



Text Annette O'Neil Photographs Angus Maresch

* awareness insight

Living a profoundly non-wasteful life

Off the mat, it's easy
to forget the preciousness
of every moment

What did you waste today? Not much, you'll insist. Recycling has become second nature to you. You already see that everything that comes into our lives has an inherent energy – a spark of worth that cries out not to be mindlessly discarded. Recycling (and choosing non-disposable items in the first place) shows consciousness of that spark. There's poetry to it, and you're happy to be part of that cycle.

Here's the thing: wastefulness isn't just an environmental issue. Living a non-wasteful life goes far beyond the act of righteously chucking one's recyclables into the proper bin. The challenge of profound non-wastefulness draws deeply on our experience as yogis.

Evaluate your wasted moments

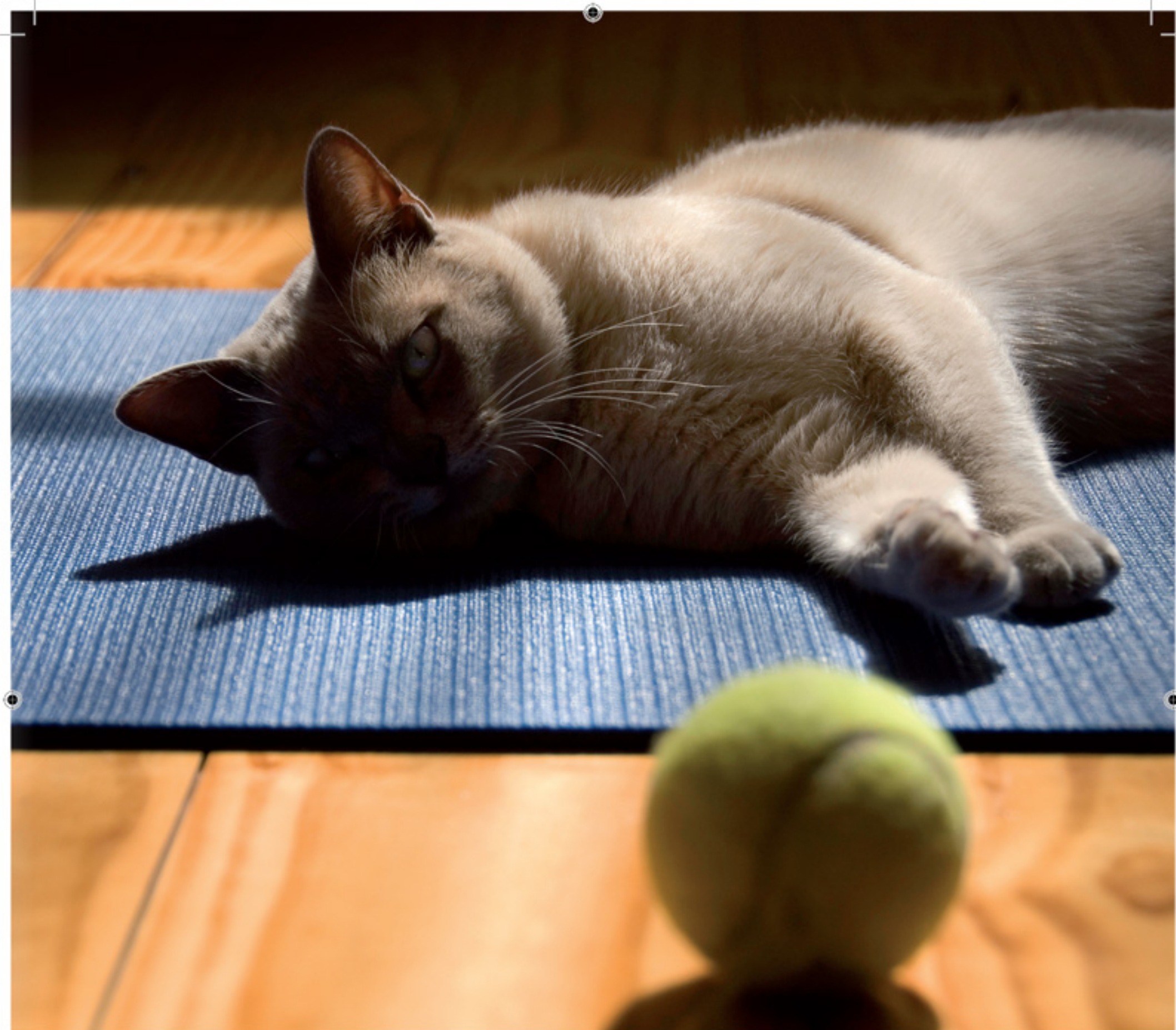
In the studio, it's easy to see that every moment is a choice. You have a limited amount of time to practice, and so you inherently know that you must commit to each asana (posture). You could, at any time, roll up the mat and leave the

room. This time is precious, however, and though the asana is challenging or the body less than willing, you make the choice to be fully engaged with your yoga. You spread your toes, breathe, and get yourself there.

Over-stimulated and under-aware, we crumple in front of the television and let the hourglass drain. We're tricked into seeing time as an inexhaustible resource until we're reminded (often through tragedy) of its short supply. In only addressing the day-to-day errands of life and discarding the time we could be allocating to deeper, more meaningful goals, we cheat ourselves out of so much richness. The key? Set your goals in these moments and connect with them, just as you connect with your asanas in class.

Clarify the choice

Without focusing on alternatives, it's easy to allow time to pass unnoticed. Try this: Jot down a quick list of actionable goals. Write down the old goals you gave up chasing. Write down some new, scary goals that push you further



than you're comfortable going. Get it all on paper. It may help to go into *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* (Supported Bridge Pose) for a moment to encourage the flow of ideas.

When done, you'll have drawn yourself a roadmap to your ideal self. Break it down into items that you can move forward with in small pieces – ideally, five or 10 minutes at a time – and commit to acting on them every day. (If your goal is to speak fluent French, this could mean completing a single unit of an online course.) Now, your list has become a manifestation of the choice you're presented with in each new moment: to discard that moment, or to utilise it. See the sacred investment inherent in each minute that flows past you.

It's important to note that this isn't an exercise in frustrating yourself with unachievable, pie-in-the-sky aspirations. It's not about identifying your worth through your accomplishments. It's about seeing that there's a moon up there to shoot for, and that you can consciously use the time you've been given. You can refuse to live wastefully.

Evaluate your wasted energies

Once you've mastered the mindfulness it takes to stop wasting the time left in your physical life, you might look forward. You may be more open to exploring the other kinds of waste you can eliminate – energy misapplied in anger and despair, for instance, or squandered in over-involvement

with unhealthy relationships. True non-wastefulness is conscious reverence of the worth of every gift you're given, whether that gift is a newspaper, a smile, or an hour of time on this earth.

You wouldn't want to throw that away, would you? Didn't think so... **YAA**



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