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THE NEXT LEVEL

Meet a few of the local experts who dedicate themselves to bringing out the best in Palm Beachers.

BY JASON DAVIS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT NELSON

TOTAL AWARENESS

Connie Beaudoin, *yoga teacher*

Though yoga is enjoying a contemporary resurgence as an enlightened approach to a healthier body, its roots go back thousands of years as a method to free the mind and spirit. When the physical and spiritual elements are linked together, says certified yoga teacher **Connie Beaudoin**, the result is achievement of peace and harmony. Beaudoin, owner of the Palm Beach yoga shala Parasutra, says many people initially take up yoga as a unique way to stretch their muscles or lower their blood pressure but ultimately find something deeper—increased awareness as a natural byproduct of the ritualistic movement, breath work and meditation. “The physical practice is just a small part of yoga,” says Beaudoin, who has taught locally for 12 years. “The comprehensive approach allows us to unravel when we’ve tightly wound ourselves up.” This has proved especially beneficial for some of the island’s blue-chip business executives, who rely on yoga for serenity and focus. “The very tools they use to realize success in business are the same tools that are very powerful in their practice of yoga—dedication, commitment, vision,” she says. “I see so many people who begin living a life dedicated to awareness rather than accomplishments or anything else used to gauge

‘success’ in life. I love when their wives come to me and say, ‘Thank you for giving me my husband back.’” *parasutra.com*

QUESTION AUTHORITY

Minx Boren, *life coach*

Books, websites, talk shows ... when it comes to shaping and achieving personal and business goals, there’s plenty of advice in today’s marketplace of ideas. Though well-intentioned, most of it is arbitrary at best, says **Minx Boren**, a Palm Beach Gardens life coach who develops and facilitates programs that support health, balance and achievement. Peak individual performance isn’t a one-size-fits-all proposition: “We live less authentically when we’re following someone else’s advice because, really, we are the ultimate authority of our own lives,” she says. “I always ask, who’s authoring your life?”

Boren readily acknowledges she doesn’t offer answers, only provocative questions that enable people to find their own fulfillment. That’s what good coaches do, she says—they see the things others cannot see for themselves, and nurture critical thinking that leads to success. Feeling overwhelmed by demands on your time? Boren might suggest color-coding the obligations on your calendar, which can provide surprising

Connie Beaudoin is a certified yoga teacher and owner of Parasutra yoga studio.

insight into what you *think* is important vs. how you *actually* commit yourself. As an objective sounding board, paired with effective tools and techniques, she tries to foster positive change. “Some of our worst crises can present our best opportunities, and any time we can shine a light on what we’re doing, it’s very eye-opening,” Boren says. “Your best friend won’t challenge you, but a coach will.” coachminx.com

TOUGH LOVE

Chris Fix, *cycling instructor*

Most of us have a deep-seated need to suffer, insists **Chris Fix**, co-founder and chief instructor at the popular Velocity Cycling Studio in West Palm Beach. Not in a bad way, he says—just enough to appreciate when we make progress on the seemingly uphill road toward fitness.

Maybe that explains why nearly every workout session (approximately 24 per week) at his studio is packed with



Life coach Minx Boren (above); Chris Fix at Velocity Cycling Studio



people eager to pedal the extra mile or two or 10. “Cycling captures so many emotions,” Fix says. “It’s a sport built on suffering on many different levels, and you have to dig deep to make it worthwhile, but you are going to get through it.”

He isn’t talking about those low-impact spinning classes so popular at big-box gyms these days; indeed, his group and private classes simulate professional training conditions with climbs, surges and time trials designed especially for goal-oriented, Type-A personalities. Still, he insists, you don’t have to be Lance Armstrong to participate—even novices can benefit from the bike by working at their own pace while being encouraged to test their physical endurance and step beyond their mental comfort zone. “Your mind will get through the body’s suffering,” says Fix, who came down to the area from New York to visit family for Thanksgiving about four years ago and never left, “and you’re left with an incredible sense of accomplishment. It’s absolutely transformational.” vcyclingstudio.com

IN PURSUIT OF GREATNESS

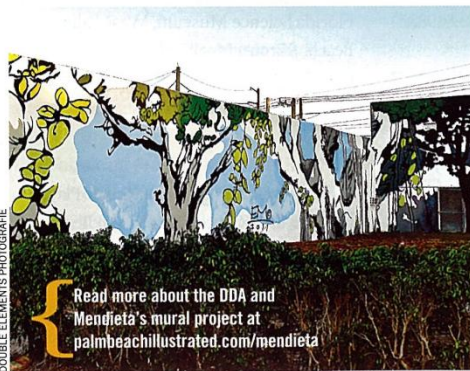
Roy Assad, *life coach*

“A breakthrough only occurs in the space of nothing.”

That is one of Roy Assad’s favorite mantras, for it illustrates that human beings can only reach their top potential by letting go—of the past, of expectations, of stresses, of grudges—and becoming blank canvases for the art of living. As a West Palm Beach-based life coach for the Human Capital Group, Assad has taught everyone from housewives to power brokers how to live their best lives.

“We teach greatness,” he says. “Forget the date or the raise or the new house. Become great at everything you touch, and all else will follow.”

agenda



DOUBLE ELEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHIE

Read more about the DDA and Mendieta's mural project at palmbeachillustrated.com/mendieta

CULTURE ♦ URBAN TOUCH

Eduardo Mendieta is beautifying downtown West Palm Beach, one mural at a time. The Downtown Development Authority gave the self-taught New Jersey artist creative control of the murals that have popped up over the past year on the sides of buildings in the neighborhood. Completed after the BP spill, the first mural features portraits of his daughter Amira, and represents hope and disappointment in the state of the planet left for the next generation. Another mural of banyan trees was inspired by his daughter Maya, and is a mix of graffiti and child's storybook. A third mural of 1960s cars was designed during the auto bailout and depicts the "Big Three"—Ford, Chevy and Chrysler. "It's always been a dream of mine to work in this kind of scale," says Mendieta. "I believe in public art. Art should be out for the public to see, not only in museums or high-end galleries." eduardomendieta.com —Lola Théline