

# Learning to fly

Acro yogi Lizzy Tomber helps students and studios find their unique superpowers.

**WHEN SHE WAS SEVEN**, Lizzy Tomber watched with awe as her brother joined the circus. Twenty years later, she taught an afterschool circus program for disenfranchised middle-schoolers near Washington, DC. Today, her business, Acropedia—a yoga-influenced partner acrobatics program developed with her husband, Josh Young (in photo at right)—keeps that sense of play alive for her and her students. But it's not all fun and games for Tomber. A self-proclaimed "school junkie," she holds master's degrees in both business and international economics, and certifications in yoga (under Faith Hunter) and entrepreneurship. She pulls all of this together in another business, YogiMBA, which helps studio owners align business principles with yoga philosophy to increase profitability and build sustainable careers.

## Play seems essential to you. Why?

Being able to just play and be joyful brings out a genuine part of people. We grow up learning how to behave "well" in social situations. When you get adults to start playing together, they have to learn new ways to relate and interact.

## Why acrobatic partner yoga?

It's all of yoga's serenity, self-growth, and self-love applied outwardly and combined with relationship, communication, and community. When someone is trying something new and putting their trust in me, it forces me to be fully present and live up to the responsibility of their trust by being the best possible version of myself.

## What do you try to inspire in your students?

My job is to help people discover their inner superhero. You see this acrobatic skill and say, "That's so cool, but I could never do it!" Then five minutes into class you're learning to do it and you think, "Hold on—my whole perception of who I am and my story about my abilities have just been blown away!" What gets people addicted is breaking their own barriers of what they think is possible. The same is true for my YogiMBA clients. I love giving people the business and management skills to overcome challenges and do things they never thought possible—like double their studio membership.



## What's the biggest challenge for yogis opening a studio?

The pressure to be it all. You have to be CEO, human resources, marketing director, accountant, lead yoga teacher, and often the person at the front desk. My recommendation: Figure out which part of your job you excel at and love doing, then outsource the rest. While it can sound scary to rely on other people, many studio owners have increased profits and brought more joy into their job by focusing on their natural talents. **BILL GIEBLER**

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## in the DETAILS

Tomber shares a few of her favorite things.

### Words to live by

I love this quote often attributed to Plato: "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation."

### Food

Pizza. I believe the quote "I've never met a bad pizza."

### Mantra

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others.

### Practice space

On top of Josh's feet. We met in an AcroYoga class, and got married five years later. When we're together, I feel at home.

### Pose

Hand-to-Hand (Handstand on someone else's hands). It's all about trusting someone else to hold you up.