

SANKALPA

a practice to create
the life your heart
desires



Hi there!

I'm so excited you are joining us for this guided journey through the mind and into the heart of what you need, want and are meant to create in life.

In this book you'll learn the background on SANKALPA, what it is and how to use it in your life. Because building sankalpa is not a vanity process, but rather an uncovering of the true needs and desires in your heart, we'll be taking you through a process of introspection. This is purposeful so that we can help you craft a sankalpa that speaks to the essence of your being and your calling. You'll also get ideas on how to use your Sankalpa and why using it is so important to your ability to cultivate the life you are longing for.

After 20 years of teaching yoga and working with students on the mat, I know that what is often most needed is not more asana. The physical practice, for me, is a lifelong practice I will always love (and use). But what I need most in life is authenticity, honesty, and purpose. We created this book because we see those same needs in so many of our students. And believe it or not, the larger system of yoga has tools that will take you there - right into the heart of the matter. Our work with sankalpa is one such tool and we are excited to share this ancient practice in a modern way.

This guide comes from experience. I found yoga in my early 20's at a pivotal time. I grew up in a rough neighborhood under rough conditions but I knew if I worked hard enough I could create a different life for myself. Yoga gave me back my power and propelled me on a journey that is still unfolding. Now, 20 years later I own two yoga studios and have taught thousands of students. But my true love is working day-to-day in the community (of Atlanta) that I call home. I'm joined in this guide by Malerie Golgan and Stefanie Boettle - two amazing teachers here in Atlanta, Georgia. Together we are excited to bring the practice of Sankalpa into your life in an empowered way.

You are here because you are looking for more or at a nature "pivot" point in your life. Get ready to explore the inner workings of your heart and uncover what is truly missing. Doing this work is a big "yes" to the next phase of your life and even if you don't yet see the path ~ you've taken the first step. We'll walk this path together - as we create a "seed" to cultivate the next phase in your life.

We can't wait to dive into this with you!

Annelise

Annelise Leal, Owner of {sacred} thread yoga in Atlanta, GA

WELCOME TO THE MAGIC OF SANKALPA.

In this section we'll

- Define Sankalpa
- Identify how it differs from an affirmation
- Create a link between your yoga practice & uncovering your true Sankalpa

The first step on this journey is to understand, "What exactly is a Sankalpa?"

A Sankalpa is very similar to an affirmation and, in fact, it is often used as one. Some might describe it as a short statement that is created especially for you and used to ingrain a thought into your subconscious mind. If you've worked with Sankalpa before and ended with something like "I am peaceful and kind," that is ok. But it's also just scratching the surface.

While Sankalpa is similar to an affirmation - it has much more depth and potential. Let's look at what the sanskrit tells us...

san

A connection with the Highest Truth

kalpa

Vow, A Resolve; or, "the rule above all other rules"

I once heard someone say a Sankalpa practice starts from the radical premise that you already are who you need to be to fulfill your life's purpose. And this is the precise difference between creating a Sankalpa and writing a pretty affirmation - there is a foundation of authenticity, honesty, truth.

A Sankalpa comes in two forms:

(1) A statement that reflects your true nature

(2) A goal, objective or deep calling

But we want to be sure this isn't coming from our intellectual mind or ego. We want to access a deeper, almost mysterious place within - a place in yoga we call the "wisdom body" or vijnanamaya kosha. This is a place of deep knowing and authenticity.

Because **an empowered Sankalpa arises from this space, it makes it much different than an affirmation** ("I am peaceful and kind") or a New Year's resolution ("I will learn spanish this year").

So a Sankalpa is an affirmation but it's one that rises for wisdom and not intellect. It's one that recognizes we already are who we need to be in order to fulfil our life's purpose.

What is the link between our yoga practice & our practice of Sankalpa?

Do you remember what brought you to a yoga or mindfulness practice? The first time I took a 90-minute, sweaty, power yoga class I felt like someone had turned my heart inside-out (in the best way). I was soaring... Do you remember the first time you felt something shift after a great class or a really focused meditation? I still feel these shifts after twenty years of practice but they are not always as noticeable or frequent.

The truth is, **there is something magical happening every time we practice yoga - but we don't always notice it.** What we are going to share with you, the process of creating an empowered Sankalpa, is one tool to wake up your practice and ensure every time you're on your mat you use the magic of your practice to guide your path.

Your practice will help strip away the ego and the recursive, repetitive thoughts that keep us in status quo even when we are unhappy or unsatisfied - **essentially it will help uncover your Sankalpa.** Your practice, however, will also be one way to cement your Sankalpa...

