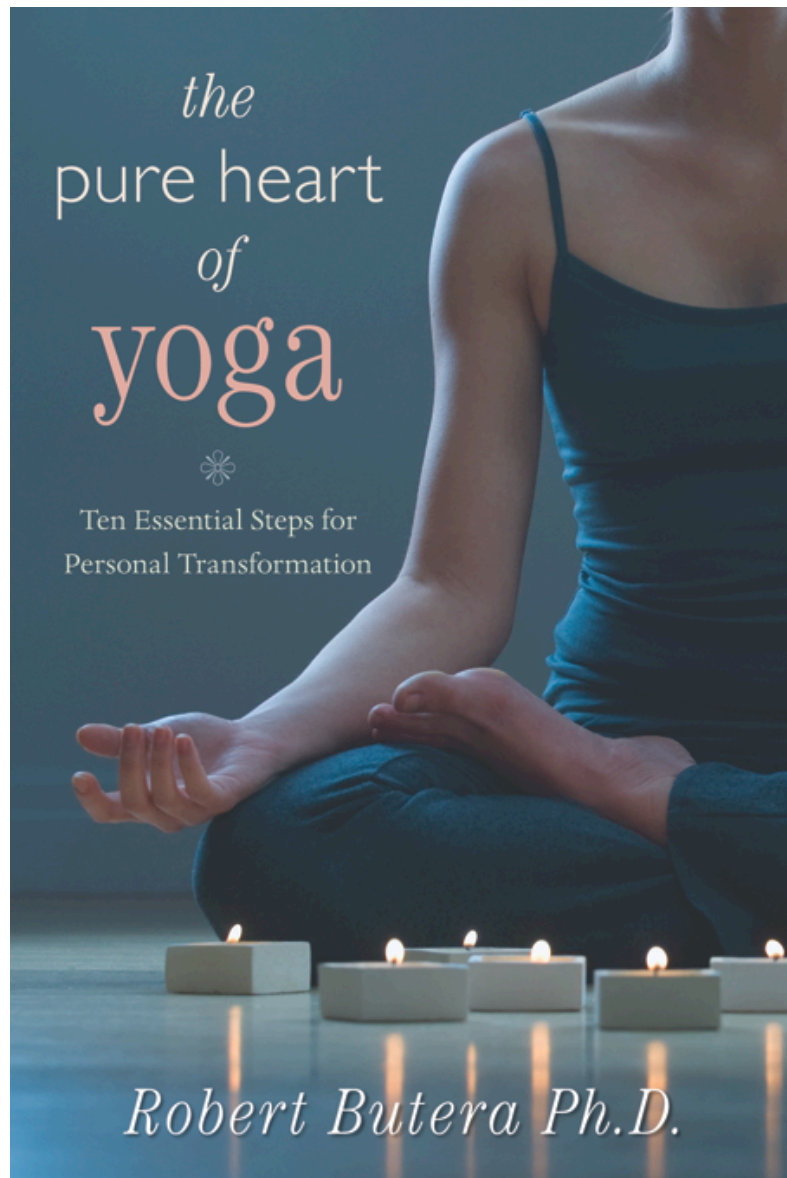


# The Pure Heart of Yoga

A Workbook Companion



Dear Friend in Yoga –

Welcome to the Pure Heart of Yoga workbook companion. This document was created so that you can keep a record of your experiences as you read The Pure Heart of Yoga. As you may have noticed in the book, there are exercises at the end of each chapter to help you apply what you learning in a reflective way. You can use this workbook as a journal that will correlate back to the chapters/pages of the book that you find relevant to your growth and understanding. I encourage you to keep these notes with your book so that you can process your experiences at your own pace, and then keep them with the book once this cycle of your journey is complete. One of the beautiful things about Yoga is that as you grow in the path, the way you understand the teachings will change. When you revisit these concepts later in life, it will be interesting to see where you started from and how your understanding and applications of the yogic teachings have evolved over time. Please keep in touch with us and let me know how your progress is going – sharing your story of transformation may just inspire someone else to do the same thing!

