

# Yoga Living



Volume XI, Issue IV

The Lifestyle Issue

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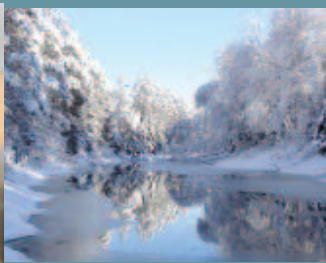
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Doers | Player | Teacher | Representative | A Voice | Impetus | Reflection | Learning | Imagine



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<<  
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"I'm still reeling wonderfully from the adventure we took through space and time. It's had a profound effect on my inner being. All my gratitude to you for being the instrument that got me there." —S. B., Cherry Hill, N.J



**Carol Bowman, MS,** past life regression therapist for fifteen years, is the internationally-known lecturer and author of *Children's Past Lives* and *Return From Heaven*.

Carol has been featured on national TV and radio including *Oprah*, *Good Morning America*, *The Art Bell Show*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *ABC Primetime* and as reincarnation expert on A&E and The Discovery Channel.

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# Letter From the Publisher



*It's that time again – a New Year.* Time to reflect on what has past and what is to come. The excess of the holidays has set in and many of you are feeling the physical and mental burdens that are associated with over-consumption. As this magazine hits the stands, Yoga centers, Fitness and Health clubs are filling up. Personal trainers are juggling their schedules and Diet/Exercise groups are formulating goals and converting calories. Yet despite the best intentions of many, by the end of February the crowds will dwindle down to a select few newcomer survivors and pre-holiday regulars.

Why does this happen? Most of us want to live healthier lives, but there seems to be a huge disconnect between the desire to be healthy and the ability to make lasting changes. Our 'best intentions' are burdened by the ongoing challenge of balancing self-care routines with the demands of our already over-scheduled work and home lives. We try and we fail and sometimes we even give up. For the majority of people that are caught up in this on-again, off-again merry-go-round of healthy living, quiet feelings of guilt and inadequacy start to creep in. Thoughts like "What is wrong with me?" "Why can't I do this?" "I'm lazy" "I have failed myself" start to run on a repetitive background loop in the mind and further deter possibility of progress.

Healthy lifestyle goals differ from person to person, but some common ones are learning yoga/meditation, eating good foods, going to the gym, scheduling down time, taking vacations/retreats, working with natural healers or cultivating a spiritual life. All are good changes to consider, but how to go about implementing them?

In my role as a yoga teacher and therapist, I have worked with many people creating healthy lifestyle changes. Those who succeed in achieving their goals learned that there are 2 keys to making lasting changes. The first is managing expectations. When goals are set too high, failure is inevitable and where there is a feeling of failure, guilt and/or lethargy usually follow. Setting reasonable and accessible goals empowers people. As each small victory is accomplished, self-confidence is boosted. This new awareness creates a new loop in the mind and thoughts like "I can do this" "Wow I did it, I wonder what else I can do?" start to prevail. Little by little changes are made and with each accomplishment, the next task looks a little bit more accessible.

The second key to making lasting changes is to start from a place of balance and understanding. In Yoga this is called the **Internal Yoga**, or focusing on the path that is right before you. In the case of making healthy changes, start by trying to understand the underlying intention or core value behind your goals. Ask yourself: **What is the essential goal of my life?**

Answers to this question will vary, but good examples of a clear response to this question are love, faith, peace, contentment or joy. Once you discover what your true value is, apply it to the manageable goal that you have selected. For example, if your value is love, then embrace loving yourself through exercise and eating right. Think of ways that you can be a loving person while doing your daily tasks, and giving yourself a loving break on the days when don't accomplish your goals. If your value is joy, practice joy in the face of your victories as well as your challenges. The key is to keep your focus on the value as your ultimate goal so that everything you do moves in that direction. This type of practice really drives things home in a way that becomes very applicable to daily life.

So, this year instead of setting up a laundry list of expectations, try implementing one small manageable change at a time. Make your list and start with the simple things first. Once you're feeling good about the small changes, start to tackle the larger ones using the positive momentum that you've created. Use your chosen value to continue to create space for positive changes to occur in 2010 and beyond!

Your Publisher,

Bob Butera, PhD, Yoga Living Publisher, Director of the YogaLife Institute in Devon, PA, writer, and national trainer of Yoga Teachers

# Yoga Living

Your Healthy Lifestyle Guide

ON  
LIFESTYLE

January/February 2010

Volume XI, Issue IV



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*Yoga Living, Your Healthy Lifestyle Guide*, promotes the field of Yoga as a healthy lifestyle. The practice of a Traditional Yoga program includes each facet of life. This magazine introduces readers to resources for healthy living. Please share your copy of *Yoga Living* with your friends. Contact us at 610-688-7030 or at [info@yogalivingmagazine.com](mailto:info@yogalivingmagazine.com). Advertisers go to [www.yogalivingmagazine.com](http://www.yogalivingmagazine.com) for a media kit.



