

Heart of Yoga Peace Project



Teacher Resources: Hosting a class for Peace

Dear sister studios and members of the Peace Project,

Thank you for hosting a class for peace.

This document is meant to provide some ideas for how a sample practice for peace can be constructed.

Please expand on it, change it - we'd just ask that you send us back any exercises, meditations, quotes or rituals you put together so we can continue to build resources for teachers of peace.

There are also some logistical things in here that we hope you will do to enable the heart of Yoga Peace Project to grow and expand, in terms of asking class participants to lend their energy to support this work.

What's in here:

Section 1 How Yoga and Peace are connected (Ahimsa)

Section 2 Quotes to use in class

Section 3 Meditations for Peace

Section 4 Sample Class Format

Section 5 Practical matters: promoting a class for Peace in your studio and the surrounding areas and supporting the mission with contact data, donations and stories

Section 6 About The Heart of Yoga Peace Project

With love and gratitude,

Christine Mason McCaull

On behalf of the Heart of Yoga Peace Project

For more information:

www.hoypeaceproject.org

Blog: evolvebeyond.wordpress.com

The Heart of Yoga Foundation is a 501©3 non profit organization, and all contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Teaching Peace from the Inside Out, in Conflict Zones Worldwide
www.hoypeaceproject.org

Section 1



How are Yoga and Peace Connected?

Ahimsa, or non-harming/non-violence

The yoga sutras of Patanjali (Pada 2, sutra 35) speak of Ahimsa, or Non Violence, in this way:

Ahimsa Pratistayam tat sannidhu vaira tyagah

- Jivamukti translation: We cease to encounter hostility by practicing non harming and non violence
- Alternate translation: When a person is established in non violence, those in his vicinity cease to feel hostility

There are several interpretations of what this means:

“Ahimsa refers to nonviolence in thought and word, as well as in deed. Violence in speech or action is almost always preceded by violent thoughts, and violent thoughts have serious repercussions on the mind and on the body- they should be avoided if only for this reason. On the positive side, careful cultivation of ahimsa leads to spontaneous, all encompassing love. Once begins to see the unity in all creation and thus progress to the goal of self realization... **We are not talking about Peace as in the absence of war, but a Peace that permeates all parts of life... it fuses our mind, actions and speech, keeping us balanced and harmonized** - it illuminates our life.” – *Swami Rama*

“The main teaching of yoga is that man’s most innermost nature is divine but that he is unaware of this and mistakes himself for his body and intellect- both of which exist within the realm of matter and therefore are subject to decay and death. All of man’s misery is a consequence of this false identification. **Yoga leads one to the direct experience of his inner Self, his true identity.** With such realization comes liberation from all human imperfections.” – *Swami Rama*

Mark Whitwell, in *Yoga of Heart*, speaks of it this way: “Our living organism has been abused by a social mind that believes it to be separate from god and nature ...to be a yogi, all it takes is to see and embrace your own reality - the natural intelligence that is you.” He goes on to say, “Even in climates of war, animosity and terror, an alternative exists. An understanding that all are connected to each other and to source. By creating communities with common values, and developing conscious awareness, false barriers are removed, and individual change can occur.”

Yoga is a practical systematic science for perfect balance and harmony - by cultivating this in ourselves- a “new world order of love could easily be affected by the adoption of even the simplest and most fundamental observances of yogic discipline.” By taking control of the Body and Breath, one can provide the ground to achieve tranquility of Mind.

Section 1



How are Yoga and Peace Connected?

This conclusion, that only through individual changes, has been reached by many great thinkers over the years, including Hannah Arendt, who survived the death camps in WWII, and stated, “Deep reflection will bring us face to face with the decisions we make, and turn us away from evil”.

Other contemporary thinkers and philosophers are encouraging us to move toward change from the inside out, including Deepak Chopra, best selling author, MD, and founder of the Alliance for a New Humanity.

