



The Lotus Blossom

www.TheYogaCenterInc.com

Winter 2009



3107-C Franklin Road SW
Piccadilly Square
Roanoke, VA 24014
540-345-4090

Freedom from our Afflictions: Understanding the Five Kleshas by Pat Starkey

Sage Patanjali outlined in the Yoga Sutras a concise description of both the problems presented to the human condition, as well as their solution, which he outlined in the eight-fold path of Yoga. He described the problems hierarchically in a series of afflictions or *kleshas*. Each of these afflictions builds off the other, taking one further from the ideal state of oneness. Understanding these afflictions can provide us with valuable insight that can prepare us for the traps that perpetuate and prolong our suffering.

Let us start our examination of these afflictions from the bottom up, so we can see how they build off of each other. Working with the kleshas, we will often need to work with some of the grosser aspects of the lower kleshas as their manifestations are more readily tied to the outside world and therefore more easily observed.

The lowest klesha is called *abinivesha*, the clinging to life or fear of death. It is instinctual in nature, but pervades into our consciousness so much so that we can misidentify ourselves with the physical body and agonize over its eventual decline and death. Some of us even pursue our asana practice only to prevent this inevitability. Luckily for us there is no time wasted on the mat, regardless of the intention. However we can miss the gift that Yoga can provide for us to be present to the now, using the practice to honor the transitory gift that is the body while still acknowledging the indestructibility of the soul that the body houses.

The next two kleshas work on the emotional levels of existence. They are *dvesha*, aversion and *raga*, desirous attachment. The lowest of these is *dvesha*. It creates problems for us in that we can avoid all discomfort — even that which is beneficial for us. All of us have poses that we do not like, and can feel the aversion arise when the time comes for us to practice them. These poses in most cases have the greatest benefit for us, so avoiding them is doing ourselves a disservice. Above aversions lays the next affliction of attachment. Attachment takes us out of balance, when we only want to do the poses that we feel good about. Other obvious ways attachment creates suffering are when we allow the senses to rule our decisions, electing taste over nutrition, material pleasures over economic restraint, and allowing sensuality to be the ruling force in our decision making process.

Desire and aversion exist due to the next klesha up the list, *asmita*, or egoism. The ego is an imaginary construct in Yoga philosophy. It is unreal. Being unreal, it constantly creates an illusion of separation between itself and others. Once having created this separation it now has the endless duty of both satisfying and protecting itself. This is what some religious traditions call the “monkey mind”, the mind that continuously creates problems that have to be solved, dangers that have to be avoided, endless conditions that have to met. It is the ego that either creates injuries in our practice by ignoring the reality of our physical limitations or conversely blocks our growth by creating unrealistic physical limitations where we will not explore our strength and flexibility. It constantly throws out judgment over our performance, be it either good or bad. No matter what the judgment may be, if we succumb to it, we are creating an obstacle to our practice.

Finally, at the top of the list of afflictions is *avidya*, ignorance, or false knowledge. Our true condition is that of being tied to all that exists in a state of unity, a limitless and eternal energy. Once we lose this understanding of unity and permanence, we can then mistake the impermanent as the permanent, the impure as the pure, pain as pleasure (and vice versa). Ultimately this false knowledge leads us to falsely identify with aspects of this incarnation, as opposed to understanding our true self. The ways we falsely identify ourselves are myriad, but can include identifying ourselves with our achievements or lack thereof, by the roles we choose, by our possessions or lack thereof, by our thoughts and emotions, and in the final illusion as only the physical body. We can have any of these listed here, but falsely identifying ourselves with these things ties us to these things, creating suffering, whether the things are pleasurable or not.

These afflictions are inherent to the corporeal existence we all share. They exist in all of us, so understanding their presence as natural and offering ourselves compassion in dealing with them will provide a way for us to work with them and allow us opportunities to relieve our suffering both on and off the mat. The primary way for increasing our awareness of the kleshas and freeing ourselves from their influence is meditation. A consistent meditation practice allows us the ability to examine how our false assumptions are playing out in our lives, frees us from the attachment and aversion we have to life conditions, and dissolves the underlying falsehoods that we are clinging to.

