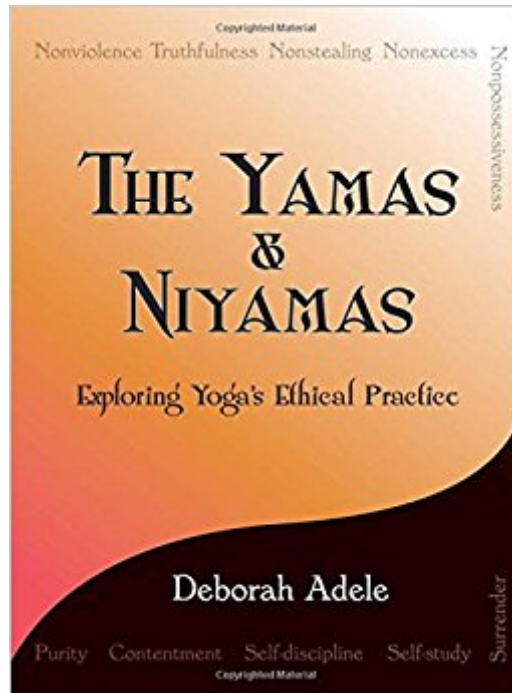


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The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice



Synopsis

The first two limbs of the eight-fold path of yoga sutras¹;the basic text for classical yoga²;are examined in this spiritual guide to the practice of yoga. Foundational to all yogic thought, they are considered to be the guidelines to the yoga way of living³ that free individuals to take ownership of their lives, direct them toward the fulfillment they seek, and gain the skills to choose attitude, thought, and action. The first five guidelines are referred to as the yamas⁴;a Sanskrit word that translates to "restraints"⁵;and encompass nonviolence, truthfulness, not stealing, nonexcess, and nonpossessiveness. The last five are referred to as the niyamas, or observances⁶;purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender.⁷ A self-study section at the end of each chapter may also be used by instructors for group discussion.

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Customer Reviews

In my opinion, this is the best and most important book on yoga to be released in a long time. Why? Because the ten yamas and niyamas -as specified by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras- are at the core of yoga and (I believe) essential for real personal growth. And yet they are given cursory treatment by many if not most yoga teachers in the west, who seem unaware of the subtle facets and profound qualities of these "jewels." And they are ignored by many of today's mental health professionals, who seem unaware that modern psychotherapeutic approaches are embedded in yoga's prescriptions for "ethical" practice of restraints and observances. Somebody really needed to write a book on this! And I must say, Deborah Adele really delivers the goods. Take for instance, Adele's chapter on Satya (truthfulness, honesty). It is a work of art in its own right, offering the

wisdom and clarity one needs to liberate powerful forces within oneself. In this chapter, Adele includes the sensible yet unusual insights of Carl Jung, Yogiraj Achala, and Mahatma Gandhi, among others, along with her own hands-on understanding. In the process, Adele addresses, for all of us, the fear (dangerousness) involved with being completely truthful, the differences between "Nice" and "Real," the epic partnership between truth (satya) and nonviolence (ahimsa), and the value of conducting our own Gandhi-esque "experiments" in truth. There is so much more to this chapter than the glimpse I've given here, but I hope I've communicated the fact that this chapter (and the book as a whole) has great depth and breadth. It is evident that Adele has immersed herself in the yamas and niyamas, emerging with lessons, teachings, and insights that could be of value to anyone. Highly recommended. I learned plenty. The author's website provides lots of useful supplementary material, including some excellent video overviews, radio interviews and discussions. I liked the fact that Adele SOUNDED like a gentle, wise, effective person. I confess that I have a bias here. I believe that my own life has been influenced, and even transformed, whenever I've aligned with the yamas and niyamas over the last 15+ years. And as a result, I was in the process of writing my own (first) book on this long-neglected topic, emphasizing how it relates to progress in psychotherapy. Well, I still think there's a future in that book! Suffice it to say that I share the author's enthusiasm for her topic.

This year I am doing a Yoga Teacher Training Course, its 420 hours all up. First up in our course we laid the foundations, which is the studying of the Yamas and the Niyamas. I loved them, they made total sense to me. What a great set of guides to help you steer your life. However, my notes didn't go deep enough for me. So I googled Yamas and Niyamas and found this book. WOW. It's a wonderful read for anyone, even if they aren't studying. I love how she expanded on Ahimsa, non violence. It runs so much deeper than I imagined. I used to be a "rescuer" when my friends were in trouble, now I can see how what I was doing wasn't helping them and how I can support them on their path. Deborah, thank you for writing such an awesome book. Children should study these guides in school! No 1 fan, Sara

First, a disclosure. The book's author, Deborah Adele, is my yoga "guru" and friend. I also wrote the haiku that appear at the start of each guideline in the book. That said, "The Yamas and Niyamas, Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice" by Deborah Adele, has been a godsend to me. I have been teaching this course for a few years at the yoga studio where I am affiliated. For the first few years, I was teaching from the only book we knew of (which shall remain nameless). The more I

explored these guidelines, the more frustrated I became with the book we were using. It was not as helpful to me and the class as I wished. I was looking for a book that would encourage the reader to use events from their daily lives to explore these guidelines and that demonstrated a deep understanding of these ethical practices. I felt I had to work too hard to make the book speak to us. I said to Deborah, "You should write a book about the 10 guidelines." She said, "I am." The book that came has met all of my expectations. It is readable, applicable, spiritual, and also beautiful to look at. The questions at the end of each guideline are there for one to explore at whatever depth one would choose. Although I have first taken this course, and then taught this class many times, using the book and my own thoughts and explorations, I always find something more to explore, a gem that takes me into greater insight into my life, giving me the opportunity to free myself from the attachments that keep us from being free and living in abiding joy. Now I have the joy of teaching a new class focusing on "Managing Transitions: Life Changes With the Yamas and Niyamas," using the book and the guidelines to explore the losses and trials found in aging, illness, and loss, as in death/divorce. The current class participants all are dealing with one or more of those challenges. How rich to be able to use Adele's book as a roadmap as they explore how to integrate these sometimes hard changes into their lives. I am so grateful to the "Yamas and Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice" for enriching my life as an ordinary human being and as a yoga teacher. Catharine J. Larsen, MA, Licensed Psychologist, 500 Level Yoga Instructor

I absolutely love this book. It is very accessible and easy to understand, you will not get lost in Sanskrit trying to understand the yamas and the niyamas with this book! I had to read this when I was going through a yoga teacher training program, and it was my very favorite of all of the book assignments. It's a short, easy read, and the author has a way of making the teachings very relatable to modern life. Fantastic.

A gem of a book, Adele makes the ancient information so practical and succinctly puts it into a common person's vernacular. Very inciteful information for any serious student of yoga.

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