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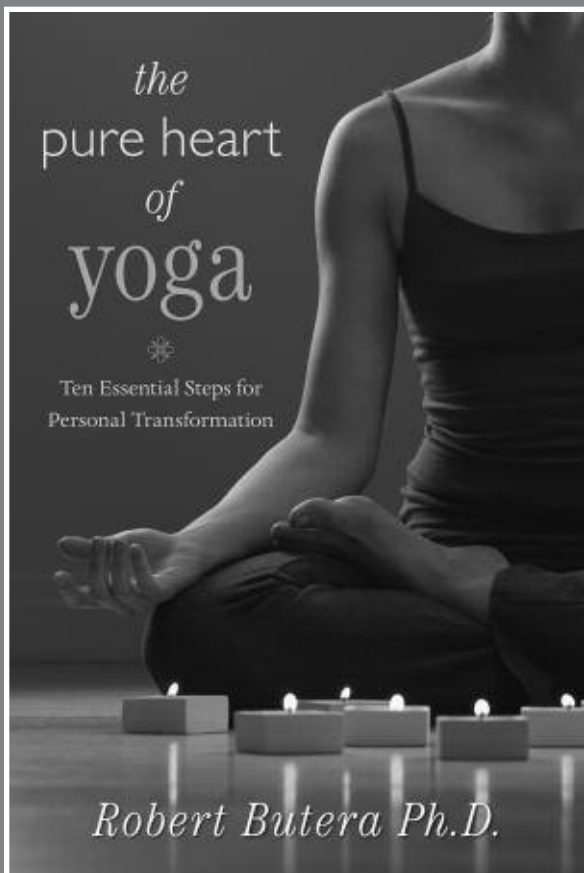
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# The Pure Heart of Yoga

## 10 Essential Steps for Personal Transformation

by **Bob Butera, PhD,**  
*Publisher of Yoga Living Magazine*

*A New Book that Looks Beyond  
Physical Benefits of Yoga*

More and more people are doing Yoga these days – from spry grandmothers to small children everyone is uncovering the benefits of this age-old practice. Though many may have learned how to do yoga, one must ask if they truly understand why they are doing yoga?

It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or advanced student, this book will help you to discover the deeper meaning and purpose of your Yoga practice. Learn yoga the way the original masters envisioned it - a holistic union of body, mind, and spirit.

### Meet the Author: Seminars and Book Signings

**Jan 19:** Transformations, Voorhees, NJ, 7-9 PM

**Feb 7:** West Chester Unitarian Church, West Chester PA, 10 AM

**March 7:** Integral Yoga Institute, New York, NY, 12:30 – 3:30 PM

**March 14:** Healing Yoga, Douglasville, PA, 7-9 PM

### Study Yoga with Bob at YogaLife in Devon, PA

**Jan 2:** Setting a New Year's Intention, 1:30-3:30 PM

**Jan 9:** Yoga for Depression, 7:35 – 9 PM

**Jan 13:** Master Class on Concentration Points, 7:35-9 PM

**Jan 15-17:** Yoga for Well Being Weekend Intensive

**Jan 27:** Master Class on Balancing Poses, 7:35-9 PM

**Feb 13:** The Yoga of Relationships, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

**Feb 17:** Learning to Surrender in Yoga Poses, 7:35-9 PM



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most positive experiences in my life." – Janice T.

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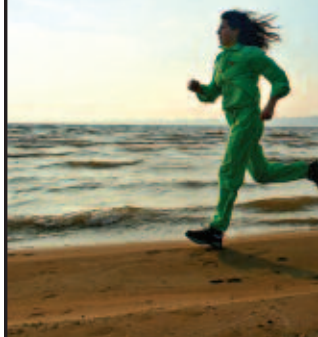
- S.K., formerly afraid of heights

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# YOGA: *A Lifestyle of Practice*



**IF YOU SAY THE WORD YOGA IN A CONVERSATION**

**TODAY, YOU'RE LIKELY TO GET VERY DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVE YOGA IS.** In Western culture the concept of Yoga has been primarily equated with stretching and exercise. You could say that many of the people in America today are doing "Yoga-like Exercises" without a sense of the bigger picture of where Yoga comes from or even what the purpose of practice is. There is nothing wrong with this approach, as we all have to start somewhere, but it is good to know that Yoga is not just about the physical postures. As a philosophy and a practice, it deals with all aspects of the human experience. When viewed from this larger perspective, we can begin to see Yoga as a lifestyle choice. The lessons that we learn in pose practice bring about a sense of deeper insight and awareness that permeates into daily living, and helps us create a sense of connection to something larger than ourselves.

