

Nonpossessiveness or Unattachment is a spiritual discipline present in most sacred texts. Unattachment is the fifth of the Yoga Yamas: Unattachment or non-greed, “when confirmed, a thorough illumination of the how and why of one’s birth comes”. In the yogic tradition, the mind becomes calm and clear by being free of desires and obligations. Then we are able to see how our desires caused our present “birth” or present state of being. When we practice being free...we experience greater expansiveness and freedom. Unattachment invites us to enjoy life to the fullest and yet always be able to drop everything and run into the waiting arms of the Divine. Unattachment can also be interpreted as nongreed, nonclinging, nongrasping, and noncoveting. We can simply think of it as being able to “let go”.

{Catching Monkeys Metaphor} – monkeys are caught in India simply by putting a banana in a cage with a narrow slit. The monkey’s hand easily fits through the slit...unless grasping a banana. Even in the face of being captured, a monkey will not let go of his banana. His “clinging” leads to suffering.

In the Christian tradition, Jesus challenges his followers by saying “whoever does not hate his father and mother cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters cannot become a disciple to me. A powerful challenge of unattachment. I don’t think Jesus intend “hate” to be used in the way we understand it...but instead, I hear a message of unattachment being taught with one of our strongest “attachments” that we know...our family. I integrate this message when I remember that all my family is a gift and reflection of Creation. That I don’t control or own any of it.

Buddhism also includes non-greed and unattachment in its formal teaching.

We can set an intention to grow spiritually in temperance when we stretch our spiritual muscles of Trust, Generosity, and Freedom.

Spiritual muscles:

Trust

The more breath we let go of, the more room there is in our body for the fullness of the next inhalation.

Spiritual muscle: Trust

Poses: Breath Awareness, Spinal Balance, Thread the needle, supported lunge with Creation Breath arms.

Affirmation: I draw in my life’s experience like the breath – feeling nourished and satisfied – and then I let them go, without clinging – like my exhale – to make space for the next precious moment.

Generosity

Practicing constant generosity and unfailing trust will keep our greed in check and keep us open to life’s unfolding

Spiritual Muscle: Generosity

Poses: Creation Breath arms in supported lunge. Radiant Star, moon god, lunge, pyramid, halfmoon – repeat other side. Star, straddle fold with twists,

Affirmations: By practicing good self-care, I trust the endless source of energy from which my generosity flows.

Freedom

Non-attachment does not mean that we don’t care or that we somehow shut ourselves off from the pleasures and joy of life and each other. In fact, nonattachment frees us up to be immersed in appreciation of life and one another. We are asked to let go of the “clinging” – not the enjoyment of the thing itself.

{Trapeze artist – a moment of suspension in mid-air} Imagery – swinging on a swing as a child. Feel the fun, excitement, and thrill of soaring. Carry that into our practice.

Spiritual Muscle: Freedom

Poses: Mountain, flying bird. Balancing mountain, flying bird, warrior three. Mountain, flying bird, warrior 1, 2, triangle, complete sun salutation from lunge.

Affirmation: I tap into my inner and outer strengths to help me recognize unhealthy attachments and boldly practice letting go.

For fun: introduce Dolphin pose and work into Tripod/Headstand