

Dharma Yoga Flow

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"It is better to live your own Dharma imperfectly, than to live an imitation of somebody else's life with perfection." -Bhagavad Gita

The Yoga practice I have shared with you is designed to encourage a sense of connection with Dharma (more about this below). The essence of the flow is about finding your purpose in life, who you are meant to be – your souls desire! It guides you to sense that your choices determine who you are and that your reactions shape your destiny. That through developing inner listening there is opportunity after opportunity to seed your destiny.

To do this there are postures that connect you with the base chakras (energy centres of the body)

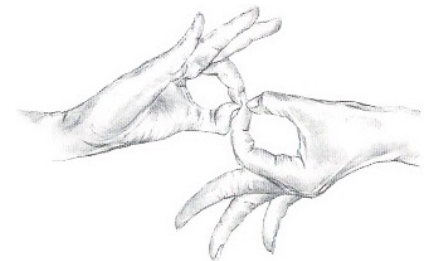
- Mooladhara (our root/sense of self)
- Swadhisthana (our creative force & home)
- Manipura (our centre of personal power & dynamism)
- Vishuddhi (our communication centre – both inner and outer)

The postures used focus mainly on the floor to facilitate grounding, rooting down & hooking into nature's forces – from which we can then stretch into our full potential.

Mudras (hand gestures) that support the Dharma Flow

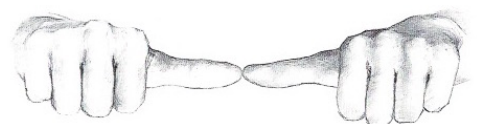
Dharma Chakra Mudra

Dharma Chakra means “wheel of the law” and refers to the teachings of the Buddha, whose intention is to free all beings from rebirth and suffering. It balances all the systems of the body and cultivates a sense of wholeness and well-being.



Angushtha Mudra

Angushtha mudra activates the space element – Akasha – whose qualities include, expansion, limitlessness and an opening to the subtle energies of our being. This mudra enhances clear communication and deepens sensitivity and inner listening.



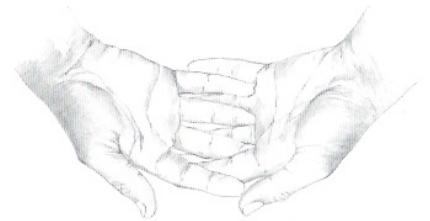
Citta Mudra

Citta means “consciousness” and Citta mudra supports the awakening of witness consciousness in which thoughts, feelings and limiting beliefs are seen more clearly, without identifying with them so completely! Through awakening the inner witness, limiting beliefs are released allowing us to discern between the true self and the everyday personality more clearly.



Ushas Mudra

Ushas means “dawn” so this mudra supports us in welcoming each day enthusiastically as a field of infinite possibilities. As we embrace each day more openly with fewer expectations of how things should be, stress and tension are reduced. Ushas mudra cultivates calm & mental clarity which supports us in viewing life more positively.



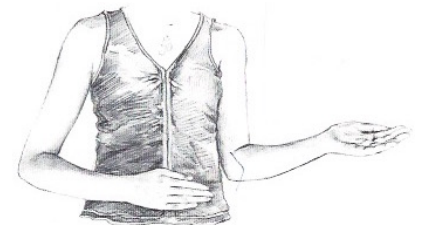
Abhaya Varada Mudra

Abhaya means “absence of fear” and Varada means ‘granting wishes’ – this mudra evokes the fearlessness that comes from being centred in our authentic being, whose essential nature is safety. Abhaya Varada mudra encourages grounding (by reducing any excessive air in the body) from which a sense of safety arises naturally.



