

The 8 Limbs of Yoga as applied to Addiction Recovery

A guide for reflection, exploration,
and deeper understanding

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Welcome

I'm so glad you are accessing this workbook! As a person in recovery from substance use disorder myself, I have experienced incredible benefits from the practice of yoga. I hope to share some of this experience with you throughout the following pages.

The format of this workbook is to provide a brief explanation on each of the 8 limbs of yoga, followed by self-reflection journaling prompts and an exploratory yoga posture. This workbook may be used as an additional support to a more structured program of recovery, or on its own to help you explore some of what yoga has to offer.

Take as much time as you need to complete these pages. Whether you are a long time yoga practitioner, or completely new to it, try to keep an open mind by staying curious as you work through the material. You may wish to revisit the self-reflection prompts from time to time, and to note how your responses may have shifted. Additional resources are included at the end of the workbook should you wish to pursue them.

-Stephanie



Introduction

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

The Yoga Sutras are a foundational text on Hindu yoga philosophy that date back anywhere from 500 BCE to the 3rd century CE. The text was originally written in Sanskrit, and consists of 196 aphorisms divided into 4 chapters. The text is attributed to Patanjali, a sage who likely integrated and synthesized yoga from older traditions. Indeed, yoga philosophy is thought to have influenced, and been influenced by, other philosophical systems in early India such as Buddhism and Jainism.

The Eight Limbs of Yoga

The Yoga Sutras outline the 8 Limbs of Yoga as various forms of yoga practice that progress from external (social) life to internal (psychological) life. These practices are believed to transform the body and mind to create a profound sense of peace and freedom from suffering.

The 8 Limbs are:

- Yamas
- Niyamas
- Asana
- Pranyama
- Pratyahara
- Dharana
- Dhyana
- Samadhi

On the following pages, you'll find:

- ✓ A brief explanation of each limb, followed by a suggested posture to explore. You may wish to read the posture cues all the way through before you try each pose.
 - ✓ A series of self-reflection questions that can serve as writing prompts.
 - ✓ A space for you to summarize anything new or notable that came up for you as you explored each limb.
 - ✓ A list of sources utilized in creating this workbook, should you wish to dive deeper.
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1ST LIMB: Yamas

Yamas are ethical standards that focus on one's behaviors. You may think of them as how you interact with the world.

There are 5 yamas:

- Ahimsa - nonviolence/non-harming
- Satya - truthfulness
- Asteya - non-stealing
- Brahmacharya - divine conduct
- Aparigraha - non-grasping

The following pages contain self-reflection journaling prompts that pertain to each of the 5 yamas.

As you reflect on the 5 yamas, experiment with *tadasana*, or mountain pose. Notice how it feels to stand tall with your feet firmly planted. How do you want to present yourself to the world?



Tadasana - Mountain Pose

- Take a few steps in place and then allow your feet to come to rest about hip width distance apart,
- Ground through all 4 corners of your feet and feel your leg muscles engage.
- Keep a slight bend in your knees to avoid locking them.
- Stack your hips over your knees, your shoulders over your hips, and your head atop your shoulders.
- Relax your shoulders and feel the crown of your head reaching for the sky.
- Turn your palms forward and gently spread your fingers.
- Inhale to lengthen your spine. Exhale to release unnecessary tension.

YAMAS

Ahimsa

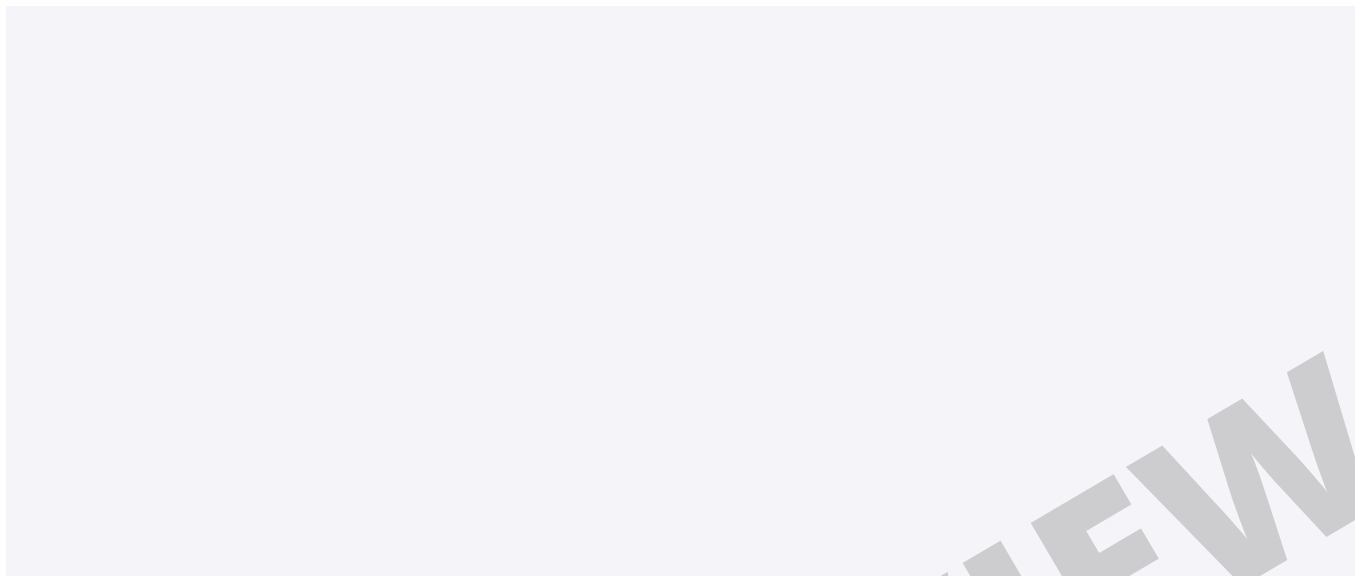
Ahimsa means nonviolence or non-harming. This pertains to other sentient beings, the environment, and yourself.

