



## **Philosophy of Anusara Yoga®**

The vision of Anusara is grounded in a Tantric philosophy of intrinsic Goodness. In this philosophy we take the premise that everything in this world is an embodiment of Supreme Consciousness, which at its essence pulsates with Goodness and the highest Bliss. All of creation is Divinely danced into existence for the simple delight and the play of embodying the Supreme's own blissful nature.

The highest intention of practicing Anusara Yoga is to align with the Divine. As we deepen our alignment with the Supreme, we step deeper into the flow of Grace. It is through the revelatory power of Grace that we awaken to the truth that this Divine flow is our essential nature. This higher knowledge naturally fuels our deepest desire to lovingly serve the creative flow of life through each breath and posture in our yoga practice. On our yoga mat we artistically offer our individual light and our unique music with the heartfelt prayer of adding more beauty, love, and goodness to the world.

The art of Anusara Yoga is a co-participation with the Supreme — not a practice of domination, subjugation, or control of Nature. The poses in Anusara Yoga are considered to be "heart-oriented," meaning that they are expressed from the "inside out." Instead of trying to control the body and mind from the outside, the poses originate from a deep creative and devotional feeling inside. On our mat, we endeavor to always remember the spiritual purpose or highest intention of practicing hatha yoga, which includes reconnecting with our innate goodness and expressing ourselves from that Divine place.

Anusara encompasses a vision of totality in which every part of each person is seen as equally Divine. It is through the limitations of the body/mind that we discover that our true nature is boundless. The body and mind are various limited forms of Divine embodiment through which we may experience the ecstasy of recognizing and glorifying the unbounded One in the world of the many. The physical body is a magnificent manifestation of Spirit, not simply an inferior material vessel. Similarly, our thoughts, desires, passions and emotions are not obstacles to spiritual awakening which need to be squelched or eliminated, but instead they are God-given means of glorifying and expanding our experience of the Supreme. Ultimately, the body/mind is a Divine gift to help us discover our glory, our greatness, and our worthiness to experience the highest sense of freedom. Embodiment is not some sort of karmic punishment, nor something we need to transcend. Moreover, although this material body/mind is ever-changing, it is not an illusion, nor a mistake of one's perception. In Anusara we enthusiastically seek to develop and refine all parts of ourselves: body; mind, including our reasoning and intuitive capacities; and our emotions, including the deepest virtues of our heart.

Anusara is flowing with Grace by saying "yes" to the whole magical spectrum of life. It is a willingness to be aware of all parts of ourselves-the light and the dark, the full rainbow of sensation, perception, emotion, and thought. Saying yes to life means to openly sense and know each moment fully without prejudging it. We simply open our hearts with love to the present moment without clinging or pushing. Then from this spacious place of perception we discern whether something is life-enhancing or not. Whatever we encounter, whether it is auspicious or malicious, good or bad, uplifting or disheartening, we respond in ways that are more life-affirming. To be in the flow is to feel the moment fully and then to choose to act in ways that celebrate the essence of life, Spirit, and our hearts.

Life is Good. Indeed, Goodness is the absolute nature of the universe. There is no intrinsic or absolute evil in the universe. However, because we are born free to choose our own experience, human beings are capable of mistakes and deliberate malevolence-moving out of alignment with the Divine in a way that creates suffering and harm. Although nothing has a malevolent or evil essence at its absolute nature, goodness takes on a relative state in the world of manifestation. In other words, not everything in the material world is as good as everything else, yet within the absolute, nothing has a bad essence. So through our Anusara Yoga practice we cultivate an ability to clearly discriminate between what is life-enhancing and what is not. When then use our power of discrimination and judgment to align with the Good in order to reduce suffering, diminish ugliness, dissolve hatred, and conversely to exult in the splendor of life and our inherent auspiciousness.

Spiritual awakening is the ever-expanding process of recognizing that our true nature is perfect, full, and lacking nothing. Spiritual freedom or enlightenment is not a fixed state of being. Rather it is an ever-evolving process of unfolding our effulgence, goodness, balance, and perfection. Progress on the path of awakening is reflected in an increase in one's spiritual centeredness; wisdom; trust in the Divine's play; capacity to lovingly honor the Divine in each other; and ability to celebrate the Divine grandeur in life. Put simply, Anusara practitioners, when they are embodying the Anusara teachings, naturally become nicer and more considerate. They develop a greater sensitivity and a heightened compassion toward everyone and everything around them. Further signs of progress on the path include a deepening of an inner strength and steadfastness. Anusara students become more appreciative and passionate participants in Life as they practice this life-affirming philosophy on and off the mat.

The Anusara community (kula) is inclusive, life-affirming, and evolving. Individuality and creative self-expression, which glorify the greatness of the kula, are encouraged and celebrated. Anusara welcomes all forms of cultural and ethnic diversity. Furthermore, Anusara encourages a wide variety of spiritual and religious self-expressions, which are heart-centered and foster love and happiness. We acknowledge, respect, and invite a diversity of experience both within our own community and among those outside the community who are seeking to align with the Divine. Our experience of diversity and difference is an affirmation of the Divine's own experience of inclusiveness, non-prejudice, and celebration of plurality. We lead by the example of our own lives, while respecting others' choices to express their own views and values. With deep respect we warmly invite everyone to join the grand celebration of Life through Anusara Yoga.