The great Indian sage Pantajali is considered the father of Modern Yoga. His book, *The Yoga Sutras* describes what is known as the 8 Fold path of Yoga. This path details the basic aspects of a Yogic Lifestyle. Each step is a practical guide that allows practitioners to achieve harmony of the mind, body and spirit. The first two steps on the 8 Fold path deal specifically with behaviors that can be removed or cultivated to begin the process of purifying the mind. For the purposes of this article we will focus on the behaviors that are meant to be cultivated and ways to use them in a Yoga practice.

The observances (niyamas) are the second step of *The 8-Fold Path* and, with the restraints (*yamas*), form the foundation of spiritual practice. The observances are positive behaviors that can be used as guidelines for practice and in daily life.

## Observances (Niyamas)

Purity (*Saucha*)

Contentment (*Santosha*)

Discipline (*Tapas*)

Study of self/Introspection (*Svadhyaya*)

Surrender to an Infinite Reality (*Ishvara Pranidhana*)

The five observances are governed by the first: **purity**. On a physical level we practice purity through healthy food choices, adequate water intake, regular exercise, relaxation, proper hygiene, etc. The cultivation of purity in the mind comes through positive thinking, including healthy choices about what we mentally consume, like the television shows we watch, the music we listen to and the company we keep. Spiritually, we engage in purity through yoga practice, or through prayer, meditation, inspirational readings, and community activities.

To purify the body in yoga practice, focus on the breath. A complete exhalation eliminates toxins, carbon dioxide and stale air from the lungs, while inhalation oxygenates the blood throughout the body. Deep breathing promotes relaxation and releases tension. The energetic channels (*chakras*) are also balanced and cleansed. Purifying yoga practices increase body awareness, resulting in a natural desire to take better care of the body, mind and spirit. With practice, the mind focuses easily and is not distracted by desires or sensory input.

**Contentment** is the art of appreciating what we have and desiring no more than what is necessary for maintaining our life. It is neither a state of like nor dislike, but simply being and delighting in our ability to radiate inner harmony and love. Contentment is choosing to see the positive in life. In yoga practice, we can appreciate the body and mind as it is. Balancing poses make us newly grateful for having two legs and feet. Moving the hands reminds us of our appreciation for all they touch, do, create, hold and heal. Awareness of the breath brings gratitude for the gift of life. Integrate the attitude of contentment into your yoga practice and daily thought processes and notice how it affects your experiences.

*continued on page 16*



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**Discipline**, in yogic philosophy, can be translated as meaning “to generate light or heat”. This refers to the psychic energy generated by the voluntary practice of various disciplines that purify the body and mind and generate spiritual radiance. Motivation to go to yoga class or commit to home practice finds its original power from discipline. Dietary changes usually require a good amount of discipline as well. Notice that some life practices require more discipline than others. In yoga class, Sun salutations are a classic example of poses that “raise heat” or encourage a sense of discipline, as are warrior poses.

The underlying theme of the observances, **purity**, may be misunderstood as soft and easy. As a result, people may see discipline as being in conflict with the overall goal of purity because of the intensity of discipline. In other words, if we are being harsh and critical in order to maintain discipline, are we practicing purity? When discipline is understood as power or effort, then it becomes the driving force of purifying actions. It is common that childhood experiences bring a penal view of discipline. As adults, it is possible to recognize discipline as a virtue. The Yoga Sutras 2:43 states, “with discipline, impurities are eliminated and perfection gained.” This ultimately coalesces into the development of the subtle senses of intuition, grace, unity and harmony in the body and in life itself.

**Study of self or introspection** means self-observation and inquiry without judgment. This behavior provides an opportunity to become aware of the various affects of thoughts and behavior. For example, in practicing introspection, we might notice that eating refined sugar has an energizing effect, followed by a lethargic effect, leaving us feeling cloudy-headed and sleepy. Sometimes, self-study helps us to distinguish between perceptions and reality – we may feel depressed or irritated, but can recognize such an emotion as separate from who we really are. In this way, we can respond with a wise understanding from the true Self. Meditation and reflection upon sacred texts offers a chance to learn from others who have gone before us and experienced many of the same life lessons. To read such sources directly offers a chance to connect to the energy and inspiration of those who were divinely inspired. It is sometimes

said that when we practice yoga poses, we are practicing with all others who are practicing in that moment, as well as throughout history. In such a way, within each pose, we connect with an ancient wisdom and spiritual energy that increases self-awareness and direct experience with a Higher Reality.

