



alchemy of yoga

Hello and Super Namaste!

I want you to become part of my Alchemy of Yoga Family. We are a tribe. We believe in magic. We are seekers, adventurers, lovers of love, rebel spirits, stretchy-minded, soulful spirits. We enjoy supporting one another, laughter, singing, organic food, dancing in the moonlight, lounging in the hot tub under the stars, playing in the pool, silent meditation hikes, taking naps & enthusiastic conversation about elevating the world.

In our intimate Kula (community of the heart), you will delve into the deepest study of who You are so you can live your happiness in a big way. More than simply mastering some yoga poses (though you will accomplish this), I want to see you become more self-aware and with joyful self-confidence live your dharma.

Who am I to you? My teaching intention is to serve you as a compassionate mentor who inspires honest self inquiry and ultimate transformation. This goes way beyond just teaching: Mentoring means I have the opportunity to hold space for your growth now and forever. I do not follow an authoritarian model of teaching where I just tell you what to do. Instead, I want you to listen to yourself, pay attention to your body and discern what supports your authenticity.



How does the Alchemy of Yoga work? It transforms us on three levels: Physical Alchemy, Spiritual Alchemy, and Mental Alchemy. We are All Alchemists. Our laboratory is our mat and the ingredients are our bodies, poses, breath, and most of all our thoughts. Based upon our thoughts we create potions that cause chemicals to be neurologically released in our bodies. We are empowered to create elixirs that heal our life. You are transformed into a Peace Leader, leading a Happiness Revolution and changing the world!

This RYT 200 Hour Teacher Training is wholeheartedly dedicated to the art of self-study through SELF-exploration. Consider this the ultimate adventure! A Hero's Journey that will both challenge and encourage you to embrace your potential, awaken your inner power and ignite your passion for life. This training teaches that happiness is your natural alchemy.

I know picking a Yoga School is hard. If my philosophy and approach resonates with you then apply today and let's talk more to know for sure. I'd love the opportunity to be part of your soul journey!

With peace in all ways,

Overview of the Alchemy of Yoga

1. **EARTH:** Foundational Alchemy - Rooting into Yourself & Manifestation
2. **WATER:** Emotional Alchemy - Tapping into Your Potential and Living in Possibility
3. **FIRE:** Physical Alchemy - Discovering Your Optimal Performance
4. **AIR:** Mental Alchemy – Unlearning the Obstacles to Your Happiness
5. **ETHER:** Spiritual Alchemy –Transformation into Living & Teaching Yoga

Alchemy of Yoga: How to Live an INSPIRED Life

Yoga is about wholeness, health, and vital living. It is about a life inspired in body, mind, and spirit. Through movement, meditation, discussion, and journaling, we will explore the vast resources related to How to Live an INSPIRED Life by focusing on the last three Niyamas or personal practices that comprise the Alchemy of Yoga. These are necessary for bringing about real, lasting change and cultivating inner happiness and spiritual bliss.

Experience the alchemy of the five elements, the four directions, and the chakra system as an inner and outer map of transformation. These are archetypal and energetic maps that are as metaphorical as they are very real and embodied. Everything we see, taste, touch, feel, and do can be interpreted through the gateway of the elements, directions, and chakras.

We will learn how to tap into these sacred relationships and align ourselves with their alchemy in order to gain insight into healing our psyche, emotions, and well-being.

What is Alchemy of Yoga?

Something magical and mystical happens when a group of high-intentioned individuals make the decision to gather together for two-hundred hours with the purpose of uplifting their lives and expanding consciousness into radical authenticity.

The result is something beyond words. It is, as best as I can explain it, the Alchemy of Yoga. The Yoga Sutras (Chapter 2, Verse 1), "*Tapas svadhaya ishvara pranidhana kriya yoga,*" explains how the Alchemy of Yoga actually works. It transforms us on three levels through **Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Alchemy**.

1. Physical Alchemy – Tapas: To ignite the changes we want to make in our lives we must establish a solid foundation. Traveling through the elements we work our way through the first three chakras Muladhara, Svadhisthana, and Manipura.

