



# THE YAMAS

The first two limbs of yoga training your actions, speech, and thoughts in ways that create harmony. The first limb - the yamas, or ethical restraints - train you in relation to the external world, particularly how you are with other people.

To practice the yamas, we learn in the first chapter of the sutras that we must dedicate unwavering effort to noticing its results. To activate the mental dimension of our lives, we *must* close down the physical dimension. This means that it's not something to step into with the mentality "I'll just try it on" nor something you do socially. Rather, you're meant to step onto the path confidently giving it a "college try."

In college nothing is done for less than a semester and all of your efforts are individual. This is the way these meditations should be approached: with genuine, dedicated effort.

# BRAHMACHARYA

Brahmacharya means "non-excess" and the reason our ancestors have us practice brahmacharya is written in *Sutras*, stating: "When walking in the awareness of the highest reality (brahmacharya) is firmly established, then a great strength, capacity, or vitality (virya) is acquired." In other words, by remembering the highest energy or force of reality, waste less energy. Moreover, prepare to feel amplified in your energy by not wasting so much on drama.

The Gita complements this explaining how a self-controlled person must live a celibate lifestyle to understand the unconditional love of Divine consciousness, which is free of the shackles of our body's animal tendencies. In other words, the Gita says a person must be free from both passion and attachment in order to understand divinity.