



The Yoga Sutras of Pantanjali

Translated by Sri Swami Satchidananda

Full Circle Yoga School 300hr Online Yoga Teacher Training 2020

Lesson Overview and Learning Objectives

You're likely already familiar with the Yoga Sutras and The Eight Limbs of Yoga. This philosophy module is an opportunity to review those teachings and gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the Sutras, as well as an appreciation for their role in daily life.

- At the end of this module, you'll be able to apply the eight limbs to daily living and explain them in your own words with real-life examples.
- You'll also have a list of 50+ additional Sutras that carry meaning beyond the eight limbs, plus actions you can take to apply them to your own life, your yoga practice, and your role as a teacher.
- Questions you are expected to answer in your notes will appear on a separate page after every Sutra with the title, **Study Questions**. These reflections will take the place of traditional discussions, so it's important to answer these thoughtfully.

Introduction to the Yoga Sutras

- The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali were written in before 400CE (~1,700 years ago) and contain 196 aphorisms (statements of truth that are often passed down through generations).
- The Yoga Sutras are the primary text of Raja Yoga, which emphasizes both mental and spiritual development.

“Raja Yoga itself is an integral approach. It does not simply advocate meditation, but takes into consideration the entire life of a person. Its philosophy is scientific. It welcomes and in fact demands experimental verification by the student. Its ultimate aim is to bring about a thorough transformation of the individual who practices it sincerely. Its goal is nothing less than the total transformation of a seemingly limited physical, mental and emotional person into a fully illumined, thoroughly harmonized and perfected being—from an individual with likes and dislikes, pains and pleasures, successes and failures, to a stage of permanent peace, joy and selfless dedication to the entire creation.” ~

Swami Satchidananda

How and Why to Read the Yoga Sutras

The Yoga Sutras is: *“a manual for transcending all artificial notions of self and the universe we live in.”*

The Yoga Sutras is the classic text of yoga theory and practice. It speaks with clarity and authority on the inner workings of consciousness, the purpose of creation, and most of all, suffering – and the means to transcend it. Its ultimate goal is to help you remember the unshakable peace of your true identity.

These aphorisms are not meant to be read once and then forgotten; it is a step-by-step manual for living a truthful and meaningful life. Different sutras appeal to different events and emotions, so not every sutra will resonate with you now.

*Each time you return after more years of life and change,
the meaning of the Yoga Sutras will offer you guidance
in new and unexpected ways.*

You are in a constant state of transformation, on an infinite journey toward understanding and harmony, even among all of your imperfections.

Truth is one, paths are many.

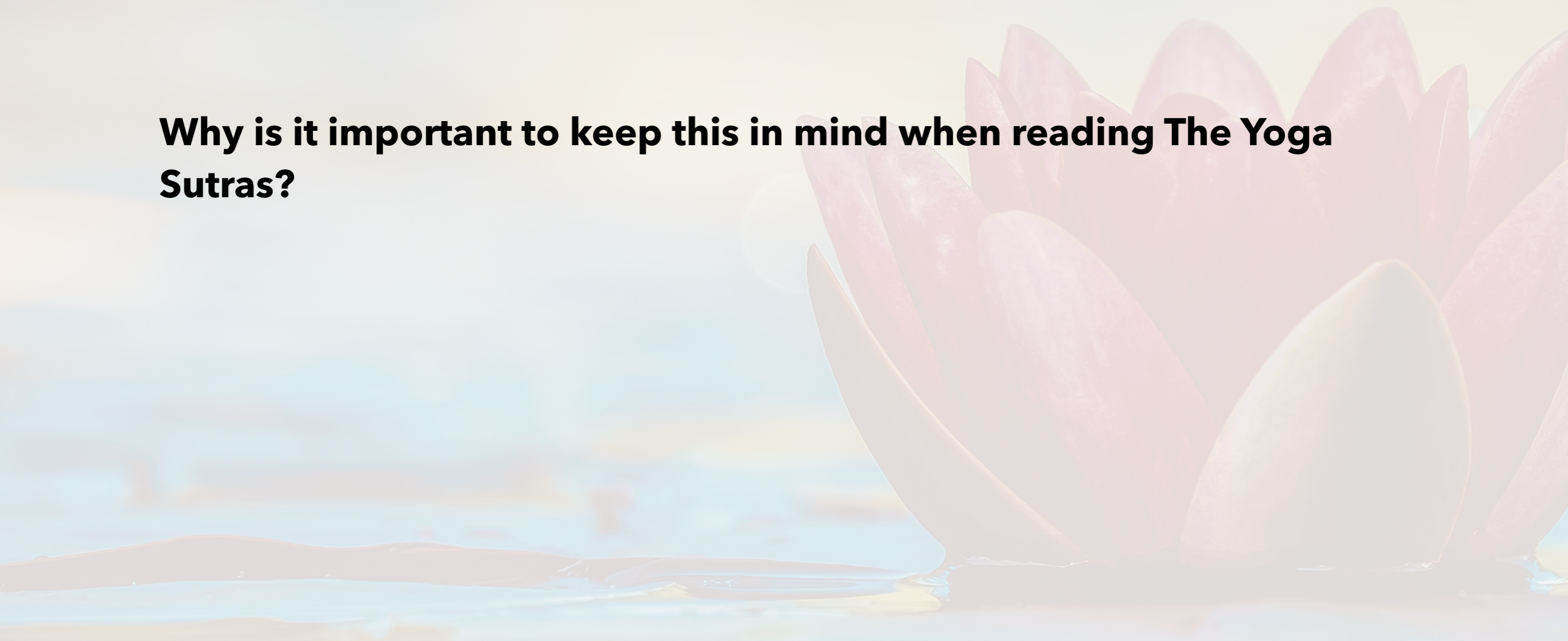


“Yoga should stand for and exemplify, the message of respect for all the different paths and that all sincere seekers should realize their common spirit and the universality of their goal.”

Study Questions

How can you embody “truth is one, paths are many” as a yoga teacher?

Why is it important to keep this in mind when reading The Yoga Sutras?



Book 1, Sutra 2

The entire four books of the Yoga Sutras offer explanations and examples related to sutras 2 and 3.

II. Chitta vritti nirodhah: *yoga is the restraint of the modifications of the mind stuff.*

Citta: sum of the mind

Ahamkara: ego

Buddhi: intellect/decision

Manas: desire

What does it mean? The entire outside world is based on your thoughts and mental attitude. The entire world is your own projection.

"As the mind, so the person; bondage or liberation are in your own mind."

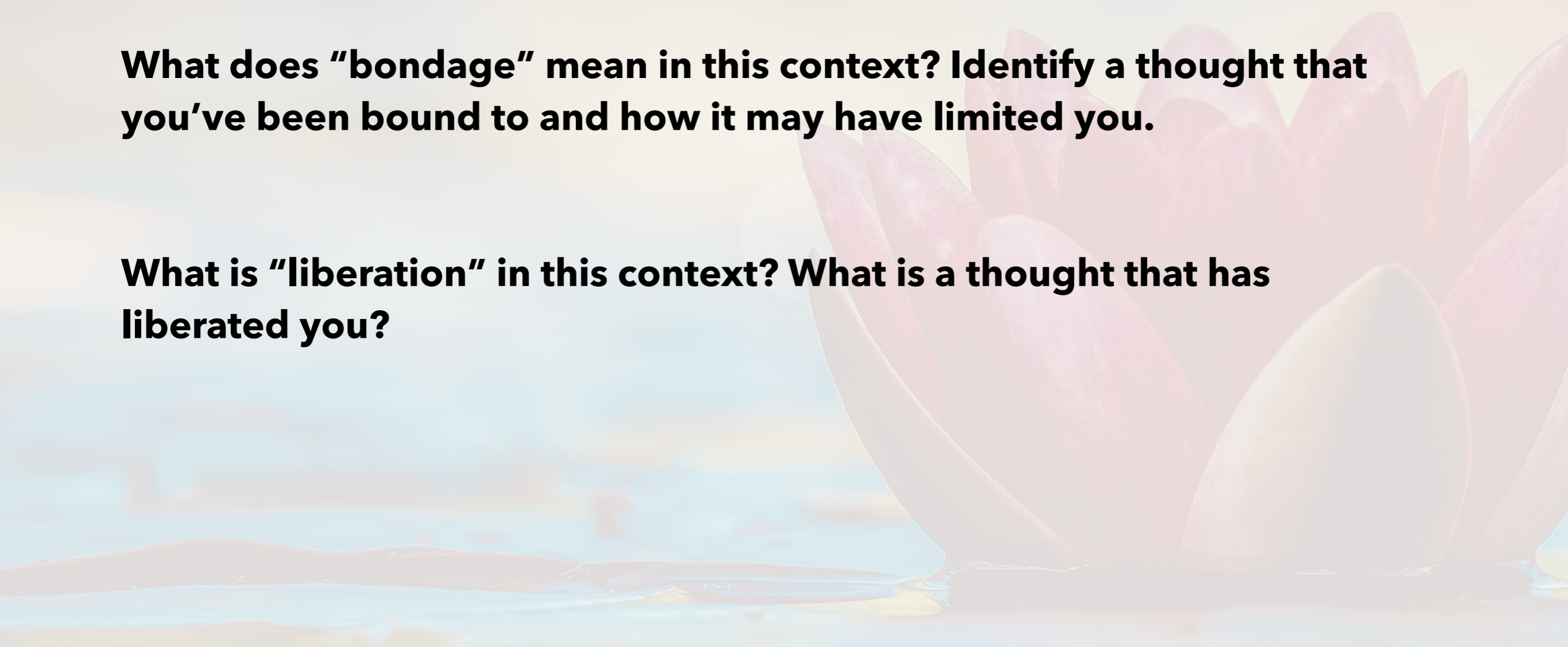
"There's nothing wrong with the world, you can make it a heaven or hell according to your approach. That is why the entire yoga is based on citta vritti nirodhah. If you control your mind, you have controlled everything. Then there is nothing in this world to bind you."

