



## **Mission Statement, Aims and Code of Ethics**

*Revised 27/1/09 (Please check the YTAA website to ensure you are reading the latest revision of this document)*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Yoga in large part springs from the *Sanatana Dharma*, the 'eternal philosophy of the *atman*, the inner Self', as expressed by the sages and saints of India. At the heart of Yoga are two basic questions: What is the ultimate goal of life and how can it be achieved?

The sages, saints and seers who have understood the nature of reality say that it is natural for human beings to seek and strive for happiness. It is for happiness that we choose a career, a life partner, raise families and try to stay healthy. They know that the underlying motivation in every activity is to attain the feeling of peace and happiness that is at the core of our being.

The realisation of that joy is the highest purpose and ultimate goal of life. And even though there are moments in life when we fleetingly touch this transcendental joy, we may not know how to hold onto it, create it, or become established in it.

The practice of yoga offers the opportunity to feel, understand and experience the joy of the inner Self, to realise the essence of existence and to live in the knowledge of it.

#### ***According to yoga the four goals of life are:***

1. Love and joy
2. Success and prosperity
3. Service and right action
4. Freedom from suffering

#### ***Four paths by which to attain the goals of life are:***

- 1. The path of love and devotion (*bhakti yoga*)**
  - To experience love of the Self
  - To share that love with others
  - To become free of the sense of separation
- 2. The path of right action (*karma yoga*)**
  - To act in accordance with the highest good
  - To serve without attachment to outcome
  - To become free of self-concern

**3. The path of meditation (*raja yoga: hatha yoga*)**

- To discipline negative thinking and feeling
- To keep the body strong and active
- To channel energy positively

**4. The path of wisdom (*jnana yoga*)**

- To know and honour one's own true Self
- To identify with the highest wisdom
- To respect the Self in others

Other paths include Mantra, Samnyasa Yoga, Tantra (Laya and Kundalini) Jaina and Buddhist Yoga.

As an association of yoga teachers, YTAA holds true the philosophical basis for yoga while encompassing the many traditions within yoga, and the styles and practices in modern interpretations of yoga. We foster an atmosphere of inclusion and non-competition, promoting understanding, tolerance and co-operation between yoga teachers and yoga practitioners in all traditions and styles of yoga in Australia.

We also recognise that our role as an association is much more than maintaining standards for, and representation of, yoga teachers. We wish to spread the message about yoga to the general public as a path to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**YTAA is dedicated to serve the timeless tradition of yoga by uniting and representing yoga teachers from all traditions and styles in Australia. We are also dedicated to serve the general public by assisting them to develop a deeper understanding and knowledge of yoga and meditation.**

## **AIMS**

- **To promote yoga to the community as a path to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being**
- **To promote understanding, tolerance and co-operation between all traditions and styles of yoga**
- **To set and maintain professional and ethical standards for yoga teaching**
- **To provide representation, advocacy, support, services and a peer network to its members**

## CODE OF ETHICS

The YTAA code of ethics is based on Patanjali's Yama (abstentions) that deal with appropriate behaviour and have contemporary relevance to professional yoga teaching. YTAA members agree to abide by this code of ethics, and by our example, to share them with others.

### **Non-violence and compassion (*Ahimsa*)**

***The inner Self resides in all beings equally, therefore we***

- a. Seek to do no harm to others,
- b. Act with care and compassion towards others,
- c. Respect the values, beliefs and aspirations of others,
- d. Avoid physical, verbal or emotional force (including anger and blame) when dealing with others,
- e. Do not discriminate. We treat our students and fellow yoga teachers equally, regardless of gender, age, sexual preference, race, culture, religion, social status or political belief,
- f. Are considerate of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of our students and endeavor to nurture their natural abilities and aspirations while being mindful of their limitations or preferences known to us.

### **2. Speaking the truth (*Satya*)**

***We understand that our words and actions have the power to influence others, therefore we***

- a. Speak truthfully with kindness in our dealings with others,
- b. Maintain the confidentiality and trust of others, as would be expected, both personally and professionally,
- c. Refrain from making statements about ourselves or others that may misrepresent the truth, or that are intended to bring disadvantage or harm to others,
- d. Ensure that our teaching is truthful, in representation, content, delivery and intent,
- e. Avoid conflict with our students and fellow teachers by seeking conciliation and working towards a mutually acceptable understanding. Where the parties cannot easily resolve their differences, we agree to refer the matter to the YTAA for dispute resolution or arbitration if required.

### **3. Non-stealing, honesty and integrity (*Asteya*)**

***We acknowledge that stealing may occur through lack of care, omission or false representation, therefore we***

- a. Abide by our business, ethical and societal responsibilities, including appropriate legal, insurance, workcover, OH&S, superannuation, banking, accounting, financial, taxation, advertising and copyright requirements or practices,
- b. Take care to ensure that information about the potential benefits of yoga or of our teaching, our level of training, experience and certification, our classes, courses, fees, entitlements and refund

- procedures are accurately, fairly and clearly stated,
- c. Teach only within the scope of our training, experience and ability,
  - d. Abide by all YTAA policies and procedures as amended from time to time, including any additional guidelines to this code of ethics, holding of appropriate Insurance, requirements for first aid certification and continuing professional development, as published on the YTAA website,
  - e. Agree to co-operate fully with any reasonable YTAA investigation in relation to our performance of our responsibilities as a member.

#### **4. Relationships and sexuality (*Brahmacharya*)**

***We value and respect our relationships with others and the right of our students to feel safe with us, therefore we***

- a. Agree that the teacher-student relationship is sacred and as teachers we should not take advantage of the vulnerability of our students,
- b. Understand that students may become emotionally attached to us. If we become aware that the attachment of a student is unhealthy for them, we will refer the student to another teacher, to suitable counseling, or end the teacher-student relationship in a kind and gentle manner,
- c. Should not allow a sexual relationship to develop with a student while the teacher-student relationship exists. If we become aware that a sexual relationship is likely to develop, we will endeavor to end the teacher-student relationship in an appropriate manner, refer the student to another teacher where possible, and allow sufficient time for the student to become adjusted to the new arrangement before any relationship commences,
- d. Understand that even if the student seeks out a relationship with the teacher or consents to it, this does not make it appropriate while the teacher-student relationship exists,
- e. Refrain from all forms of sexual harassment.

#### **5. Non-possessiveness (*Aparigraha*)**

***We value the principles of non-attachment, non-possessiveness and accepting only that which is freely given, therefore we***

- a. Refrain from seeking money, gifts or advantage that is not freely given in the spirit of generosity,
- b. Co-operate with fellow teachers, refer students to, and encourage students to seek assistance from, other teachers and related professionals with the student's best interest in mind at all times,
- c. Honour and respect the traditions and/or teachers in which and with whom and we have trained or benefited, and respect the traditions and teachers of others,
- d. Aim to give our time, energy, skills and experience freely for the good of others, and to serve humanity with compassion and kindness.