

# NAMASTÉ NEWS

from Felicity Green

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## The Little Things of Life

When we practice Yoga, whether physically as in asana and pranayama, or intellectually and emotionally in following the ethical precepts, we refine ourselves.

We refine ourselves because we focus our attention more acutely than usual on one particular aspect. Then we begin to observe, and then we can discriminate. Discrimination is the path that will take us out of the victim position, and help us to direct our lives.

Our development as human beings depends upon the small decisions we make each and every day. From the moment we get out of bed and throughout the day these small decisions will add up—eventually into big lifetime directions for ourselves.

Asana is a good place to start because our body is honest. It has a wisdom of its own and as we learn to listen to it, to challenge ourselves without forcing, we become more sensitive and refined in our actions. Our muscles become better balanced and the poses become harmonious and pleasurable “stiram, sukham asanam” Patanjali 11:46

Just as dis-ease in the body is often the thing that leads us to Yoga, it is a teacher, in that it helps us to understand where we need to pay attention. Also if we feel psychological or emotional dis-ease it is a sign. If we decide to face it and challenge ourselves, it directs us to the more philosophical aspect, to enquire into an understanding of how we behave.

As we learn about ourselves on the physical or manifest level, our attitude towards more subtle aspects also begins to change.

The changes that occur may eventually be large and life changing, but the route to this is an accumulation of many small refined changes in our approach to everyday life.

For instance as we pay more attention to those small things, the food we eat, the ways we waste or use our energy, how we entertain ourselves, what car we drive etc., etc, we start to see where we are often defeating ourselves by our unwise decisions. We may want to feel calm and content, but this does not happen because we have chosen actions which don't support it.

To move ourselves in this direction we have to be involved in self study, “svadhyaya” Patanjali 11:44. Patanjali's Sutras encompass learning about ourselves in all spheres and following a chosen direction.

Swami Radha always encouraged us to pick a clear direction for ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. This simplifies life, as it is easier then to see where our daily actions and decisions are in harmony with these wishes and where they are not. If you vaguely leave your life to chance or luck and are not committed enough to be proactive, the outcome is much less likely to be what your choice is.

So take some quiet time and decide how you would like your future to unfold.

1. Observe yourself in life and understand where you are not at ease with yourself.
2. Prioritize your dis-eases and decide which one or two are the most disturbing, create the most suffering or discomfort.
3. Then think of a practice that could neutralize this or direct it in another direction.
4. The last and most difficult step is to practice it regularly, as Patanjali says: “practice must be pursued with trust, confidence, vigor, keen memory and power of absorption to break this spiritual complacency”. Patanjali 1.20.

As Swami Satchinanda said: “We all have the Light within us, the problem is that our lamp glasses are dirty.” Yoga is a cleansing process on all levels if we pay attention and take the freedom to make choices for ourselves.

May your Light shine forth.

Blessings,

*Felicity*