



# STEADFAST FREEDOM YOGA

## October 4, 1995: 17 Years Old - Yom Kippur Speech, New York

**Some people say it was never harder to be an adolescent.** This statement is certainly true, considering the violence, crime, guns, diseases, and the many other atrocious things adolescents have to deal with these days. **What are young people to believe?**

The answer to that question is complex. **My solution is to start solving these problems through education, the foundation of life.** In our school system, we are taught mathematics, history, and English, but are we taught the basic knowledge that most teenagers need to survive? I do not believe so! Education should not merely be memorization, tests and note taking. **Education is living, experiencing, and growing.** We as a community have to pull together in these tough times and try to reform the educational system. One possibility might be to introduce new classes in schools focused on teaching children about AIDS, gun control, and saving the environment, while Earth's breathtaking natural wonders still exist.

In just five years from now we are going to be jumping into the 21st century where technology is supposedly going to be paramount. **If we want to leap without landing flat on our faces, we better start doing something now! NOW is the crucial time in history where society can either flourish or despair.** If we despair, the life of our children and grandchildren will be horrifying. Will the Earth be a planet of toxic waste and infectious diseases, a place where living is a task rather than a pleasure? What are young people to believe?

**They are to believe that we can reform the "system." We can make changes. We can make the world a healthier place!** Many of you may be questioning the fact that you can personally make a difference. If every person here does his or her best to take a stand, write to Congress for better educational programs, volunteer a little Time to help those less fortunate, and put your best foot forward, WE WILL HEAL THE WORLD! **We all must work together and unite so our families' future generations will have something to believe in! They can believe in peace, harmony, and love.**

**Today is Yom Kippur, the start of a new year, 5756. Let us make it a year of action and a year of caring.** Let's THINK about other people, and by doing so, feel better about ourselves. Yom Kippur is about being forgiven for our sins. We should not only remember what we did in the past, but more importantly remember WHAT WE DID NOT DO!

In the words of Robert Kennedy, “Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends fourth a tiny ripple of hope...and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

May each and every one of us be inscribed for a blessing in the book of life!

La Shana Tova