



*Yoga
ambassador
Seane Corn
creates
venues
for change.*

from the
GRO



DUND

UP

by Jana Hill

Anyone who has leafed through a yoga magazine

over the past several years is familiar with Seane Corn's signature smile shining forth from the covers of *Yoga Journal*, *Yoga + Joyful Living*, and *Natural Health*, to name only a few. She headlines for yoga workshops and conferences all over the world.

"Build the pose from the ground up," she tells her students. Plant the feet firmly on the mat, focus on all four corners of the feet, firm up the legs and thighs, lift the sternum, draw down the tailbone, look up, and reach. Reach.

And just as she directs students to build each asana from the ground up, she has done the same in her service work.



Mainstreaming mindfulness

Corn found her way into service work as her yoga practice unfolded. Forming her body into asanas was only the beginning of what would become a lifestyle that focuses on the yogic principles of ahimsa (nonharming), satya (truth), and service. While working at the Life Café in New York City's East Village in 1987, she connected with humanitarianism, vegetarianism, and yoga. By 1994 she had decided to make yoga her profession.

"I remember telling my father I will never make any money at this, but I will live every single day of my life happy. In 1994 yoga really didn't have the popularity it has today, so you didn't go into it thinking it was a career. I assumed I'd teach four to eight classes a week just to pay my rent," she says.

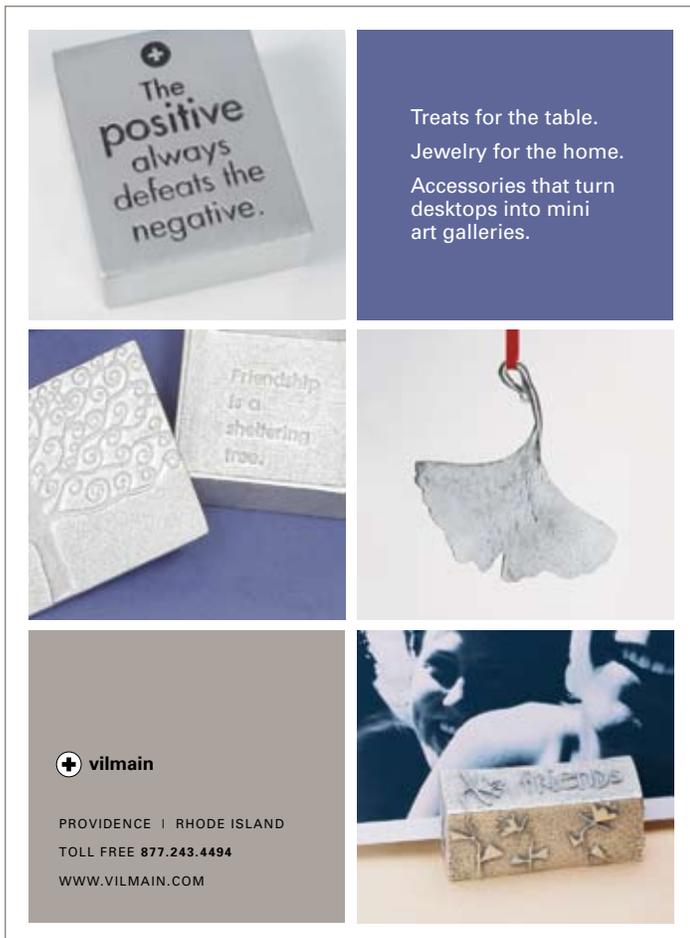
Her modest goals led to surprising results. In 2000 she was offered a modeling spot with Nike. The ad campaign featured pro athletes such as Lance Armstrong and Mia Hamm, and granted yoga the same respect paid to other physical

disciplines. The ad ran during the Summer Olympics and the Super Bowl, exposing millions to yoga, while breaking down the stereotype of yoga as a soft-and-fluffy practice.

Before accepting Nike's offer, though, Corn went through an emotional struggle because of Nike's involvement with sweatshop labor.

