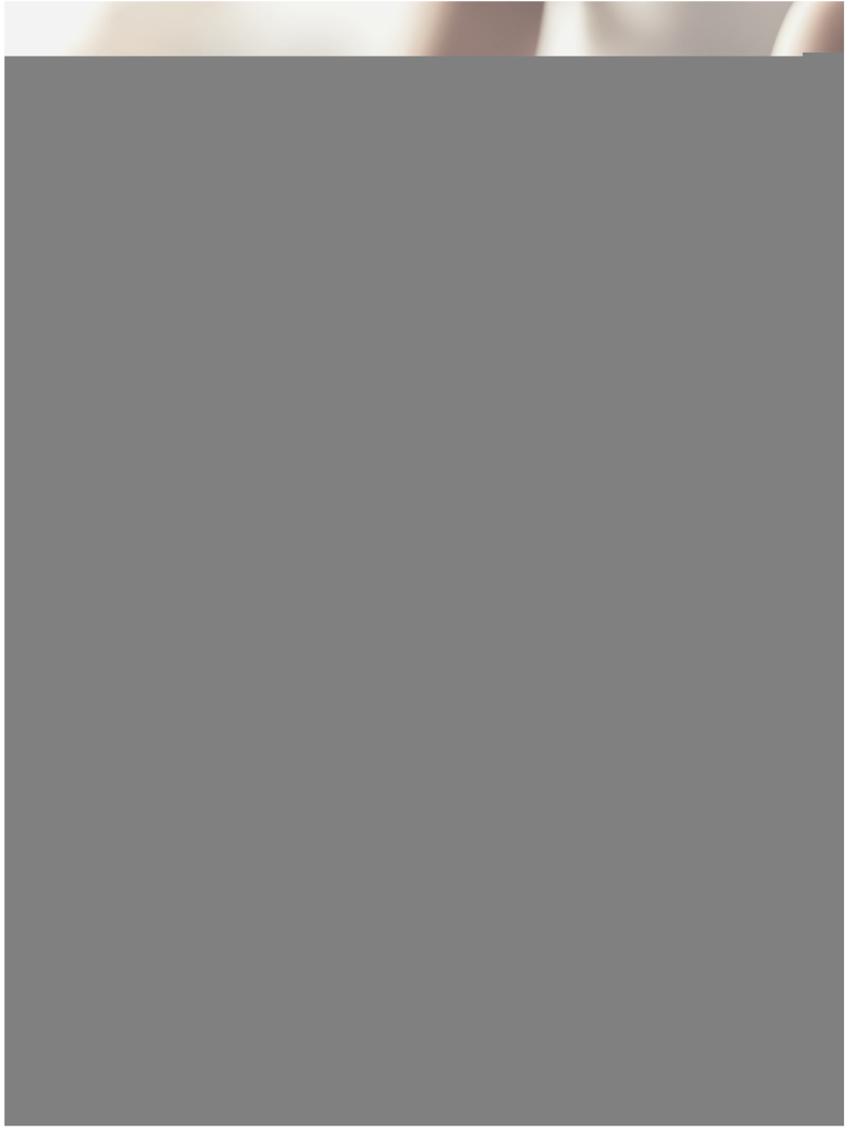


UNCOMMONLY MORAL



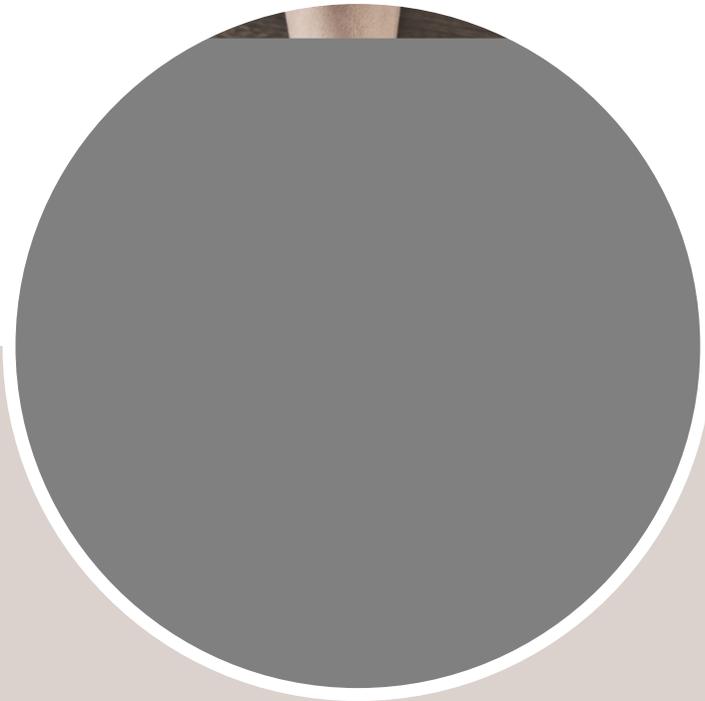
i am non-violent

ahimsa and surrendering violent thoughts, words & actions



first limb, first step

There will be many adjustments required for a yogis mind to take over the mind of our time that you've acquired by simply being a human in the 21st century. It won't be easy and it won't be supported by the modern world, it's best you get used to this reality if you'd like to start walking towards enlightened thought & divine love.



ahimsa means no hurting

The first limb of yoga - ethical restraint - starts with non-violence, or retraining ourselves from going dark on people, places and things that do not agree with our momentary needs. Through ethical non-violence we naturally relearn how to respect all of life by first refraining to harm the people, places or things that do not seem to make our momentary existence *easy*.

All of the ethical and moral principles are honored three-fold - in thought, word and deed. This means that in order to achieve a peaceful internal state the first step is refraining from *harmful* internal