Keep Practicing -

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**Step 1: Setting an Intention** (page 28)

1. Choose an area of your life that you'd like to set an intention, such as health, relationships, work, family, or spirituality.

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2. Within your chosen area of life, create a goal that is important to you. You may immediately identify the goal or it could take more time to figure out exactly what you want it to be. Once you've figured it out, write down your goal in clear terms. Try to be as specific as possible (i.e. I want to lose twenty pounds or I want to volunteer at a women's shelter). You might have many goals at first, but narrow it down to one to start.

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3. Now ask yourself why you want to achieve this goal. Take this answer and ask yourself, once again, why? The first reason you identify will be at a

surface level. The second reason will likely be broader and more spiritual.

You can repeat this process several times if you wish.

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4. If the intention is based on fear or ego, try to go deeper to identify the pure or balanced desire. For example, if the reason you initially identify for losing twenty pounds is so that people find you attractive, search within yourself to find a pure intention for losing the weight (yet be mindful that the intention still feels sincere). You might realize that a more meaningful goal is improving your health. This pure intention would have all sorts of effects, such as feeling stronger and more energetic, which might in turn open up new opportunities in your work and personal relationships. Now that you've identified the positive intention, write it down clearly.

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5. When you next practice yoga poses, focus on that intention. Afterwards, note any interesting insights or thoughts about the experience in your journal.

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6. Finally, write down your intention in bold letter on a bookmark to highlight your place in this book. You can cut out the page below if you like.

**My Intention is**

## Step 1 Intention

Exercises (page 31)

1. After you read the case studies on intentions, in a sentence or two, write down why you are practicing yoga. Even if the reasons seem selfish, be honest and write them down. The more honest you are, the more relevant and revealing your exploration will be. Some common reasons might be, “I heard yoga will help me get the body I always wanted,” “I need to get rid of my stress,” or “I want to be enlightened.”

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2. Now that you have discovered the possible qualities of an intention, how does yours compare to those from the case studies? Take a look at your list of reasons for practicing yoga from Exercise 1 and write down any flaws you see. Perhaps you wanted to fit in with your friends, or maybe you wanted to get in shape. Continue to be honest with yourself, even if you know the “right answers.” Reflect on how these reasons help or hurt you. Consider each reason individually and ask yourself if it’s beneficial for your body, mind, and spirit. You will very likely find that some of the reasons are preventing you from achieving health and vitality. Use the restraints and observances to redirect your intention for doing yoga, deepening your practice and pointing you toward a more fulfilling life.

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3. Look at your list of reasons for doing yoga and identify those that are not aligned with pure intention. Next, take these misaligned reasons and ask yourself what the source of suffering is behind those reasons. For example, if your reason for practicing yoga is that you want to get a date, your source of suffering might be loneliness. Perhaps you've become desperate, anxious, or impatient in your desire to find a partner. Write down the pain that is motivating you to do yoga. Even if you have several improperly aligned reasons for doing yoga, they usually boil down to one or two core sources of suffering. For example, inferiority and a lack of self-confidence, or a feeling of emptiness and not "having enough."

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Now, consider the restraints in relation to your suffering. Which one relates to it the most? In the examples above, inferiority and a lack of self-confidence would

relate to the principle of non-violence, and the feeling of not having enough would relate to non-attachment. Brainstorm positive virtues that represent the opposite of your pain. Write down this virtue; it will be closely related to your intention. Be very subjective with your choice of positive virtue. One person who feels low self-esteem may elect to focus on confidence, while another person will find acceptance powerful. Think deeply about the topic and discover a personal response.

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4. In considering the five observances, which one inspires you the most? Perhaps the principle of contentment encourages you to trust that your yoga practice is exactly where it needs to be, even if you can't contort your body like other students in the class. Or maybe discipline resonates with a need to establish a home yoga practice in addition to going to class. Choose one of the five observances as your intention for practicing yoga, or alternatively, any positive concept that motivates you on a deep level. Take it out for a test drive to see if it resonates in the depths of your soul.

