



THE ART OF TEACHING

"While the Iyengar tradition is a very methodical approach, it is not intended to be rigid. There is tremendous freedom within its structure. As a teacher, I want students to understand not only the method and its structure but also the freedom and the creativity that is at the heart of this rich tradition."

Sharon Conroy

The Teacher

Sharon Conroy began to practice in the Iyengar tradition in 1986 and is certified as a Junior Intermediate III teacher. She opened the first Iyengar Yoga Center in New Orleans twenty years ago and taught there until Katrina.

As the first certified teacher in Louisiana, Sharon apprenticed a number of students who became certified teachers. She has conducted teacher training weekends since 1996 in both Louisiana and Florida and has conducted yearlong programs since 2007.

In addition to her practice of asana and pranayama, Sharon is dedicated to studying the yoga sutras, and this has led to her writing. From 2005-2008, she wrote the sutra column for the IYASE newsletter, and since 2006 she has written an article for each issue of the IYNAUS newsletter, *Samachar*. Writing has become a practice in its own right, providing Sharon with another way for Sharon to deepen her understanding of yoga. It has also had the unexpected side benefit of making Sharon more aware of the language she uses when teaching.

Sharon studies in Pune with the Iyengar family on an annual basis and was present to honor Guruji on his 90th birthday in December, 2008. She has been a student of Patricia Walden for twenty years and has assisted her at many retreats as well as in her two year teacher training program in Cambridge,

2005-2007. Sharon is especially grateful to Patricia for encouraging her to do teacher training. Through it, she has come to know how much she enjoys sharing her understanding of teaching in the Iyengar tradition with others.

The Students

To participate, you need to have studied yoga in the Iyengar tradition for at least two years. You also need to have a regular home practice.

The primary focus of the program is to help both aspiring and experienced teachers refine and deepen their understanding of the Iyengar method of teaching asana.

During the program, all students are expected to take a weekly class with a certified Iyengar teacher, maintain a regular practice of asana and pranayama, and complete homework assignments in a timely manner. If you do not have a certified teacher within an hour's drive, please discuss other options with Sharon.

The Program

The program consists of three weekends. Students will be given homework prior to each weekend and will work together on both Saturday and Sunday from 10AM to 6PM with a 90 minute break for lunch.

BKS Iyengar tells us that we are to teach from our own practice. In other words, being firmly established in a home practice is a prerequisite to teaching. We teach what we learn from our practice. And, once we start teaching, our interest in our own practice often increases. With home practices in place, the primary focus of our time together will be to explore the art of teaching in the Iyengar tradition.

The overall aim of the program is to help each participant come to a deeper understanding of how to teach the poses

on the syllabus with which they are working in preparation for an Iyengar assessment.

BKS Iyengar has developed a highly effective method of teaching asana. However, just as it takes many years to mature in our practice and understanding of the standing poses, it also takes many years for us to mature as teachers in our understanding of the individual components of this teaching method. Just as we learn to use our bodies in increasingly more precise ways in our practice of asana, we learn to use language in increasingly more precise ways as we mature in our teaching.

Each of the three weekends will focus on deepening and clarifying our understanding of one component that defines the Iyengar method of teaching. In doing so, we will be learning how to use language more skilfully and more precisely.

Teaching peers and receiving feedback from a more senior teacher is one of the important ways that we improve as teachers. While about half of our time will be spent peer teaching and working in small groups, participants will also be involved in a variety of other activities each weekend. There will be an asana class both days, a scheduled time for Q & A, and a scheduled time for philosophy discussion.

The Art of Demonstrating a Pose for the First Time October 10-11, 2009

The art of a first demonstration lies in finding effective words to capture the geometry and/or essence of a new pose. We want our demonstration to dynamically entice students to work with the new pose. Participants will develop and then refine their ability to do this for the poses on their syllabus. They will learn how to- make careful choices about what to have students watch, coordinate their body movements with their words, and use their voice skilfully.

The Art of Finding and Teaching the Primary Actions for a Pose January 16-17, 2010

This second weekend will focus on two very important aspects of teaching a pose for the first time. First, what do we want to see happening in a particular pose? What are our priorities for the pose? Second, what are we going to teach students so that they manifest these priorities in their own pose? What actions will we teach them? How do we instruct our own body when we practice to achieve these priorities? What language can we use to most effectively express those actions?

The Art of a Second Demonstration & Teaching a Correction/Refinement or a Moving Along Action March 6-7, 2010

As we teach a pose for the first time, we want to be able to see whether our students are actually doing what we ask them to do. If they aren't, we want to show them what they need to do differently. If they are, in fact, doing what we asked them to do, then we want to give them a new action that will move them deeper into the pose. At the heart of the second demo is our ability as teachers to see our students clearly while we are teaching them. We can develop this skill by learning how to look at our students carefully and systematically when they are in an asana. We'll work together in different ways to develop and refine our ability to see. And, we'll practice the art of doing second demonstrations and teaching a correction or a moving along action.

