

YogaRosa

I discovered Iyengar Yoga in 1995 in Hallandale Beach when my aerobics teacher didn't show up. Reluctantly, I walked into a small room with bikes on one side. I wasn't going to stay, but two senior citizens and a tiny woman with a sweet smile welcomed me and asked if I was there for the yoga class. The teacher was Marilyn Rubin, and I had no idea this class would shape me for the rest of my life. I didn't understand her instructions, or the shapes she was making my body perform. All I know is that something about those shapes captured my mind.

In 1998 I went to the 80th Birthday celebration of BKS Iyengar in Pune. He spoke about the soul, the intelligence, and saw a whole new world. One that spoke to my heart like nothing before. I bought all his books, and every morning after feeding my three preschool-age daughters breakfast, I took out one of the boxes of toys that only came out during my yoga time. My daughters would play beside me as I studied *Light on Yoga* and practiced what I had learned from the Master. When I chanted the invocation to Patanjali, my daughters would run around me, copy some of the words and laugh. They would crawl under me in Adho Mukha Svanasana, and look at *Light on Yoga*, pick a pose, copy him, and tell me how easy yoga was. I would usually get 30-40 minutes of practice before they were ready for something else.

I realized I needed a space to practice, and wondered how many other mothers were out there who needed a break from the duties of motherhood. In 2001, I opened Yogarosa. My intention was to have a studio with many styles of yoga, since there weren't many Iyengar Yoga Teachers in the area. Although we offered many styles of yoga with great teachers, the students were more drawn to Iyengar Yoga. In 2006, I created the first Teacher Training in my area led by Mary Dunn, Dean and Rebecca Lerner, and Professor Edwin Bryant teaching us philosophy. We had 40 students sign up, and out of those, we ended up with 10 certified Iyengar Yoga Teachers. When Mary Dunn passed away, we were all heartbroken, but felt so fortunate that she sprinkled some seeds that over the years have sprouted.



Yogarosa became a hub of Iyengar Yoga, hosting teachers from around the world, including Gabriella Giubilaro, and RIMYI teacher Devki Desai. We learned from Patricia Walden, Kevin Gardiner, Eddy Marks, Mary Obendorfer, and more. I witnessed beginner students become intermediate students, teachers, and studio owners. Our classes were always accessible and inclusive. Our students were Russian, Brazilian, Israeli, spoke many languages, and came from many walks of life. The multi-millionaires took classes with those who were on full scholarships, and everyone got along. We hosted a yearly Holiday Potluck, which everyone looked forward to, and exchanged recipes. We hosted a clothing swap, to foster recycling, and donated lots of clothing to the local homeless shelter. Our studio hosted musicians, art workshops, lectures, meditations, and even an Itsy Bitsy Yoga class for new moms.

Opening a business is never easy, but there are two women who were fairy godmothers for me along the way. Bobbi Goldin (whom I met in India in line for the bathroom!), from the Yoga Institute of Miami and Marti Parker Krauss, of Boca Yoga, guided me and advised me about running a yoga school, and became my dear sweet friends. They taught me to be ethical, to help those who can't afford classes, and to work as a team and with community.

The pandemic forced us to close the brick-and-mortar space, but our community has stayed strong, practicing online. We organized props for those who needed them, and our students have become more independent and focused, and are now practicing more than ever.

