

Welcome!

“Off the Mat: Living Yoga in Daily Life.”
Week One



Please make yourself comfortable. Take a worksheet from the basket, and fill it out. Write what first comes to mind. You will not have to share your answers with anyone.

Theory & Practice

- What is yoga
- Introduction to yoga philosophy
- The Eight Limbs of Yoga
- Dharana: meditation training
- Yamas: 5 restraints
- Niyamas: 5 wholesome states
- How to practice yoga of life.



Each week, add one small practice to your daily routine.

- **Week 1:** 10 minutes of meditation in AM or PM.
- **Week 2:** Create an intentional approach to an aspect of your daily routine.
- **Week 3:** Choose one Yamas or Niyamas to practice
- **Week 4:** Create your own full practice.

What is Yoga?

- Science of extraordinary living.
- A system to reaching our full potential
- An approach to wellbeing
- A practical psychology of liberation*

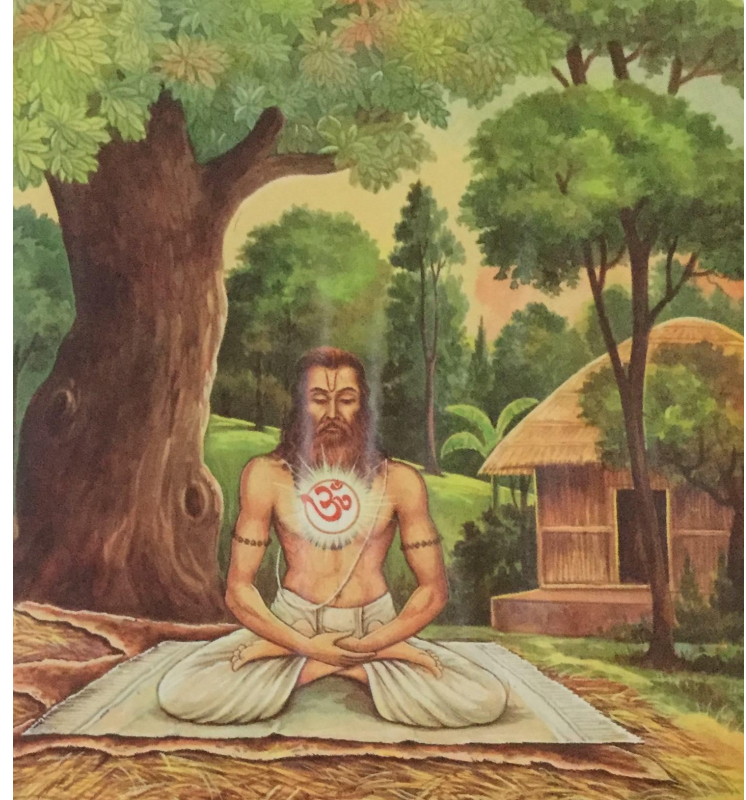
What is it Not?

- Dogma
- Arbitrary rules
- A religion

Ultimately, yoga is a pathway to connect with Divine. God.

The Origins of Yoga

- India, 6th - 4th century BCE in India
- Time of great upheaval
- Yogis were radicals, like Jesus' apostles
- Eventually written down in the Yoga Sutras by Patanjali in 400 CE



The Eight Limbs of Yoga

**One aim:
calm the
mind and
be okay
with the
present**



The Basic Human Problem & The Basic Solution

- The Problem: ordinary unhappiness

Samvega: disillusionment with ordinary life. A normal stage of development where we realize that things like money, fame, relationships, cannot supply true satisfaction.

- What we call a midlife crises, yogis call normal and healthy.

