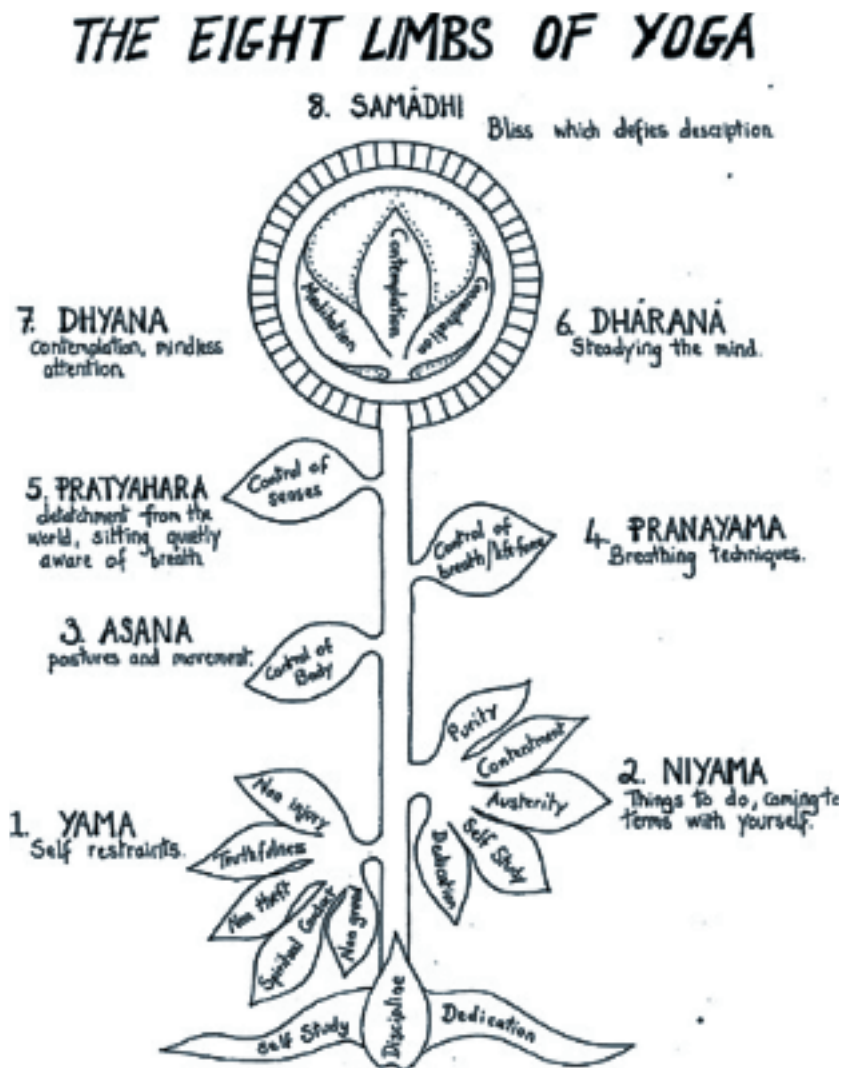


**Off the Mat: Living Yoga in Daily Life**  
**Week Two: Strengthening the Mindfulness Muscles**

**Eight Limbs of Yoga** = Calm the Mind. Cultivate Presence. Live a more skillful life by *responding* with intention, rather than *reacting* according to old patterns



**Dukkha:** “Suffering.” A pervasive sense of the unsatisfactory-ness, moment-to-moment. Things shouldn’t be this way. This shouldn’t be happening.

**Sukha:** “Sweetness.” Everything is already okay. Experiencing the present moment as it is. This is happening; I can feel it and I am open to it.

Dukkha and sukha not the same as “sad” and “happy.” Dukkha means always squirming out of the present moment, wanting things to be different, avoiding feeling pain and discomfort. Sukha is not always feeling like things are happy and great. It’s about being able to sit with both joy and sorrow.

*“You can’t fix the pain or make it go away, but you can be with it, with a kind and open heart.”* -Kristin Neff, *Self-Compassion: Step-by-Step* (available from SoundsTrue)

### Three Types of Suffering (Dukkha)

1. *Raga*: Craving, greed, clinging. Always leaning forward into the things without appreciating what’s already here.
2. *Dvesha*: Aversion, hatred, avoidance. Letting your personal dislike overtake your field of vision.
3. *Moha*: Delusion. “Tell me when it’s over!”

Not all anger is bad. Not all longing is bad. Not all delusion is bad. Not all avoidance is bad. They are part of the human experience! But they cause suffering when they are:

1. Disturbing: our mind is not calm, you can’t appreciate things how they are now.
2. Obstructive: you can’t see reality, or people, as they really are.
3. Separative: you can’t experiencing how things are because you are obsessed with how things should be.

Pain and discomfort are part of life. The skill of yoga is developing the presence of mind (and the strength of spirit!) to *feel* it, and consciously *choose* how to respond, rather than reacting according to old patterns to get rid of the feeling as quickly as possible.

Sometimes our behaviors or habits seem outside of our conscious control. We might often feel hijacked, reacting to things with old behavior patterns, like a “cut-to” in a sitcom. But yogis broke down this chain reaction into four separate links:

1. Input. All day, you are bombarded with stimuli.
2. Appraisal. Subconsciously, you evaluate each input.
3. Impulse. You react with attraction, aversion, or neutrality.
4. Action. You respond, take action.

The stronger our “mindfulness muscles” the better able we are to stop the chain reaction after Impulse, and *choose* how to respond in a healthy, intentional way.