

# The Yamas and Niyamas

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The Yamas and Niyamas are the ethical guidelines of yoga. They serve as the basis for the ethical code of conduct among *Purna Yoga*™ certified teachers and among Yoga Centers, its owners and employees.

## Yamas (Universal Principles)

1. *Ahimsa*: Kindness, non-violence, compassion for self and others. Be mindful of how you treat yourself, others, and your environment. Treat all things with care. We harm ourselves when we treat other people and things with disrespect.

2. *Satya*: Truth in thought, words and communication. Formulate your words before you speak them. “The spoken word is your master; the unspoken word is your slave.”

3. *Asteya*: Abundance, non-stealing, not taking that which you know is not yours. Stealing is the result of a belief in lack, which is counter to the universal law of abundance. First, reject the urge to take what is not yours, then work on changing the inner belief that leads to that urge.

4. *Brahmacharya*: Sexual moderation, conservation of energy, abstinence, celibacy. Avoid overindulging in sex, the quickest way of depleting one’s life force. Do not deny sexuality, but do not be ruled by it. Yoga delivers the freedom from the attachment to sexuality, without a denial of its virtues.

5. *Aparigraha*: Self-reliance, non-greed, non-covetousness, non-hoarding, generosity in spirit and action. Accept what you need for your dharma and reject the rest. Do not spend energy longing for what others have (jealousy). Self-responsibility (understanding that you have created your life), taking action towards progress, and connecting with the sense of wholeness within are indispensable for the development of aparigraha.

## Niyamas (Individual Precepts)

1. *Saucha*: Cleanliness, purity, care for one’s physical being and surroundings. Our surroundings reflect and influence our inner selves. Bring cleanliness and order into your environment. The more you treat your surroundings as a temple, the more you welcome the Divine.

2. *Santosa*: Contentment, willingness to accept what is, which leads to gratitude. Gratitude connects you with the sense of santosa.

3. *Tapas*: Discipline, ardor in aspiration, fire, using the power of choice to overcome tamas, inertia. Do not “linger too long in a resting place.”

4. *Svadhyaya*: Self-study, study of texts. At the end of each day, reflect on and learn from your choices. Take time to know yourself. Are my thoughts mine? Are my words original? Are my actions authentic to my nature? Read illumined works that you would like to incorporate into your consciousness.

5. *Isvarapranidhana*: Surrendering the fruits of your labor to God, devotion to God. It is not the action that counts, as much as the intention behind it. Find a way to make your actions spring from true love, and offer them to the Divine. This leads to freedom from attachment and to the illusions of success and failure.

