



Alicia Roscoe in Conversation with Fleur Ostojack for BBC Radio Oxford, 27/04/20

Fleur Ostojack: Tonights Fitness with Fluer is offering your Yoga fix, and I love yoga. The reason why I do is because I know I will feel better afterwards. Everytime you think... 'oh should i work out, should i do this, should i do that..' Sometimes you just think, oh i just don't have enough energy. But with yoga you can take your time, do it at your pace and you always feel better afterwards. I know I do! I never regret a yoga session, even if that is just me doing it for two minutes. It just gives me the ability to stretch and to switch off. And to have that bit of *me* time, and it is perfect for when the news can feel too much at this moment. So, if you are looking for a class online the company called '&Sister' are offering them to keep you staying connected and healthy. Alicia is the founder and she joins me over the phone now.

Hey Alicia how are you doing?!

Alicia Roscoe: Hi Fleur! I am really well thank you.

FO: Good, good! So, I just wanted to ask how are you doing with life in quarantine first of all? How are you getting on?

AR: I am getting on well thank you. I practice yoga daily which really helps keep me grounded and positive during this time. I am also connecting with my clients which really helps me to keep some normality and just to see faces everyday, even though it is on a laptop via ZOOM, it still gives me that connection and that is what yoga is all about.

FO: I know what you mean and I do miss yoga classes, because it is all well and good doing yoga at home if you want to use YouTube, if you want to get some videos from there, or if you have got somewhere else where you get your yoga classes, but i just really miss everyone! Just the community of everyone in one room, feeling the same kind of strength and flexibility and when something is hard and we have a laugh over it. I miss that! I miss the togetherness of yoga.

AR: Yes, yes I do as well. I miss being able to adjust clients and actually being able to even give them a hug at the end or a massage. That is definitely missing, but doing it live together is definitely better than just going on YouTube and doing content that

is pre-recorded, there is something still special about seeing people in the present moment, if that makes sense? Sometimes you reach towards the screen and give each other virtual hugs and there's something about we are still all in it together and keeping that positive thought there that we will be practicing together at some point again soon.

FO: Exactly! Talk to me about why yoga is good for the body. I have spoken about yoga before on my show, I just think that everyone can do it! Some people think and say 'oh, i am really bad at yoga, I don't do it' and i just think well it is practice. You have just got to practice. There isn't really such a thing as good or bad at yoga, I think it's just whatever you want to do and whatever your body will allow you to do. So, I understand how it benefits the mind, it helps you stop, it helps you pause, but what does it actually do for the body? Because sometimes I will come out of a class aching, and I can't believe it!

AR: Well you are so right that there is no such thing as being bad at yoga, there is only just showing up and practicing. I started practicing and I couldn't even touch my toes, I was completely in-flexible naturally. But how it helps the body is the amazing combination of strengthening and lengthening. And the reason your muscles may ache a little afterwards is because you are just gently opening up and increasing your flexibility but without putting any stress on your joints. And. of course, the difference with yoga as opposed to other forms of exercise is that you're focusing on your breath and you're bringing yourself into that present moment. You're really experiencing the stretch so, when you're doing that, you're also being mindful, and so you are much less likely to injure yourself because you can really feel and have that connection with your body.

FO: Yeah. And so, tell me about &Sister Yoga during this time. Tell me more about what you do, before this virus came along. Tell me more about &Sister Yoga!

AR: So, i started &Sister Yoga in 2015, with my Sister, that is why it is called &Sister. Our aim was to bring people together and share the knowledge that we'd experienced through yoga and the healing that I had myself experienced. I actually started as a corporate lawyer in my 20s and had a lot of anxiety, depression, you know problems where I just felt whatever I did I couldn't come out or solve. Yoga seemed to be the answer for that and I wanted to bring that to other people. We have been running retreats for the last four years, mostly in Oxfordshire at a venue called Poundon House. Since the lock down we wanted to still be offering and sharing yoga classes, and so we have moved my taught yoga classes onto ZOOM and we have also been working really, really hard and bring together lots of our collaborators, as we genuinely collaborate with other brilliant teachers, chefs and practitioners, to bring a virtual retreat this weekend. We are really excited that it is going to be launching on the 1st May or starting on the 1st May, it just feels like a

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lovely date to set some intentions and practice yoga together.

FO: Lovely! It sounds really nice, so it is going to be an online retreat as you say isn't it? So, what can people expect? Can any one join?

AR: So yeah, anyone can join. It is open to everybody. We will be sending out a pre-retreat exercise & meditation to get people thinking about *why* they want to retreat, why they want to spend that time on their yoga mat or just more in a reflective mind. Then we will all come together (virtually) on the Friday, we will be able to meet and share our intentions for the retreat and then on Saturday morning we will be practising yoga together via ZOOM, then on Saturday evening we will be doing a cook-a-long together, we will be cooking a beautiful vegetarian curry. On Sunday we will be meeting again for a yoga class and gong bath, again via ZOOM. As well as that i have put together a retreat guide to guide everyone through it and obviously i will be available for people to talk to or whatsapp. But we are recommending that on the weekend people try to limit their screen times as much as possible, other than coming online to do the classes.

FO: mmm. How can people join? Where do they have to go? Are you on social media?

AR: Yes, so we have got an instagram account which is @andsister_yoga and also via our website which is just www.andsister.co.uk

FO: A fantastic way of getting everyone together as well isn't it?

AR: Yeah, it is going to be a really wonderful experience! I am actually feeling we ARE able to do a lot over online and hopefully this is going to be allowing people to do a retreat at home and knowledge will stay with them and they can recreate that whenever they feel they need to! The whole idea of our retreat, and is the feedback we have always gotten back from our guests, is that they do make incredible changes in their life after a retreat. There is a shift of energy and an energy, a positive energy, that allows them to make those changes and decisions in their life that may have been a little bit stuck before.

FO: Yeah, and i think that having a little bit of a pause, a breath, maybe just taking some time out to focus on what your mind is saying, what your body is saying and by just stepping on to a yoga matt, just speaks volumes for yourself! You don't have to tell anyone, it can be personal, and that is what i really like and cherish about yoga. So, thank you so much Alicia! I am hoping that you'll have a very good weekend with all the retreats, and people can find you online. Have a good evening okay?

AR: Thank you so much Fleur, thank you for calling! Goodbye!

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FO: No worries, speak to you soon! Bye! FITNESS WITH FLEUR.

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