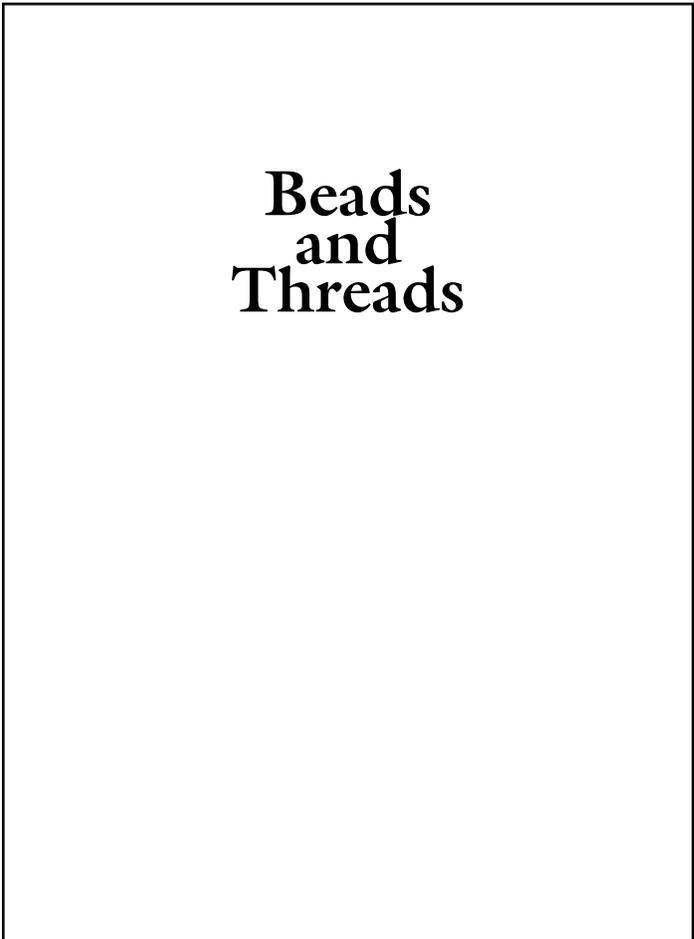
"I was very uncomfortable aligning myself with an organization that exploited children in any way. Yet at the same time, the ad I was asked to be in was acknowledging female amateur athletes that were in a pro-level discipline, but were kind of hidden—like women who get up at four o'clock in the morning to run and women boxers. And it was the first time they wanted to acknowledge yoga on the same level as any other discipline," Corn says.

The image was powerful and broadly viewed. Nike's ad began with a montage of athletes in other disciplines, then flowed to a shot of Corn in full Scorpion pose—hands splayed and planted on the floor, back arched, toes touching the top



Treats for the table.
Jewelry for the home.
Accessories that turn
desktops into mini
art galleries.

vilmain
PROVIDENCE | RHODE ISLAND
TOLL FREE 877.243.4494
WWW.VILMAIN.COM



Beads and Threads

of her head. The only sound was of her breathing. The screen was adorned with the words, "I've never owned a ball."

"I think it was one of the most powerful images of yoga that I've seen out there. And I'm very proud of it," Corn says.

The Nike ad may be one element that ushered yoga solidly into the mainstream collective consciousness. Today, mainstream movies and TV often show actresses and models in yoga poses; chick flicks such as *27 Dresses* and *Fool's Gold* are just a sample of the movies that shoot a scene in a flow class.

"Nike helped create a certain amount of visibility that I never would have had without their support," she says.

Getting grounded

Once her career took off, she knew what had to happen next—it was time to give something back. Corn found the right opportunity at a place in Van Nuys, Calif., called Children of the Night, an organization that helps adolescent prostitutes.

"I thought, they need yoga. They need to breathe," she says. She looked forward to helping kids who needed yoga.

"The first day in, I was so arrogant thinking I was going to help them, and it wasn't like that. I got my ass kicked. I had no idea walking into that room how incredibly challenging it was going to be working with that particular group. After the first class, I sat in my car and cried. Then I realized I needed to really heal myself, so those girls could be my teachers. I came back and just got very humble with them. I didn't try to fix them, change them, I just loved them."

Her new mindset worked, and she found herself connecting with them as equals—a common theme in Corn's teaching is that empathy is only possible between equals, and true healing is only possible through empathy.

As her love for service grew, she became aware of the potential cycle of goodwill: Fame sells products, and cause-related products help people in need.

Corn formed her nonprofit, Off the Mat, following a visit to Africa as a YouthAIDS ambassador. Her yogic path continued to unfold when YouthAIDS asked her to travel to India to see their program. She and actress Ashley Judd, who is the Global Ambassador for YouthAIDS, spent a month in India where Corn taught yoga to impoverished prostitutes and learned about the sex-trade industry in India.

Moving together

The lessons Corn has learned as a yoga teacher and a YouthAIDS ambassador have combined with her natural ability to market. She created the Seane Corn brand almost by accident, but the lessons within it are useful for business owners: Be who you are, get your message out, walk your walk, and tell people how they can take part in what you do.

For retailers, Corn suggests they marry their ideals with their everyday business habits by finding products that support a cause close to their own hearts. Then the marketing side is simple—let customers know you are supporting that cause and why. Cause-related marketing works because people want to do the right thing, she says.

