

# Swadhyaya: Getting to Know Yourself

Swadhyaya, or self-inquiry and observation, is a special type of gaze that may or may not come so easily, and yet, it is truly rewarding when practiced regularly. Swadhyaya invites you to gaze upon yourself with kind eyes, the eyes of a best friend or mother. Yes, those eyes. They are in you. They are you!

Like all Vedic guidelines focusing on how you move through your inner and outer worlds, swadhyaya asks you to build greater presence in your life through the following:

1. Root into radical self-love
2. Practice, practice, practice
3. Be with the full range of your emotions
4. Step back from being at the center of your stories

Swadhyaya extends her open hands welcoming you into the practice of radical self-love. “Radical self-love is (y)our inherent state of being as worthy and enough. It is the unobstructed access to (y)our highest selves.” (Sonya Renee Taylor) Radical self-love doesn’t settle for acceptance. It asks you to dig deeper and fuller, claiming your state of “original goodness.” This especially is the case when it seems like everyone arounds you prefers that you make do with much less.

Anchoring yourself in radical self-love requires ongoing practice, which is both humbling and invigorating; it can be no other way. It demands of you to pause regularly throughout your days, take a few or many slow, steady breaths, and

start afresh. In doing so, it reminds you that this is what it means to be truly alive.

When you practice swadhyaya with the intention of radical self-love, of moving towards wholeness, you engage your experiences, all of them, actively. You feel them as they are without pushing away or down that which is uncomfortable. You return over and over to being with the highs and the lows, inviting them to teach us within the overall view that all is for your evolution and in that sense positive, if you will allow it. You practice letting go of any expectations or attachments and allow all you experience to pass through you.

It's important to become aware of what you practice and how you practice because your body will soon bear these beliefs, stories, moods and emotions for you and the world to see.

The body only knows to practice. Whether you are aware of it or not you “are always practicing something.” (Richard Strozzi-Heckler) Thus, it's all the more imperative to interrupt habits that lead you away from returning over and over again to nourishing your sweet self.

All self-observation and inquiry, places your consciousness in that of being the witness to this divine drama of life unfolding, rather than confusing the drama as your true self. As you engage in reflection this week and throughout the program, there may be the unconscious tendency to identify with the behaviors, thoughts, feelings, etc., which you are observing about yourself. This can lead to over analysis, judgement, and treating yourself like a problem to fix versus an expression of the Divine to celebrate.

By focusing on shifting from thoughts to feelings, especially where you experience them in the body, you move in direction of union with your true self and the Divine. You welcome yourself home to that within which does not change with the seasons of the year and life.

## Establish your Intention

This week, you are invited to engage in the practice of swadhyaya. Bow your head, close your eyes, place your hands on your heart, or drop into yourself in whatever way feels good to you. Take a few easy breaths, and when you are

ready, set the intention to be curious with fresh eyes, the eyes of your soul. Simply, notice what unfolds from there. You might be surprised that by setting the intention with sincerity how much you automatically begin to become aware of what your body has been practicing and thus your mind too.

## Claim what's Working

You are here to celebrate who you are. You are not a problem to be solved. You are a bearer of the Light! Remind yourself of all that is good, true, and beautiful in you and your life. Take a wide gaze and a narrow one. Don't hold back and avoid overthinking. This exercise can be as long or short as you like. Honor who you are right now. See with those kind eyes of the soul!

## Livelihood & Lifestyle

The body tells me this is working because...

The mind tells me this is working because...

The spirit tells me this is working because...

## Body & Wellness

The body tells me this is working because...

The mind tells me this is working because...

The spirit tells me this is working because...

## Creativity & Learning

The body tells me this is working because...

The mind tells me this is working because...

The spirit tells me this is working because...

## Relationships & Society

The body tells me this is working because...

The mind tells me this is working because...

The spirit tells me this is working because...

## Essence & Spirituality

The body tells me this is working because...

The mind tells me this is working because...

The spirit tells me this is working because...

## Tending the Soil

Return to this week's landing page on the website to reread the Ayurvedic recommendations on how to enhance your digestion of food and life.

Which recommendations stand out to you? Which ones seem to be calling your name? Select one or a few to focus on incorporating this first week of the program. More is not necessarily better.

The aim is to create and maintain a quality of presence, not add one more thing to your "to do" list or another external "should" that you carry around like a burden.

Although change usually means some discomfort, you know your threshold at present. Listen and trust yourself.

Play and practice. Practice and play.

## The Dining Experience

I will feed my body, mind, and spirit by...

## Honoring how You are Made

I will feed my body, mind, and spirit by...

## Stoking for the Flame within You

I will feed my body, mind, and spirit by...

## Soulfood

I will feed my body, mind, and spirit by...