



Q: I love how *The Yogi's Way* began. How different is the twelve-week course from your twelve-week experience with your friends, and *mitras*, years ago? What do you think is so magical about the number 12?

A: The 12-week course in *The Yogi's Way* grew out of a 12-week journey I shared with friends and *mitras* years ago. In both cases, the number 12 played a

significant role – it shaped how much time we spent on specific practices and the overall flow of the program. Across sacred traditions, 12 symbolizes completion, wholeness, and harmony. You see it everywhere – in the 12 apostles of Jesus, the 12 tribes of Israel, the 12 Olympian gods, the 12 imams in Islam, and the 12 mantras of the Sun Salutation practice.

Chapter 6 of *The Yogi's Way* describes the 12 Sun Salutation mantras and how they honor 12 aspects of solar energy that live within us all. As we weave these mantras into our Sun Salutation practice, we awaken each facet of our inner light while offering gratitude to the Sun. The sequence – traditionally repeated 12 times – becomes a potent practice to counter fear and self-doubt by nourishing faith in oneself and strengthening our agency to create a purposeful and meaningful day. With every round, our confidence deepens; and as neuroscientists remind us, repetition is essential for rewiring the brain for lasting change. Rather than relying on the outside world to bring meaning and purpose into our lives, this daily practice grounds us in our light and potential, empowering us to create a meaningful day through our own thoughts, words, actions, and choices.

Q: I studied to become a yoga teacher (Hatha and Prenatal) 20 years ago, and pretty much have been practicing daily since. Yet, I am learning and relearning so much in your book. Thank you. I am often reluctant to finish with savasana! It is so simple, and yet so important to practice. Can you expand on how minutes of regular silence affect the mind-body-spirit connection?

A: Silence allows us to integrate the energy shifted through our yoga practices. This is extremely important. Today, scientists are finding that because so many of us are constantly stimulated – through our phones, podcasts, music, videos – we rarely experience the quiet moments our minds and bodies need to process our life experiences. Silence is medicine. Without these moments of stillness, we find ourselves restless and anxious. While podcasts and other media often share brilliant voices, if outer

noise isn't balanced with inner quiet, we risk losing connection to our own wisdom and to our body's innate ability to heal, balance, and harmonize. These restorative processes happen naturally in stillness, making the practice of savasana essential for nurturing mind, body, and spirit. Every moment in savasana is an opportunity to connect with your inner voice and support your body's healing –let this inspire you!

Q: Most of the mala jewelry I create includes a mantra, yet I catch myself thinking negatively more times than I'd like. Do you have a method for stopping a negative thought and changing it to positive in the present moment? What is it about a mantra that can make one feel so emotional? I even began crying when I read the mantra list on page 111!

A: Mantras connect you to your soul's eternal wisdom. They help you remember your deepest Self and the Universe's deepest truths. At a soul level, your essence is eternal and boundless. Beneath all the inevitable ups and downs of life, this truth remains unchanging. To be reminded of these truths – which are the essence of all beings – can be deeply moving. Mantras connect you to your highest Self while also connecting you to all life. Tears can be a natural response to such profound remembering and connection.

One method to stop a negative thought and shift it to a positive in the present moment is the mantra *So Hum*, which means "I am that" – I am that eternal, infinite light and potential. Whenever a negative thought overtakes the mind, silently repeat this mantra to reconnect with your essence. From this field of light and potential, you can respond to the present moment with understanding, patience, deep breaths, gratitude, and wisdom.

Q: I am in Week Five at the time of writing this Q&A, and I am already sensing a positive shift. What did you witness in your life writing *The Yogi's Way*?

A: Belief in our capacity to change our minds, health, and reality. Our minds are everything. Our thoughts shape our mental and physical health as well as our personal reality. The mind is so slippery, we need the support of our *mitras*' – friends on the path who become our accountability partners – to turn our minds into a platform for radical transformation instead of a prison that drains our energy with *kleshas* such as doubt, fear, and shame. *Klesha* is a Sanskrit word that means "destructive thought or emotion." Some of the biggest *kleshas* are delusion, attachment, anger, fear, and low self-worth. *Kleshas* are a central focus in *The Yogi's Way* because recognizing them and holding them with compassion, acceptance, and wisdom allows us to turn them into fuel for transformation instead of obstacles. *The Yogi's Way* guides us to work through our *kleshas* with time-tested, millennia-old practices whose effectiveness is now supported by cutting-edge research on the brain and mind.

Q: You have worked with Sting. How does it feel to teach a luminary like him yoga? (I would be nervous!)

A: I'm always nervous before I teach or sing – anywhere and to anyone! As I guide my students to their breath, I do the same, and within a minute or two, the nervousness dissolves. As we connect to our breath, we connect with our limitless soul, and we do our best in the moment. I also remember the Gita's wisdom: act without concern for the results. When we give ourselves wholeheartedly and authentically to the present moment – without trying to be anyone but ourselves – the action itself becomes the reward. I have found that the best of luminaries know that their gifts come from beyond. They are among the most humble of people, and a joy to be with.

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Datta worked for the United Nations before leaving to study ancient yogic wisdom and practice. Since 2002, she has taught yoga and Ayurveda workshops, retreats, and trainings in twenty countries across five continents. Her students include Sting, Paul Simon, Edie Brickell, Zainab Salbi, Sujatha Baliga, and thousands of other practitioners globally. Visit her online at <http://www.ReemaYoga.com>.

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