“Peace movements have tried three ways for bringing war to an end: the first is **Activism** (eg, protests and public demonstrations, lobbying)- the difficulty of this being that protesters are not heard, they are worn down by frustration and resistance, they are outnumbered by war interests, and their own idealism often turns to anger and violence. The second is **Humanitarianism** - helping the victims of war, bringing kindness compassionate relief. While this is good, the challenge is that this comes after conflicts have started, is vastly underfunded and that humanitarians are wildly outnumbered by soldiers and warmakers. And the third option - **Personal Transformation** - has never really been tried. The closest we have come is the exhortation to “pray for peace”- but it has never really been attempted on a broad basis. The idea is that you can only end war one person at a time- when you end it in your own heart” – paraphrased from *Deepak Chopra’s Peace is the Way*

Section 2

Peace Quotes for use in Class



In long holds, during vinyasa flow, in dharma talks, or coming out of Sivasana when there is a great deal of receptivity- consider passing on the words of some great teachers of peace.

"All beings are suffering, so extreme kindness is the natural response." – Mark Whitwell

"In truth there is only one war. It is the struggle for good and evil in the individuals own heart and soul. All other wars spring from that source and in the end can only be resolved in the place. Failing that, mankind continues to struggle on the outward battlefields, vying for power over one another, no matter the cost in terms of human suffering or death." – Micheal Bonesteel

"Peace is more than just an absence of war. It is rather, a state in which no people of any country, in fact no group of people of any kind live in fear or in need...on our road towards a better future for mankind we cannot ignore those millions for whom peace does not exist...whenever we solve one single problem we have contributed to peace for the individual we are making our world a slightly better place in which to live" – Paul Hartling, UNHC for refugees

"To the extent we draw the world to us by an attitude of willingness, appreciation, kindness, joy... We express the positive current. When by unwillingness, a critical attitude, selfishness, unkindness, greed, we push the world away from us, excluding it from our circle of awareness, awe express the negative current. It is a choice: to rejoice in our existence or to wallow in it." – Swami Kriyananda

"Peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones in floods caused by senseless deforestation in a neighboring country. Lasting peace comes only when human rights are respected, the people are fed, and individuals and nations are free." – The Dalai Lama

"No interests, however great, are higher than those common to the whole of mankind. Among them, the foremost is the old commandment: Thou Shalt not Kill! You are all of one blood. Love one another. People can. Nations can. All this is eminently possible because love is as natural as national hatred is the most unnatural of all human feelings." – Klaus Arnoldson, 1908 (Nobel Peace Prize winner)

"Devote yourself to resolute insistence on goodwill in the place of force, even in the face of great disaster past or threatened, and you will build a better more peaceful world. The future hope of peace lies within such personal sacrifice." – Henry J. Cadbury, American Friends Service Committee

Section 3



Guided Meditations for Peace

Compassion Meditation and Reconciliation Meditation

Compassion Meditation

Take your seat, find the breath, and begin the visualization:

- Visualize a loved one: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Hold yourself as your beloved: *May I be free from suffering, may I find peace.*
- Visualize a neutral someone: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Visualize a difficult someone: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Pull up and imagine you are flying, looking down on yourself sitting, and pull up and away, see your entire town: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Pull even farther up, visualize your state: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Even farther now, visualize your country: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Now settle into an area of trouble on the planet: *May you be free from suffering, may you find peace.*
- Come back up, and visualize the entire earth: *May all beings be free from suffering, may all beings find peace.*
- Return to the self: *May I be free from suffering, may I find peace.*

You can use this in short form by practicing the compassion meditation on yourself and one other, or throughout the day as you become aware of negative self talk or obsessive thoughts.

Reconciliation Meditation, as taught by Thich Nhat Hanh

"We must sweep and scan our "territory", this body on a regular basis. Be aware of it, at the deepest level, then connect and reconcile yourself with it." – Thich Nhat Hanh

As you scan your body, there are three stages of reconciliation with the parts of the self:

Example, with the eyes:

- Breathing in: *I am aware of my eyes, breathing out, I am smiling at my eyes*
- Breathing in: *I know that you are there and I am glad for it, breathing out: thank you for being there*
- Breathing in: *I know that you are suffering, breathing out, I am here for you*

"Scan your own territory": a sample progression would be to do this meditation with the Eyes, then Throat, then Heart, then Lungs, etc. - continuing on with Digestion, Reproduction, Legs, Arms, as you see fit.