2. Mental Alchemy – Svadhaya: In yoga we study the self to learn about the self. Here the mental alchemy is through self-observation. By witnessing our thoughts, we become aware of our mental patterns and the obstacles to our happiness. We journey through the heart chakra to align the love and wisdom from our hearts and communicate it out to the world, aligning thoughts, words and actions with our truth.

3. Spiritual Alchemy – Ishvara Pranidhana: As we are doing and watching, we let go of the ego of judgment. We move beyond wanting life to be different and begin to feel the surrender and acceptance of the natural flow of the present moment. We understand that there is no reason to stop this flow for its natural current is to align with the current of grace that is everywhere outside us. Beauty becomes our way of life. Happiness becomes our natural alchemy once again.

How Does Alchemy of Yoga Work?

Ancient Alchemists, like their Yogi counterparts, saw all of creation as composed of **Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space**. Through their meditations and explorations of these five elements, they created healing and transformative potions that unlocked many of the mysteries of the universe and therein contributed to the evolution of humankind. For us as Alchemist Yogis, our laboratory is our mat and the ingredients are our bodies, poses, breath, and thoughts. Mixing it all together changes your life. You are transformed into a Peace Leader, leading a **Happiness Revolution** and changing the world!

EARTH – Chakra 1 – Muladhara: To manifest our desires we must have strong roots within ourselves. *WATER – Chakra 2 – Svadhisthana:* We tap into our limitless potential to create our dreams and desires.

FIRE – Chakra 3 – Manipura: We ignite the fire of our burning desires and dreams through action.

AIR – Chakra 4 – Anahata: Our inner wisdom becomes available to us when we open the heart and surrender to love, gently releasing what is no longer in alignment with our hearts.

ETHER – Chakra 5 – Vishudha: Communicating to the universe our wisdom learned from the heart with clarity and truth. To open the heart and surrender to love we must have a strong knowing of our truth.

Chakra 6 – Ajna: We open the third eye in order to sink back as the observer of our being. As we observe with gentle awareness, all negative thoughts and egoistic tendencies dissolve and we return back to stillness, happiness, and love. We surrender to the guidance of our inner wisdom and know that all the answers we seek lie within us.

Chakra 7 – Sahasrara: The flow of grace exists all around and flows through us from an open crown chakra. We become the embodiment of the Divine, a unique expression of consciousness, dwelling in our natural alchemy of love and peace.

Curriculum

Yoga Technique, Training & Practice

100 hours

Asana, Pranayama, Meditation, Mantra

This is the largest portion of the curriculum, including morning meditation, followed by daily Asana practice. Early morning Satsang will always include a form of meditation, and will also often include various traditional yoga techniques, such as Mantra repetition. The daily Asana portion is typically a vigorous 90 minute Vinyasa Flow class.

Teaching Methodology

30 hours

Personal Development and Sacred Principles of Teaching

Yoga is defined as the study of the self, to the self, through the self. Alchemy of Yoga is dedicated to self-study through both modern and ancient forms of personal development. We wholeheartedly believe the best teachers are those who know themselves the best. Therefore, we offer you ways to unlearn the obstacles to your happiness, how to harness the power of manifestation, and tap into your greatest personal potential. Yes, demonstrating, assisting, and adjusting students is certainly covered. But we also cover how to hold space for others, how to honor the sacred seat of the teacher, and the Alchemy of Communication from our highest selves using Non Violent Communication techniques (NVC). Our program is specifically geared help you discover your authentic voice.

Anatomy & Physiology

25 hours

Both Physical & Energetic Anatomy

Alchemy of Yoga anatomical education is more than just learning about muscles and bones. You'll learn about practical theories and how to apply them to real-life. We cover both the human physical anatomy (skeletal, muscular, respiratory, & cardiovascular systems) as well as energetic anatomy (prana, chakras, nadis, bandhas). There is a specific emphasis on understanding Ayurveda and it's powerful role in promoting the Alchemy of Balance and Happiness in your life.