Meditation can occur anywhere. On the mat, take time to notice the mind and the emotions throughout your practice. Observe the intention behind the practice, observe the ego’s attachment to results. Observe both attachment and aversion to the poses you choose or avoid. Cultivate a relationship with the *sakshin*, or the observer in your practice. Building this relationship of watching yourself as you breathe, as you move, as you think and feel will begin your journey to understanding the afflictions and lead you back to *vidya*, or the truth of yourself and all existence.

.....
www.TheYogaCenterInc.com

.....
You are more than what you think or what you feel. You are an ever-expanding circle of the mystique of consciousness. You are a center without circumference.” — Yogi Amrit Desai
.....

Inside this issue:

Freedom from our Afflictions 1

What do you do with distraction in your yoga practice? By students 2

Did you know...? 2

Events and special classes 3

Our new schedule About Virginia Balsarak 4





Special Events! - Keep current through the website! www.TheYogaCenterInc.com

Yoga Nidra with Pat Starkey —
 Friday, JAN 2, 2009 ~ 7:00 - 8:30 PM ~ Fee: \$15
 Yoga Nidra is a technique for deep relaxation, taking the body and mind into deeper states of consciousness. This workshop provides a brief overview of the practice along with some surrounding theory. Create your intention for the New Year!
 Yoga mats can be used but are not necessary. Loose clothing is recommended for unrestricted movement.
 Yoga Nidra is suitable for all levels of students.
 Beginners are welcome!

Food is Brahman: Ayurvedic Eating for Everyday Life with Laura Pole
 Saturday, JAN 10, 2009 ~ 1:30 - 5:30 PM
 Fee: \$50 ~ 10 student minimum
 Register with payment by JAN 5
 Learn how to nourish yourself based on the teachings of *Ayurveda*. Learn 8 basic principles of health supportive food selection and preparation. Find out about the basic mind-body types and how to balance your mind-body type (*dosha*) through thoughtful food selection and preparation. Put *Ayurvedic* principles of Eating Awareness into practice by enjoying a bountiful snack at the end of the afternoon.

JAN 24, 2009 ~ YOGA DAY USA/ Benefit for St. Jude Children's Hospital
 Join us for yoga classes with our teachers! Give generously to children at St. Jude's.
 8:30 - 10:00 AM Yoga 2 with Debbie
 10:30 - 11:45 AM Power Yoga with Debbie
 12:00 - 1:00 PM Yin Yoga with Debbie
 1:30 - 2:30 PM Alignment study of a popular pose w/ Pat
 2:45— 3:45 PM Integral Yoga with Caryl
 4:00 - 5:00 PM Gentle Yoga with Virginia

Jivamukti Yoga with Mary Brown
 Saturdays: FEB 7 & MARCH 7, 2009
 Each class time: 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
 Fee:\$20 per class. Registration due 5 days before class
Practice vigorous vinyasa style yoga. Chant Om and sing Sanskrit prayers. Learn about yogic philosophy. Learn to link movements of the body with breath. Practice methods of Kriya Yoga. Practice meditation. This practice is appropriate for graduates of Beginner yoga who want to take their yoga practice to another

Partner Yoga workshop with Ann and Kimball Egge
 Saturday, FEB 14, 2009 ~ 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
 Fee:\$18 for 2 . Registration with payment due by FEB 9
 Partner Yoga helps you connect with your partner. Connect with your breath. Stretch deeper and access poses in a new way with the support of your partner. Find ease & a sense of play by practicing yoga with your partner, friend, or spouse! Come have fun with Ann & Kimball!

Back Care Workshop for Yoga Teachers. Focus: SI Joint with Terry Brown, E-R.Y.T. 500
 SAT FEB 21, 2009 ~ 2:00—5:00 PM Fee: \$35
 Earn 3 CEUs for Yoga Alliance
 Learn how to protect and stabilize the sacroiliac joint in your practice and use yoga techniques to help decrease pain and discomfort. Learn which poses to utilize to treat this part of your body well.

Restorative Yoga with Maggie Boyes & Debbie Stevens
 Saturday, March 14 ~ 2:00 - 4:30 PM
 Fee: \$25. Register by MAR 10 Class limited to 10 students
 Restorative Yoga relaxes the body in restful poses. The mind powers down, the muscles relax, providing the body an opportunity to renew and heal. As your body feels supported, it opens to a deeper sense of relaxation.