The result of this over time is a cessation of all activities which would harm these systems, as you develop awareness and change form within. This reconciliation and compassion to the self is the beginning of social change.

Section 4

Sample Class

With invocation, pranayama, asana and guided meditation



Before Class/Administrative:

As people come in, gather emails and names to send to the Peace Project- if you already have them, please ask if they can be added to our members list and if you can pass on their contact information. Have a donation basket and some cards with the website available for online donations.

Before you begin the class, please open by describing the Peace Project, who's behind it and what we do. You can explain why yoga works for peace in your own words or using information on yoga and peace above. Refer people to brochures or the website for further information- this seems to work better than at the end when people are blissed out post practice- although you can remind participants on the way out.

We also like to tell a story, or share a letter from one of our teachers - these are frequently updated on the blog at evolvebeyond.wordpress.org.

Flow Practice for Peace - Sample Class:

Please conduct a systematic balancing practice- all things equal and opposite - tuned to the level of your class.

Here's an example for a Level 2 Flow practice that touches all parts of the energetic body and will result in a feeling of great openness and centeredness - ADJUST AS NEEDED.

Bring attention throughout the class to having a compassionate and loving internal dialogue, to being in gratitude and awareness of your body, of loving yourself, of releasing all negative and violent thoughts to the self, to those you know.

Potential invocations, if this is your custom (choose one):

Om shri shivayah namaha Salutations to our common mother, nurturing source, abundance of life, always present when called on. – from *Yoga of Heart*, Mark Whitwell

Ahimsa Pratistayam tat sannidhu vaira tyagah

By practicing non harming and non violence, we cease to encounter hostility. – *oga Sutras of Patanjali*

Coming into practice- breath and presence:

Seated in a simple cross legged position, begin breathing exercises and integrating movements

- Come deeply into the body through **Breath of Victory** (Ujayi Pranayam)*
- Balance the right and left brain through **Alternate Nostril Breathing** (Nadi Sodhana)*
- Bring energy up the spine through **Mountain Breath***
- Enliven the body through **Bellows Breath***

Section 4



Sample Class

continued

Gradually unfold the body:

- Roll forward onto **hands and knees**, continue conscious breathing
- **Circular “Cat and Mouse”** with udiyana bandha
- **Downward Dog** with a slow transition to
- **Standing forward bend**, spiral the inner thighs toward one another and the back, spread the hips, straighten the knees gradually, rise to
- **Mountain***
- **Joyful breath:** Inhale the arms wide and high, exhale swing down and forward 5x*
- **Twisting cleanse:** Touch shoulders with fingertips, exhale/inhale rapidly as you turn from side to side from the waist up- legs firmly planted

Inhale, dedicate your practice, Deep OM from the belly

(wherever there is an *- invite the students to pause and feel - if it feels right to you, you can use peace quotes at this place in class)

Building tapas, surfing the breath, practicing awareness:

Surya Namaskar A & B

Using crescent lunge as an alternating, adding variations including twisting, etc as desired

Asana for Balance:

Incorporating strength, flexibility and alignment

Conscious flow, lead with the breath, let the posture serve the breath

Left to Right/Right to Left: Strengthen and elongate the side body

Triangle/Side angle/Vasisthasana series on both sides

Top to Bottom/Bottom to Top: Elongate the spine and strengthen the upper body, Elongate the legs and strengthen the lower body

- Standing forward bend series
- Prasarita series
- Balancing Series- Ekapada, tree
- Inverted balancing series- headstand, handstand

Section 4



Sample Class

continued

Front to Back/Back to Front: Strengthen and open belly and back

- Shalabhasana/low navasana
- Camel/navasana
- Bridge/navasana
- Danurasana/happy baby
- Plow/Rock and roll

Spiraling the body while coming into tranquility:

- Half Pigeon on both sides
- Reclining twisting variations

Savasana

Guided Meditation

Choose one from the meditations section

Close

Lokha Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu

May all beings everywhere be happy and free

Section 5

Practical Matters



Promoting in your studio and the surrounding areas

Flyers, brochures and posters are here: <http://www.hoypeaceproject.org/downloads.htm>