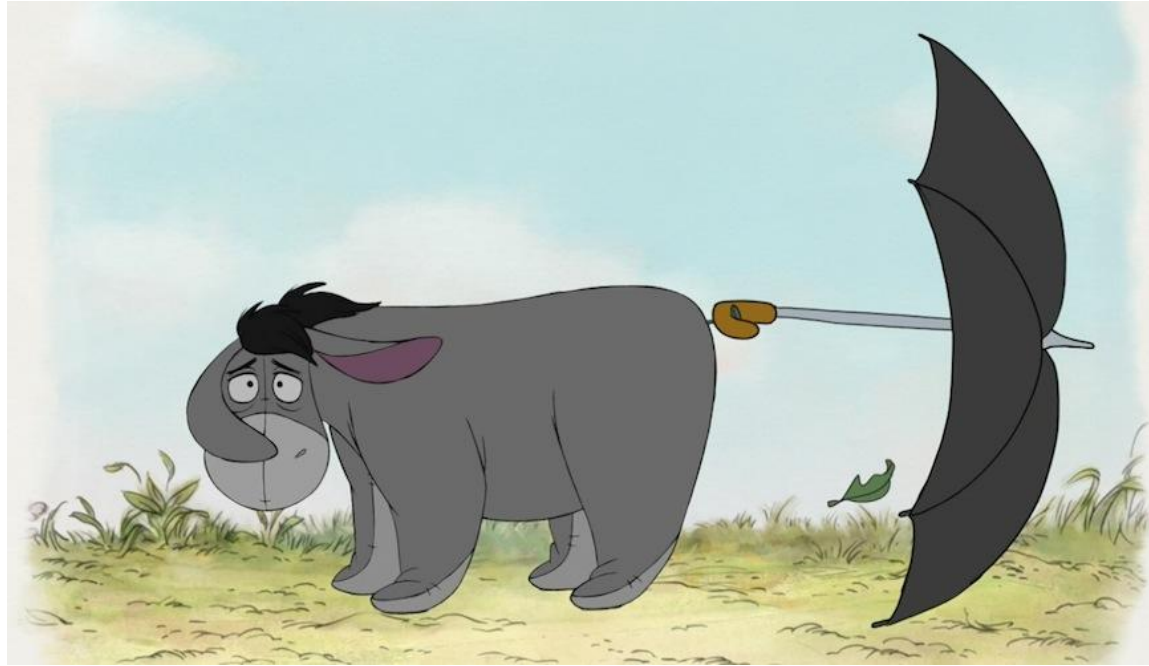
“There were no formerly heroic times, and there was no formerly pure generation. There is no one here but us chickens, and so it has always been: a people busy and powerful, knowledgeable, ambivalent, important, fearful and self-aware; a people who scheme, promote, deceive, and conquer; who pray for their loved ones, and long to flee misery and skip death. It is a weakening and discoloring idea, that rustic people knew God personally once upon a time - or even knew selflessness or courage or literature - but that it is too late for us. In fact, the absolute is available to everyone in every age. There never was a more holy age than ours, and never a less.”

-Annie Dillard, *For the Time Being*

#yogalife



#yogalife



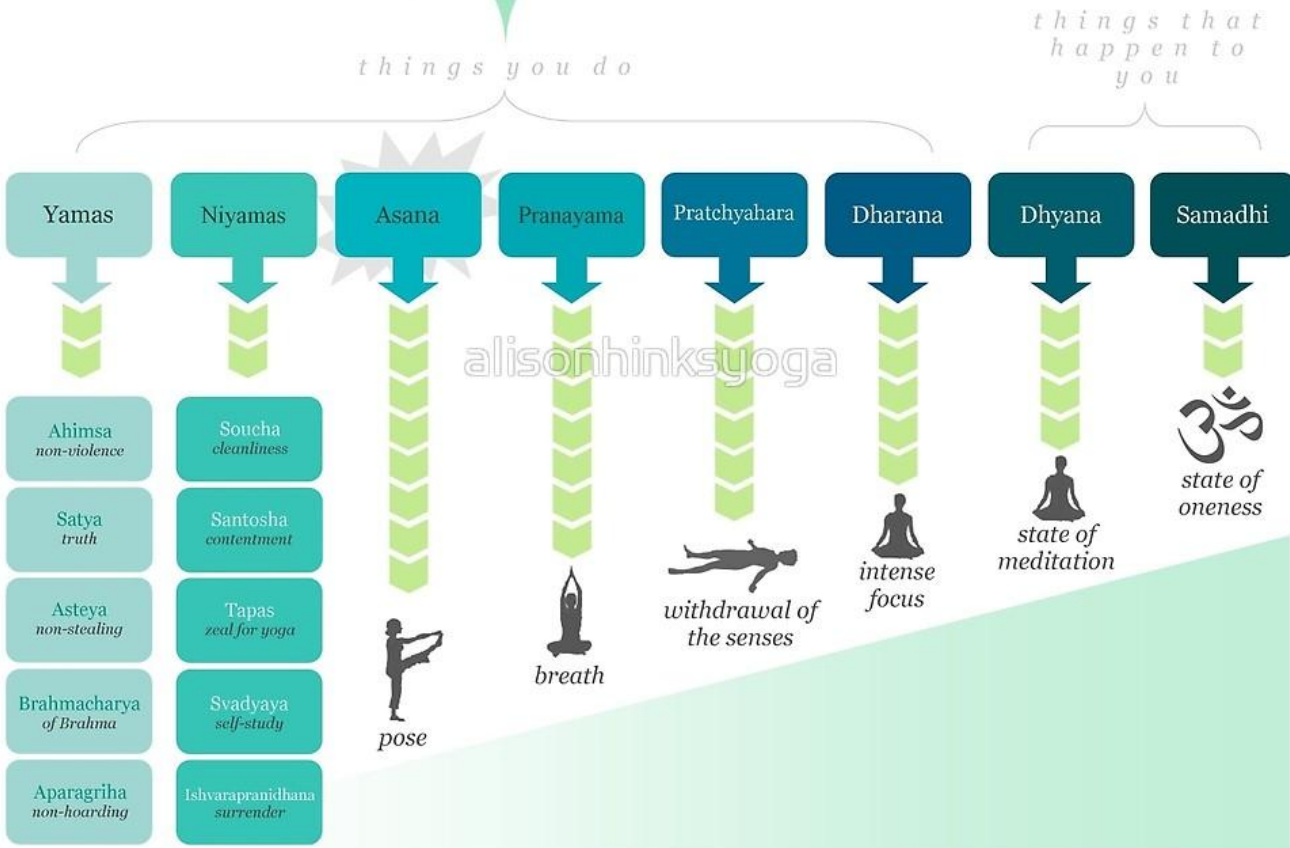
The Basic Human Problem & The Basic Solution