Study Questions

What does “restraint” mean and how can we practice it?

What does “bondage” mean in this context? Identify a thought that you’ve been bound to and how it may have limited you.

What is “liberation” in this context? What is a thought that has liberated you?

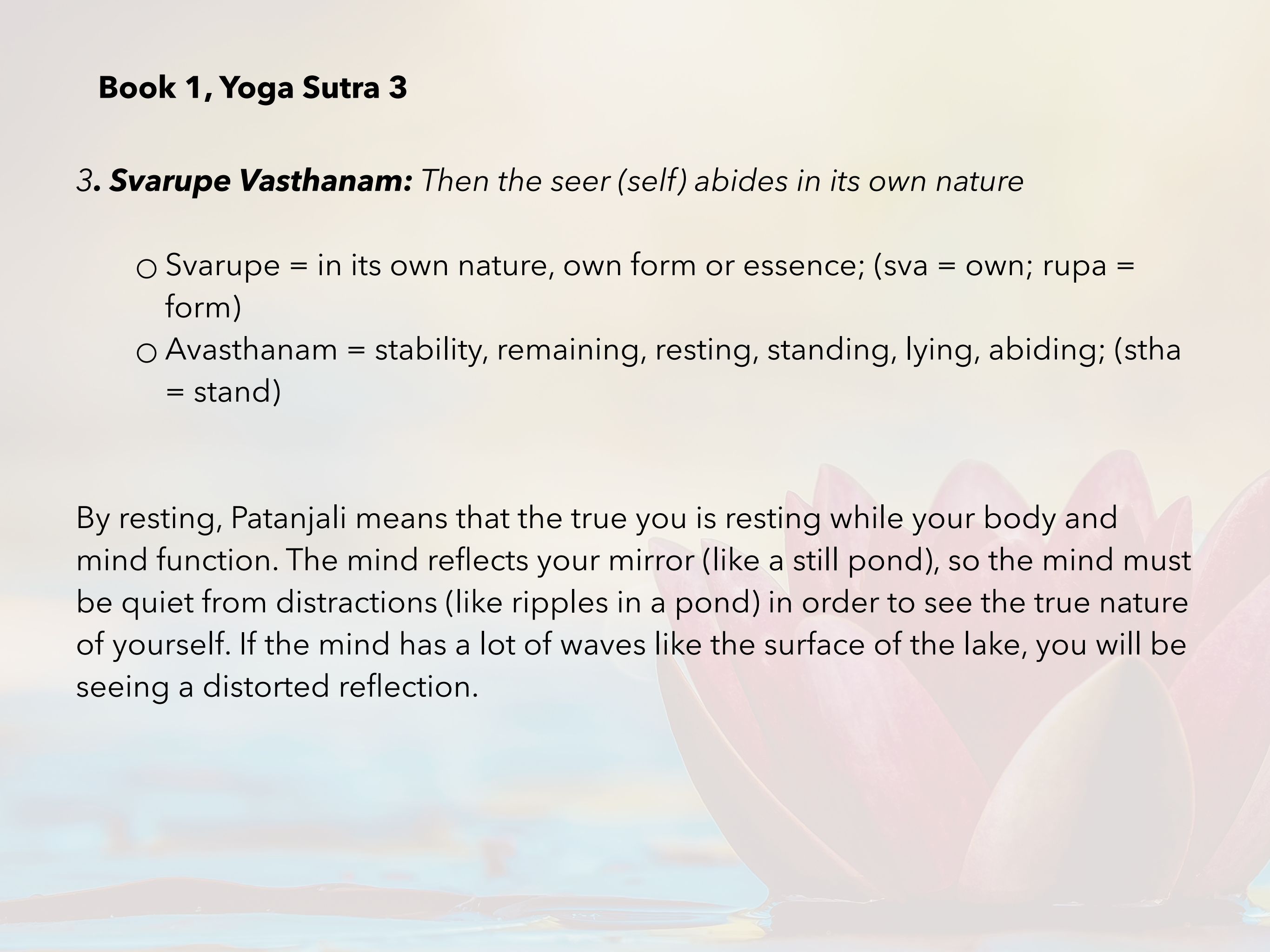


Book 1, Yoga Sutra 3

3. **Svarupe Vasthanam:** *Then the seer (self) abides in its own nature*

- Svarupe = in its own nature, own form or essence; (sva = own; rupa = form)
- Avasthanam = stability, remaining, resting, standing, lying, abiding; (stha = stand)

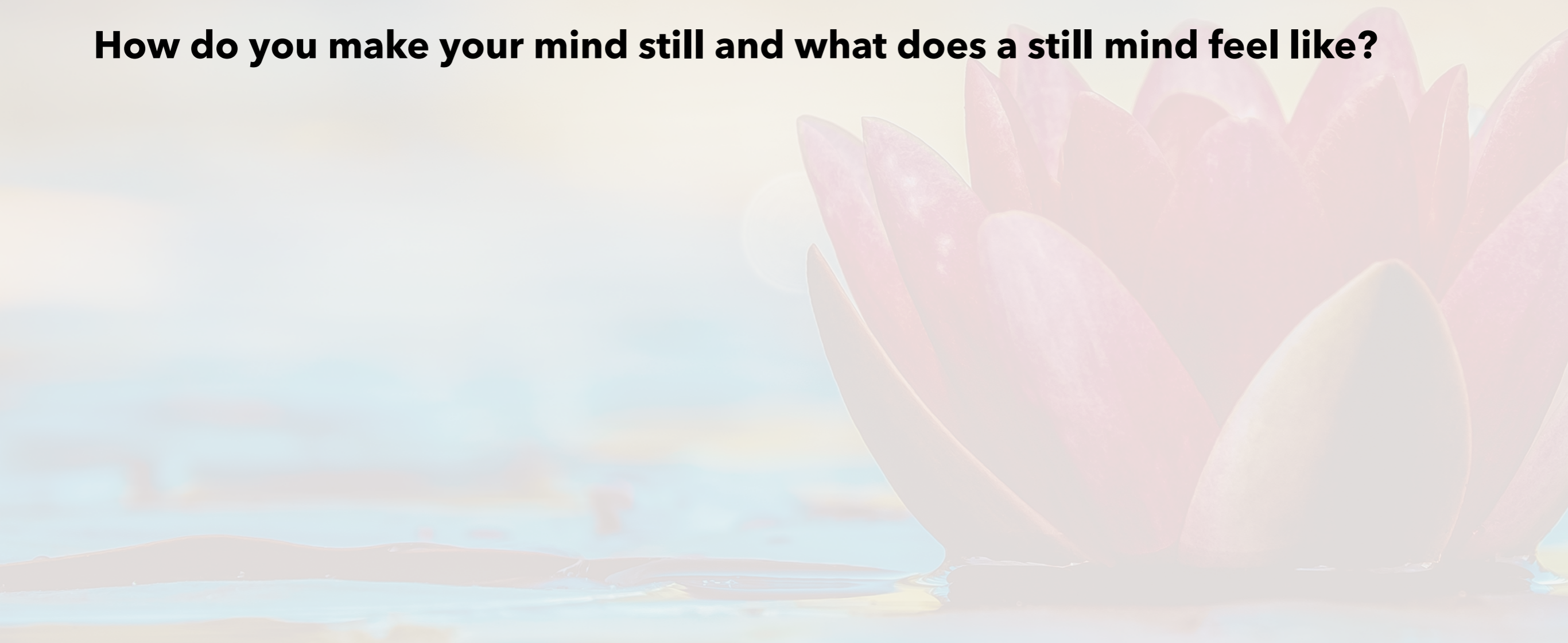
By resting, Patanjali means that the true you is resting while your body and mind function. The mind reflects your mirror (like a still pond), so the mind must be quiet from distractions (like ripples in a pond) in order to see the true nature of yourself. If the mind has a lot of waves like the surface of the lake, you will be seeing a distorted reflection.