connections as well as any externalizing we do from these spaces. In this first set of activities, we get deeper into understanding how *harmful* connections happen for us as well as how to hinder them now.

Each of the ethical principles should be practiced in three ways: **thought, word and deed. In order to do so, these virtual exercises offer meditations, journaling prompts and physical practices that coincide with each value to deepen a practitioner's personal connection within each principle.**

Meditations create space to observe and encourage thought processes; journaling prompts create space to observe and encourage vernacular; and physical practices create space to observe and encourage actions. Each provide space to disconnect from shadowy energy within.

a step toward being kind

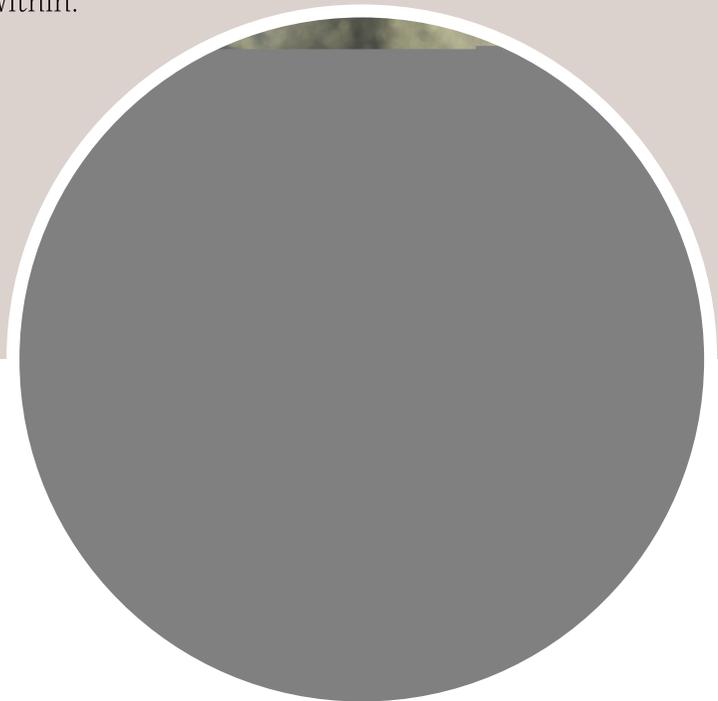
Our ancestors were smart - they know that our loudest, most animalistic energy makes it easy to identify more with chaos than calm, dis-ease than ease and war than peace, which is why the first step of yoga focuses on restraining the more shadowy energy of our body instead of promoting anything light.