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**Step 2: Attitude**  
Exercises (page 48)

*Note: For this exercise, use the pure intention you chose in Step One.*

1. As you think about your intention, consider again the reasons why you chose that intention. Examine your intention in terms of the four bhavas:

a. How does duty expand your understanding of your intention?

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b. How does knowledge expand your understanding of your intention?

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c. How does non-attachment expand your understanding of your intention?

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d. How does mastery expand your understanding of your intention?

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Which of the attitudes can give you the tools for living out your intention? It may help to review your notes from the exercises in Step One as well as the descriptions of the attitudes in Step Two. Choose the attitude that feels like the best fit for your intention. You can always change your mind, so don't worry too much about it being the "right" choice.

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2. Focus on poses from this attitude category while including other poses for a well-rounded practice. If you've chosen the attitude of non-attachment, focus on relaxation

poses, twists, and inversions. You'll still practice other ones, like strength and balancing poses, to round out your practice. It's a matter of emphasis on your time and effort. As you practice yoga poses, focus on the attitude of each pose and contemplate how this relates to your intention. Practice each pose in a steady and comfortable manner, pay attention to your breath, and let go of tension you are holding in your body. The goal is to center the mind on a spiritual intention and be receptive to the positive feeling of the attitude of the pose. The effort is in being effortless. Allow your thoughts to organize by letting go, similar to the effect of a restful vacation.

#### Outline Your Pose Practice

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**Personal Notes on Attitude**

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**Step 3: Posture**

Exercise (page 73)

1. List the desired time, duration, and place for your yoga practice. Remember to consider your lifestyle and be reasonable about what you can truly do.

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2. List ways in which you can help yourself stay committed like practicing with a friend or joining a weekly yoga class. Perhaps you can treat yourself to a smoothie at a café after class or purchase an eco-mat with an artistic design that inspires you to practice. Think creatively about how you can stay focused on your practice. And have fun!

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3. If you are a beginner student, find a local yoga class to attend. If this is not a possibility, use an instructional video to aid your practice. If you are in a class, ask your instructor to give you feedback on your physical alignment. Most

teachers give feedback to their students as part of the instruction, but always speak up for individualized attention. Regardless of your level of experience, invigorate your life with the support of your local yoga community. If one doesn't exist in your area, create it yourself!

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**Personal Notes on Posture**

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**Step Four: Breathing**  
Exercises (page 94)

1. Are you able to breathe into the three areas of your lungs: diaphragm (belly), intercostals (lateral expansion of rib cage), and clavicle (upper chest area)? If not, where do you feel constricted? Can you try to relax these areas? Is your breath erratic, or slow and steady? Try to relax your body and breathe with as much ease as possible. If your breath feels constricted, erratic, or shallow, try breathing in another position. If you're sitting with a straight back and feeling uncomfortable, try standing up or lying down in order to adjust your breathing pattern. Then, return to the seated position. If this continues to be difficult, consult a yoga teacher or a health professional.

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2. Do you remember to pay attention to your breathing in every yoga pose? Usually, when you're struggling the most in a pose, you're not fully breathing. Try to remember this as you practice and consistently ask yourself, "Am I breathing?" Come into and out of the pose on the inhale and exhale, depending on what is appropriate. Most importantly, breathe slowly and be aware of how you're feeling as you practice the poses.

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3. Do you maintain awareness of breathing throughout the day? What do you notice about your breathing patterns? Experiment with the breathing exercises described in this chapter. Is there one that feels particularly relaxing? Zero in on one or two exercises that you practice off and on through your day. For example, you may find that breath retention helps you unwind through increased oxygen absorption.

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4. Once the breathing exercise becomes easy and comfortable to practice, remember to apply your personal intention from Step One. What do you notice as a result of applying intention to the breath?