Yoga Philosophy & Ethics

30 hours

From The Yoga Sutras to Modern-Day Mindfulness

Alchemy of Yoga has a non-traditional approach to Yoga Philosophy. Expect a healthy dialogue on key concepts from The Yoga Sutras as well as modern day philosophy and Positive Psychology. We are dedicated to presenting key traditional philosophical concepts, such as Advaita Vedanta (non-dualism). We will also explore ethical relationships and boundaries and what it means to be a psychologically healthy teacher. You will learn techniques about how to guide students to their own experience and be self-led through a non-authoritarian approach, and mindfulness practice as it relates to the business of being a yoga teacher.

Practicum

20 hours

Practice Teaching

Based in Sacred Learning Methodology, we will use various learning techniques, trainees will practice teaching in a variety of settings & scenarios (including 1 on 1 and in small groups) from day 2. We utilize technology, for example, via video feedback, as another layer to the learning process. We require time spent in observation, reading and processing what this means to you. Most importantly we will give you the tools to Teach Peace.

Training Course Syllabus

Through the Alchemy of Yoga expressed in Yoga Sutra 2.1, we see and feel the interconnectedness of all people, creatures, nature, and energies. This natural alchemy serves as a guide as you embark upon the path of self-study:

I. FOUNDATION: Introduction

Initiation into Truth, The Four Agreements, How to Live an Inspired Life, Alchemy as a Map of Transformation, How and Why Alchemy of Yoga Works

II. EARTH: Manifestation - Rooting into Self

Freedom from Fear/Shadow Work, Ethical Guidelines, Greatness & Living Honorably, The Hero/Heroine's Path, Power of Manifestation, Living Your Yoga

III. WATER: Tapping into Your Potential

Body Love, Spiritual Happiness, Svadhaya of Possibility, Intention & Dharma, Vision Boards & Dream Journaling, The Five Koshas, Intrinsic & Extrinsic Movement, Bandhas, Somatics, Energetic Anatomy, The Psychology of Yoga + The Chakra System

IV. FIRE: Discovering Your Optimal Performance

Recapitulation, Developing a Personal Practice, Sun Salutations, Dancing Warriors, Moon Salutations, Mandala Namaskars, General Principles of Poses (Purpose, Stages & Benefits), How to Teach a Pose Safely to All Levels of Students, Stress Response + Relaxation 101, Restorative Poses, Yoga Therapeutics, Anatomy - Muscles + Bones, The Neuroscience of Yoga

V. AIR: Unlearning the Obstacles to Your Happiness

Yoga History + Lineages, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, The Yamas & Niyamas, Alchemy of Balance + Happiness, Breathing (Pranayama), Meditation (Dhyana), Ayurveda, Dinacharya, Doshas + Guidelines for Balancing the Doshas, Nourishing the Physical Body + Ayurvedic Diet, Food Plans to Balance the Doshas

VI. ETHER: Transformation into Living and Teaching Yoga

The Psychologically Healthy Teacher, Teaching as Art, Skill, & Service, Staying Inspired as a Teacher, Teacher Mission Statement, Teaching to the Heart of the Student, Creating a Safe & Sacred Space, Assessment of Class Energy, Mood, Style, The Essence of Great Teaching, Teacher & Student Relationship, Honoring the Sacred Seat of the Teacher, Ethical Relationships & Boundaries, Alchemy of Communication, Learning Sanskrit, Linguaging, Class Theme Preparation, How to Theme in a Psychologically Healthy Way, How to Guide Students to Their Own Experience, The Art of Sequencing Vinyasa Flow, Wave Theory & Choreography, The Business of Yoga & Sustainability

Alchemy of Yoga Syllabus Overview					
Alchemical Experience	Levels of Transformation	Spiritual Focus	Direction	Chakra	Element
Foundational Alchemy	Rooting into Yourself and Manifestation	Foundation	East	Chakra 1	Earth
Emotional Alchemy	Tapping into Your Potential and Living in Possibility	Creation	West	Chakra 2	Water
Physical Alchemy	Tapas, Discovering Your Optimal Performance	Ignition	South	Chakra 3	Fire
Mental Alchemy	Svadhaya, Unlearning the Obstacles to Your Happiness	Edification	North	Chakra 4	Air
Spiritual Alchemy	Ishvara Pranidhana, Transformation into the Infinite	Liberation	Omnidirectional	Chakras 5, 6, 7	Ether

Note: With deep respect and honor: This program is enriched by many ancient teachings, not just yoga, it also draws from Joseph Campbell, Brene Brown, Thich Nhat Hahn, Pema Chodron, Jack Kornfield, Wayne Dyer, Shamanism, Ayurvedic studies, Mythology, and energy systems like the Chakras.