When we get too far down the dark road, it's hard to remember the purpose of the light, and that's why the first step of *hatha yoga* is to restrain and release harmful thoughts, words and actions and not continue to validate them in our bodies. Each of the steps we take beyond this on the first limb build on non-harm and choosing to not perpetuate dark behaviors within.

There may be a lot of dark energies you face in your practice, and that's okay. Fear, guilt, shame, grief, deception, illusion and attachment are all dark energies, so try not to let them take over within.

The practices may feel strange, foreign and unnatural in an adult body - and that's okay! Most of us are nurtured more into synthetism and adjusting to the economy of our world than to innocence and adjusting to our natural world.

Allow the practices to be uncommon and odd and all of a sudden you'll develop an uncommon sense of peace within that others in our synthetic world don't have anymore. We all had it when we were kids, but most of us weren't trained to keep it. Focus on how it feels in the days after you practice to notice the difference. Do your best not to focus on it being weird rather see it as uncommon and different to help you keep going.

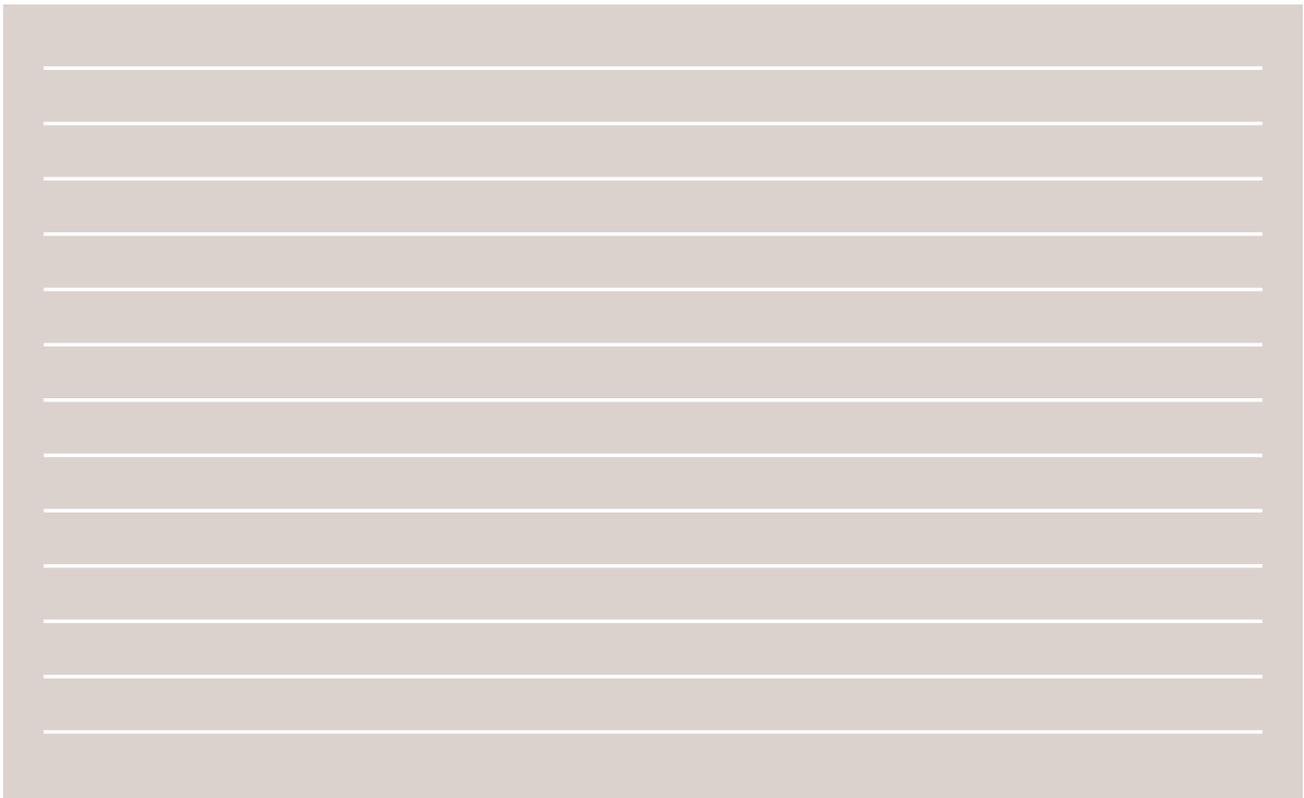


Prompts to Encourage a Non-Harming Vocabulary