Assignments

Over the course of the three weekends, you'll work with many, if not all, of the poses from your syllabus. Assignments will focus on 10-15 of those poses each time. By the end of our time together, you will have written first demonstrations, decided upon priorities and tendencies, and determined primary actions for many of the poses on your syllabus. And, you will

have developed a clearer understanding of how to go about doing these things for the poses with which you didn't work. There will also be written assignments on various aspects of yoga philosophy as well as sequencing assignments.

Tentative Schedule

10:00am-12:30pm Asana Class

12:30pm-2:00pm Lunch

2:00pm-3:00pm Philosophy and/or Q&A

3:00pm-6:00pm Teaching

Goals for Participants

It is my hope that by the end of our three weekends each participant will-

- .clearly understand the difference between a demonstration and teaching
- .be able to distinguish between an initial demonstration and a teaching demonstration and do both more effectively
- .be clear about how to set priorities for the poses on the syllabus with which you are working
- .know how to find appropriate actions to teach that will help students achieve, or move towards, these priorities
- .be able to see students more clearly
- .understand what a second demonstration and the second teaching of a pose entails and do both more effectively

In preparing the class assignments, participants will have created a workbook of sorts for many of the poses on their syllabus. This workbook can be a useful reference in preparing for an assessment. While you may still have poses to work on, you will have developed a better understanding of what might be useful to put in such a workbook and will hopefully be inspired to finish the work for any poses that were not addressed over the course of our time together.

The Location

All classes will take place at Yoga on 30A in Grayton Beach, Florida. Grayton Beach is nestled between two state parks off scenic Hwy 30A. It is less than a day's drive from many parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee. It is an hour from the Ft Walton airport and also an hour from the Panama City airport.

Cost

If you register by August 15, 2009, the cost for the three weekends is \$900. To reserve a place, send in the registration with a deposit of \$300.

If you register after August 15, 2009, the cost for the three weekends is \$960. To reserve a place, send in the registration with a deposit of \$360.

The balance of payments for everyone will be as follows-

- .the second installment, \$300, will be due October 1st
- .the third installment, \$300, will be due January 1st.

If you need to make other arrangements, please contact Sharon via email at riverwalker@mchsi.com or call (850)502-1104.

Space is limited to 12 participants. If you withdraw on or before September 1st, whatever you have paid will be refunded less a \$150 administrative fee. If you withdraw after September 1st, your fees, less \$150, will be refunded provided your place can be filled.

What the Students Say

Here is what a few of the students who participated in the last series of weekends have to say-

Sharon Conroy's teacher training not only made me a better teacher but it also inspired me to become a better student. Her classes made me want to practice more, and to do so with more curiosity. Now, I feel more confident in my teaching because of what I learned in my own practice. Also, the Intro assessment doesn't terrify me anymore! I am feeling more and more comfortable with the assessment process because of the weekends I've spent with Sharon. There is certainly a well-thought out methodology to Sharon's teaching that has helped me better understand the brilliance of the Iyengar method.

Rachel Mathenia, Nashville, TN
Assessed Teacher in Training 2008
Candidate Introductory 2010

These weekends have clarified my understanding of each of the poses on my syllabus, as well as ways to teach the poses. I learned a tremendous amount when I was practice teaching, but I also learned from watching others practice teach and receive feedback. Sharon presented an excellent framework that has helped me begin to learn what aspects of a pose to teach to a particular group of students and how to teach them. Learning to establish priorities for each pose has done more for my teaching than anything else, although I probably wouldn't have gotten so much out of it, if it weren't for the hard work we put in on the geometry of each pose. I feel confident that I can be prepared for assessment by continuing to work in this way.

Julia DeHoff, Tallahassee, FL
Candidate Teacher in Training 2010

The program is thorough and complete, and I gained insight into the poses on my syllabus. There was ample opportunity to teach, receive feedback and ask questions. In addition, I learned a lot from Sharon's observations of the students in the poses and the modifications that were given. Sharon is an inspirational teacher, and I highly recommend the training!!!

Becky Estes, Nashville, TN
Assessed Teacher in Training 2008
Candidate Introductory 2010

REGISTRATION FOR THE ART OF TEACHING

Name

Street

City, State, Zip

Telephone: work

home

cell

Email

Would you like to know more about local housing possibilities?

Please answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper and return it with your registration. Your answers don't have to be long.

1. Why do you want to participate in this program? Are there particular things you are hoping to work on/learn?
2. Who is your regular teacher(s)? How often do you study with her/him?
3. How long have you taken classes in the Iyengar tradition?
4. Please describe your current asana practice. How often and for how long do you practice? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practice?
5. Do you have a pranayama practice? If so, please describe it.
6. Are you currently teaching? If so, how long have you been teaching? If not, are you apprenticing with someone or have plans to start teaching?
7. Have you already passed the teacher in training assessment? If not, do you have plans to be assessed in the next year or so?
8. Do you have any chronic injuries or other challenges?
9. Is there anything else you'd like Sharon to know?

To reserve a place, please mail your answers to these questions, the registration, and a check for \$300, before August 15th, and \$360, after August 15th. Make your check payable to Great White Heron and mail it to Sharon Conroy, P.O. Box 1751, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459