disability and others are not. Disability can include illness, injury, old age, chronic pain, and more.



# What is Ableism?

**Ableism** is a way of thinking and acting that values some bodies, minds, and people over others. Ableism justifies exclusion of and discrimination against disabled people — especially those without class and race privilege, citizenship status, and other forms of access. It is a set of practices that are sometimes obvious and other times difficult to notice. Ableism is a system of oppression that is upheld by racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. It works on a personal, everyday level and on a bigger institutional level.

# Disability and Yoga: Who Can Access Yoga in the US?



# Addressing Ableism in Yoga Teaching, Practice, and Spaces

## Instead of...

- ▣ High cost of classes
- ▣ Yoga classes primarily in studios
- ▣ Physically Inaccessible practice spaces
- ▣ Culturally inaccessible, unwelcoming spaces for disabled people
- ▣ Ableism in language and instruction
- ▣ Culture that values competition, individual achievement, or comparison and that encourages internalized ableism
- ▣ Philosophy that prioritizes unity, sameness, oneness or egolessness over recognizing difference and power

## How about...

- ▣ Affordable, accessible (and donation-based) classes individually and in small groups
- ▣ Yoga in bed, at home, in community, in institutions
- ▣ Physically Accessible practice spaces
- ▣ Diverse group of students and teachers that welcomes those whose bodies, minds, and behavior fall outside cultural norms
- ▣ Informed, disability-centric language and instruction
- ▣ Culture that values acceptance, self-compassion, resilience, and diversity in practice and bodies and that fosters a sense of collectivity
- ▣ Philosophy that prioritizes solidarity across difference, recognizing privilege and oppression and sharing resources



# What Do Disabled Peoples' Movements Teach Us About Radical Collective Access?

- ▣ To insist that our practice spaces and our movements for change are accessible in the broadest ways possible
- ▣ To understand ableism as part of the complex web of power that reproduces privilege and oppression
- ▣ To take ownership of our individual relationships to ablebodiedness and disability
- ▣ To practice interdependence and collective care in ways that recognize our uneven relationships to access, resources, and power
- ▣ To value self-conscious practices of alliance as opposed to 'help,' particularly in the role of teacher
- ▣ To slow down, make room, be willing to sit with complex experiences of injustice — our own and others; to become friendly with the discomfort of an always unfolding process
- ▣ To recognize both the ordinary and unique, the utility and the beauty or pleasures of disability

# Postures of Alliance: Sitting With Injustice, As Justice





# Breath



# Noticing the Gaps: Reactions, Responses, and Questions

