

# YOGI WRITINGS: Laura Walheim VALLEY YOGA - A Love Affair!

*Photos by Kathy Prekoski*



I love going to yoga class. I love all our incredible instructors, each with a unique perspective and instructive style. I love the life stories shared before and after class. But mostly this is a love affair with Brenda Proudfoot's creation – Valley Yoga. My journey with Brenda began more than 12 years ago on Locust Street. From the very first class Brenda's integrity was evident, her knowledge of the body and brain extraordinary. Brenda never judges, she simply encourages us to find that which is available.

As it turns out, I'd met Brenda prior to Valley Yoga while with my daughters at her organic Bed & Breakfast in Three Rivers. She and her partner were exhibiting photos of their experience in the Philippines. The Exhibit was of the plight of Filipino prostitutes and the US Military's role in its development and continued existence. They had traveled and lived in the Philippines to help and support these women. It made for a very interesting mother/daughter outing. There are no coincidences in life.

I started yoga because I wanted to slow down. What I found at Valley Yoga, then and now, is a supportive loving environment with a physical challenge and shavasana! Love shavasana, restorative and child's pose – I'd found my calm. The bonus for me was in the physical challenge, stretching and strength building, proper breathing, bones you can't exactly move but envision a direction, chest openings and hip openers and an actual purpose for a "groin and a psoas". I now take for granted my good posture and unconsciously meditate in mountain pose in the grocery line.

Although I don't endeavor to be the top yogi in class, yoga will always be a part of my life. With every shavasana I lie in gratitude for my mat at Valley Yoga and the wonderful teachers and people it's brought into my life. We as a group are so fortunate to have this quality of yoga in the middle of California, but then again, there are no coincidences in life.