Swadhistana Mudra

Swadhisthana means “ones own dwelling place” – this mudra awakens a deep sense of contentment, allowing us to be nourished by our true being, rather than seeking fulfillment and pleasure at the level of the personality. The left hand opens to receive universal healing energy while the right hand channels this nourishment into the body



Working a little deeper into the concept of Dharma

What does “living your best life” mean to you? Does it mean accumulating wealth and fulfilling all your material wants? Or, does it mean turning away from the material world in order to fully realize the gift of spirit? We often tend to think of these objectives as being mutually exclusive: material fulfillment or spiritual fulfillment, not both together. A little exposure to the philosophy of many Eastern spiritual traditions — including yoga — could easily lead you to conclude that if you aspire to achieve goals in the material world you cannot fulfill yourself spiritually, or vice versa. However, since all of us, at some level, long for fulfillment in all aspects of our life, it is essential to understand that these two aims are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the yoga tradition asserts that lasting happiness is dependent on prospering both materially and spiritually.

If yoga is about life, this means all of life, not just part of it. Together, the spiritual and material comprise the whole you, the whole of the experience of being human and the nature of the universe in which you live. There may be no more important step to achieving ultimate fulfillment than accepting what the Vedas, the scriptural source of yoga, teach us about desires — that some desires are inspired by your soul.

The Four Desires

According to the Vedas, your soul has four distinct desires, which collectively are described as purushartha, “for the purpose of the soul.”

- The first of these four desires is **DHARMA**, the desire to fully become who you were meant to be. It is the longing to achieve your highest state of well-being — in other words, to thrive and, in the process, to fulfill your unique purpose, your destiny.
- The second desire is **ARTHA**, the desire for the means (like money, security, health) to help you fulfill your Dharma.
- The third desire is **KAMA**, the longing for pleasure in any and all forms.
- The fourth is **MOKSHA**, the desire to be free from the burdens of the world, even as you participate fully in it. Moksha is the longing to experience spirit, essence or God, to abide in lasting peace and to realize a state beyond the reach of the other three desires.

These four desires are inherent aspects of your soul or essence. Your soul uses them for the purpose of fulfilling its unique potential. Learning to honor all four of your soul’s desires compels you to thrive at every level, leads to lasting happiness as well as a complete and balanced life. Perhaps most significantly, this teaching from the yoga tradition on the four desires is the touchstone to achieving real and lasting happiness and, in the process, to making your most meaningful and beneficial contribution to the world.

Not all Desires lead to happiness!

Of course, not all desires lead to happiness. Desires can and do lead to pain and frustration. However, according to the ancient tradition, it is attachment to desire, not desire itself, that is the underlying cause of practically all of our pain and suffering. It's vital to understand that while you are alive, there is no end to desire, since the seed of your every thought and your every action is a desire. Thus, when it comes to desire, it's not a matter of avoiding desire, but rather learning to discern those desires that are helpful and necessary for your growth — those that serve your soul and help you continue to thrive — from those that do not. The critical question when it comes to desire is, how do you differentiate what Buddha referred to as “wholesome” from “unwholesome” desires, or what the yoga tradition describes as helpful (shreya) desires from simply pleasant (preya) desires?

Admittedly, being able to recognize which of your desires are vital to pursue and which ones are not is often less than easy. This is precisely why the ancient sages counseled that we practice yoga. Their point was a very practical one: You are best able to discern which of your many desires should (and should not) be responded to when your mind is calm and tranquil. From this perspective, clear perception is the cornerstone and an absolute necessity for living your best life — and that's exactly what the focus of a yoga practice should be all about.

Yoga's ultimate intent is to achieve something far deeper and more meaningful than just a better body or less stress and tension. Its ultimate aim is to help you hear your soul's call so that you can be consistently guided to make the best decisions — the ones that serve your highest state of wellbeing. In the process of doing so, you will necessarily be made more whole and act in such a way as to support the larger world of which you are a part. It will also lead you to a truly fulfilled, meaningful and purposeful life.

What is Dharma?

