

**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.**

*We ourselves may act upon unwholesome thoughts, such as wanting to harm someone, or we may cause or condone them in others; unwholesome thoughts may arise from greed, anger, or delusion; they may be mild, moderate, or extreme; but they never cease to ripen into ignorance and suffering. This is why one must cultivate wholesome thoughts.*

*Being firmly grounded in non-violence creates an atmosphere in which others can let go of their hostility.*

Essentially, lines II.34 & II.35 say that ugly feelings that arise within us, while we may think that they are directed towards others, always end up causing us harm. They state that learning to let them go will ultimately promote positivity within ourselves and others. These thoughts and feelings will arise; it's only natural. The difference comes from how we interpret and act/don't act on them.

I'm no stranger to negative feelings, especially in the last couple of years where so many things in the world just seem to be going wrong. Honestly these Sutras just remind me of the idea that what we let into our existence and what we let into our mind will become our reality. If we let anger or jealousy take the lead, we will find more reasons to feel angry or jealous. But if we let forgiveness, kindness and compassion be at the forefront of our minds, we will naturally see more good in the world. This isn't an easy thing to do, but it is a worthwhile skill to learn, both for our own health and happiness and those of everyone around us.

In my practice, I am often discouraged when I'm unable to complete an advanced asana (or any at all given my injuries). This brings about feelings of helplessness, negative thoughts about myself and my abilities and jealousy/envy towards those who are fully able-bodied or "fitter" than I am. These feelings, while natural, are only hurting me and even potentially hurting my relationships. This lesson would both be useful for myself, and for my students. It's important to cultivate loving feelings towards ourselves, at all times. Negative feelings just aren't helpful.

Learning to accept those around me, especially those with different opinions or who are wanting to argue has been a lifelong journey. I'm still working on it and it can be difficult sometimes to not get triggered into negative emotions. Learning to see the good, even when it can be hard to see, is an important step towards feeling better or doing better. And it's always worth it.