When it comes to the way we talk and interact as individuals, what we think is harming or violent may or may not be what actually causes harm to one another. Marshal Rosenberg, Ph.D., studies language, the human body and how we must learn to communicate with one another to help each other work through conflict without hurting or fighting with each other.

Each of us carries a unique perspective and way of looking at a situation that's influenced by our lives and the different things that have happened to us to form our individual opinions and inform the knowledge we carry. It deters from our individual growth toward peace of mind (and harmony within our world) to argue over rightness and wrongness. On the contrary, when we allow ourselves to be more vulnerable and share our feelings on why we think, speak or act in a certain way, it helps everyone learn more about the uniqueness of perspective.

Take a moment to journal on what you **feel** about *nonviolence*. Take a moment after to write about why you believe you feel the way you do about being nonviolent and non-harming. Finally, write about how you believe your life would change if you vowed to be non-violent in your thoughts, your words and all of your actions. At the end, read everything you wrote.



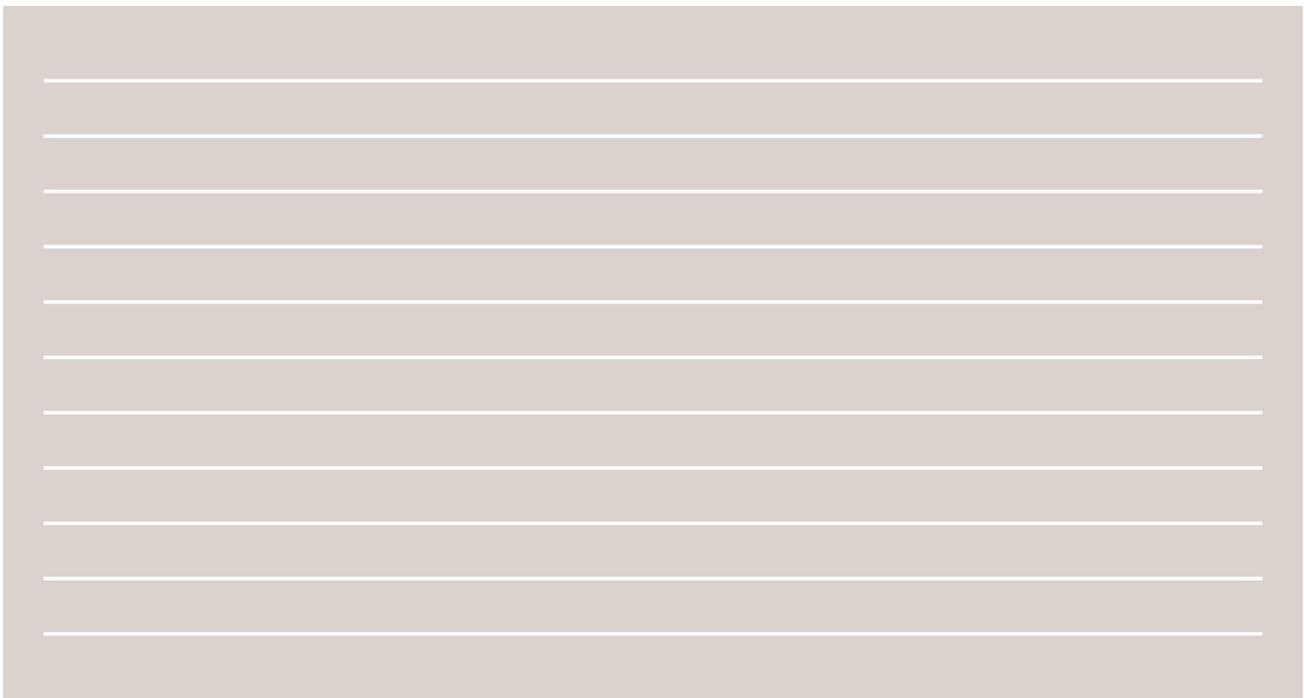
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Prompts to Encourage a Non-Harming Vocabulary