With the final observance, **surrender to an infinite reality**, letting go is a key action. When we accept that our limited human minds are ultimately not in control of reality, we surrender our ego to a higher principle. Whether we believe it to be the Universe, Higher Self, Nature, God, Goddess, Krishna, Allah, Buddha or Jesus, this higher principle is a very personal choice. In yoga poses, “letting go” can be practiced while exhaling in poses that release tension. Here we can cultivate faith by learning that the world does not rest on our shoulders or even revolve around us. Going deep into a yoga pose does not come through effort, but through surrender.

In considering the five observances, which one inspires you the most? Perhaps the principle of contentment encourages you to trust that your yoga practice is exactly where it needs to be, even if you can’t contort your body like other students in the class. Or maybe discipline resonates with a need to establish a home yoga practice in addition to going to class. Choose one of the five observances as your intention for practicing yoga, or alternatively, any positive concept that motivates you on a deep level. Take it out for a test drive to see if it resonates into the depths of your soul.

While I suggest using this intention for a period of time, know that you can always change your intention. If you’re feeling weak one day, you might adjust your intention to having courage to practice yoga. Or if you’re filled with a deep sense of gratitude, you might hold the intention of offering gratitude to the world through each yoga pose. The most important thing to keep in mind in using intention in your practice is that it is heartfelt and sincere. As you practice, notice how embracing an intention wholeheartedly spills over into the way you understand other areas of your life and watch your yoga grow into a lifestyle practice! ▲

*Partial Excerpt from The Pure Heart of Yoga: Ten Steps to Transformation by Robert Butera, PhD (Llewellyn Worldwide, September, 2009)*



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# What Kind of Yogi are You?

*"Knowledge, devotion, and work are complementary both when we seek the goal and after we attain it. We may climb the mountain from different paths but the view from the summit is identical for all."*

– Shri Radha Krishnan

Are you confused by all the different kinds of yoga that are out there today? As an avid researcher on the subject, I am intrigued by all the different definitions I find, and am always amazed by the sheer amount of dialogue that is happening about the benefits of Yoga on a local and national level. Many people associate the term Yoga with a physical practice, but it is also a life practice that is both timeless and limitless. And while I could write an entire article on the varied styles of modern Yoga that exist today, I find that it makes more sense to look at the roots of Yoga for an outline of the different types of practice. This approach will open up the consideration of how Yoga can be adapted to suit personal dispositions, and help individuals form a meaningful practice that they can sustain in daily life. It is easy to see how this might differ from other philosophies, many of which try to put practitioners into a box and say "This is the way to live." Yoga takes the opposite approach and helps people discover who they are at the very core of their being and then offers practices that complement that true nature.



pleasure and pain, loss and gain, failure and success. The entire story serves as a practical guide to maintaining a balanced state of mind through the different practices of Yoga. The term Yoga, when used as a practice of uniting the mundane with the highest reality, can be applied to a variety of paths. While each path differs, their fundamental goal of Self-realization is the same. For the purpose of this article, we will look at the 5 major branches of Yoga.

**Karma Yoga:** The Yoga of Action or Selfless-Service

**Bhakti Yoga:** The Yoga of Devotion

**Raja Yoga:** The Yoga of Meditation

**Jnana Yoga:** The Yoga of Knowledge or Wisdom

**Tantric Yoga:** The Yoga of Health and Wellness

There are many ancient texts that lay the foundation of our modern understanding of Yoga. The Bhagavad-Gita is one of those texts. The term Yoga covers a wide range of meanings, but in the context of the Bhagavad Gita, Yoga is viewed as a unified outlook, serenity of mind, skillfulness in action and the ability to stay attuned to the Higher Self and the Infinite Consciousness (God, Goddess, Nature etc.). According to the Bhagavad Gita, the goal of life is to free the mind and intellect from their complexities in order to remain focused on dedicating one's actions to the divine.

Yoga can be considered a philosophy of living in the Gita. As Arjuna, the main character of the story, searches for answers to his dilemmas, he is shown how to go beyond normal modes of thinking and is shown ways to transcend attachment and think beyond the duality of

**Karma Yoga** is a way of using selfless service, or the more traditional work life as a means of spiritual development. This path teaches practitioners to view actions that are as trivial as washing the dishes all the way to big decisions in the workplace as opportunities to cultivate a selfless attitude of service. While practicing Karma Yoga, one uses their individual gifts for the betterment of their selves and society. The theme of non-attachment to the results is one of main themes of the Gita and it relates to learning how to live in the present moment. Full concentration on an action is a means to cultivating a peaceful mind. In other words, Yoga or union is established when the person is totally focused on the task at hand and does not dream about the result. Work is infused with a sense of higher purpose, and the smallest mundane acts are imbued with a super-conscious awareness.

**Raja Yoga** is the Yoga of meditation. Meditation can be defined as making the mind one-pointed and going beyond the information of the five senses, as well as

*continued on page 53*