The Reason: we are
chronically dissatisfied with
how things are right now.

The Solution: turn inward,
find stillness, listen. Be
here.

Patanjali's 8 Limbs of Yoga

8



The Eight Limbs aim to bring you into a state of stillness.

To calm the fluctuations of the mind.

In this state, we receive Wisdom from the Divine.

Basic Mindfulness Meditation

The Noble Failure

It is very hard to keep your attention in one place, the present experience, for more than a few seconds at a time.

That happens to everyone!
It's how the mind works!

You realize what your mind is doing all day when you are not paying attention.

Trying the Puppy to the Post

Also a helpful discovery!

When you bring your attention back again and again to an object, your attention eventually settles.



Dharana: The First Stage of Meditation

- Dharana is the foundation for deep meditation.
- Dharana is the process of continually bringing attention back to an object, tying the puppy to the post.
- Dharana is the feeling of all your attention moving toward one point in a steady stream.
 - Playing music, sports, conversation, yoga class.
- It is a blissful feeling: content and connected.

Basic Meditation Practice

Notice when your attention has slipped off the object.

What were you thinking about? Name it. (Yikes!) Then, come back to the breath.

Just one breath at a time.



The Witness: An Essential Discovery

We are not our thoughts,
but rather the Witness
observing the thoughts.
You can also think of it as
your Soul, True Self, God,
Inner Wisdom.

That little Witness is what
are trying to strengthen in
Dharna. It is the home to
our intuition, wisdom,
discernment.

