

Yoga Sutra II.34 and II.35 are part of Patanjali's teachings on the practice of yoga and the cultivation of inner peace and compassion. They generally revolve around the ideas of cultivating kindness and a calm mind when dealing with difficult people or challenging situations.

Yoga Sutra II.34: This sutra highlights the importance of cultivating a practice of countering negative thoughts with positive, compassionate thoughts. It also appears to point us toward practicing compassion and kindness for those who are suffering or experiencing negative emotions. Through these teachings, we are encouraged to adopt a supportive and empathetic attitude towards others, especially during difficult times.

Yoga Sutra II.35: This sutra emphasizes the significance of maintaining a peaceful and composed mind when interacting with people who exhibit negative behavior, such as hostility, anger, or ignorance. It suggests that rather than reacting to their negativity, one should maintain inner tranquility and not allow their negativity to disturb your own mental state. It purports that only more suffering will come from meeting negative emotions with more negative emotions.

Applying these sutras in one's life can lead to personal growth and a more peaceful existence.

In dealing with difficult people, the sutras remind us to respond with understanding and empathy, recognizing that their negative behavior might arise from their own suffering or ignorance. They could be caught up in the pursuit of material goods, status, or simply reacting to their own perceptions of fear or scarcity. Many of these behaviours can also be seen as stemming from deep dysregulation in their nervous systems, which might be caught in overly sympathetic charge from a trauma or early overwhelm.

From the sutras perspective, by responding with kindness, we can potentially create a positive impact and reduce tension. Going even further with this, we can practice yoga in our daily lives—in all its aspects but particularly in the asanas, pranayama, subtle energetic movement, to aid in our increased interoception. This type of mind-body aligned work is effective in helping us release bound up sympathetic energy in our systems, which can lead us to see danger and threat and scarcity around us, which then effect our thoughts and behaviours.

In my personal practice, during yoga and meditation practice, these sutras can guide me to cultivate a sense of inner peace and compassion. They act as a reminder of the power of neutralizing negative thoughts with thoughts of kindness and empathy. By doing so, we can develop emotional resilience and become better equipped to handle life's ups and downs.

As a yoga teacher, incorporating these teachings into my classes can inspire your students to not only improve their physical practice but also cultivate mindfulness and compassion towards themselves and others. I would hope to encourage them to apply these sutras to themselves first, practicing patience and non-judgment to their own practices. Never pushing their bodies into pain or forcing themselves in any way that would be detrimental but that stems from a negative view of themselves.

By increasing their own discernment and decreasing their self-judgement, the students participate in creating a culture in the class and beyond.

I also find that keeping these sutras in mind helps to remind me that, along with clearing bound up charge in our bodies from chronic stress and overwhelm and trauma, when we are in regulation and in our window of tolerance, we can choose our thoughts and actions. We do not need to react to the challenges others give us, rather we can respond with more patience. In this way, we neutralise the negativity and we certainly don't need to perpetuate and carrying it in our bodies.

In summary, the sutras from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali encourage the practice of kindness, compassion, and emotional composure in dealing with difficult people or situations. By applying these principles in our lives, personal practice, and teaching, we can create a more harmonious and compassionate environment for ourselves and those around us.