How This Program Meets Yoga Alliance Requirements for RYT-200 Hour Certification

Alchemy of Yoga takes great joy in maintaining integrity through alignment to the standards provided by Yoga Alliance. This program offers a complete 180 contact hours with sacred content as follows:

AREA OF FOCUS	YA REQUIREMENT	ALCHEMY OF YOGA PROVIDES	ALCHEMY OF YOGA TT PROGRAM DETAIL
Techniques - Pranayama, Asana, Meditation	100 hrs. (75 contact min./ 50 with lead trainer)	100+ hrs. (85+ contact/ 15 non-contact)	Asana Classes, Earth, Fire, Ether
Teaching Methodology	25 hrs. (15 contact min./ 10 w/ lead trainer)	30+ hrs. (25+ contact/ 5 non-contact)	Online Module, Fire, Ether
Anatomy & Physiology	20 hrs. (10 contact min.)	25 hrs. (20 contact/ 5 non-contact)	Water, Fire, Ether
Philosophy, Ethics, Lifestyle	30 hrs. (20 contact min.)	40+ hrs. (35+ contact/ 5 non-contact)	Foundation, Earth, Water, Ether
Practicum	10 hrs. (5 contact min./ 5 with lead trainer)	10+ hrs. (5+ contact/ 5 non-contact)	Observations, Practice + Assistant Teaching
Balance (Drawn from Above Categories)	15 hrs.	15 hrs.	Graduation, Reading + Homework
TOTAL HOURS	200 hours	220 hours	220 hours total
Contact Hours - Minimum Required	180 hours	180 hours	

Overview of Study Tracks and Yoga Alliance Requirements

This document provides Alchemy of Yoga's options for self-study and a description of practicum materials based on Yoga Alliance's Requirements to meet RYT-200 Hour Certification standards.

Options for Self-Study

Allowing space for individual growth, Alchemy of Yoga offers two paths of study:

Option 1 includes above aspects of self-study culminating in formal certification through Yoga Alliance with 200-Hour Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) status. Expectations of students following this immersion-based path include:

- Interest in studying all aspects of yoga: asana, pranayama, meditation, philosophy, history and theory, arising from a wish to deepen your practice and engage in self-study.
- Commitment to attending training sessions and completing additional contact hours including asana classes, observations, assistant teaching, and practice teaching.
- Participation in group activities and contribute to discussions.
- Completion of all homework and practicum requirements.
- Support other students.

Option 2 includes Immersion for serious students looking to deepen their practice and knowledge of yoga asana, meditation, philosophy, and spirit who do not wish to pursue teaching yoga. As a self-study student, differences in your experience include:

- You are not required to submit any homework although it is strongly advised that you complete the assigned readings in order to contribute to group discussions.
- You will not be required to complete the practicum requirements.
- You will not be graded or assessed in accordance with Yoga Alliance standards.
- You will **not** be awarded a 200 Hour Yoga Alliance Teaching Certificate upon completion, however you will be given a certificate of program completion as a reference for future studies or trainings.

Post-Training Mentorship: Alchemy of Yoga understands that a 200-Hour Teacher Training Program is both a deep-dive into yoga + self-study *and* simultaneously just the beginning. We are thrilled to offer ongoing resources and mentorship, including but not limited to:

- Planning a yoga career + business, how to best market yourself while maintaining strong ethical standards and life balance, and how to resolve ethical issues that arise from teaching yoga.

