

## Essay Question:

**Read Lines II.34 and II.35 from chapter two of the Yoga Sutra's of Patanjali. Summarize, in your own words, the meaning of these sutra's. Explain how they can be used in your life, with people you find difficult, in your practice and in teaching your students.**

Lines 11.34 and 11.35 refer to the practice of non-violence. This refers to not only the physical act of violence towards others or oneself but all aspects of life from emotional to mental. It is defined as compassion. Compassion for yourself and those around you. Forgiveness is an expression of one having compassion for themselves and others around them. The sutras refer also to changing your thoughts to non-violence. We have control of our thoughts and where we direct our attention. Thoughts can not be eliminated but they can be replaced with different ones. Our thoughts create feelings which create actions giving us our results. When you learn to think differently you will feel differently. These feelings will drive your actions and results. Results which are shared in your relationships.

For many years I was very unhappy with myself. I had only had negative thoughts about myself and my life. It got to the point it was affecting my work and the relationships around me. It was physical violence I was inflicting, as mentioned there are other forms of violence. I needed to learn non-violence towards myself. I needed to pay more attention to my thoughts and feelings and identify what the cause of these negative feelings. Once the thoughts and feelings were identified I was able to replace them with the more positive ones. I needed to learn to be more compassionate and patient with myself to be able to identify every thought.

It is a constant struggle to practice non-violence and monitor all your thoughts and feelings but it does become easier the more often you do it. You begin to realize you have less negative thoughts, more positive more compassionate ones. This internal shift in thinking creates a shift in feelings and influences, in changing your actions it will give you different results. Results which affect everyone in my life. Improving my relationships, how people react to me and see me.

By having compassion, and non-violence towards myself I began to realize and understand that everyone comes from a place of pain and fear. So by approaching people with compassion patience's and understanding even the most difficult person will react to you in the same way and with the same compassion. I began to realize that people's reactions have nothing to do with me but have to do with what they are experiencing.

As I write this I realize it may seem rather trivial and simple but that is really what non-violence is. It is awareness and decisions. Decisions to be positive. We all have the freedom to choose violence or non-violence towards ourselves and others. On the mat and off we all need to learn to take a step back and try to be gentler with ourselves and others. The way we see and feel about ourselves is how others see us and treat us which influences everyone's behaviour.