

## Roots – The What, Where, Why, How and When of Infinite Yoga...

By Dana Rae Paré – Founder and Creative Director



*"When I was designing the schedule at Infinite, I thought names like Foundation, Core & Restore and Soul Vinyasa were much more interesting than Yoga Level 1, 2, 3, etc. I wanted the names to reflect the feeling and format of the class and mesh well with our urban, downtown yoga sanctuary..."*

I also thought that most people wouldn't understand the traditional Sanskrit names, but lately I keep having students ask me "What style of Yoga is this?" or better yet... "Is this anything like xxx Yoga"??? Which, along with my recent yoga teacher training, sparked the idea for this article. I'll be as clear and concise as possible and hopefully answer a few of your questions.

**Knowledge is Power**, so here we go...

### Yoga Tradition

All traditional forms or styles of yoga originated in India over 4,000 years ago. No one is certain exactly, as all yoga was passed down verbally from teacher to student... It wasn't until 2000 years or so ago that "**The Sutra's of Patanjali**" became the first written document on yoga and the yoga lifestyle. In his Sutras Patanjali describes the 'eight limb' path (Ashtanga) of yoga that comprises many aspects beyond the simple physical asana practice. His book is still used extensively by yoga teachers to this day including my Teacher Training.



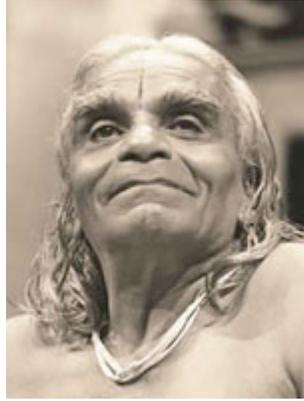
T Krishnamacharya

Moving on rather quickly to just over 100 years ago, we come across one of the greatest yogi's in living memory – **T. Krishnamacharya**.

His teachings spawned 3 brilliant yoga masters: the late **K Pattabhi Jois** (Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga), **BKS Iyengar** (Iyengar Yoga), and **TKV Desikachar** (Yoga Therapy). Each studied with Krishnamacharya at different stages of his life and each developed a new path for yoga, but with roots firmly planted in the great master's teachings.



Pattabhi Jois



BKS Iyengar



TKV Desikachar

### **Still following? It comes together now...**

The unique path of Infinite Yoga combines influences and inspiration from all 3 styles, but the source of all our classes is Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga. Some of our classes follow the strict traditional sequence of Ashtanga Vinyasa, while other classes use inspiration from Iyengar or Desikachar's yoga therapy. Our combination enables students to practice and continue to progress in yoga, regardless of their age, experience or physical challenges - making Ashtanga Vinyasa accessible to all.

### **Here's a very brief description of each of the 3 styles:**

**Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga:** A "breath-fueled" set sequence of asanas in a continuous flow with precise rhythm, movement and number of breaths ("vinyasa") as well as a particular focus of the eyes (drishti) and internal energy locks (bandhas). A dynamic and powerful practice.

**Iyengar Yoga:** Many of the same postures (asana) of Ashtanga Vinyasa, taught at a slower pace with emphasis on detailed alignment. Known for its verbal precision, adjustments, and use of props. Designed to enable all levels and ages to practice throughout various stages of life.

**Yoga Therapy:** Taught one to one with a huge emphasis placed on breath and postures being adapted to each student on an individual basis. Each student is given a prescribed program based on their needs and capabilities, often includes pranayama (breath work), Mantra (chanting) and yoga philosophy (Patanjali's Yoga Sutras).

### **So back to the beginning again. Now that you know what kind of yoga you are doing, why does it matter? and what's in it for you?**

By combining these different styles of yoga you have a broader base to work with and continue to grow and progress. With all 3 coming from the same source there is no conflicting information from class to class, or from IY teacher to IY teacher (more on teachers soon).

### **It is easier to understand and see how it applies to you if you glance down the list of classes and check out the style that "inspired" their formats.**

**Foundation:** based on the breath of Ashtanga (Ujjayi) combined with the precision of Iyengar. Emphasis is placed on alignment, use of props, and developing more body awareness (lifting kneecaps!).

**Ashtanga All levels:** Half Ashtanga Vinyasa, half Iyengar inspired. Features the stamina and strength building Ashtanga Vinyasa sequence taught with the traditional rhythm and breath for the first half of class. Second half of class breaks down the more

challenging postures in a more Iyengar influenced way via precise alignment details, prep postures, props, and a slightly slower pace.

**Soul Vinyasa** Ashtanga Vinyasa, Yoga Therapy & Me. A flowing class based on the literal meaning of vinyasa from the roots of Krishnamacharya. "Vi" "nyasa" or special placing refers to impeccable sequencing combined with a hot soundtrack, a bit of my dance background and a weekly meditative focus.

