



WINTER 2018-2019

NEWSLETTER

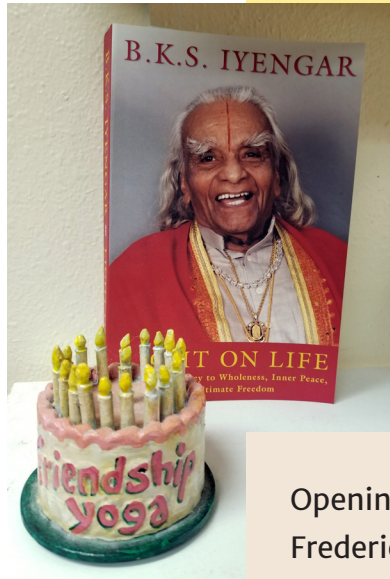
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www.friendshipyoga.com

From the Director

Nancy Footner
Certified Iyengar Yoga Instructor

B.K. S. Iyengar, through his 80+ years of intense, uninterrupted, and innovative practice reinvented classical yoga for the modern age. A creative and brilliant teacher, he developed a precise, erudite, and systematic methodology thereby bringing yoga to tens of thousands of people of all ages and abilities, throughout the world. In *Light on Yoga*, his classic text, Iyengar describes Yoga as a “timeless, pragmatic science evolved over thousands of years, dealing with the physical, moral, mental and spiritual well-being of man as a whole”. I am convinced that Yoga has become ubiquitous today because of B.K.S. Iyengar. No one in the world of Yoga will be as influential as he has been. His passing marked the end of an era, but he left behind a profound and enduring legacy.



Join us for a celebration

B.K.S. Iyengar Centenary
Iowa City Public Library,
Meeting Rm A
Saturday, December 15, 2018
3:30-5:00 pm

Opening remarks by Professor Frederick Smith. Followed by a showing of *Ultimate Freedom* a film demonstration by Mr. Iyengar in Ann Arbor in 1976

Birthday cake will be served.
We will also be celebrating
Friendship Yoga's 25th birthday!

Think Light! Try to impart a feeling of lightness to the body. Think light. This can be by mentally extending yourself outwards from the center of the body, i.e. Think tall. Think not of just raising your arms but of extending them outwards, and when you are holding them still, think again of reaching still farther away from your body. Do not think of yourself as a small, compressed, suffering thing. Think of yourself as expanding no matter how unlikely it may seem at the time – *B.K.S. Iyengar*

Save these dates:

May 31-June 2, 2019
21st Annual Friendship Yoga
Prairiewoods Retreat
with Bobby Clennell,
Senior Certified Iyengar teacher

Fairweather Lodge comes to Friendship Yoga

By Shea Velez-Westphal, Fairweather Lodge Coordinator

The Fairweather Lodge is a Shelter House program that provides permanent, supportive housing for adults struggling with persistent mental illness and homelessness. The intent of the Fairweather Lodge program is to provide support through a variety of interventions including activities that promote community involvement, mental health recovery and employment with Shelter House's microbusiness, Fresh Starts. All Fairweather Lodge members are employed part-time with Fresh Starts which contracts with local businesses to provide janitorial services.

As part of the community engagement component, in January of 2018, the Fairweather Lodge started an ongoing relationship with Friendship Yoga. Fairweather Lodge members attend weekly classes with Nancy Footner where they practice Iyengar Yoga to improve their health and wellbeing. Nancy has specially catered these classes to better suit the needs of Fairweather Lodge members who are often experiencing chronic pain. This is especially valued since many of the members have injuries and physical impairments that resulted from living with unstable housing for extended periods of time. Learning the Iyengar method with Nancy provides the Fairweather Lodge members an opportunity to resolve this pain, while becoming more in tune with their body.



Nancy's continued support of the Fairweather Lodge has even provided Fresh Starts with an additional contract with a weekly shift at Friendship Yoga. This contract has allowed the Fresh Starts business to expand and provides more employment opportunities for Fairweather Lodge members to develop their professional skills. The Fairweather Lodge members and staff appreciate all that Nancy has done to bolster the program's goals and mission and look forward to maintaining this relationship in the future.

Support Friendship Yoga's efforts to bring Iyengar Yoga to those who need it the most but can afford it the least, by making a donation to the Maitri Yoga Education Fund. You can read more about MYEF on www.friendshipyoga.com

Iyengar Yoga goes to the U (of Iowa)

By Jenn Bowen, Certified Iyengar Yoga teacher

Yamas (the universal great vows):

non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, avoidance of non-productive expenditures of energy, and non-greed)

Niyamas, (essential principles that foster

spiritual growth) (purity, contentment, fervor/discipline, study of the sacred texts and dedicated service without selfish expectations).

Teaching within an academic environment brings on a specific set of challenges. How do I assign students a letter grade in Yoga? Since it's important for all students of Yoga to understand that the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are the foundation for the study of Yoga, I decided to satisfy the university's course requirements by assigning readings on the first two limbs of Yoga. Students chose two of the principles and submit essays based on their personal

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The pains which are yet to come...

Kathy Gassman

I wasn't familiar with Patanjali's Yoga sutra 2.16 (The pains which are yet to come can be and are to be avoided.) when I signed up for my first yoga class at Friendship Yoga, but I had a similar idea in mind, albeit a less sophisticated, or gross/physical interpretation of the sutra. In *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, B.K.S. Iyengar states that "Patanjali is saying that yoga is a preventative healing art, science and philosophy, by which we build up robust health in body and mind and construct a defensive strength with which to deflect or counteract afflictions that are as yet unperceived afflictions."