Dharma is a Sanskrit word that loosely translates to righteous living, but the original word itself has a far deeper meaning than its direct translation. The ancient Hindu texts of The Vedas describe Dharma as an inner wisdom, or a cosmic guidance that governs not only the individual, but also the universe itself.

For a person to follow their Dharma, all they need to do is to follow that inner guidance. Easy, right? Not always...

The reason why you might find it difficult to listen to that inner voice is because there are so many other voices vying for your attention. There's the voice of your own mind, the voices of the people around you, the voice of culture ingrained through generations, the voice of your conscience, the voices of beliefs and expectations and a whole cacophony of others.

Ways to Explore & Discover Your Personal Dharma

Pay attention to synchronicity.

- Life is very good at guiding you, if you just pay attention. Notice what or who keeps showing up in your life. If someone or something shows up over and over, it's likely that the person or thing is tied to your dharma.

Follow callings.

- Callings are those things that you feel deep inside guiding you that don't necessarily make sense to anyone else but you. You feel a direction to do something, but it's not through your mind. These callings are preparation for your personal dharma.

Know when it's time to go.

- If you are feeling like it's time to move on, then it's probably time to move on. Your mind might be fighting you, but your soul knows best.

Be aware that it's not linear.

- The path to your personal dharma may in fact feel like a spiral. Just when you think you've gotten there, you find yourself spinning deeper into some aspect. It helps to surrender to the notion that the journey isn't always forward.

Make friends with the illogical.

- It's important to know that your dharma is not necessarily coming from a rational place. If you are trying to over-mastermind it, you will probably drive yourself crazy, and your dharma will feel even further away.

Have a practice that connects you to a greater source.

- Whether it's yoga, meditation, painting, or walking in the woods, it's important to connect with a source greater than you because that's where the information about your dharma lies and that's where you'll find the support to step into it.

Look at the people you admire.

- The people you admire tend to represent the greater aspects of you. Put on your detective hat. This can give you clues to your personal dharma.

Take it seriously, but be light-hearted about it.

- If you take discovering your dharma too seriously, you may not actually be able to see it. It helps to have a light touch.

Have courage to walk into the mystery.

- If you are committed to discovering your dharma, you'll need to call in a higher level of trust.

Allow breathing space.

- Your dharma is not something you can “catch.” You need to take steps, then leaps, and then let yourself breathe. Patience is an absolute necessity.

It’s important to understand that the callings, journeys, and even the seeming missteps can be coalesced into a pathway toward your personal dharma.

One final question you might like to ask yourself is:

- **What is the change that you so deeply want to see in the world?**

Your answer may give you an important clue to discover your personal Dharma, your sacred duty, your mission here on earth.

How often do you ask yourself *Who am I? What do I want? What is my purpose in life?*

These questions come from the depths of our being, which is always nudging us to look beyond the world of appearances and discover our true life's purpose. When you're connected to your deepest purpose, you live in the flow of creativity, love, enthusiasm, joy, and abundance.

Clues that You're Living Your Purpose

The spiritual Law of Dharma states that we all have a unique talent . . . something we love and do better than anyone else in the world. When we use that special talent to serve others, we live in the fullest expression of our Dharma. We experience personal fulfillment while simultaneously serving the needs of our family, our community, and the planet.

When you're in your Dharma . . .

- You lose track of time. Instead of watching the clock or thinking about what you'd rather be doing, you're fully immersed in present moment awareness.
- You're excited about the unfolding possibilities and the opportunity to serve others as you express your unique gifts and talents.
- You don't seek approval, security, or control. Knowing that your true source of abundance and creativity is infinite, you don't get caught up in the ego's archetypal power struggles.
- Your chosen activity feels deeply right and natural to you, even when it sometimes challenges your abilities or, conversely, feels monotonous.
- You enjoy your relationships with those who share your life and work
- You feel aligned with the evolutionary flow of the universe, regularly experience synchronistic opportunities and encounters that support you in the fulfillment of your intentions and desires.