WHAT IS OUR “WINNING” FORMULA FOR CREATING A SANKALPA?

There are three critical components to creating a Sankalpa that is aligned to both your true essence and your purpose on this earth. Without hitting all three we sometimes end with a sankalpa that satisfies our ego ("I am beautiful, rich, and successful") but doesn't hold deeper power.

To create an empowered Sankalpa you must:

(1) **Listen.** In order to create a powerful sankalpa you want to uncover your heart's true desires and your emotional needs. That might sound like a lot of soul-searching work but it's not. There are clues all around us. In order to pick up on them we must be willing to hear the message of the heartfelt desire, we must turn inward and welcome the messenger in, and we must be willing to do what is required of us.

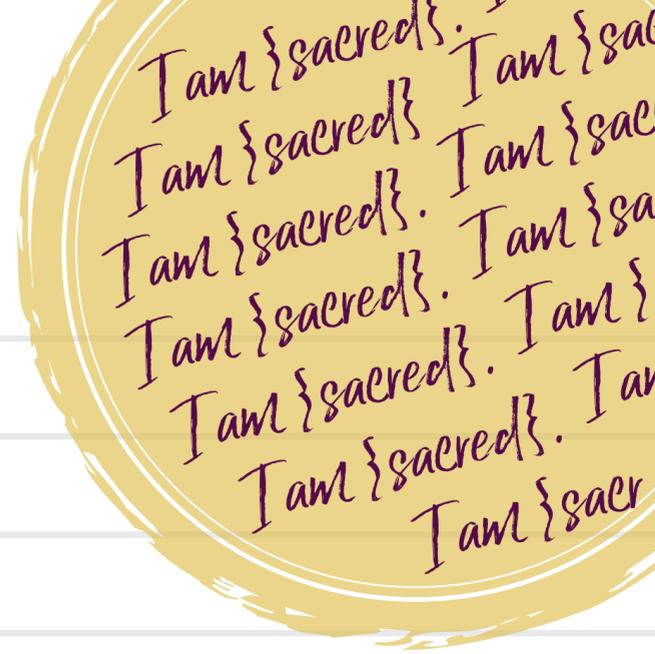
(2) **Create a statement that addresses your needs & desires as well as the obstacles in front of you (or within you).** This is an important part of showing our willingness to do what is required of us. As you craft this statement, be sure to make it “present tense” to activate the power of manifestation.

(3) **Call in the idea of “ease”.** Finding the path to your “dharma” need not be a struggle. Before you lock down your sankalpa:

- Take a moment and close your eyes.
- Visualize yourself living the life you are speaking of.
- Visualize how you move, your body language and facial expressions, your energy. Imagine yourself moving this way with a sense of great ease - as if the Universe is supporting you in your work.
- Now - - take a look back at your Sankalpa. Is there a way to include in your statement this element of ease and support?
- How can you verbally articulate the support the world will have for you as you move on your path?

We have developed a series of journal prompts to help guide you thru this. As you move thru these prompts try not to get into your head. Write what comes to mind and we'll continue to drill down until we find the root of your desires. It's a simple process and only take a few minutes of time to tap into your truth & authenticity.

The Art of Creating with Ease.



What do I truly want and crave?

What is underneath that longing? What would I be solving or satisfying within me by achieving this?

Now, check in on above...

This question is one of the most important because it helps unravel what is quietly at play in the background. The first thing that comes to mind might not be what you really desire but a stepping stone leading you on the path of your heart's longing. For example if you reflect on this and first think "I want to lose weight", dig deeper. Why? What would that do for you? The answer to that question for me would be a craving of wanting to be accepted the way I am. Or perhaps you might long to be healthier, to have a longer life to spend quality time with your loved ones. There could be a hundred answers, but what is important is that you dig deep to find the one. Listen to your intuition...and make any adjustments - write what comes up when you drill down.

What I want to is...

When I achieve this how will I feel?

Is this how you want to truly feel? If not, go back to the start and rethink what you really want...

Am I willing to take the action required to move my life in this direction? What is holding me back?

What is the tiniest baby step required to move in that direction?

THE ART OF CREATING WITH EASE.

Now it's time to get quiet and sit with your journal and your heart. Now it's time to take what you already know in your heart and form your unique sankalpa. Writing a sankalpa is simple but be mindful of the words you choose and how they feel in your ears & your heart.

What is it that you truly want and need? Craft a Sankalpa activating this in present tense as if it's already happening.