1. How does nonviolence or non-harming relate to addiction recovery?

2. How has your substance use (or behavioral addiction) harmed others?

FREE PREVIEW

3. What about the environment and/or your community?



4. In what ways has your addiction been harmful toward yourself?



FREE PREVIEW



YAMAS

Satya

Satya means truthfulness, or non-lying.

1. In what ways has your substance use (or behavioral addiction) caused you to become disconnected from your true feelings?

2. Has your behavior during active addiction led you to be less-than-truthful in your interactions with others?

FREE PREVIEW

3. In what ways has your addiction required you to be dishonest with yourself?

FREE PREVIEW

4. During times when being truthful risks causing harm, how do you plan to practice Satya and Ahimsa concurrently?

FREE PREVIEW



YAMAS

Asteya

Asteya means non-stealing. This may include objects, ideas, or words.

1. Have you ever stolen, or taken credit for something that wasn't yours, as a result of your addiction?

2. Has your addiction created a strong sense of "lack" that you felt compelled to address or relieve?

FREE PREVIEW

3. How have you struggled with feeling like you aren't enough, or that you don't have enough?

4. How have these cravings or feelings of "not enough" created suffering for you or others?



YAMAS

Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya is "divine conduct," often stated as "don't overindulge."

1. In what ways has your addiction convinced you that it's okay to overindulge or binge?

2. How does our culture/society reinforce that indulgence is desirable?

FREE PREVIEW

3. What have you noticed are the after-effects of overindulgence, either generally or specific to your addiction?

Blank response area for question 3.

4. Has behaving irresponsibly and/or thoughtlessly led you to unnecessary suffering? How so?

Blank response area for question 4.

YAMAS

Aparigraha

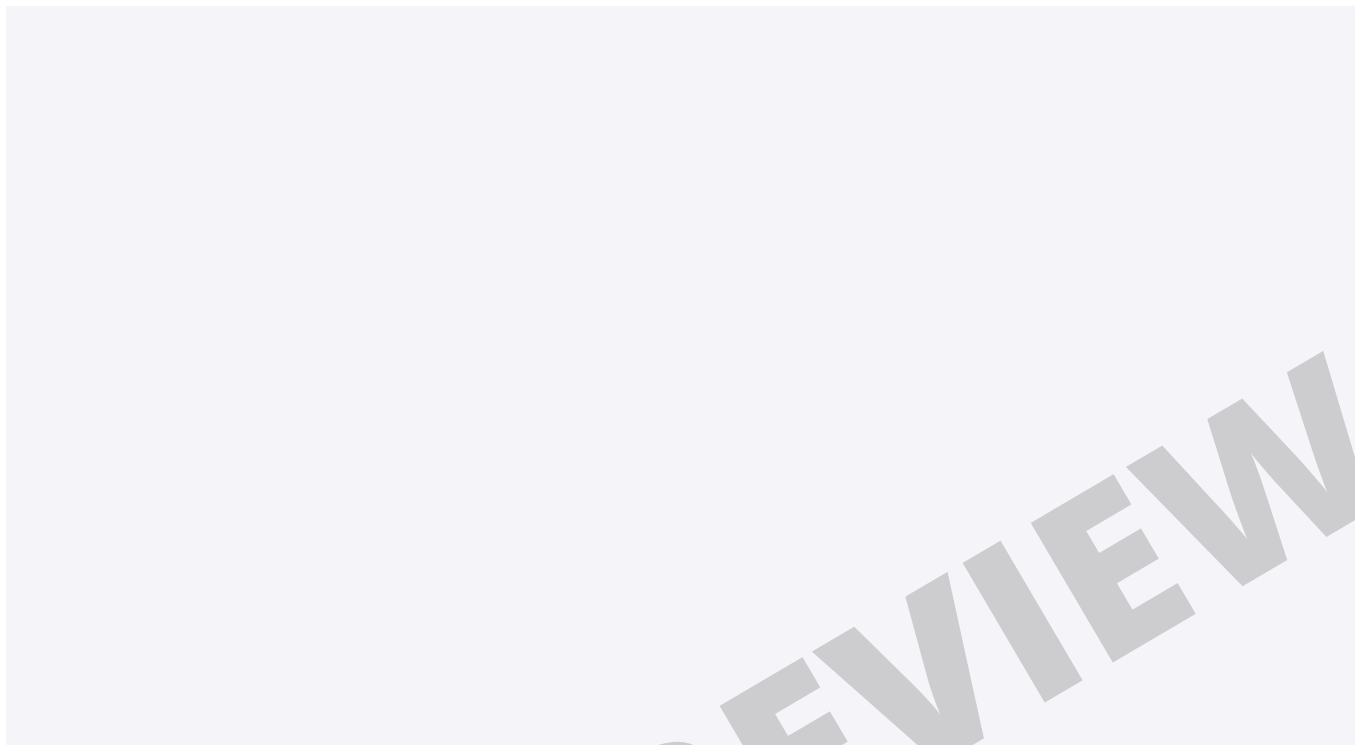
Aparigraha means non-grasping or non-clinging. It may also be thought of as non-attachment.

1. In what ways have you found yourself clinging to your addiction, or your drug of choice?

2. What fears do (or did) you have about leaving your addiction behind?
 - How can (or did) you overcome those fears?

FREE PREVIEW

3. What did (or might) it feel like, physically and emotionally, to let go of your addictive behavior and mindset?



4. How might (or have) these feelings shift(ed) over time?



Summary

What stood out to me about this section?

What new insights were gained?

Follow up items/tasks

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