

CALM THE MIND

TWO MINI TEACHINGS INSPIRED BY THE YOGA SUTRAS

KATE VOGT

GARDENER OF OUR OWN MIND-BODY

Practitioners of yoga flourish like plants in a well-tended garden. Some have just been planted, others are sprouting, some lean toward the sun while others bow their heads. Each has different characteristics and specific growing requirements. No one is better than the other. With constant care and attention each plant garners the strength to weather any innate or unexpected obstacles. The phases of growth are gradual and there is ample room for everyone.

In our practice of yoga we learn to be the gardener for our own mind-body. If we are ever-watchful, we'll notice when greed, jealousy, confusion, and anger arise and be able to interrupt these unwanted weeds before they take hold in our relationships. Freed of interruptions, we can focus on stabilizing and nourishing our highest and beautifully unique potential. It takes sincere and patient practice over a long time to become an accomplished gardener, but the results are ever-lasting tranquility and contentment. *(This mini-teaching is inspired by Yoga Sutra I.14)*

CULTIVATING INNER HAPPINESS

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali remind us that yoga brings about subtle and long-lasting changes in the way we are in the world. These inner shifts come about through steady practice and are most apparent in our relationships. You may have noticed some of these changes in yourself. For example, when you hear good news about someone, you may notice that you are genuinely happy for them with no trace of the jealousy or other negative feelings that would have previously been there. Another example might appear in a seemingly non-virtuous situation where someone is dishonest or has an addiction; and earlier tendencies toward being judgmental have given way to thoughts of equanimity or empathy. Similarly, you may now find yourself feeling true compassion toward those who are suffering and gladness when you see another express honest kindness.

These virtuous qualities of friendliness, compassion, gladness, and equanimity arise as our mind becomes more tranquil through practice. You may also cultivate them to help them take root and blossom throughout all your relationships, including yourself. One simple way to do this is to silently repeat the name of one or each of these four qualities a few times once or twice a day. *(This mini-teaching is inspired by Yoga Sutras I.14, I.20, and I.33)*