

Yamas

Learning to regulate the disturbances of body and mind that are created by the senses and the four urges is an important aspect of self-work. The five yamas are guides to managing one's own desires and to creating healthy relationships in the world. They are the means to regaining balance in life.

Ahimsa Non-harming

Practicing the attitude of non-harming reduces insecurity with others, brings peacefulness and trust and reduces the fears that plague the mind.

Satya Truthfulness

When thought, word and deed are aligned, the mind is put at ease. Saying what is beneficial and measured in a pleasant way is truthfulness.

Asteya Non-stealing

Stealing promotes a mental attitude that "I do not have enough" and that "without having what others have, I cannot be happy." Non-stealing gives mental strength and integrity.

Brahmacharya Moderation of the senses

When sense pleasures become the focus of life, they create chaos. Managing the senses promotes health, reduces wandering thoughts and heightens energy. Promotes moderation and balance in life.

Aparigraha Non-possessiveness

The things of the world are ours to use but not to own. By having a correct attitude regarding our possessions and relationships, we free our spirit for the joys of inner life. Realizing happiness does not come from owning and controlling material things brings peace.

Niyamas

There is a drive in us to realize the infinite reality. The niyamas give direction to that drive. They refocus the mind on its spiritual purpose and inspire us to live a life that is less dependent upon external circumstances and more fully illumined by an inner spiritual life, discipline and mindfulness.

Shaucha Purity

Storing impurities in body or mind leads to ill health and reduces our capacity for inner work. Purity means both cleansing and proper nourishing of body and mind.

Santosha Contentment

With contentment, we gain happiness. This does not mean being complacent. Accept what has come to you without expectation, jealousy, bitterness or frustration while always working to improve.

Tapas Self-discipline, spiritual practice

Tapas means "heat." It implies effort. When we make a disciplined effort, we build energy and enthusiasm for our task. Tapas leads to self-mastery and strong willpower.

Svadyaya self-study

Self-study is the study of the Self, the Infinite dwelling within. Through meditation, a teacher's words, journaling, reading and self-observation, we are inspired to know ourselves on a deeper level.

Ishvara Pranidhana Self-surrender

By learning to trust in the guidance and grace of the Infinite, the tension and burdens of ego are washed off. After our own effort, grace enters us.