How to Meet Yoga Alliance Requirements for RYT-200 Hour Certification

- 1. Asana Classes:** Participate in Practice Class sessions scheduled into the Teacher Training curriculum.
- 2. Observations:** Complete four hours of observation including: 1) Observe Silvia teaching a one-hour yoga class, 2) Observe a sunrise, 3) Observe a sunset, 4) Observe thoughts that arise during silent mealtime. To receive credit for these observations, please write a brief report detailing your observations and reflections (1-2 paragraphs each).
- 3. Assistant Teaching:** Complete one hour of assistant teaching with Silvia. To receive credit for assistant teaching, please write a brief report detailing your experience (1-2 paragraphs each).
- 4. Practice Teaching & Final Teaching Presentation:** Participate in Practice Teaching sessions scheduled into the Teacher Training curriculum. Prepare to teach the Alchemy of Yoga 30 Minute Yoga Class to your tribe.
- 5. Sacred Study Project:** Write a report on the chakra(s) or dosha(s) of your choice. You have complete creative freedom in this self-study. The intention is that you dive deeper into the chakra system or the practices of Ayurveda. At minimum, please submit 2-3 pages of personal reflection, but you are encouraged to take the direction that inspires you most.
- 6. Asana Sheets:** Create a photo diary of the following 10 fundamental poses: Adho Mukha Svanasana, Virabhadrasana I, Virabhadrasana II, Utkatasana, Parsvottanasana, Eka Pada Rajakapotasana (any variation), Ardha Matsyendrasana, Plank Asana or Side Plank, Urdhva Mukha Svanasana or Bhujangasana, Setu Bandha Sarvangasana or Urdhva Dhanurasana. In addition to a personal photo that embodies your personal alchemy, please include a description of purposes, benefits, modifications, and cues.
- 7. Final Exam:** The exam is distributed via e-mail part-way through teacher training. It is open-book, open-friend, open-Google, and open-heart.
- 8. Attendance:** 180 contact hours are required.
- 9. Non Contact:** Complete the online Business of Yoga module and other required reading assignments.
- 10. Attitude:** As a requirement for certification, each trainee commits to a positive attitude of ahimsa, offering loving kindness and patience to all beings. In addition, each trainee exhibits conscious relationships and ethics in line with Yoga Alliance, please refer to the YA Code of Conduct found here: <https://www.yogaalliance.org/AboutYA/OurPolicies/CodeofConduct>

How to Submit Your Work: Please create a separate document for each practicum requirement — e.g., all observations are in one document, all assistant teaching reflections are in one document, etc. Please title each document with Your Name + Assignment — e.g., Sarah Erter: Observations. E-mail all assignments to Sarah (sarah@alchemytours.com).

Submission Guidelines: Please submit the above self-study work within six months of completing teacher training.

For each teacher trainee, it takes a different amount of time to complete the program post classroom sessions. Everybody has their own yoga, which Alchemy of Yoga respects and honors. To maximize optimal learning and reinforcement, we recommend that practicum materials are completed within six months of completing teacher training. If you are unable to meet practicum requirements within the suggested timeline, please reach out to sarah@alchemytours.com to design a timeline that best fits your yoga.

Reading List

REQUIRED BOOKS: It is recommended that you read the books in the following order. While nothing beats a worn hard copy aged with years of love and use, consider purchasing electronic copies if you are completing a destination-based teacher training.

- Yoga: The Spirit and Practice of Moving Into Stillness by Erich Schiffmann
- The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz
- Living Your Yoga: Finding the Spiritual in Everyday Life by Judith Lasater
- The Secret Power of Yoga by Nischala Joy Devi or The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- Wheels of Light by Anodea Judith
- The Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies by Vasant Lad
- Yoga for Wellness by Gary Kraftsow
- Teaching Yoga: Exploring the Teacher-Student Relationship by Donna Farhi
- The Key Muscles of Hatha Yoga by Dr. Ray Long
- How We Choose To Be Happy: The 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People by Rick Foster + Greg Hicks
- The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice by Deborah Adele
- The Heart of Yoga: Developing A Personal Practice by T.K.V. Desikachar

RECOMMENDED BOOKS: Additional recommendations that include several of Silvia's favorites books to support continuation along the path of self-study and self-discovery.