**Ashtanga Level 3/4** Traditional Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga – no getting around it. It's the pure primary series of Ashtanga. A continuous uninterrupted flowing series, each breath is counted precisely in Sanskrit throughout this dynamic class. With dedicated practice and proficiency primary series becomes a moving meditation with tremendous mental focus.

**Mysore** The "Traditional 3/4" class (above) is the way that K Pattabhi Jois would verbally lead a class. This rarely happened except when he was on tour outside India. If you study at his school in Mysore, India, you learn yoga step by step, one posture at a time - the "Mysore way". Students move on to the next posture only when the previous one has been mastered. At Infinite's Mysore class we preserve this traditional method, and adapt it with TKV Desikachar's yoga therapy approach. For most students this means following the traditional series step by step, posture by posture, with no exceptions. But for students dealing with injuries, pregnancy, and other limitations, individual attention and guidance is provided. (Similar to working with a teacher privately where prep postures, modifications and props are used to help the student progress.)

**Core & Restore** teaches the essence of Ashtanga, the breath and bandhas, which truly is the 'Core of Ashtanga'. This class is also inspired by Forrest Yoga. Forrest Yoga was created by Ana Forrest and is known for its emphasis on breath, intense corework, and pain-free backbending. All followed by deeply relaxing Restorative Yoga (Iyengar) where you surrender, let go and let your mind and body unwind.

**IY Improv:** Ashtanga Vinyasa, Iyengar, Forrest. Explores the more challenging postures of Primary (1st), Intermediate (2nd) and Advanced A (3rd) Series of Ashtanga in an improvisational unique format. Combines prep postures, longer holds, deeper breath and intense focus. Inspired by Iyengar and Forrest Yoga with precise step by step details and impeccable sequencing at a slightly slower pace. Move beyond boundaries and deepen your understanding of Ashtanga and yourself.

***So there you have it, the IY class schedule, deeply steeped in tradition, with creative formats to bring understanding, balance, longevity and fun to your yoga practice and yoga progress!***

#### **What about the IY teacher's roots?**

OK, here it is, the IY family tree of our teacher's and our teacher's teachers. First a quick review of all the teachers mentioned: T. Krishnamacharya (the source), K Pattabhi Jois (Ashtanga), BKS Iyengar (Iyengar), TVK Desikachar (Yoga Therapy), Ana Forrest (more recently Forrest Yoga). Got it?

Dana and Trevor have studied directly with K Pattabhi Jois in Mysore, India and in the U.S. and traveled to India in 2009 for his Memorial Service. Holly, Deanna, Aryn & Janike have studied with him during his U.S visits. Dana has also studied in India with R Sharath, the grandson of K Pattabhi Jois. Troy has studied with K Pattabhi Jois in India on many occasions.

Dana, Trevor, Holly, Janike & Deanna have all taken Tim Miller's teacher training. Tim

was the first Westerner to be certified by K Pattabhi Jois to teach the Ashtanga Vinyasa system. Troy studied with Tim for many years.

Dana & Trevor have both completed Iyengar teacher trainings. Not directly with Mr. Iyengar, but with senior Iyengar teachers Roger Cole (Dana) and Eddy Marks & Mary Obendorfer (Trevor). Dana and Trevor have also taken multiple workshops and classes with senior Iyengar teachers.

Dana & Trevor have both studied briefly, but directly, with TKV Desikachar (Krishnamacharya's son). Dana went on to study with Kausthub Desikachar, son of TKV Desikachar, and grandson of T. Krishnamacharya. Oreste visited Chennai in India to study with Kausthub at KYM (Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram).

Dana has completed teacher training with Ana Forrest (Ana's first teacher training). Trevor has taken workshops with Ana.

Deanna and Oreste have studied with Mark Whitwell who studied directly with T. Krishnamacharya and TKV Desikachar for 20 years.

Deanna, Oreste, Janike, Aryn, Jennifer, Heather & Erin have all completed Infinite Yoga's Teacher Training with Dana, and are Registered Yoga Teachers with Yoga Alliance.

Trevor, Aryn, Deanna, Jennifer, Heather & Oreste have all studied with Infinite Yoga for many years. The combination of this with their dedication to Ashtanga Yoga, brings consistency and quality to the teaching you experience at Infinite Yoga.

***So there is our IY family tree. You can see how our classes and our teachers are all connected. Whenever you attend class you become part of that connection, the yoga community, with a solid path and a yoga lineage that has been passed down from teacher to teacher for thousands of years!***

I hope you've found this useful and gained some insight.

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