Study Questions

What do the "waves" represent and how could they distort your reflection?

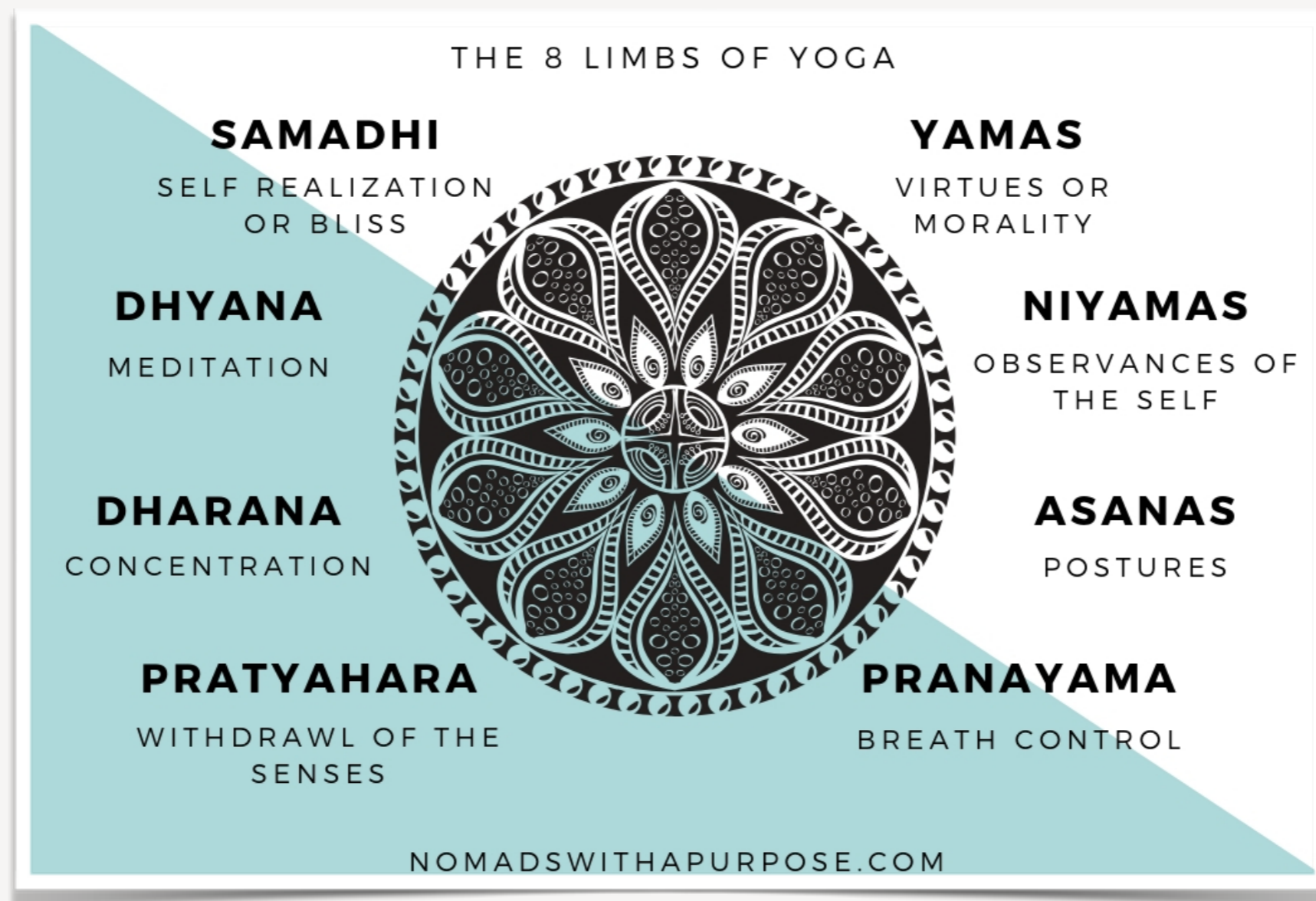
How do you make your mind still and what does a still mind feel like?



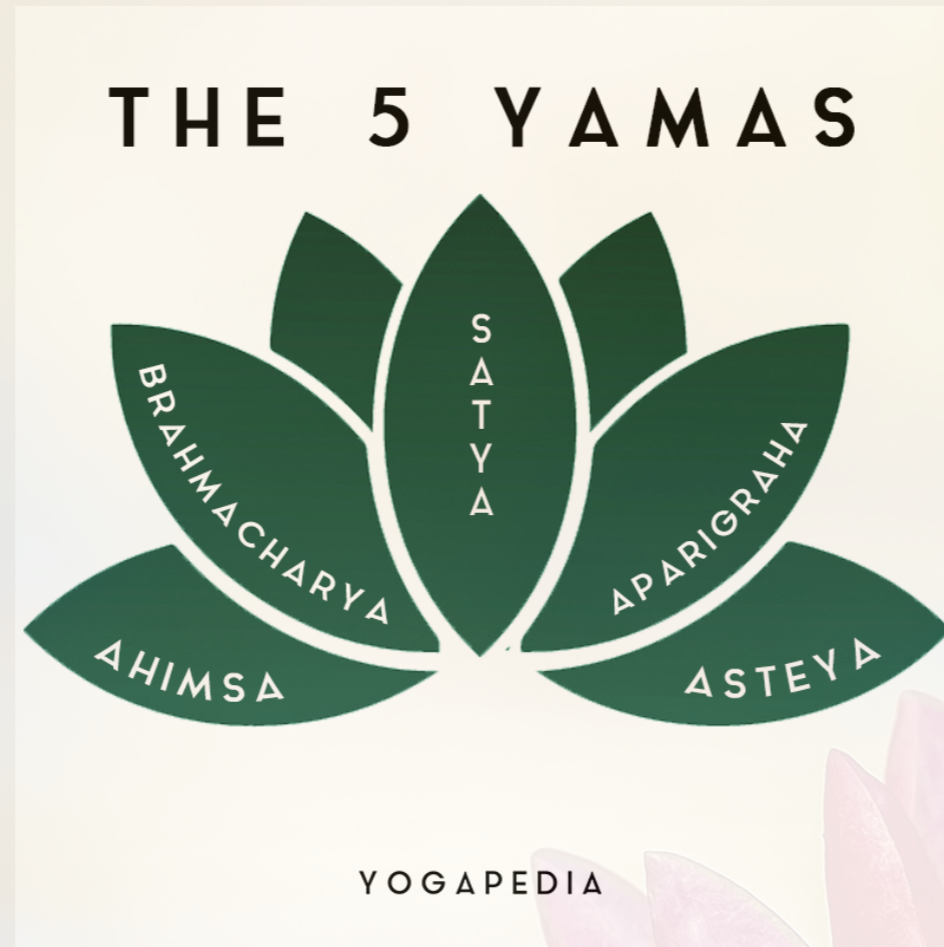
Book 2, Sutra 29 The Eight Limbs of Yoga

"These great vows are universal, not limited by class, place, time, or circumstance."

The Eight Limbs of Yoga are fundamental to the study of yoga and it's likely you've already encountered them many time before. Now is an opportunity to extend our current understanding of the Eightfold path into deeper, more meaningful realms. As we approach it with fresh eyes, try to see each limb not as a definition of a word, but as a question and an opportunity.



Yamas



The yamas and niyamas are the first and second limbs in the eight limbs of yoga.

The Yamas are moral and ethical guidelines, or “laws of life” for living the yogic path in society and in relationships with others.

These principles enable us to lead lives that are conscious, honest, and ethical, ensuring that we treat others with the utmost form of kindness and respect.

Yama #1: Ahimsa

Ahimsa is often translated as nonviolence or non-killing, but a more direct translation is, "not causing pain." This is a principle for consciously not causing pain in relation to ourselves and when interacting with others. Ahimsa applies to the thoughts, actions, and words we use on a daily basis.