- Yogi Bare by Philip Self
- Eastern Body, Western Mind by Anodea Judith
- The Language of Yoga by Nicolai Bachman
- The Wisdom of Yoga by Stephen Cope
- Anatomy Coloring Book
- Yoga from the Inside Out by Christina Sell
- A Path With Heart: A Guide through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life by Jack Kornfield
- Wherever You Go There You Are by Jack Kornfield
- Anatomy of Movement by Blandine Calais-Germain
- The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace by Jack Kornfield
- Healing Mantras by Thomas Ashley-Ferrand
- Women Who Run with the Wolves by Clarissa Pinkola Estes
- The Four Desires by Rod Stryker
- Yoga & the Path of the Urban Mystic by Darren Main
- Breathing Book by Donna Farhi
- It's Easier Than You Think by Sylvia Boorstein
- Women Code by Alisa Vitti
- Daring Greatly by Brené Brown
- The Way of the Happy Woman by Sara Stover
- The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell
- The Heroine's Journey by Maureen Murdock
- Be Happy by William Holden
- Sweat Your Prayers by Gabrielle Roth
- Light on Life by B.K.S. Iyengar

Alchemy of Yoga 200-Hour Teacher Training Intake Form

If you feel inspired by the Alchemy of Yoga vision to Teach Peace, we would love to listen to your story and learn more about the heart of your yoga.

Please send completed materials to: silvia@alchemytours.com and sarah@alchemytours.com.

Background Information: Name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and emergency contact information

Please tell us about your yoga practice.

- How long have you been taking yoga classes and/or practicing yoga?
- What style(s) of yoga do you practice?
- How often and how long do you practice? Do you have a home practice?
- Do you currently have a meditation practice?
- Who have been your most influential teachers and why?
- Have you attended any trainings, intensives, or retreats? What inspired you to attend and what did you learn?

What has inspired you to pursue yoga teacher training?

- What are your expectations for the training? What do you hope to gain, learn, or improve?
- Do you teach yoga now? If so, please share with us the details of your teaching path.
- If you plan on teaching after completing the program, why do you want to teach yoga?

What does yoga mean to you?

- Describe how your life has been impacted by practicing yoga.
- Tell us about your hobbies, interests, community service, etc. outside of yoga.
- Describe your physical health (e.g., any major illnesses, surgeries, or physical conditions), emotional health, and mental health.
- Do you have a support network of friends or a therapist?
- Does your family support this journey you've decided to take?
- This program requires a significant investment in yourself. Do you have any other major commitments (e.g., school, two jobs, etc.) that would prevent you from participating fully?

Alchemy of Yoga History

Through the **Alchemy of Yoga** we can create our own medicine, cure our self-created problems and live with the sense of bliss and contentment that all of us are born to experience.

Alchemy is a beautiful word and complex term. For some, it calls up images of primeval crackpots and charlatans promising to turn lead into gold. For others, it reminds us of the genius of **Isaac Newton** who, as an alchemist, astronomer, naturalist, and physicist came to be known as one of the greatest scientists and mathematicians of all times while also understanding the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of reality.

Ancient alchemists, like their Yogi counterparts, saw all of creation as composed of **earth, air, fire, water,** and **space**. Through their meditations and explorations of these five elements they created healing and transformative potions that formed the base of much of modern pharmacology. In the process, they unlocked many of the mysteries of the universe and therein contributed to the evolution of humankind.

Alchemy as it relates to the realm of metaphysics is arguably the higher practice of this ancient art. Just as pure gold can be obtained by burning away its impurities and base metals, through Spiritual Alchemy one can move from an imperfect, diseased, ignorant and corrupted state towards wisdom, healing, self-transformation and enlightenment. This is the **Alchemy of Yoga**, and it is at the core of this sacred science.

Each and every one of us is an alchemist. Our laboratory is our brain. We concoct our potions and elixirs based upon our thoughts. These chemicals then course through our neurological systems and spread into our organs, muscles, bones and tissues. Depending upon the quality of our thoughts and our level of consciousness, we are either creating black magic that will only cause us pain, or we are creating miracle potions that can help us lead the lives we have always desired.

For instance, a chronically agitated, fearful and angry person creates too much **adrenaline** and **cortisol**, the primary chemicals associated with our instinctive fight-or-flight response. Our fast-paced, stressed-out culture contributes to this alchemy and such a person finds themselves in increasingly toxic life situations. This pattern often leads to lowered immune function, mental or physical ailments, and ultimately serious disease.

