**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.**

“Killing” as an obstruction to Yoga, for me, means any action that damages what I am meaning to cultivate while practicing Yoga (the limbs). This action can be intentional due to anger or ignorance, this action can be my passivity when I witness others causing harm. The result of my action and inaction can be little, medium, or great – the harm is still caused, regardless of perceived affect. There is no difference between harmful action that I commit, and harmful action that I witness another commit. Thinking harmful thoughts and acting out harmful actions are much the same – both will have causal effect in the Universe (karma), and both will return to me to teach me a lesson about how to engage compassionately. Harmful actions kills and obstructs a Yoga practice because it distances one from the goal of compassionate living and Union, and prolongs the effort.

Once I am able to conceive of managing my thoughts and actions towards being non-injurious, non-lethal, the world will reflect this work back to me (in the same way that if I offer harm through thought and action, I will receive harm back – cause and effect and Karma are the two universal laws).

These sutras remind me of Nonviolent Communication, which I implement with difficult people, within my life in general, and while teaching. NVC works for me because it does not deny that non-empathetic thoughts can arise; there is space for these thoughts because we are imperfect human beings. It is about giving oneself time and space to give self-empathy, and to direct empathy towards others over time (seconds, minutes, days). It acknowledges that self-empathy and empathy for others is also a practice (much like Yoga), which does not necessarily come instantaneously, but rather, is cultivated. Lions and lambs can play together once we understand that conflict within ourselves and conflict between others and ourselves arises from the conflict of strategies in getting needs met, rather than the conflict of needs themselves. The world is peaceful when all of our needs are met. It is okay to be reactive if one can remove themselves from the trigger and give introspection and self-empathy, but it is not okay to withhold this effort from being offers to others. To attain Union and compassionate space, we must know that there is no separation between self and other, one’s needs and my own needs.