Getting the word out:

- Send notices for upcoming events in your local newspaper calendar
- Send a direct invitation to local journalists to take class, invite some populations who may not otherwise come, some high school students for example, invite some local officials to attend
- Copromote with other yoga studios, with peace advocacy groups and activists
- Start in class announcements 3 weeks ahead of time
- Use meetup, online listings, ask people to put it on their blog or facebook

Supporting the mission with contact data, donations and stories

- PLEASE capture emails and contact data for people
- If they give you money directly and want a tax receipt, please also capture the amount from each person - we are a 501 (c)3

Cash or check donations to:
Heart of Yoga Peace Project
538 Broadway Suite B
Sonoma, CA 95476

You can direct them online for donations and lending support and procuring tshirts, etc to:
www.hoypeaceproject.org

Please send us comments or stories, more ideas for classes, more quotes, meditations, etc to:
info@hoypeaceproject.org

Thank You!

Section 6



About The Heart of Yoga Peace Project

What Is the Mission of the Peace Project?

The Peace Project is a 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to supporting yoga teachers in troubled areas around the world, to spread peace through the transformation of individual consciousness, and to enable cross-cultural understanding through one to one diplomacy. The project utilizes yoga as a common, non-religious unifying principle to bring together those affected by struggle and conflict in a neutral location where their full attention can be applied to basic yogic tenets such as non-violence and tolerance. The Peace Project will provide education and resources to current and aspiring yoga teachers so that they can bring the seeds of change back to their native lands.

Why Did You Create the Heart of Yoga Peace Project?

It was born of a deep desire to see peaceful change in our lifetime, and personal experience with how yoga works in the individual's heart to make this happen. The immediate catalyst for how the program took shape occurred at a teacher training in New York, where two teachers- one from Tel Aviv and one from Lebanon met and began a dialogue for peace. From this experience, the Foundation was born. See our video accounting of the origins of the project on YouTube (Heartofyoga1).

Who is Behind the Heart of Yoga Peace Project?

The Peace Project was born from The Heart of Yoga Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 organization founded by internationally known yogi, Mark Whitwell. Mark's expertise is teaching authentic yoga and training yoga teachers. A student of UG. Krishnamurti, Krishnamacharya, and Srivatsa Ramaswami, the native New Zealander has been teaching yoga internationally since 1978. He was the editor and contributor to Deskarcahr's book, the Heart of Yoga.

What Will You Accomplish and How Will You Measure Success?

We will work to develop local teachers, and measure both the direct and indirect impact of those teachers in touching people around them.

Does This Really Work?

Yes. The once-esoteric practice of yoga has grown to having more than 10 million practitioners worldwide. There is also much scientific empirical evidence proving yoga's positive effects on mental and physical health and well being.

While most Westerners can enjoy these effects by simply finding their local studio, renting video or downloading classes on iPods, much of the world does not have that luxury. Basic health care in many countries of the world is not available, and access to yoga is often very far down on the list of immediate needs. It is a simple and accessible practice that can accelerate positive change in the world.

Section 6



About The Heart of Yoga Peace Project

continued

It is a practice most needed where the physical and mental conditions of the world are most harsh – in conflict zones, in times of battle and in times of grief.

In addition to Mark, the Peace Project advisors and directors are comprised of some of the most influential global yoga teachers and advocates for non-violent change in the world, as well as hundreds of individual teachers, studios and yogis around the world.

Additionally, many key centers for non-denominational spiritual study are involved such as Eselan and the Omega Institute. They bring professional, results driven thinking and proven methodologies to enhance the efforts at developing a more peaceful world.

Who is Funding This?

The founders and stewards have provided all the initial start up funds. Heart of Yoga is funded through individual donations, grants and operating programs. A primary goal is to create an interconnected community, so we prefer to have a lot of people a little bit invested in success!

How Much of the Budget Goes to Funding vs. Overhead?

86% of the budget is designated for programming.

What Does it Mean to be a Sister Studio?

The Peace Project matches studios and teachers around the world to create dialogue and support. Sister studios have direct exchange with one another, and work to support and educate each others membership about their experiences on and off the mat.