The affliction that brought me to Friendship Yoga was most definitely perceived -- in 2005 I was seized by a bout of nostalgia upon seeing the Dr Scholl's sandals that I wore and cherished in the 1970s & 80s. The shoes which served me so well in childhood did unspeakable things to my lower back in my 30s. I knew that I didn't have the stoic fortitude of my mother, who suffered with lower back pain as far back as I can remember, and did so with the frightening grace known only to good Catholics, good mothers, good nurses, and good Cubs fans, of which she was all four.

I went on the offensive. I made an appointment with a highly-recommended chiropractor, Dr Jane Bourgeois. My dear friend Sarah suggested we sign up for yoga classes at the studio where her late mother practiced, Friendship Yoga. By the time the semester started, Sarah had

learned that she was pregnant with her second child, and she decided to forego the class. *Doing anything for the first time without a buddy* is one of my least favorite things to do, certainly a product of being the youngest of five, and always having an older sibling dragging me along to wherever they were going. I went to that first class by myself, a personal triumph and a testament to my resolve to avoid a lifetime of suffering through back pain.

In my copy of *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, I have written "not physical pain" next to the aforementioned sutra, a note likely taken in a workshop with Kristin Chirhart. B.K.S. Iyengar explicates that past pain is finished, current pain can be lessened to some extent by yogic practice and determination, and that future pains can be prevented by adhering to yogic discipline.

Sarah's youngest turned 13 this year, and I have managed to

avoid any chronic back trouble in those 13 years since my first yoga class. If ever I do inadvertently tweak my back, I have some tools to restore my back to healthy functioning through yogic discrimination, as well as the wise counsel of Dr. Jane, a fellow student.

But I have also over the past 13 years caught glimpses of Patanjali's true or subtle meaning of Sutra 2.16, as well as that of the scribbled note, "not physical pain". B.K.S Iyengar talks of Arjuna, the hero of Mahabharata, who begged Lord Krishna to grace him with divine perception so that he would be able to face the divine light; here is the warning from Patanjali: to stabilize our body and mind, so that we will be able to perceive divine light, and not be harmed by it when it dawns.



Connie Roberts, Friendship Yoga student since 1995



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FACEBOOK

Iyengar Yoga goes to the U (of Iowa)

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reflections. I have found the reception is seamless because college students expect academics and experiential learning to be entwined.

One benefit for me, as the teacher is that I can view the student's insights from their writings. Last year a student wrote he felt like his greatest gains came from the mental effort he put into getting out of bed on cold winter mornings and walking himself to class along an icy river. This mental perseverance helped him overcome other life obstacles. Other students report finding more routine in their lives overall, noticing they have a quieter mindset on days they practice and the effect this has on their focus in other classes. Some find improvement in their diet by eating at more regular times and reducing their meat intake. They also report improved sleep and sleep habits. It's exciting to witness them reap the benefits stemming from simple lifestyle changes sparked by the study and assimilation of Yamas, Niyamas as well as the yoga postures.

The college years are such a ripe time for curiosity and exploratory learning. I feel so grateful to be able to introduce the vast subject of Iyengar Yoga to this age group. For all of us who say, "I wished I could have started yoga sooner," we can find joy in knowing that on campuses around the Midwest college students are finding their way to Iyengar Yoga.

Corpse Pose

Give yourself plenty of room, she says, start with your knees bent, then slowly let them go until you are only

a piece of silk floating down to accept the support beneath you. Let your fingers uncurl; soften any tightness in your jaw

and if a thought occurs, let it be like a cloud passing through your mind, each exhalation taking you closer

to nothing. She makes it sound so easy and I hope it is, like sliding a boat into water. —Carol Tyx

Lasting Impressions

from the 2018 Fall Workshop
with Laurie Blakeney



Laurie, stands "on high" to support Nora's ustrasana.

When I attend class with a senior Iyengar teacher, I watch and listen for new ways to address any persistent issues that typically challenge students.

Laurie Blakeney helped us to 'polish' our poses. I'll be processing my insights (and more) as I practice and introduce them to my students in the months to come.

—Robert Gadon, Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher

I appreciate Laurie's gentle "matter of fact" way of teaching. She puts me at ease and the result is greater (self) confidence. —Kari Gerst

Laurie showed us "work arounds", ways to overcome difficulties and make progress. My take away came after the workshop was over as I feel my mind has opened to being more flexible and I find myself utilizing "work arounds" in my daily life. —Linda Meredith

I remembered Laurie saying something like "it'll take 3 years to even "get it," to vaguely understand yoga, and that's ok." This resonated with me, and I'm happy that I'm moving into year two and look forward to learning more as I continue to practice. —Nicole Becker

As a beginning yoga student, I was apprehensive about attending an intensive, multi-day workshop; assuming I would be far out of my league. I did not feel out of place due to my inexperience. In fact, I felt motivated to extend my efforts thru gentle, humorous and intelligent guidance.

—Sue Riedl

I vividly recall Laurie urging us on patiently, telling us that elbows can bend in all sorts of directions because we are human, and saying we need to "work with what we have" when it came to how our bodies moved. Laurie kindly reminded me that it's ok to shake a little bit when you're as flexible as I am. —James Shepherd