

Learn This Potent Practice To Stop Giving Your Power Away (Sankalpa)

BY SONYA GENEL

I have heard many interpretations of the Sanskrit word Sankalpa. It roughly translates to “will, purpose, or determination” but I believe it can best be understood as an affirmation of intention.

In the practice of yoga, working with a clear and honest Sankalpa consistently over time is incredibly powerful and often utterly transformative.

For me, yoga has always been so much more than just exercise. By weaving in a Sankalpa, I sense that each pose is both a dedication and a reflection of the intention in my heart.

The physicality of this translation from mental words into embodied actions generates great power. The experience is profound. In doing asana, I am making prayerful art with my body.

How to work with a Sankalpa

An effective Sankalpa will be short, to the point, and stated in the present tense. For example:

“I am patient”

“I release fear of the future and forgive the past”

“I am open to receive what I need”

“I am an open channel”

“Creativity flows through me”

“I am powerful, precise, and effective in my actions”

You do not need to share your Sankalpa with anybody else, nor should you. It is for you. Keep it to yourself like a sacred magic spell. Other people's reactions and opinions may confuse you and dilute the potency of your Sankalpa. Do not give your power away.

Before you start your hatha yoga practice, sit for a brief centering meditation.

Observe your breath as it moves steadily in and out through the nose.

Take complete yogic breaths. Draw the breath slowly all the way in using the belly, the ribs, and finally the chest to complete the inhalation. Exhale gently and completely in the reverse way.

Soften the muscles of the jaw and eyebrows.

Allow your mind and energy to settle and slow down with the breath.

Bring your palms together in front of the heart.

Draw the thumb knuckles to the sternum.

Clarify and state your intention silently in your mind three

times.

At this point, you may chant 'Om' three times. This is optional.

Begin your usual practice of yoga asana.

Throughout your yoga practice, find opportunities to re-call and recommit to your intention. Use it to center, inspire, and encourage yourself at moments of frustration or difficulty.

I find that resting poses or transitional poses (such as child's pose, tadasana, or sitting seiza style) are a great place to pause for a few moments and again silently state your Sankalpa to yourself.

Finally, be sure to state your Sankalpa silently one last time before releasing the body and mind into the surrender of savasana.

Affirmations are often used in many systems of health care, spirituality, personal growth, and even business planning. Now try weaving it into your yoga practice. I guarantee you will like the results!

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [Awakening Shakti: The Transformative Power of the Goddesses of Yoga](#) .

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