The thoughts of a more positive alchemist create **serotonin** and **interleukins**. These chemicals boost the immune function, relax our adrenals, and promote healing. This pattern leads to a happier life in which greater health, greater achievements, and greater experiences seem to go hand-in-hand.

Simply put, as we all have heard, **“You are what you think.”** The hypochondriac becomes sick. The person who thinks negatively creates a reality in which things always seem to go wrong. Those who believe they cannot accomplish something have already seeded their own defeat. On the other hand, the positive person who takes a sugar pill in a blind test of a new medicine may actually experience benefits far beyond what the real drug has to offer. Those who are convinced of their potential are likely to realize it no matter what obstacles arise. *Those who see the world filled with light and love often have this reflected back to them as their reality.*

The groundbreaking work of Japanese **Dr. Masaru Emoto** has illuminated this phenomenon, and the crossover between the physical and metaphysical aspects of alchemy, in a unique and remarkable way. Through special photographic techniques, Dr. Emoto has been able to prove that water, in its frozen crystal form, actually responds to words and thoughts. When he exposed water to words of **love, compassion, and peace**, even if not spoken aloud, the water formed beautiful and intricate crystals no matter what language was used. When words of hate, anger and evil were used, no crystals formed and the water appeared muddied and toxic. Water responded similarly to peaceful, melodious music as opposed to heavy metal or rap. You can see these photos by looking up Dr. Masaru Emoto on the internet.

If our thoughts and words have the power to impact water, it makes sense that they also influence those around us and impact the patterns we create in our lives. In effect, as we respond to our circumstances, experiences and surroundings, we directly effect how they respond and reflect back to us. We are the alchemists not only of the chemicals coursing through our bodies; **we are the creators of our individual worlds.**

This is why Yoga, and its sister science of Ayurveda, teach us alchemical techniques that reconstruct the molecules of our being. **Pratyahara** (withdrawal of the senses) and **Dharana** (single-pointed concentration) help to bring us to deeper levels of inner awareness and balance. **Mantra** (the repetition of sacred words) actually allows us to access higher universal powers that are healing and transformative. **Dhyana** (meditation) ultimately crystallizes our consciousness and brings us to Self-realization.

As a practice, you can conduct your own scientific experiment on yourself, serving both as scientist and subject. Find a quiet place where you can lie down undisturbed for several minutes (this can be done after Yoga during **Savasana** or as a response to a stressful day). Once you are comfortable, note what your emotional state is as you begin. Try to feel the “taste” inside of your body, the current chemical atmosphere of your being. Bring your awareness to your brain, seeing it as your laboratory and your mind as the alchemist. Then, allow your breath to become deep and full. After a few breaths,

begin placing the following words in your brain, repeating each one long enough that the emotion of the word begins to permeate your consciousness.

Contentment... Repeat this over and over with the breath remaining deep and full, really feeling it, breathing it in and exhaling it throughout your entire being. Do this for a few minutes, noticing the internal chemistry of your body and the subtle shifts that begin to take place.

Follow the same process with: *Serenity... Peace... Gratitude... Compassion... Love... Ecstasy...*

And so forth, spending a few minutes with each emotion. You do not have to memorize these words or this sequence. **Choose the words that you know deeply in your heart are the most healing and transformative for you**, even letting them arise naturally during the process. When you are done, spend some time noticing any shifts in your inner essence, any different “taste” of being you. Feel the relaxation and pleasure that arises from this practice in every cell of your body and every corner of your mind.

This alchemical process played a great role in my own self-healing. I moved from fear, anger and despondency to openness, compassion and a firm belief in my ability to self-heal. It did not happen overnight, and at times it felt like I was endlessly digging ditches, seeking to pierce the crust of my entrenched emotions and unearth a deeper place in my soul where my true nature was buried. Through faith, devotion, and dedication, the work paid off and I was fortunate enough to heal, both physically and emotionally.

Healing, I came to learn afterwards, did not stop there. It is a daily practice in a world where stressful challenges and negative emotions often prevail. We all have this power, to heal ourselves day in and day out. Through the **Alchemy of Yoga** we can create our own medicine, cure our self-created problems, and live with the sense of bliss and contentment that all hearts deeply desire.

- By Bhava Ram