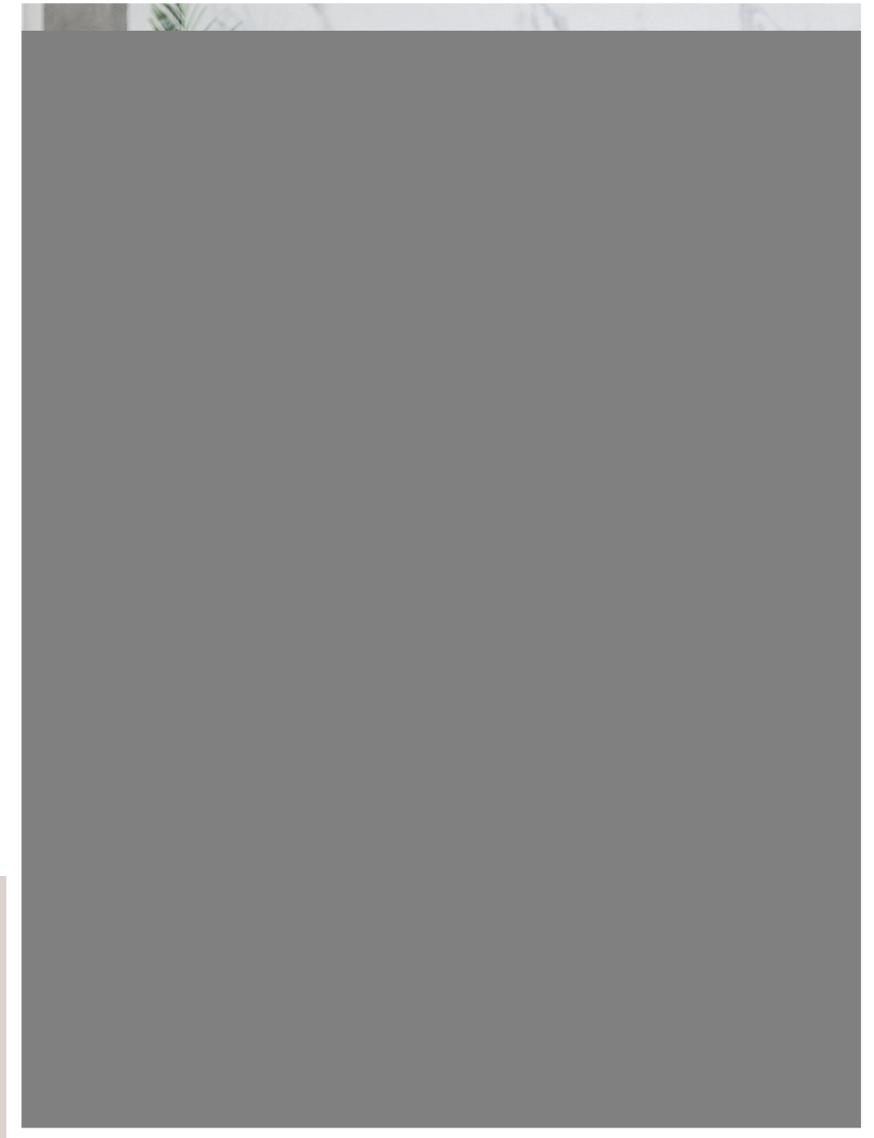
Part of Rosenberg's work is teaching us how to speak *non-violently*. In his book *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*, Rosenberg teaches us how to speak in "I-statements" that allow us to share our feelings while creating boundaries, or space for our feelings to be heard, understood and withheld. His model of communication allows each of us to maintain our power as individuals and learn how to work together interdependently with the power of choice.