The Nike experience has made Corn an expert on something retailers deal

Eco-friendly, organic spa gift sets with CD



888-499-0044; 561-499-0044
www.justrelax.us.com

OREADE MUSIC

*Listen With
Your Heart*



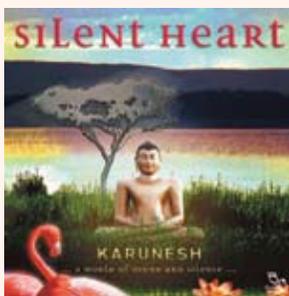
*Relax
Spa
Calm
Fresh*

This wonderful garden of music and natural sounds provides a perfect soothing background that is neither boring nor repetitive.

*Magic
Nature
Dream
Light*



Twenty years of magical music mixed with enchanting nature sounds, highlighting the best of Mike Rowland's career. It all started with the Fairy Ring, a worldwide standard album in the New Age genre.



*Peace
Serene
Insight
Prayer*

Using shakuhachi flute, wooden bass flutes, oboe, Tibetan singing bowls and keyboards, the music builds a dreamscape of soft and relaxing music with its heartfelt melodies.

FOR ORDERS: 888-673-2331
EMAIL: OREADE@WRIGHTFUL.COM



**FREE SAMPLER
AND CATALOG**
CALL: 828-884-4169
WWW.OREADE.COM

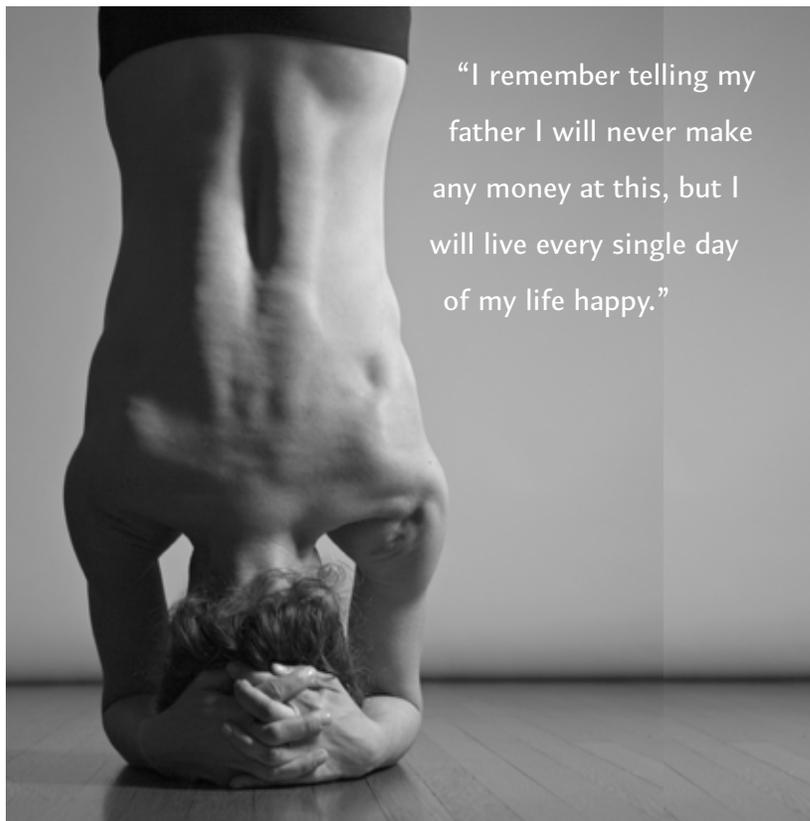
with day to day—reconciling their ideals with the curve-balls of real-life business decisions. Corn's decision to align with Nike for the greater good parallels the angst felt by store owners who have to make tough decisions—such as choosing the “Made in China” labels that flood the U.S. marketplace and displaying those items next to Tibetan malas and meditation bells. The parallel is that to keep a goodwill-based business going, the bottom line must eventually be considered, and items that are not Made in China are sometimes hard to find or far more expensive.

What should business owners do when those decisions have to be made within a tight budget, in ways that are not always 100% sustainable, fair trade, organic, and goodwill-based? Corn's advice is this: “You just have to do your best. Be very mindful. Make as many conscious choices as you can.”

She suggests telling customers “Here's what I'm doing. Here's why I'm doing it. Support this effort. Support the responsiveness of this business because this is what we're trying to do.” I really do believe people will invest in other people trying to do the right thing. If it is part of a business model to be fair trade, to be organic, to think locally, or to buy from grassroots manufacturers, then do it, and find a way to tell customers what you are doing. Let people know this is the business model you are committing to, and that commitment will attract a particular consumer who wants to support this kind of mindfulness. I know that's where I'd shop.”

Jana Hill is a freelance writer living on Camano Island, Wash.

inspired



“I remember telling my father I will never make any money at this, but I will live every single day of my life happy.”