Signs your thoughts need ahimsa:

- Negative thinking about ourselves and others
- Thinking that you "can't" or aren't good enough in regards to self improvement
- Being consumed by thoughts like shame, resentment, jealousy, and guilt
- Busyness and taking on too much responsibility, thinking we must manage it all

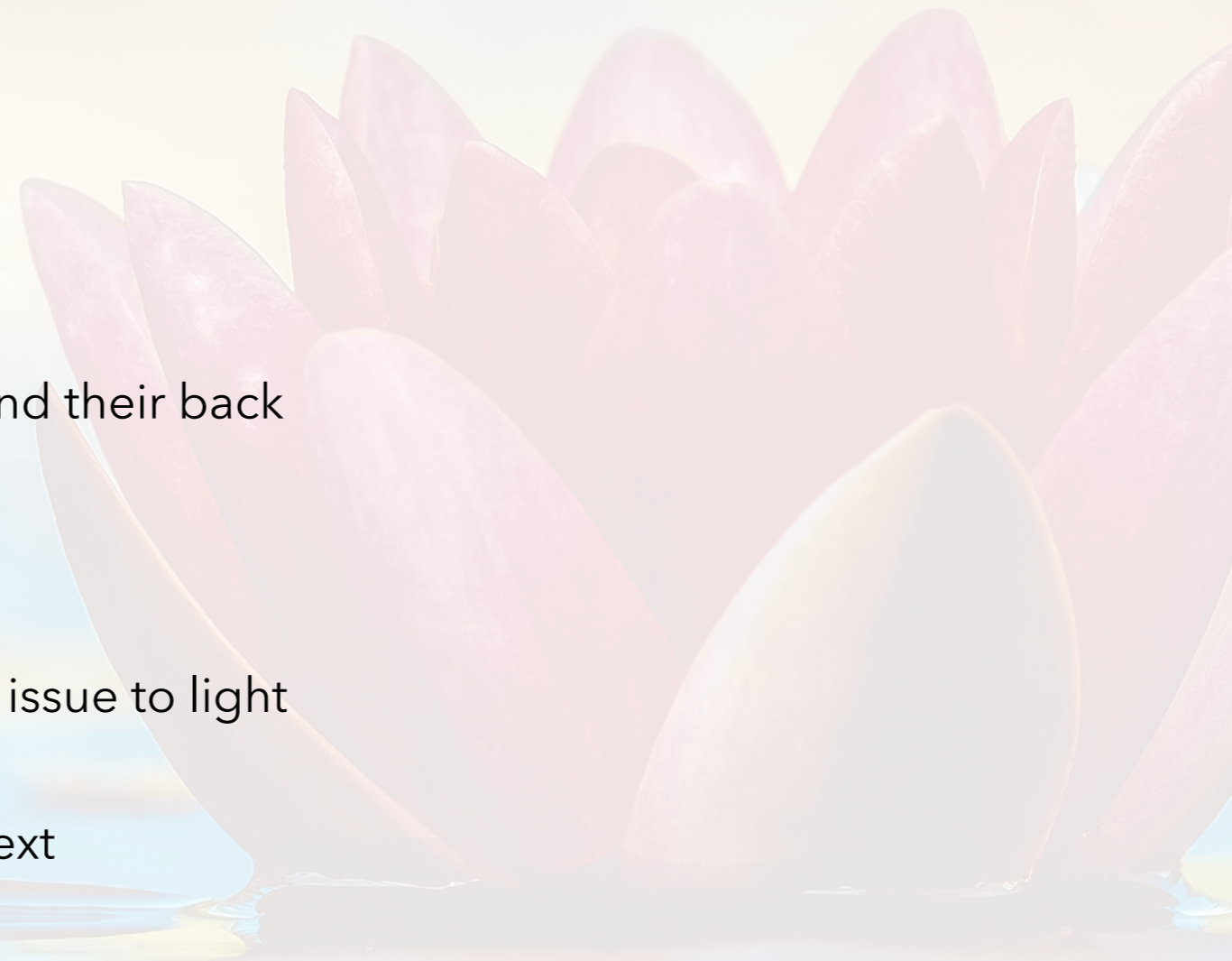
Yama #1: Ahimsa

Signs your actions need ahimsa:

- Skipping meals and not getting enough sleep
- Using standard cleaning and personal without regard to environmental effect
- Overindulgence on meat and dairy products
- Fear-driven and anger-based action

Signs your words need ahimsa:

- Calling people names either to them or behind their back
- overuse of swearing and negative language
- Gossiping about others without bringing the issue to light
- Arguing with people on social media or via text



Yama #1: Ahimsa

If we don't consistently remove the thoughts of negativity, of self-harm, and of self-criticism, those thoughts begin to grow and multiply. Rather than celebrating the gift of who we are, we start to judge, compare, and criticize ourselves and others. Negative thoughts can slowly become translated into words and actions.

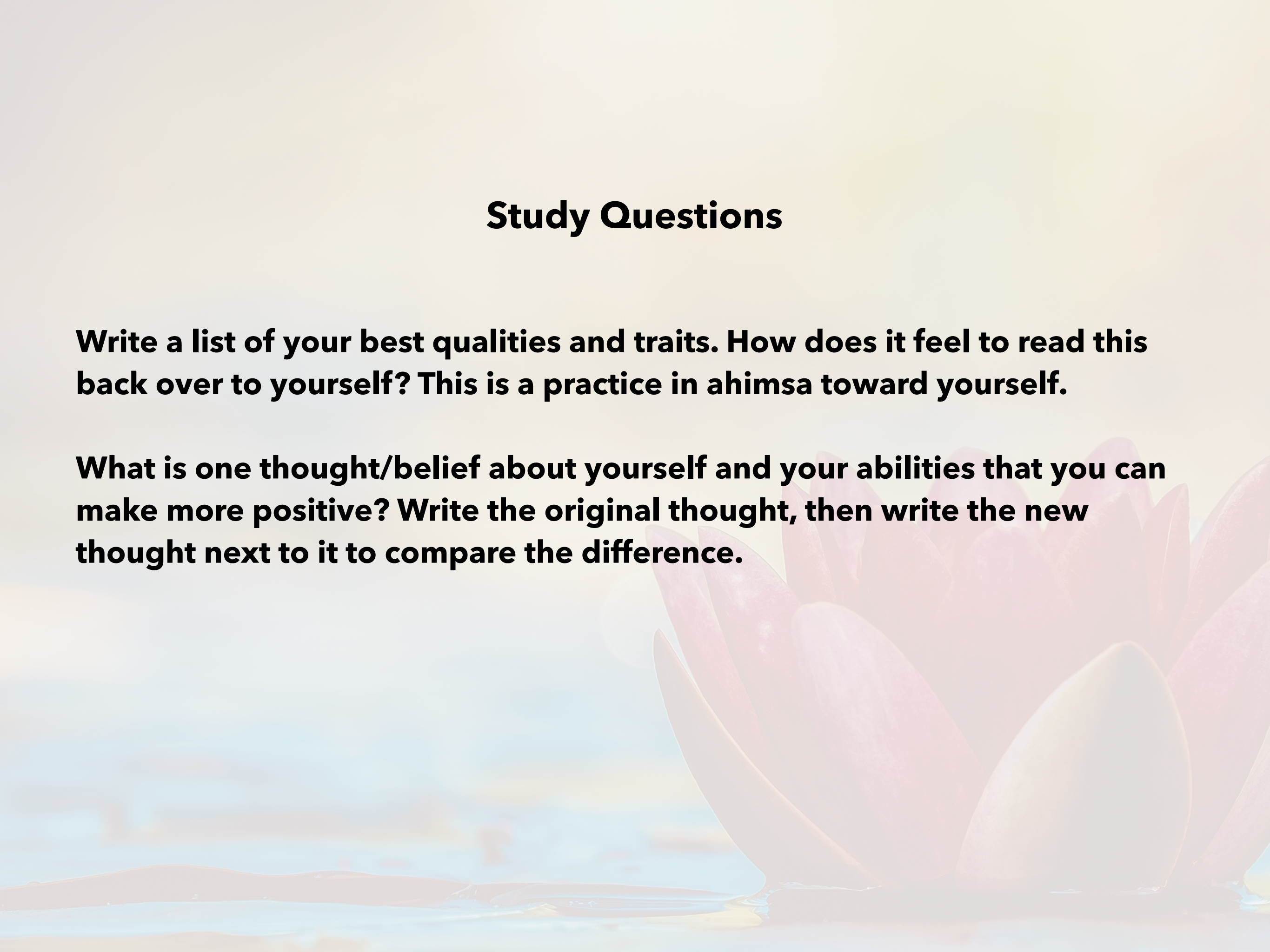
How to practice ahimsa:

- Reframe negative thoughts; use positive and loving thoughts toward yourself
- Practice kindness and compassion towards those that anger/frustrate you
- Allow yourself to receive love and kindness from others in addition to giving it
- Practice non-violence towards the earth and towards animals through consumer habits
- Get enough rest, fill yourself with foods, attend to your basic needs first
- Practice yoga for the sake of practicing, not to achieve a goal or push yourself

Study Questions

Write a list of your best qualities and traits. How does it feel to read this back over to yourself? This is a practice in ahimsa toward yourself.

What is one thought/belief about yourself and your abilities that you can make more positive? Write the original thought, then write the new thought next to it to compare the difference.



Yama #2: Satya

Satya means truthfulness. The word 'sat' translates as true essence or true nature; something pure and unchangeable. It is also "that which is beyond time, space and person."

"Before you speak, let your words pass through three gates.

At the first gate, ask yourself 'Is it true?'

At the second gate ask, 'Is it necessary?'

At the third gate ask, 'Is it kind?'"

Telling the truth in words isn't the only way to practice satya. Satya is a total commitment to truth in words, actions, intentions, and essence of being. It requires both awareness and understanding of honesty, and even more importantly, authenticity.

