

MATTHEW SANFORD BIOGRAPHY

*Mind-body integration is more than a personal health strategy.
It is a movement of consciousness that can change the world.* — Matthew Sanford

Matthew Sanford once led an ordinary life in a loving family. But at the age of 13, a devastating car crash took the lives of his father and sister and left him paralyzed from the chest down. Advice from his doctors to “forget his lower body,” however, was what really crippled Sanford, leading him to ignore his once-athletic body, until at age 25 he discovered yoga and the healing power of the mind-body connection. Now 42 and still paralyzed, Matthew has inspired and enhanced the lives of thousands as a nationally recognized yoga teacher, author, and a leading voice in the integrative health movement. His inspirational story proves that a mind-body approach to trauma and loss can enhance quality of life. He wants the world to know that healing is possible, even when a cure is not.

Sanford graduated with a BA in philosophy from the University of Minnesota, Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude, and received a Master of Arts from the University of Santa Barbara in philosophy. His pioneering work began in 1998 when he started teaching an adaptive yoga class for people living with a wide range of disabilities. Realizing all individuals could benefit from having a deeper connection between mind and body, Sanford founded **Mind Body Solutions** in 2001, a non-profit 501c(3) organization dedicated to his simple, yet universal message — minds and bodies work better together. The organization provides a vehicle for Sanford’s work and voice to reach audiences nationwide. Sanford delivers keynote presentations and teaches workshops at national yoga conferences and major yoga studios around the country; presents seminars to major health care organizations, including the Mayo Clinic and Sharp’s Hospital; and is a valued corporate speaker, bringing his innovative message to companies through speeches, workshops and programs, including *Bringing Your Body to Work*. Corporate clients have included Medtronic, Best Buy, Target and Cargill.

Sanford is using his pioneering experience with yoga, paralysis and disability to transform our current approach to rehabilitation, which includes a growing initiative for veterans. In 2007, Sanford served as a keynote presenter at **Donna Karan’s** Urban Zen Initiative, a forum that brought together renowned leaders in integrative medicine and healing therapies. He is currently spearheading a groundbreaking pilot program at Courage Center, a leading transitional rehabilitation facility in Minnesota, which incorporates a mind-body approach into the rehabilitation process while measuring outcomes.

Sanford shares his philosophy on the importance of the mind-body relationship in his critically acclaimed memoir ***WAKING: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence*** (Rodale 2006/paperback June 2008). In 2007, *Waking* received both a Minnesota Book Award and Northeastern Minnesota Book Award. A documentary on his life’s work is being developed.

Sanford received a Karma Yoga Award (2003) from the Yoga Journal for his work as founder of Mind Body Solutions, which also operates a yoga studio for traditional students. He also received the Judd Jacobson Memorial Award (2004) for his work with yoga and disabilities through the Courage Center and the prestigious Eleven Who Care Award (2007) from KARE-TV for his years of service teaching adaptive yoga in the community. Recognized as a national hero, Sanford was named the Quality of Life award winner in the 6th Annual [Volvo for Life Awards](#). Astronaut Dr. Mae Jemison presented Sanford with his award at a 2008 ceremony in New York City. Volvo will now contribute \$100,000 to Mind Body Solutions. The remarkable documentary created for the Volvo event can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

A documentary on Sanford’s life and work is currently being developed. Sanford lives in Orono, Minn., with his wife and business partner, Jennifer and their son, Paul. For more information visit: www.matthewsanford.com or www.mindbodysolutions.org