



Dear {FIRST\_NAME} ,

Greetings in the new year. Much is changing, much will remain the same. I hope the truth you find in your practice aligns you solidly with what must be let go of and what must be held tight. Thank you to Elizabeth Kerwin for the archival photos below, from a collection entitled "Sweet Memories." Use as necessary!



### Student Spotlight

*Renee Razzano, student of Iyengar Yoga since 2002 and CIYT, is our new interviewer for the monthly "Spotlight" piece. Renee lives in San Francisco, and this month she talked to "Yogi Zain."*

**Renee Razzano: What inspired you to become a Certified Iyengar Yoga teacher?**

Zain Syed: The principles of Iyengar Yoga teaching are so brilliant that I yearned to be certified to honor these principles and techniques. The more gratitude I received from students about my teaching the more I felt I had to be certified so as to give credit where credit is due, which is always



B.K.S. Iyengar and the Iyengar family. Once I became certified I felt blessed to carry a ray of light from this family and brighten the world with the practice of yoga.

**RR: How does your experience of being an immigrant relate to your practice of yoga? How about your experience of being a Pakistani American in particular?**

ZS: To be honest, it has no effect. My identity as an immigrant is only effected when in relationship to others.

I've noticed a shift in people's energy – with western white yogis, particularly – when they find out I'm not Indian – something they may sort of imagine an idealized yoga "teacher" to be – and then hearing I'm Pakistani there is a pause and surprise. It's akin to the feeling when at the airport, going through TSA, you feel that suspicion of being profiled because of your Pakistani/Muslim background, which I find sort of comical. When I tell an Indian person, or another South Asian, that I'm a Pakistani American the usual response is "why, of course" as in, okay, we just had to figure out which side of the made up borders of our subcontinent we are from, and we move onto the next conversation of getting to know one another. I would love to see more Pakistanis, and South Asians in general, practicing in studios and at workshops.

**RR: How did you get involved with the prison yoga project? How is the experience of teaching at San Quentin different from teaching elsewhere?**

ZS: It feels like fate to me – I happened to be at a meditation center gathering when there was a request for a male person of color to teach in a prison. I connected with James Fox, the founder, and took over his class at San Quentin in 2012. Yoga in a prison is like no other class I've taught elsewhere. It's my only class with all men and it is great to see them take interest in the subject.

Building trust with the guys is just as important as elsewhere. Language plays a key role. Actions like arms up or hands behind your back can have a different connotation at first. Or the words "past" or "life" or "time" can be heard differently than when we think of past life time. So the experience has taught me to teach people not poses. To meet them where they are and not get caught up in the technical aspects of practice.

Going to San Quentin every week is a reality check for me to be grateful for the privileged life I have, the family I have, the teachers I have, the friends I have. I always walk away with a tender heart and remind myself to not get worked up about petty problems.

**RR: I'm aware you were personally impacted by the recent Ghostship warehouse fire in Oakland. Has your practice of yoga provided support as part of your grieving process, either solo or with other people?**

ZS: My practice has served as a strong rock to keep me grounded as much as I can with my undulating emotions of deep sorrow and loss. For the first few weeks I was apprehensive to do back bends and yearned for long, deep forward folds. Teaching, to my surprise, was a sobering experience and cleared my head space. Holding a healing space for others, not to be caught in my own mind during even the most darkest of times, had a healing effect on myself. I see bodies differently and faces differently, eye contact and touch feels different, knowing how short and precious our time is while alive.

**RR: You've got real talent and savvy with social media. What are your thoughts about the potential uses of social media for sharing yoga?**

ZS: My use of video sharing online is inspired very much by B.K.S. Iyengar's efforts to spread yoga across the world. He performed yoga as an artist and made the practice look fancy and fun. He attracted many audiences across the globe and gained their attention. So part of my mission on social media has become to make Iyengar Yoga look and feel cool because that is exactly what it is for me — anything but boring. My intention behind posting is nothing more than love for yoga. Following Mr. Iyengar's artistry, I share my creativity with my body as a painter would with their canvas or a musician with their instrument. It is also a practice of *Svadyaya* and *Vairagya*. To not be attached to the fruits of our labors, so in the case of social media, the number of likes, comments, or shares. I am grateful for support from the online community of yogis.