We often label ourselves according to our thoughts, feelings, experiences, and opinions – but none of these things are real. Satya is moving beyond this to maintain constant awareness of your highest reality or truth.

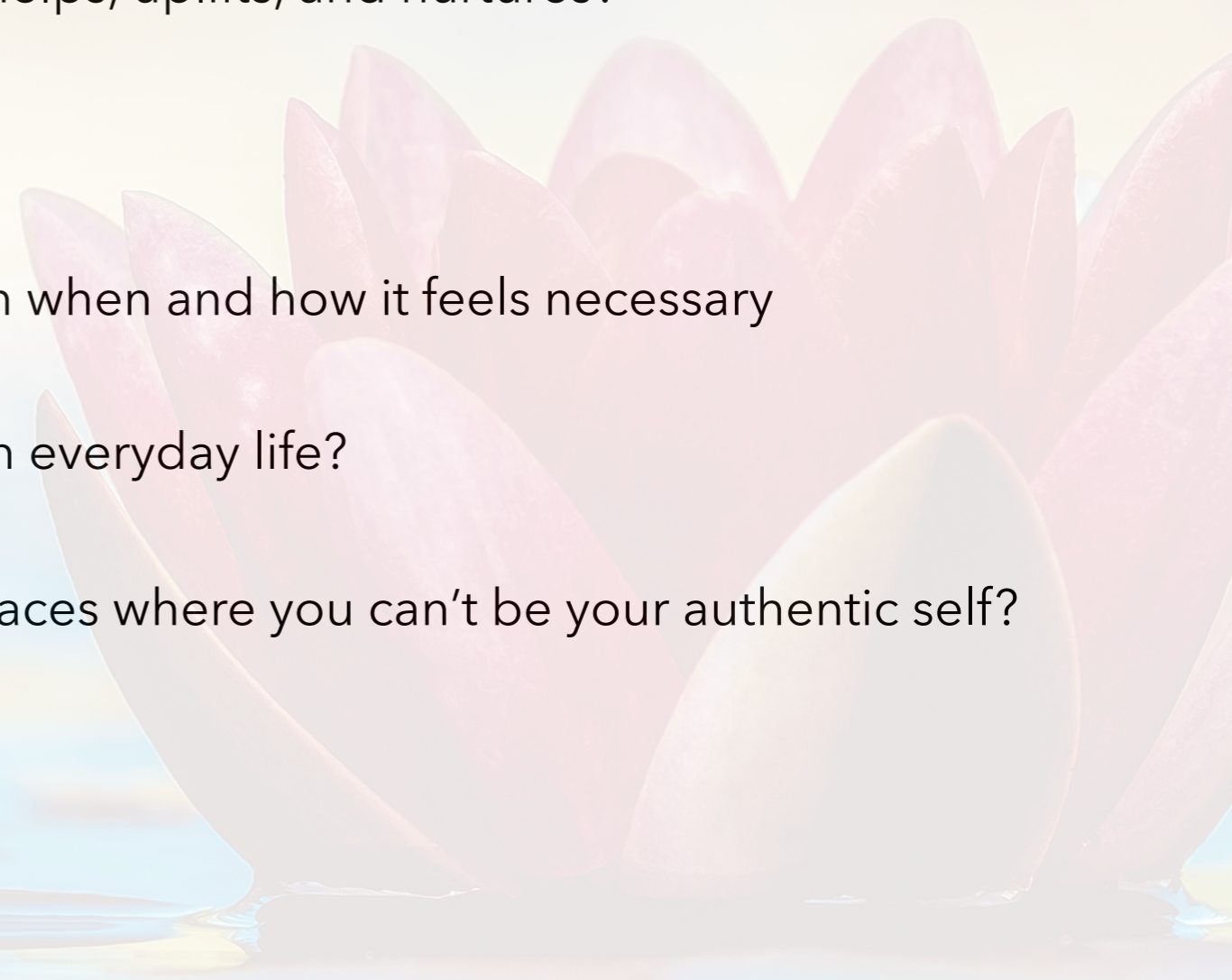
Yama #2: Satya

Satya is about restraint

- Carefully consider the truth you share with others
- How is it expressed in a way that inspires, helps, uplifts, and nurtures?

Satya is about vulnerability

- Keep your heart open and speak your truth when and how it feels necessary
- Do you feel free to be your authentic self in everyday life?
- Do you spend time around people or in places where you can't be your authentic self?



Study Questions

How can you live more authentically and in alignment with your truest self? How might this manifest life changes in your favor?

Are there any areas of your life where you feel it difficult to be honest (ex: a relationship, work)? Explain.

How can you apply satya and speak your truth in the context of teaching yoga?

What happens when the truth could potentially harm someone? Is it possible to honor both ahimsa and satya at the same time? How?

Yama #3: Asteya

At the most basic level, asteya means non-stealing. So many things can be stolen: time, money, love, natural resources, talent. The most important thing to know about asteya is that people usually don't steal these things because they want themselves or others to suffer – they're trying to fill their own incompleteness.

People steal when they feel incomplete and unhappy.

Ways that people steal to feel complete:

- Overconsumption and consumerism: buying and using what you don't fundamentally need
- Infidelity, enjoying attention from someone whom you don't feel the same about
- Copying or emulating someone, stealing of an idea, plagiarism

Yama #3: Asteya

Abundance is the key to practicing asteya in everyday life. Abundance in not only material items, but in time, love, money, and talent, can help you live a truer and more peaceful life.

Cultivating abundance for asteya

- Practice mindful shopping. Ask yourself: do you really need to buy it? For every new thing you buy or acquire, give away something that would be more useful to someone else.
- Allow others to shine in their own way while cultivating appreciation for your own gifts
- Live in the present. Sulking in the pain or shame of the past can steal joy from the present.
- Release long-held beliefs about who you are and what you can accomplish.

Study Questions

Think of a time you felt jealous or insecure in relation to someone else. How could you go back in time and apply asteya?

What activities or people make you feel the most abundance? What are ways you can incorporate more of those into your life, especially when you feel jealousy or low self-esteem?

What are ways a student might be stealing before, during, or after class? How can you practice asteya as a yoga teacher?

Yama #4 Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya originally meant celibacy, but in modern times we interpret it as the right use of energy. It translates to 'behavior which leads to Brahman.' In other words, brahmacharya is about putting energy only into actions that reinforce your connection with the divine.

Why the right use of energy matters:

- When we are mindful of how we direct our energies, we reserve more energy for ourselves and the things that bring us joy and light
- Sensuality and sexuality are tied to creativity and inspiration. When we're mindful about who we share our creations with, we can direct that energy towards things that bring our lives meaning.
- Disassociating ourselves with our bodily needs (i.e. hunger, desire) helps us move into pure consciousness rather than being limited by the labels we've placed upon ourselves

Yama #4 Brahmacharya

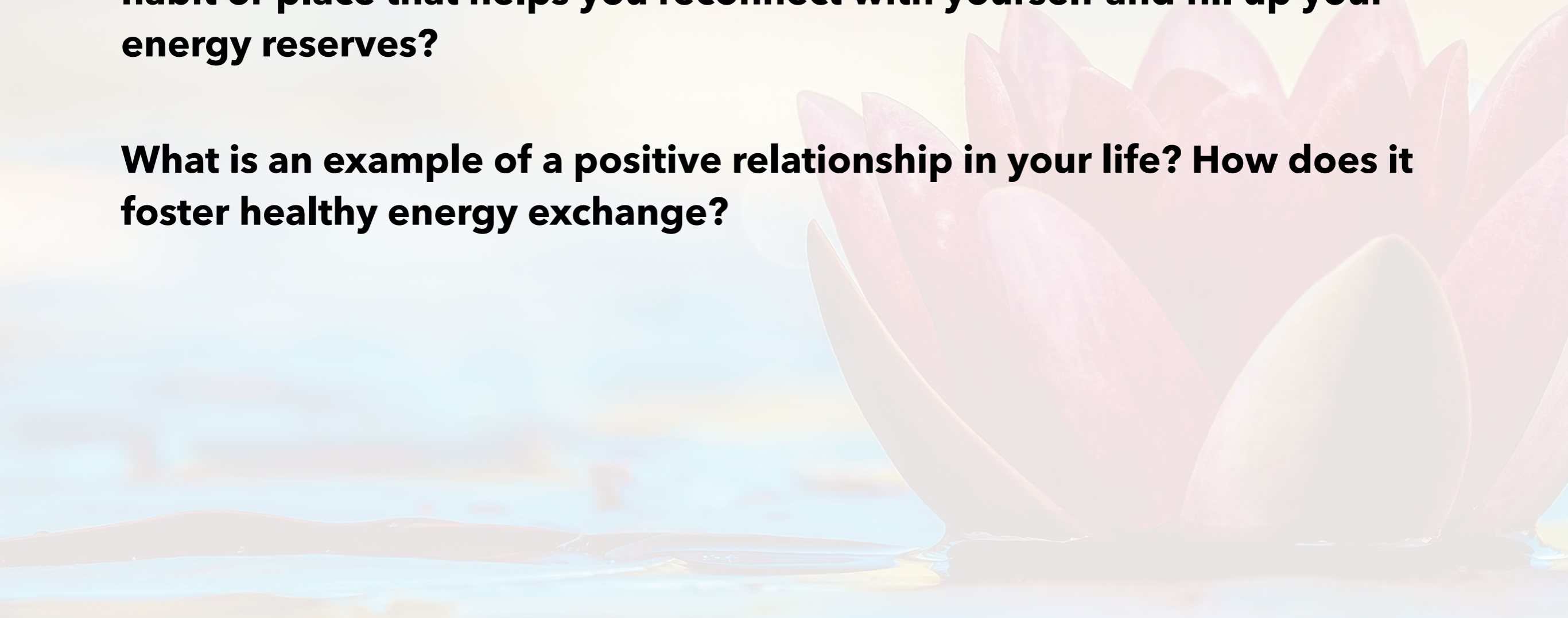
How to apply brahmacharya in daily life:

- Connect to the energy of surrender through yoga, mantra and meditation. When we step back and conserve our resources, rather than oversharing them, we create space for opportunities to manifest.
- Spend time meditating, in silence, and in nature. This can help us connect to our true state and clear out the thoughts which bind us to desire and incorrect use of energy.
- Be mindful about relationships. Who are you sharing energy with in daily life? Do they reflect the person that you want to be?
- Observe where you focus your mind's energy. When you notice anger, fear, or irritability arise, practice pratipaksha bhavana, or opposite thoughts. This method allows us to reframe negative thinking into positive. For example, being frustrated with someone else's actions can be transformed into an opportunity to learn more about someone you love on a deeper level.

Study Questions

What is one way you can practice surrender in your daily life? What is a habit or place that helps you reconnect with yourself and fill up your energy reserves?

What is an example of a positive relationship in your life? How does it foster healthy energy exchange?



Yama #5 Aparigraha

Aparigraha means non-attachment or non-hoarding. This applies to material things at a basic level, but a deeper look helps us understand that many other things can create attachment in a negative way.

Where attachment can cause suffering:

- Relying on material possessions can cause a person to associate themselves with that thing. i.e. a house owner, a Tesla driver. If that thing is stripped away, a person may not know their identity and purpose.
- With more possessions comes more responsibility. Where will you store your extra things? How will you pay to fix this or that? What will happen to that thing if you want to go on vacation or move or make a change?
- Being attached to another person in an unhealthy relationship can cause us to associate our sense of self-worth with the other person's presence. This can cause us to lose our sense of self entirely.

Yama #5 Aparigraha

When we associate material things with rootedness and completion, we may feel the need keep buying things and keep filling the void, which can lead to further suffering through economic distress and low self-worth.

How to practice aparigraha:

- Practice the Marie Kondo method when buying or ridding of things. Hold it, close your eyes, and ask yourself: does it spark joy? If not, you probably don't or never really did need it.
- Allow people to come and go from your life naturally without forcing them to stay or using them to reaffirm your own needs. Create an open channel. *"Love is what is left when you've let go of all the things you love" ~ Swami Jnaneshvara*
- Consider if you're attached to a certain ideal as a teacher. Do you expect to look/perform a certain way? Release attachments to what you should do as a teacher and allow acceptance to take the place of expectation.

Study Questions

What material possessions are you attached to? Can you think of a deeper emotional reason why that thing might be important to you? What idea about yourself is it reinforcing?

Have you held onto any beliefs about what a yoga teacher should look/be like? Do you meet all of these expectations? How can you reframe these expectations into acceptance for who you are and where you're at?

Niyamas

THE 5 NIYAMAS



YOGAPEDIA

The Niyamas are moral and ethical guidelines that apply to yourself, though these actions can in turn affect the world around us. These are more subtle practices regarding how you treat your physical body, your mind, and your spirit. The word 'Niyama' often translates as 'positive duties' or 'observances', and are thought of as recommended habits for healthy living and 'spiritual existence'.

Niyama #1 Saucha

Saucha means purity or cleanliness in both the body and the mind. Practicing saucha frees us from impurities that cause physical disease and mental dis-ease. Saucha was traditionally performed through the shatkarmas, cleanliness practices (such as the neti pot). Today, saucha has greater meaning through mental and energetic cleanliness.

Ways to Practice Saucha:

- Spending time alone can help one reset and achieve harmony in mind and body. Small amounts of isolation and silence help purify the mind and create opportunities for fresh new thoughts to occupy it.
- Digital minimalism. Aside from cleaning out your actual closet, think about the clutter and “dirt” that may have accumulated in your digital devices. Photos of ex lovers? Apps you don’t use? Negative music or movies? Unhealthy social media practices?
- Apply cleansing breath work practices like Kapalabhati breath (unless pregnant) and Dirga Pranayama to clear the nadis and balance energy. Kundalini Kriyas can also help energy cleansing, as well as deep asana twists.

Niyama #1 Saucha

In the modern world, saucha has adopted a new meaning in regards to the environment and toxicities. What you put in and on your body are very important for practicing saucha.

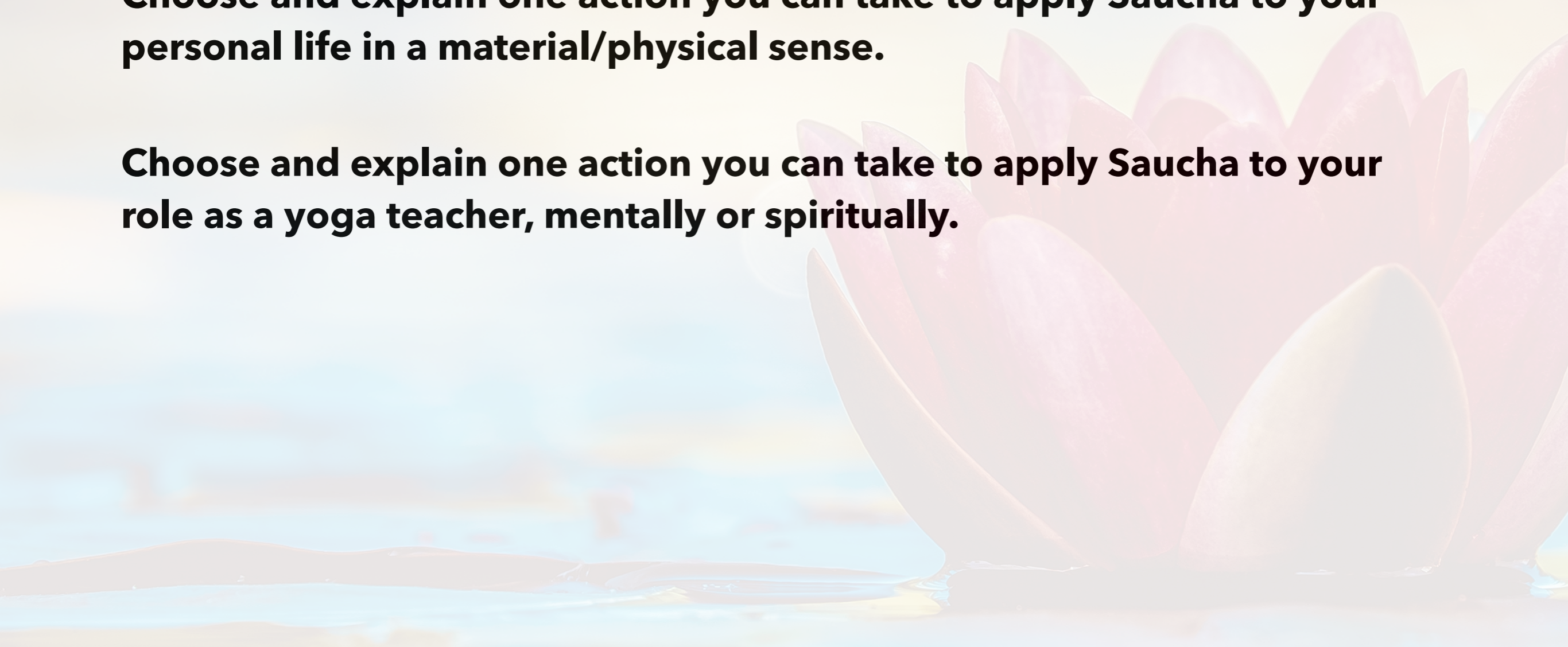
Practicing Saucha for health and environment:

- Using eco-friendly cleaner and yoga props in a studio can keep your space free of toxins
- From shampoo, to hand soap, to clothing, consider where your personal items came from and what they contain. The skin absorbs chemicals extremely quickly, and we don't know their effects.
- Do the foods you eat have toxic origins? Factory farmed animals endure great pain and suffering before their death; are you consuming that negative energy? How about the conditions of the people who made the food? What additives and chemicals are in your packaged food?