**Step 5: Archetypes**  
Exercises (page 149)

1. Discover Your Chakras: To identify one of your chakras, take a moment to close your eyes and imagine a loved one. Focus on someone whom you love easily and unconditionally, like a child, spouse, or pet. Spend a few moments cultivating your love and notice where you feel it in your body. Most people will feel a sense of warmth in the heart area. This is the heart chakra or energy center. Conversely, the memory of a romantic break-up or a difficult family relationship conjures up sensations of heaviness or pain in the heart. Butterflies in the stomach from public speaking is a common sensation related to the third chakra. This chakra is where gut feelings or intuition start, often in situations where we have to rely on senses other than our intellect to make a decision. Also related to intuition or insight is the sixth chakra, also known as the third eye. A physical headache or pressure is a typical sixth chakra response.

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2. The Chakras in Practice: Review the information provided on each chakra. Now consider the descriptions for both the balanced and unbalanced state of each chakra. Try to pinpoint the chakras in your body that are healthy and vital and those that are

unbalanced. If you find that the description for the chakra's unbalanced state matches issues you are dealing with, it's likely that it needs attention. Experiment with the suggested yoga poses to balance the affected chakras. As you practice, be sensitive and aware of how the poses affect you. Remember that the goal is not to develop an abundance of energy in any one area, but rather to create balance throughout the body. Focus on clear, calm, steady energy flowing through the chakra system. Use the space below to make notes based on your experience.

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#### Second Chakra

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#### Third Chakra

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Fourth Chakra

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Fifth Chakra

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Sixth Chakra

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Seventh Chakra

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**Step 7: Concentration**  
Exercise (page 155)

1. Choose one sensory stimulus that disturbs your yoga practice.

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2. Notice the characteristics of this stimulus in terms of intensity, quality and frequency.

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3. Notice the feeling or emotional reaction this disturbance evokes in you.

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4. Try to understand the roots of the feeling. If the sound annoys you, try to understand why it annoys you.

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5. Accept that the stimulus could be interpreted in a different way.

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6. Move the pre-conceived notion from a negative association to a positive. What you can focus on about the stimulus that is funny, interesting, beautiful or inspiring?

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7. Release the negative association, hear the sound for what it is, and then continue to listen or choose to ignore the stimulus. When you accomplish this last step, you will have realized freedom from sensory distraction.

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**Step 9: Psychological Blocks**

Exercises (page 216)

1. Review your week, pick a klesa, and reflect on how it affected you. For example, on Monday, did ignorance disturb your day? On Tuesday, did your ego interfere with any decisions you may have made?

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2. Which yoga poses do you “like”? Why?

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3. Which yoga poses do you “dislike”? Why?

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4. How do you find equanimity in your yoga poses?

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5. Do your “likes” and “dislikes” change? If so, why?

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6. Do you compare yourself to others in yoga class? If so, why?

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7. Are you upset if there is a substitute teacher for your yoga class? If so, why?

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8. Are you upset if someone's mat is in "your" spot when you get to class? If so, why?

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9. When you are in yoga class and the teacher plays music, does it affect your practice? If so, how?

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10. Are you truly practicing selfless service if you seek praise for your work?

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11. Think about the qualities of active, inactive, and pure. Are you free of the hindrances of the mind? How are you working toward a balanced lifestyle?

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12. Has there been a period of your life that seemed to be dominated by a particular klesa? Spend some time journaling about what was going on in your life, how you felt, and what you learned.

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*Reflect on all of your answers. Can you see how each response is rooted in ignorance?*

**Personal Notes on Psychological Blocks**

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**Step 10 : Emotional Transformation**

Exercise (page 236)

*As an exercise to learn more about your own patterns, consider these questions:*

1. What do you worry about?

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2. If you probe deeper, what is the underlying fear?

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3. Can you determine which klesa you are afflicted with?

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4. Can you discover an opposite emotional response? As with any emotion, practice acceptance and listen for its message. Practice small acts of faith. Pray when you start to worry.

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*Practice faith during your yoga practice. The poses have been practiced by countless yogis for thousands of years, so let their ancient wisdom transform your life. Have faith in the process and reverence for those who have gone before you on the path. Practice yoga poses with a positive intention in your mind.*

