

voices

Author, paralyzed after car crash, offers insights on mind-body link

• Minnetonka yoga instructor Matt Sanford's book hits stores this week.

EDITOR'S CORNER
SAM BARNES



Pages 12 through 15 of Matt Sanford's new book, "Waking: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence," ought to be required reading for any driver, new or old.

The passage details more vividly than anything I have ever read how quickly, and irrevocably, a patch of ice — or any of a thousand other unforeseen dangers — can veer a moment on the highway into sudden disaster.

Matt was a 13-year-old boy in 1978, returning home to Duluth from a joyous Thanksgiving celebration with his family, when a patch of ice on an overpass sent the family car careening off Interstate 35 in Iowa. The car rolled over three times, front to back, down an embankment.

When it came to a rest, Matt's father was dead. Matt and his sister had been thrown from the vehicle; his sister died at the scene. His mother and brother were OK, but Matt was in a fight for his life. His back and neck were bro-



STAR TRIBUNE FILE

Matt Sanford teaches yoga as a way to foster what he calls the "energetic connection" between the mind and body — a subject he's explored intimately since he was injured in a car accident. His new book is titled "Waking: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence."

ken; he was paralyzed from the chest down.

Thus began a journey that would carry him through months of agonizing rehabilitation and, since then, decades of self discovery.

Today, Matt Sanford lives in Orono and runs a nonprofit called Mind Body Solutions in Minnetonka. He teaches yoga and through it his special understanding of the mind-body connection.

His book, published this week and available in area bookstores, is a beautifully written account of his story.

It is sobering, with its revelations of just how unbearable

human existence can become after such a physical trauma, yet reassuring, through its narrative of how one man can adapt and learn from his own experience what an entire medical establishment had told him not to believe.

That is, that there is an "energetic connection" between mind and body that transcends the nerve connections of the spinal cord — one that can guide the mind of any individual toward a greater understanding of himself and the world around him.

Today, Sanford teaches this connection through yoga, and he also uses his personal expe-

riences to present lectures for healthcare providers. His subjects include "Healing other than healing to walk again," "The intersection of yoga and rehabilitation," "Beyond bedside manner," and "Doctors, too."

The last two lectures in particular are intended to help physicians appreciate how critical is their personal role in the healing process — how even the stories they tell about subjects seemingly unrelated to their medical care can have a profound impact on a patient's recovery.

Sanford will be making appearances during the coming days to sign books and meet readers in the area. These include:

- The Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Minnetonka, 13131 Ridgedale Drive, at 7 p.m. Thursday.

- The Loft Literary Center, 1011 Washington Av. South, Minneapolis, at 7 p.m. July 6.

- The Marsh in Minnetonka, 15000 Minnetonka Blvd., 7 p.m. July 13.

Expect his book to do well. Reviews have been promising, and it was picked by Reader's Digest as an "Editors' Choice" selection for June.

Contact the writer at 612-673-7940 or at sbarnes@startribune.com.