Study Questions

Choose and explain one action you can take to apply Saucha to your personal life in a material/physical sense.

Choose and explain one action you can take to apply Saucha to your role as a yoga teacher, mentally or spiritually.



Niyama #2 Santosha

Santosha is about contentment and acceptance. This doesn't mean accepting toxicity or harm; it means seeing any situation, good or bad, with clarity (rather than running away) so we can approach it from a place of love.

Why do we need Santosha?

- Santosha is essential for helping us accept our shadows so that we can understand ourselves better. Rather than avoiding the uncomfortable, Santosha allows us to accept and walk through the darkness with grace.
- Santosha teaches us to remain balanced. Balanced in energy, intention, and emotion.
- Santosha allows us to view and confront imbalances and injustices so that we can take the necessary steps to make the world a better place.

Niyama #2 Santosha

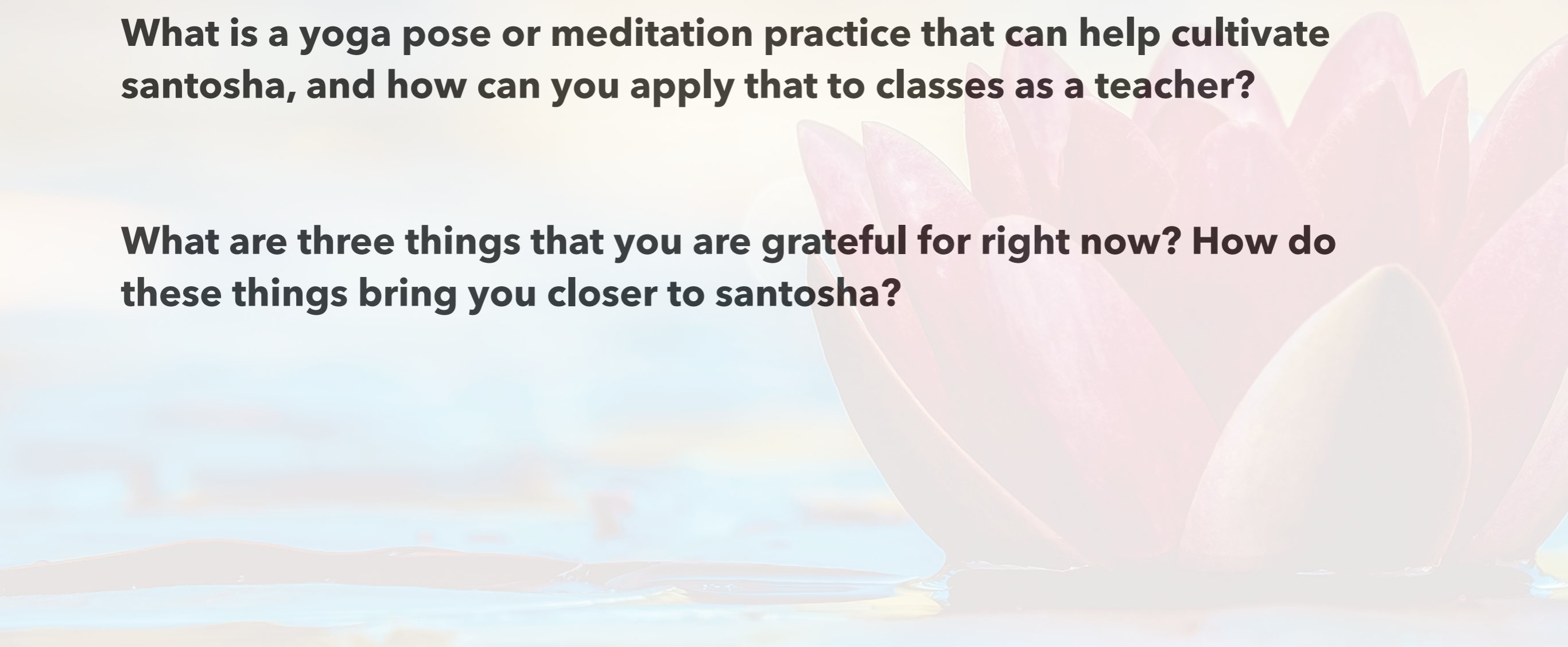
How to apply santosha to your life

- See life and everything in it as a circle, rather than a line. Everything dies, is reborn, and transforms into something. Anytime you're faced with a challenge, remember to accept it as part of the cycle. It will always be followed by something good – that is the law of nature.
- If you're procrastinating, avoiding something or running from someone, santosha can help you look at the situation from non-judgmental view to figure out why.
- Practice gratitude. Contentment is exceeded when we are grateful for what we have – every single day. Write a list of things you're grateful for when you feel that life has wronged you.

Study Questions

What is a yoga pose or meditation practice that can help cultivate santosha, and how can you apply that to classes as a teacher?

What are three things that you are grateful for right now? How do these things bring you closer to santosha?



Niyama #3 Tapas

Tapas, or discipline, is an important part of yogic living. Tap means “to burn,” which represents the burning away of impurities, such as the negative thoughts that breed fear, weakness and uncertainty. Tapas is about cultivating enthusiasm, zest, and passion for the things we are disciplined in.

Why is Tapas important?

- Tapas encourages us to engage in practices that stoke the inner fire, or agni. These practices look and feel different for everyone.
- On a small scale, tapas could be trying a new skill or speaking your mind to someone who makes you feel small. It could also mean making big life changes like changing careers or moving to a new place.
- Tapas is involved anytime you step outside of your comfort zone. *Tapas is to burn away self-doubt by showing up.* This is the path to transformation.

Niyama #3 Tapas

How to apply Tapas to your life

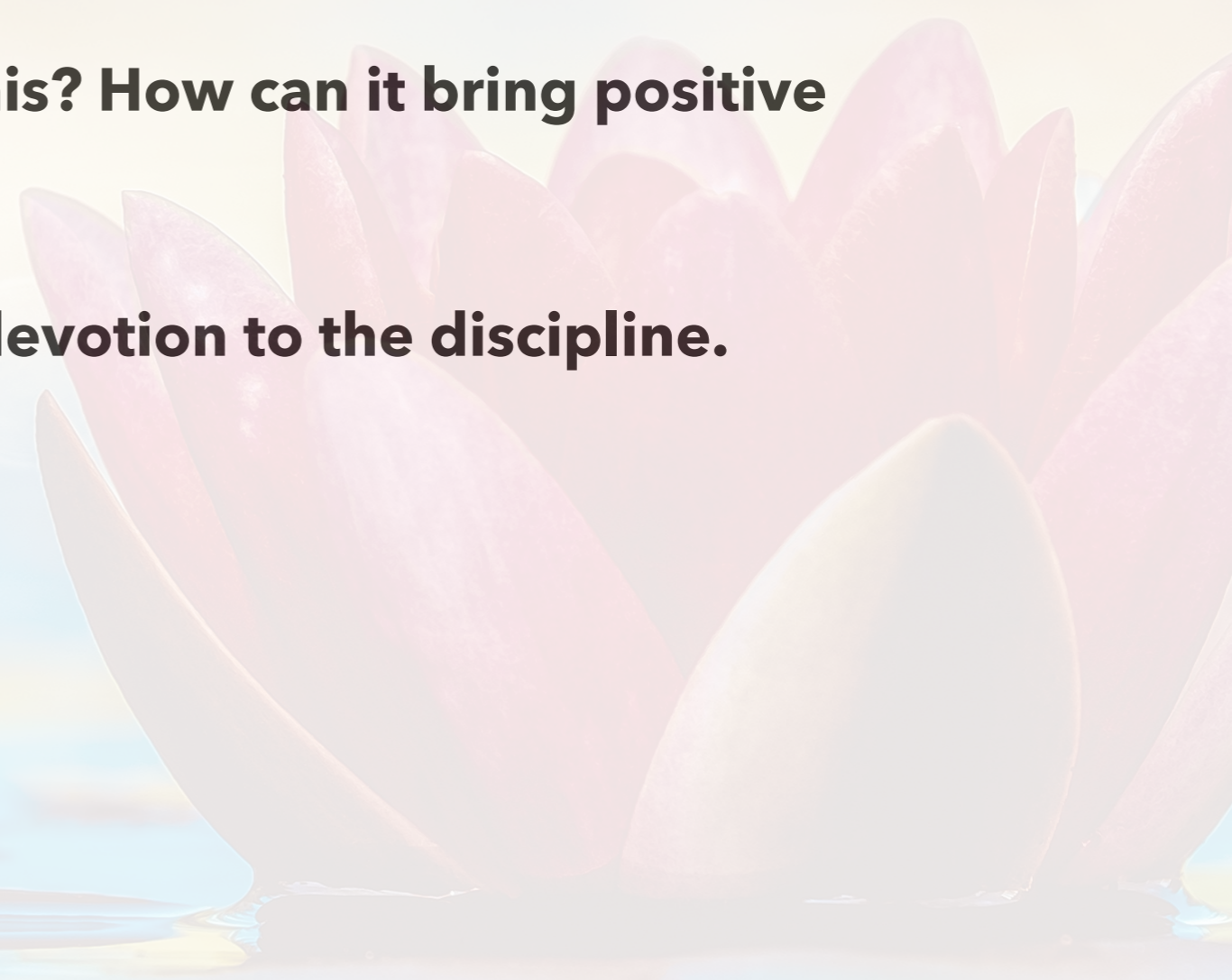
- Tapas doesn't ask us to ignore self-doubt; it asks us to move through it, and, eventually, burn it away. We spend our lives following urges; tapas asks us to use the burning fire in our heart to create the life we want.
- Choose a discipline that you believe would bring about positive transformation in your life. A daily meditation practice, eating plant-based for a month, or resolving to speak your truth are all good examples.
- Ask yourself what your intention is choosing this discipline. It should come from a deep place within your heart – not because it will make you look better to others, but because it will make you feel deeply satisfied inside.
- Create a sankalpa, an intention or vow meant to bring about change. For example, someone who wants to practice yoga daily could say, "I feel energized and alive when I Practice yoga every morning."