Back Care Basics focus: SI Joint with Pat Starkey & Debbie Stevens
 Sat., MARCH 28, 2009 ~ 2:00 - 4:30 PM
 Fee: \$25 ~ Registration w/ payment by March 24
FOCUS on SI JOINT
 Learn how to protect and stabilize the sacroiliac joint in your practice and use yoga techniques to help decrease pain and discomfort. Learn which poses to utilize to treat this part of your body well.

Yin Yoga Training for Teachers: Part 2 with Debbie Stevens, RYT 500
 SAT JAN 31 2:00 –5:00 PM Fee: \$35
 Earn 3 CEUs for Yoga Alliance
 Focus on the meridians aspect of Yin Yoga. Practice poses for different meridians and organs. Teaching techniques and assists practiced.





3107-C Franklin Road SW
Piccadilly Square
Roanoke, VA 24014

**Our Winter schedule begins January 11, 2009!
Sample each *series* class *FREE* the week of January 4!**

MONDAY:	3:30 - 4:30 PM	Gentle Yoga (<i>drop-in</i>) - Virginia
	6:00 - 7:15 PM	Yoga 1 (<i>series</i>) - Patrick
	7:30 - 9:00 PM	Yin Yang Yoga (<i>series</i>) - Debbie
TUESDAY:	10:00 - 11:30 AM	Yoga 1 (<i>drop-in</i>) - Ann
	5:30 - 7:00 PM	Integral Yoga (<i>drop-in</i>) - Caryl
WEDNESDAY:	8:30 - 9:30 AM	Pilates mat class (<i>series</i>) - Rennie
	12:00 - 1:00 PM	Yoga 2 (<i>drop-in</i>) - Debbie
	5:00 - 5:45 PM	Pilate Express (<i>series</i>) -Jennifer
	6:00 - 7:15 PM	Yoga 1 (<i>series</i>) -Caryl
	7:30 - 9:00 PM	Yoga 2 (<i>series</i>)-Pat
THURSDAY:	10:00 - 11:30AM	Yoga 2 (<i>drop-in</i>) - Caryl
	5:30 - 6:45 PM	*Prenatal Yoga (<i>series</i>) - Lindy
	7:00 - 8:30 PM	Yoga 2 (<i>series</i>) - Gail
FRIDAY:	4:00 - 5:30 PM	Yoga 1 (<i>series</i>) - Pat
SATURDAY:	8:30 - 10:00 AM	Yoga 2 (<i>drop-in</i>) - Debbie
	10:30 - 11:45 AM	Power Yoga (<i>series</i>) - Debbie
SUNDAY:	5:00 - 6:30 PM	Yoga 1 (<i>drop-in</i>) - Evie/ Maggie/Gail

New Fee Structure:

Drop-in Class	\$12.00
Senior/Students	\$10.80
1st 12 Week Series†	\$120.00
Seniors/Students	\$108.00
2nd 12 Week Series†	\$60.00
Seniors/Students	\$54.00
Quarterly Frequent	
Yogi Card*	\$200.00
Seniors/Students	\$180.00
Annual Membership	
Card*	\$650.00
Seniors/Students	\$585.00

† applies to series or drop-in classes, but must be committed to a specific date and time
* Cards pay for series classes with pre-registration and 12 week commitment.

Self-Portrait: Virginia Balsarak , a Gentle Yoga Teacher

Virginia has been doing yoga in one form or another since 1990. She moved to Roanoke in 1988 to take a job as an Occupational Therapist in the area. Along with that she found a bevy of excellent yoga teachers who lovingly pushed her to move her body in different ways and accompany that with deep breathing.

Breathwork quickly became her favorite thing to do to both relax and stimulate during strenuous workdays. Virginia spent most of her working years doing therapy with children. She also worked with adults having specific upper

extremity disabilities. The foundation for these studies (anatomy, physiology and psychology) worked well as a foundation for further yoga studies.

During the last two years of working, Virginia decided to try and complete a yoga teacher training to prepare herself to teach yoga. She finished in 2006 and has spent the last two years teaching yoga to seniors and people requiring a gentle approach to their yoga practice. Her approach to teaching is strong in body alignment and mindfulness of practice during *asanas*. Yoga has taught her to appreciate the

moment, to be always present during practice and to relax and stop working so hard during the postures. She is very happy with these lessons, realizing of course, that life is an on-going process and she is not yet complete.

