

YOGA HILLSBORO

& THE STRESS REDUCTION CLINIC

SCIENCE, YOGA, ANOREXIA & WORTHY OF LOVE

We asked our students to share their experience of learning MBSR, yoga and Nia. Here is an essay from a student, a scientist, who finds love and contentment in the face of the challenge of *Anorexia Nervosa*:

"I am a scientist by nature and by nurture. Not only do I analyze the world around me in terms of its mathematical fundamentals, but I also tend to analyze myself in that manner. Needless to say, it doesn't work so well when it comes to facets of myself that don't relate to any formula, such as my personality and emotions. Therefore, when I was diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa, I went through a complete cognitive upheaval. All of a sudden, life just didn't make sense; I know I was fighting against my body with my mind to a point of my body and my brain's detriment. And yet, I couldn't combat the negative emotions that were driving me to starve myself. To make a long story short, I entered therapy as a treatment, and it was recommended to me to start yoga. Participating in my first yoga class was one of the highlights of my life. For the first time in years, I was able to put aside my mental struggle with weight and food and focus only on the effects of my breath and motion of my body. In other words, I felt at peace.

I continued to cultivate that feeling all throughout my treatment, including a hospital stay and an intensive outpatient program. To this day I attribute my success in recovery from this dangerous psychological disorder to the benefits of yoga. This form of movement and breath helped me to realize that my mind and body are actually one, and that it is okay if I can't analyze everything I do based on a general formula. Instead, I need to learn theories of myself through uniting my mind and body. It is only through this that I can see myself as I truly am: a human capable and worthy of love and contentment, not a human who deserves constant punishment because she can't seem to control the world around her. Yoga remains my teacher, mindfulness and faith through all points in my life. I've even learned to apply them when participating in my favorite science classes, a sign that my life truly has changed due to the lessons yoga taught me.

- S, college student!