Study Questions

Choose a discipline you'd like to start following.

Ask yourself, why do I want to do this? How can it bring positive change into my life?

Write a Sankalpa to reinforce your devotion to the discipline.



Niyama #4 Svadhyaya

Svadhyaya is often translated to self-study, and many people believe this to be education in traditional form. Acquiring external knowledge is a part of svadhyaya, but it is more deeply involved with internal knowledge. 'Sva' means self, and 'adhyaya' means study or education. Thus Svadhyaya is about learning your own history and how past experiences have shaped your perspective on life.

Why is Svadhyaya important?

- Svadhyaya allows you to observe the mind and become aware of your thoughts. It's the practice of thinking about thinking.
- Svadhyaya is the key to understanding your own feelings, challenges, habits, emotional reactions, hardwired behaviors, conditioned responses, associative memories, recurring thoughts, attitudes and perceptions of yourself and others.
- When you know why you act and feel the way you do, you can work to rewire these patterns in more positive ways that improve your quality of life.

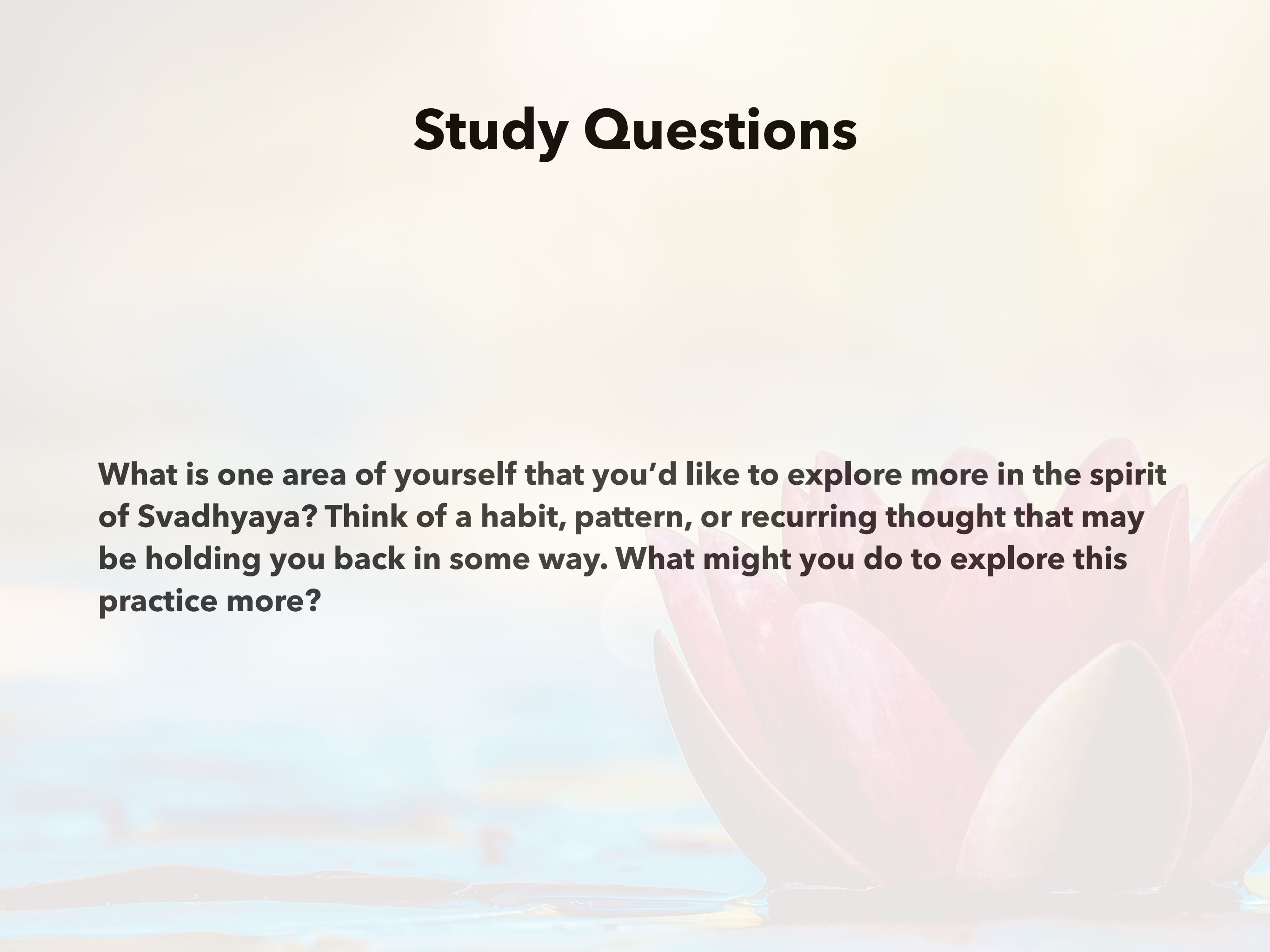
Niyama #4 Svadhyaya

How to apply Svadhyaya to your life

- A regular meditation practice helps you become aware of your recurring thoughts and identify ones that hold you back
- Reflective journaling and stream-of-consciousness writing helps you get to the root of your emotions and patterns (we'll practice this together later in the course!)
- Practicing yoga can help us understand how we respond when we reach our edge or are challenged. What thoughts or beliefs arise? Are they true?
- Create a habit of asking questions before thinking or doing. How do I feel about this? Is this what I really want? Is this what I really want to do? Is this what I really want to say? Is this going to take me where I want to go? Do I have any attachment to the outcome? How do I want to feel? What's another way to look at this?

Study Questions

What is one area of yourself that you'd like to explore more in the spirit of Svadhyaya? Think of a habit, pattern, or recurring thought that may be holding you back in some way. What might you do to explore this practice more?

A pink lotus flower is in bloom in the foreground, partially obscuring the text. The background shows a sunset over a body of water with a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The water is calm, reflecting the light from the sky.

Niyama #5 Isvara Pranidhana

Isvara Pranidhana means surrender. It asks us to devote ourselves to the divine; to let go of any attachment to the sense of "I" and the ego. Since the ego defines our attachment to who we are based on the physical world, isvara pranidhana asks us to give up these ideas so that we can become closer to our true nature.

Why is Isvara Pranidhana important?

- Through the act of surrender, we release the thoughts, emotions, and expressions that we have defined ourselves and others by. Then, we can see that the divine is in everyone; we can see that everyone is equal.
- The act of surrender helps us release expectations about the outcome of our actions. Opening up to all the love that we are; all the love that may be, helps us reduce anxiety and embrace the uncertainty of all that is yet to come.
- Isvara pranidhana asks us to devote our actions to the divine (which in this case means the collective consciousness that we all embody). It helps us do things for the sake of helping others and doing good in the world to make life better for everyone. Imagine: how the world would change if we all practiced this?

Niyama #5 Isvara Pranidhana

How to practice Isvara Pranidhana:

- Release the need to control situations. Pay attention to tension that arises in your body when life doesn't go as planned. How can you release this tension and surrender?
- Set intentions to act out of the benefit of the collective, rather than for ourselves. Create a practice to connect with that which is greater than yourself.
- In yoga we can surrender to a posture and the feeling, even when it is uncomfortable or the mind tells us we can't
- Yoga nidra and restorative yoga allow us to reach the state between waking and dreaming (hypnagogic state) where we can practice surrender in the form of pure relaxation. This allows us to view reality, and our thoughts, in a different light.

Study Questions

**What is one area of your life that could benefit from Isvara Pranidhana?
What are the potential benefits of practicing surrender in this space?**

**Create an intention to use in a yoga class that can help you students
practice the spirit of Isvara pranidhana, or surrender.**