Rosenberg's communication model involves four parts: (1) observations, (2) feelings, (3) needs and (4) requests. In order for our feelings not to bottle up, we use this communication to express them and release the emotional build-up that leads to anger. Here's the formatting of the statements: I hear/see [enter observation here]. I feel [enter how the observation made you feel here]. I would like [enter the boundaries that need to be set here]. Would you be willing to [enter request for behavior change here to facilitate your boundary being honored].

Take a moment to think about a situation where you've felt agitated, angered or frustrated lately. Whether or not you acted on that agitation, anger or frustration, do your best to reflect on the situation and use the nonviolent communication model to learn how to communicate what you experienced non-violently and begin the process toward mindful interdependence by setting a boundary that would avoid these feelings being replicated in the future. Use the space below.



A large rectangular area with a light beige background and horizontal white lines, resembling a sheet of lined paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run horizontally across the entire width of the area.



practicing ahimsa

In this course, we practice non-violence by honoring the breath. Until we cleanse our mind of dark thoughts, it may be guiding us to move with force rather than ease. By moving with the breath, we remove any forceful connects that are programmed within as we surrender to our breath and the natural way our body prefers to move. It may feel strange at first so feel free to take as many breaks as you need to get back to it in time.

Practice Non-Violence

In this practice, you'll honor non-violence in your practice by feeling what your body is doing. In the Ayurvedic system, we learn that feeling is a meditative energy because it allows us to access this moment completely. In the postures, do your best to let your body feel well.

tune in

Feel the breath - the way it enters, the way it leaves, trying to let it enter the chest each inhale & leave the belly completely as you exhale.

Feel yourself move with your breath, flowing pose-to-pose alongside it for a few minutes. When you lose it, just guide your body back to it.

warm up



practice

Hold these postures while feeling the breath for 5-10 breaths each. If you start to feel uneasy, let the body move with the breath.



Release awareness to feel 5 breaths in each posture.

cool down



tune out

Let the body relax for 3-5 minutes.





ahimsa meditation

The key to meditation is to take the seat of the observer: to watch thoughts instead of encouraging them. In this case, we focus on not encouraging harmful thoughts. The meditation for *ahimsa* is simple, you repeat "I am non-harming" for 5-minutes while being the boundary police on your thoughts to make sure you're not feeding any harmful thoughts.

It's normal for negative, degrading, and even violent thoughts to occur in our minds with all of the TV, videos and games that we watch having violence laden throughout them. In order for it not to takeover though, we must police our mind from encouraging it as a "normal" part of our thought processes. We can't change the world's behaviors, but we can start the process of altering our own, which begins here.

If a negative, degrading or violent thought comes up when you're saying the affirmation, "I am non-harming," just watch it. Don't try to push it away nor change it, just let it be there but continue to recite the affirmation and feel the breath.

The meditation is recorded on the website, or you could simply set a timer for 5-10 minutes and begin on your own...

you're doing an uncommonly great job

Any efforts you put into your spiritual, mental, emotional or physical well-being go along way for not only your health but also for inspiring the health of those around you who care for you. Even though we don't always talk about this stuff with one another, the effect we have on one another is huge!

While mental health has been important since the beginning of our species, it hasn't been promoted nor recognized as important by mass society until more recently. The fact that you're learning ancient guidance to help you shows so much about you and I could not be more grateful.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the ripples you're creating in this world - you're one of a kind!