**Find more "Student Spotlights" to print or share on your social media at:**

[https://iynaus.org/sites/iynaus\\_files/eblast-assets/Student-Spotlight-October-2016.pdf](https://iynaus.org/sites/iynaus_files/eblast-assets/Student-Spotlight-October-2016.pdf)  
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## Why do YOU like Iyengar Yoga?

### A Note from Shaaron Honeycutt

Help us start a movement AND get the word out about Iyengar Yoga. Let's not keep it a secret any longer! How to be a part:

- Create a minute-long video on your phone (give or take a few seconds) about what you like about Iyengar yoga. Tape your students! Ask anyone who will stand still long enough!
- Post it to your Facebook or Twitter or Instagram and use the hash tag #whyyengaryoga or send it to me at [socialmedia@iynaus.org](mailto:socialmedia@iynaus.org) and we'll see that it gets posted!

Remember to follow us on

- [Facebook](#) -  
- [Twitter](#) -  
- [Instagram](#) -  
- [You Tube](#) -

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## Yoga for Depression From the Research Committee

Please use the findings and graphic displays of research in your studio, on your social media platforms, and in your practice! There are so many excellent studies showing the efficacy of Iyengar Yoga on physical and mental health.

Find more at [iynaus.org/research/research](http://iynaus.org/research/research).

Questions or comments for the research committee? Contact [Kathy](#).



## Board Business

After the IYNAUS board's two in-person meetings, we put out "[Bulletins](#)" to let you know what was discussed and acted upon in the meetings. To read about the November 2016 meeting held in Chicago, click [here](#).

One of our other responsibilities is to let members know of any changes to our bylaws. Here is a recent change that was voted upon by the board, described by President Michael Lucy.

At its meeting in November 2016, the IYNAUS Board voted to make some small changes to Article VII, Section 4 of the IYNAUS bylaws, which deals with the election of the IYNAUS Executive Council, a subset of the full board.

The previous version of that section read:

NOMINATION, ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

The Board will establish election procedures to elect members of the Executive Council from within its members. The Executive Council will consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers up to nine (9) in total.

The Term of Office for each member of the Executive Council shall be four (4) years and one half of the members will be elected every other year. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. Members may be eligible for re-election after the passage of four years. All committee appointments are for four (4) years. The Certification Chair as the ninth member of the Executive Council shall serve no more than one four (4) year term. To assure a consistent knowledge base, the outgoing Certification Chair may overlap for a transitional year with the incoming Certification Chair.

The new version, approved by the board last November, reads:

NOMINATION, ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

The Board will establish election procedures to elect members of the Executive Council from within its members. The Executive Council will consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers up to nine (9) in total.

The Executive Council will be elected every two years, in November of even-numbered years. The Term of Office for each member of the Executive Council shall be two (2) years. No member may serve more than four (4) consecutive two-year terms. Members may be eligible for re-election after the passage of one year. All committee appointments are for four (4) years. The Certification Chair as the ninth member of the Executive Council shall serve no more than one four (4) year term. To assure a consistent knowledge base, the outgoing Certification Chair may overlap for a transitional year with the incoming Certification Chair.

The change is intended to give a chance for a wider pool of Board members to serve on the Executive Council during their time on the Board. IYNAUS members have 30 days to comment on the change. Please send any comments to [president@iynaus.org](mailto:president@iynaus.org)

The IYNAUS Bylaws can be consulted at <https://iynaus.org/iynaus/iynaus-bylaws>

As always, I welcome your feedback and hope you'll [stay in touch](#).

Take care,  
Denise Weeks  
IYNAUS Publications Committee Chair

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