Three Realizations

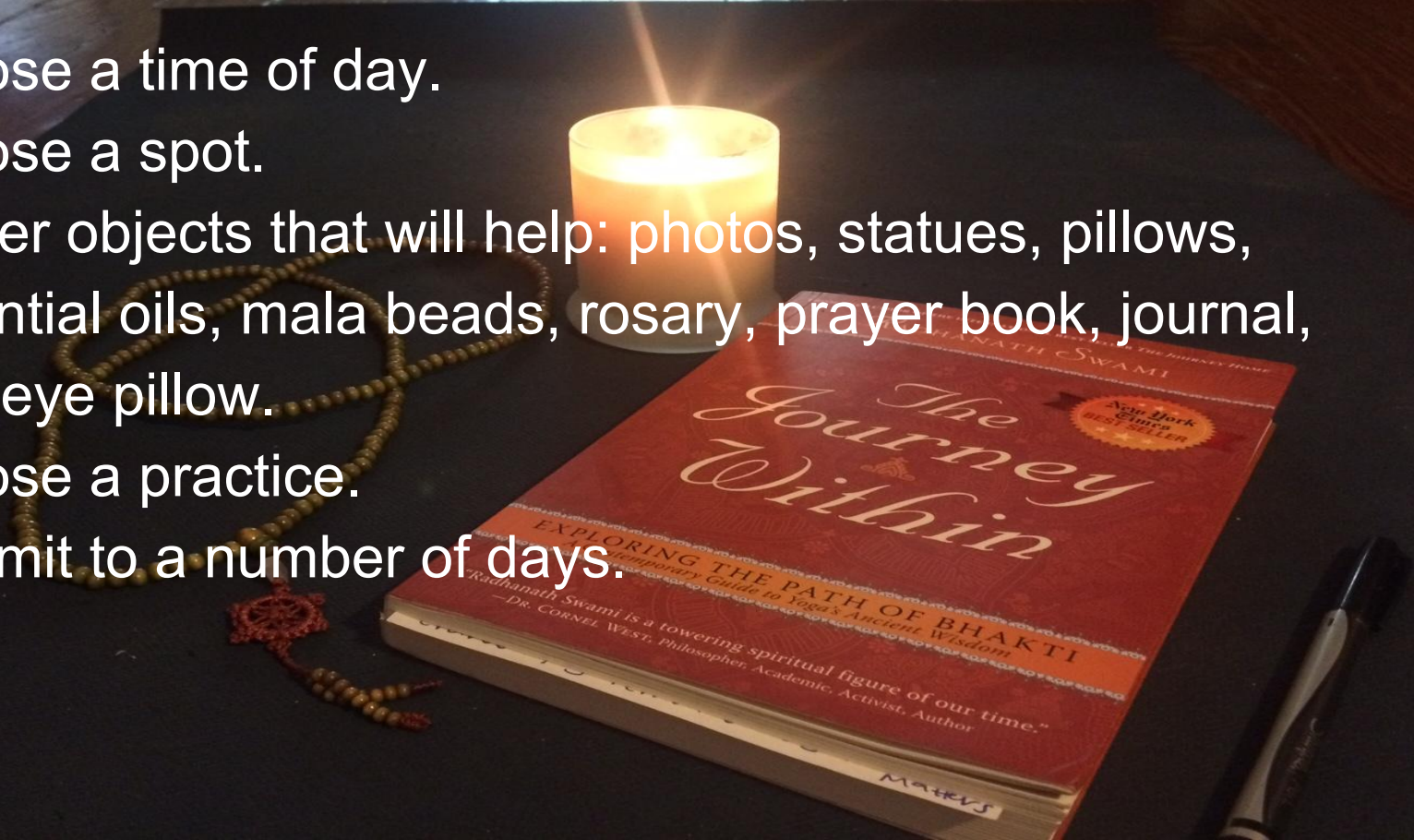
#1: It is the nature of the ordinary mind (everyone's) to be unable to rest on a single thing for more than a few seconds.

#2: That inability to sit with the present moment is the reason for ordinary unhappiness.

#3: But if we strengthen our inner Witness through meditation, we can step back from our thoughts, desires, emotions. Feel them, and let them pass.

Starting Your Practice

1. Choose a time of day.
2. Choose a spot.
3. Gather objects that will help: photos, statues, pillows, essential oils, mala beads, rosary, prayer book, journal, pen, eye pillow.
4. Choose a practice.
5. Commit to a number of days.



The Effects of Meditation on Your Brain

Some changes in the brain after only three cumulative hours!

Amygdala—which produces feelings of anxiety, fear and general stress—shrinks. (8 weeks)

Hippocampus thickens, improves learning and memory, emotional regulations. (8 weeks)

Reduces anxiety and social anxiety.

Decreases activity in the “default mode network,” responsible for mind-wandering.

Eases symptoms of depression as much as prescription medication.

Improves feelings of wellbeing.

Posterior Cingulate—which helps us focus on the present moment and not on “me”—grows.

For Further Exploration

Books

The Wisdom of Yoga, Stephen Cope

The Great Work of Your Life,
Stephen Cope

The Untethered Soul, Michael Singer

The Yamas and the Niyamas by
Deborah Adele

Living your Yoga, Judith Hanson
Lasater

Meditations and Recordings

Two that I recorded available with
[course material.](#)

Insight Meditation App

SoundsTrue - free meditations come
with acct. Also, Richard Hanson's
Meditation to Change your Brain.

Tara Brach podcast (free)