

THE FACILITATOR'S
GUIDE TO TEACHING

THE YAMAS
&
NIYAMAS

HOW TO ADD THIS COURSE TO
YOUR STUDIO'S CURRICULUM

by Deborah Adele

THE YAMAS & NIYAMAS

Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This Facilitator's Guide is designed to be used with the book, *The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice* by Deborah Adele. The book is designed as a self or group study guide. Each chapter of the book concludes with four questions for reflection. Journaling, discussion and practice are encouraged. The Facilitator's Guide is designed to help you introduce this teaching in your own studio or group by showing you the format which I designed to work at Yoga North. Please feel free to use this as a template or as inspiration to design your own class.

The *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are foundational to all yogic thought. They stand as the first two limbs of the 8-fold path. Yogiraj Achala made these ten guidelines come alive for me in a way that began to bring grace and fluidity to my days. After practicing these guidelines alone, I invited my business partner Ann to join me in the exploration. We ended up building our relationship, our partnership, and our business on these principles. The result has been nothing short of extraordinary. We began to teach these concepts yearly at our studio and found others were having the same wonderful ah-ha's that we were.

We began to look for a book that could support our further study and teaching. We found many references to the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* listed in various books that expounded briefly and brilliantly on these guidelines, but not a book that put all of its attention toward this topic. As a result of this search, I was compelled to write *The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice*. It seems to me these tenets deserve much more attention than they have received.

To help you develop a class to introduce these concepts at your studio I offer this Facilitator's Guide based on what we've been doing at Yoga North since 2002. We teach these guidelines yearly to the community at large in the framework shown below. We also make these concepts an intimate part of our teacher training program at the 200 and 500 hour levels. Please note that I travel to teach these guidelines and would be happy to support your initial introduction to the community and/or your teacher training program in the form of a workshop.



Class Title: The Yamas & Niyamas:
Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice

Optimal Group Size: 10-14

Meet: Once monthly for 1½ hours

Length of Commitment: 8 months

Month 1: Introduction and Ahimsa

Month 2: Satya

Month 3: Asteya

Month 4: Brahmacharya

Month 5: Aparigraha

Month 6: Review of Yamas plus Saucha & Santosha

Month 7: Tapas & Svadhyaya

Month 8: Ishvarah Pranidhana, Summary and Closure

This study also lends itself easily to a ten month study with one guideline per month.

Tuition: See “Cost” below.

Meeting Time:

- Monthly for 1½ hours.
Sunday evening 6:30-8:00 PM works best for us.
- Some participants “buddy up” and check in with each other weekly to discuss the question of the week and keep each other faithful to the study.
- The time frame for each session looks something like this (first meeting and final meeting vary slightly):
6:30-6:40 Gathering
6:40-7:00 Discussion on the guideline of the month
7:00-7:30 Lecture on next month's guideline
7:30-7:50 Next months questions and reading assignment
7:50-8:00 Closure

Month 1:

- Verbal commitment to ourselves and the group to make this study a priority, to do the homework, and to show up for the group sessions. We also go over some group rules such as sharing floor time, using “I” statements, respecting each other’s views when different from our own, and holding confidentiality.
- Lecture and discussion on the importance of having an ethical system in place in our lives. Emphasis is made that this study can become one’s ethical system or can be used to support the ethical system one already has in place.
- Each member shares who they are, why they are here, and what they hope will be different for themselves because they participated in this extended study.
- Leader lectures on *Ahimsa*. Leader can highlight main points from the book, personal experience and stories, stories from the Bible or other sacred scripture, current events, or history.
- Leader goes over questions at the end of the chapter that will be the focus for the group during the coming month and assigns the introduction/preface, overview, and *Ahimsa* chapter for reading and study during the first month.
- End with a brief closure consisting of a quote or a short poem and a few minutes of silence for reflection.



Months 2-7:

- Class begins with discussion on the guideline that was studied the previous month and what was learned. This can be done as a large group, in groups of 4's, or in groups of 2's. This is most easily done by sharing insights from the 4 weekly questions.
- The next guideline is introduced with a lecture, going over the questions, reading assignment, and brief closure.

Month 8:

- Same format as above with the addition of a more formal closure that is somewhat like a graduation from the class. We have each participant light a candle and share what they will carry forward with them from the study. We then give them a flower and a rolled up "diploma" that has a pertinent poem on it. They also take their candle home as a reminder of what they have learned.

Leader:

- We use two leaders for the 8-month session. One person lectures and the other facilitate everything else. These two people alternate roles each month.
- Leadership could also be done by one person or the whole group could share this role.



Cost:

- Tuition for this extended study at Yoga North includes the cost of the book. Yoga North has tried a variety of different pay schedules throughout the years. I recommend charging whatever feels right to you at this time.
- We require participants of the 8-month study to attend an overview workshop on the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* before starting the course. The workshop runs 2.5-3 hours and is part of our teacher training program. It is also open to the public and CEU's are available. (Contact Deborah if you are interested in having her teach this workshop at your learning center. See last page for details.)
- If you are a group of peers, a club or a church group, the study could be done by sharing the leadership and charging either nothing or a small donation.

*My intent in writing this book, **The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice**, is to provide the support and the incentive for you to explore your life in a fun and profound way. However you incorporate these concepts into your life, I know they will bring greater courage, compassion, joy, and curiosity to your journey.*

Happy exploring - Deborah Adele



Contact Deborah:

Individuals, teachers and studios interested in continuing their studies with Deborah through lectures, workshops, or teacher training, or for information on her other products and events, please contact her directly:

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