When you're not living your true purpose, the clues are equally clear . . .

- You don't find intrinsic pleasure in your work or activities. You have a nagging feeling that there must be something more to life, even if you don't know that that is.
- You dread going to work or performing whatever activity currently fills your days. Time seems to drag and you can't wait to stop.
- Your relationships feel strained or even toxic.
- You don't feel like you're expressing your uniqueness or individuality in your work. You may doubt whether what you're doing is truly serving others.
- You expend a lot of energy resisting change or trying to force things to happen.

Keep in mind that finding and living your purpose isn't a one-time effort. Dharma is an ever-evolving process that depends above all on expanding your self-awareness. Sometimes you will feel completely in the flow, living in harmony with the force of evolution on a moment-by-moment basis. Other times when you feel out of balance and constricted, you may be expressing only a small percentage of your Dharma.

Reflective Questions to keep you on track

To find yourself, lost and without purpose, wondering how you ended up where you are, is a scary thought. The power of self-reflection can serve to keep you in check, to keep you focused on self-improvement and ensure that you are as fulfilled as possible.

- **Am I using my time wisely?**

“Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind.” – Nathaniel Hawthorne

- **Am I taking anything for granted?**

“Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your last misfortunes, of which all men have some.” – Charles Dickens

- **Am I employing a healthy perspective?**

“Perspective is as simple as answering this question: If I had five months to live would I experience this problem differently?” – Shannon Alder

- **Am I living true to myself?**

“A lot of the conflict you have in your life exists simply because you’re not living in alignment; you’re not being true to yourself.” – Steve Maraboli

- **Am I waking up in the morning ready to take on the day?**

“Know that dreaming is a waste of sleeping time and energy if you don’t wake up to achieve them.” – Israelmore Ayivor

- **Am I thinking negative thoughts before I fall asleep?**

“Insomniacs know that there is something about the night. A darkness, an energy, a mystery that shrouds things. It hides things at the same time as it illuminates them. It is this thing that allows us to examine our thoughts in a way that we can’t during the day. It is this thing that brings truth and clarity.” – Courtney Cole

- **Am I putting enough effort into my relationships?**

“Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike.” – J.K. Rowling

- **Am I taking care of myself physically?**

“To keep the body in good health is a duty...otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.” – Buddha

- **Am I letting matters that are out of my control stress me out?**

“The reason many people in our society are miserable, sick, and highly stressed is because of an unhealthy attachment to things they have no control over.” – Steve Maraboli

- **Am I achieving the goals that I've set for myself?**

“Those who do not move, do not notice their chains.” – Rosa Luxemburg

This final question is necessary to consider on a frequent basis. We all have a general vision of where we want to be in five or 10 years, but it's a very obscure glimpse based around general accomplishments.

PsychologyToday.com reports: “In life, people have many goals (e.g. exercise more, be a better spouse, save more money). However, goals often go unrealized because people lack self-awareness... Thus, to improve our chances of reaching our goals, we must remain aware of our current behavior.”

It's helpful to examine the visions of our future selves in close detail and break down everything that must be done in order to achieve them. Don't solely focus on the *where* and *what*—account for the *how*.

Through frequent self-reflection, we can make sure that we're on the right path. Lack of self-reflection can cause us to seem lost or without a purpose. Time flies by and without consciously evaluating our circumstances, we can let so many aspects of our lives slip away: our health, our relationships, and our goals. It's necessary for us to unplug for a few minutes every now and again, when possible, and address a variety of the questions, including some of those listed above.

Above all else it is vitally important to create the space and time to feel into our bodies, to breath, to pause, meditate and reflect.

Namaste

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For Retreats, Yoga Classes and Treatments visit: www.pranamay.co.uk

Email – debbie@avani-yoga.co.uk

Phone - 07901907245

With gratitude and thanks to - *Rod Stryker, Deepak Chopra, Life Hack, Joseph and Lilian Le Page*