

Sutras 2.34

“When negative thoughts such as violence, etc are done, cause to be done or even approved of---whether incited by greed, anger or infatuation----whether indulged in with mild, medium or extreme intensity, they are based on ignorance and bring a certain pain. Reflecting upon this is also pratipaksa bhavana”

To me this means that our thoughts create action, whether we know it or not. All thoughts, are like a seed that can grow into a tree, that perhaps even creates more fruits that perpetuate the cycle. In any form, the more negative feelings we hold on to (greed, anger, jealousy, etc) it will inevitably only manifest into suffering.

2.34:

“In the presence of one firmly established in non-violence all hostilities cease”

To me this means the more we cultivate a sense of awareness of ourselves and embody ahimsa, we begin to notice the effects on our surroundings (people and environment).

For both 2.34 and 2.35 this can be applied in many contexts:

A small example in daily life might be our demand for eating specific foods at our convenience. We might love eating avocados and don't think about the impact when we grab some at the grocery store (especially in Canada, in December!) but unbeknownst to us, the demand for avocados in developed nations has created serious implications to the people and land in which they come from. For example, in Mexico, it is causing major deforestation issues, pesticides and chemicals used are creating widespread major illnesses, and the prices for exportation are so high that the farmers who grow them can't even afford to eat them. The business has become so lucrative that drug cartels are taking over resulting in murder, violence, government corruption and poorer living conditions. So making small efforts such as making more informed choices and buying less exotic foods we can help reduce the suffering in far reaching instances. So ultimately if more of us make these choices and reduce demand, the complications around the supply may be reduced.

On the subject of dealing with 'difficult' people...I actually have fewer of these interactions than I used to. And when the situations do arise, they just don't bother me as much. I have an

intense and long history of being in 'difficult' situations, but far worse has always been the emotional turmoil that was in myself. Negative thoughts were a way of life for me and something I used to cling to as a part of 'my story'. But now, instead of reacting the way I used to...by either snapping back to win the upper hand, or internalizing and ruminating over these occurrences with tons of self hatred and doubt, I am more aware in the moment to assess the reality of the situation. I accept what I can not change, acknowledge my role in the conflict without being too hard on myself, and simply move on. I notice the more I practice this, the easier it is becoming.

With my asana practice this comes in the form of being more intentional in each movement and experiencing mind, body and breath as one. By doing smaller, slower movements I feel more of each sensation in my body. I am able to feel more and think less about what I am doing. By practicing this way, I sometimes notice that I have more space or ease in situations I used to find uncomfortable and challenging. In all, I am able to go deeper and feel stronger by doing less.

By embodying this in my own practice, I find I am able to understand the nuances of the sensations in my body and its connection with my mindset. This allows me to demonstrate and explain in a way that might come from a place of experience instead of a memorized script. This means that students that engage auditorily, visually and kinesthetically might find ways to connect with the guidance and gives more opportunities for them to be curious about their own experiences.