(Part One - Needs & Desires)

Now, Address ease... what can you add to qualify your sankalpa so that it acknowledges "ease" and "flow" and brings the support of your community as well as God or Universe?

(Part Two - Ease)



this is my empowered sankalpa



HOW TO USE SANKALPA - A FEW RITUALS OF SANKALPA

Once you've found your Sankalpa, make sure it is a short, precise, positive sentence in present tense. The practice of Sankalpa is like planting a seed. After the seed is carefully chosen (finding your Sankalpa) and the soil is prepared (the body relaxed), the seed is put into the soil. The seed needs to be watered and tended to regularly (the Sankalpa needs to be remembered and repeated regularly). When you regularly tend to the seed, the seed grows on its own. We don't need to control it or push it. We trust it to grow by itself as we water it regularly. The seed grows best if the soil is loose enough for the water to actually sink in. This means it is important that our bodies are at ease and relaxed. The more relaxed our state is when we remember and repeat the Sankalpa, the better our seed is watered and nurtured.

Here are a few rituals of how you can use your Sankalpa:

Savasana Sankalpa: Once you find a fully released and comfortable position for your Savasana – your final pose of your Yoga practice, place one or both palms onto your heart and take 2 full deep breaths. Then silently repeat your Sankalpa in your mind 3 times. Take 2 more deep breaths. Then let it go. Release your hands to the ground and let yourself fall fully into your Savasana. Trust your seed to grow on its own.

- Before practice:
 - Arrive a few minutes early on your mat before you begin your Yoga practice.
 - Find a relaxed position either lying on your back or sitting. Place one or both palms on your heart if you like.
 - Close your eyes gently, take 2 full deep breaths, and silently repeat your Sankalpa 3 times.
 - Take 2 more full deep breaths before releasing the Sankalpa and your hands. Open your eyes again to begin your practice.
 - Allow your active Yoga practice to naturally move you towards your set intention of your Sankalpa.
- Night Sankalpa:
 - When you go to bed at night, lie down and find a restful position.
 - Put both palms on your heart, take 2 full, deep breaths & silently repeat your Sankalpa 3 times.
 - Take 2 more full, deep breaths. Let your hands go, let your Sankalpa go.
 - And allow your Sankalpa to guide your time of rest.
- Morning Sankalpa:
 - The first moment you awaken in the morning, while still in bed and before fully opening your eyes, take a moment and place one or both palms on your heart.
 - Take 2 deep breaths. Repeat your Sankalpa silently 3 times and again out loud 3 times.
 - Take 2 more deep breaths. Feel the energy of your Sankalpa. Find a soft inner smile, then get up and begin your day.

In addition to those rituals, you can repeat your Sankalpa at any time you like. This can serve you as a wonderful anchor when you are feeling stressed, when you are feeling down or upset.

Your Sankalpa really works like a compass that guides your daily actions towards the manifestation of your true essence. When we find our actions to be contrary to our Sankalpa, it offers us the opportunity to pause, to reflect and re-direct our actions.

When we were developing this guide, Stefanie came across a quote from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that says, "You are what your deep, driving desire is. As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny." This is the foundation of Sankalpa.

NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT YOUR SANKALPA TO ACTION.

When I truly landed on an empowered Sankalpa I began to use it weekly. I had been practicing yoga nidra for some time but never really understood how to uncover my soul's desire or arrange a sankalpa that communicated ease in achieving these things. Once I was taught this art - life truly began to click for me. A year later the way my life looked was totally different, and while I still work hard (there is no magic pill) and move through the highs and lows of life - I am doing it with much more joy and contentment.

We hope by sharing this wisdom you are able to lay the same groundwork in your life! Remember that Sankalpa is an ancient practice and it is amplified by the energy of everyone who has used it before you. **Your next step is to commit to putting this to use. Every time you repeat your Sankalpa it grows stronger.** And from my personal experience, the days I almost bail on my ritual are the days that it seems to hold the most energy for change.

I'd love to continue to support you on this path. I refine my personal Sankalpa every few months so if you want motivation or a partner to walk this path with, connect with me on instagram at [@thevidayoga](https://www.instagram.com/thevidayoga).

The key to teaching yoga, for each of us, is to remind an eternal student. If you'd like to continue exploring Sankalpa or learn about other tools that could become part of your yoga practice - join us at www.sacredathome.com. On top of Livestream classes you'll find tutorials and resources to expand your practice.

We'd love to hear your progress & support you on your path.

Annelise, Malerie, and Stefanie



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