



CONVERSATIONS

Emma Freud's legal highs: baby goat yoga

Emma Freud | Saturday September 05 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Share



Save



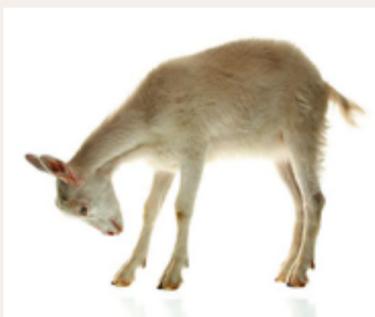
I have loved goats since Lucy and Mary the long-eared Anglo Nubians came to live with us in Suffolk in the Nineties. They smelt awful, but indiscriminately ate for Britain, which made them my sort of ladies. For example, we once put the final clue of a treasure hunt inside a small wooden box, wrapped it in paper, tied it up in gingham and attached it to Mary's collar. As the team arrived at the goat pen for the crucial clue, they watched the end of a ribbon disappearing into Lucy's mouth; she had devoured the entire package.



GETTY IMAGES

They ruined the afternoon, but my love of goats remained solid. So imagine my joy when I discovered a local baby goat yoga class, at which a herd of goats use yoga practitioners as new climbing apparatus, and a group of yoga practitioners use goats as a way to achieve a new level of heightened spiritual bliss, or "shanti".

I generally have issues achieving a high from yoga. It's not the spiritual discipline itself, but the immaculate, flexible women who practice daily in co-ordinated Lycra and never seem to sweat. I find it hard to discover my inner Zen while feeling like an upended tortoise, surrounded by leggy gazelles with their ankles effortlessly in a double bind behind their necks.



GETTY IMAGES

This new earthier, goat style of yoga made me feel hopeful. The location was a small paddock of cherry trees, with the heady, pungent scent of a farmyard and the occasional pile of goat dung between the mats. Nature and ancient wisdom fused in a slightly smelly union of big Lycra creatures (us) doing "downward goat" and tiny hairy creatures trying to climb on to our backs. Suddenly the gazelle ladies seemed less intimidating. We were all on the same spiritual level and by the end there was poo on every mat - even the posh ones from Sweaty Betty. One slight problem is that you can move a class into a paddock, but you can't take the omnivore out of the goat. My friend Emily began her session with an extravagant, shiny fringe. She ended it with a fraction of her bangs, the rest having been devoured during a cobra pose by a hungry descendant of Lucy and Mary.

It's no alternative to MDMA, but goat yoga is a loving, giddy experience. And the sheer joy of communing nature with ancient wisdom was omnipresent - even in the eyes of the animals as they watched 30 humans, on all fours in their front yard, behaving a bit like slightly stoned goats.

If laughter gives a natural high, there was a lot of that too, from all of us - except Emily.

eastonfarmpark.co.uk