

Caring for the Self and the Koshas

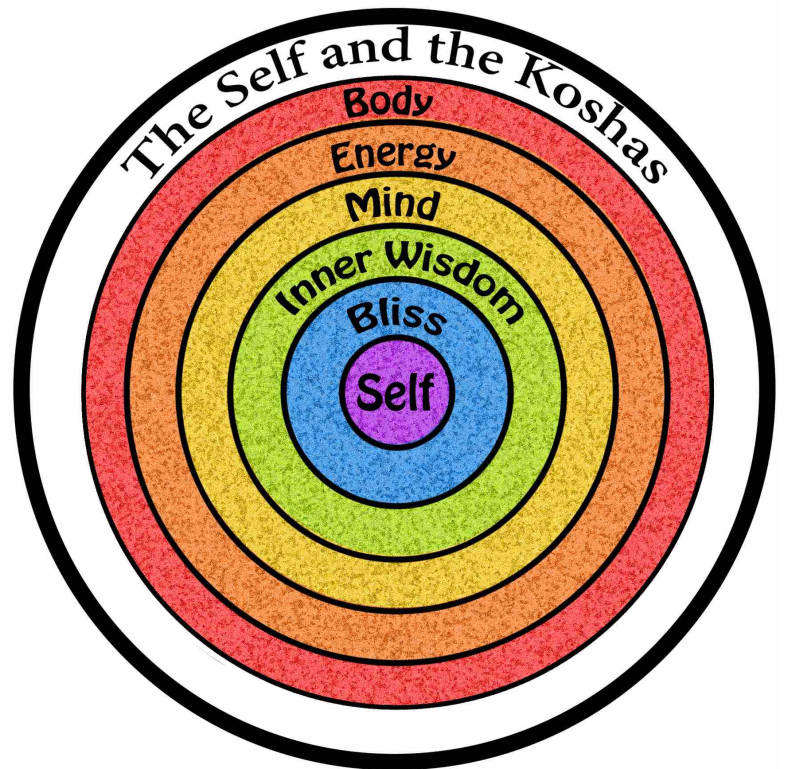
Lesson 2 – Caring for the Body

For Adults - The body is the most external of all the coverings of the Self, of all the koshas. It is the most readily observed with the senses of taste, smell, feel, hear and see. Generally, when we think of taking care of ourselves, we think of taking care of the body. In yogic philosophy, “we” are not the body, but the body is what gives us form. It is our interface with the rest of the world. The material world is encased in this covering. Anything and everything we do to care for the material world is something we are doing to care for the body.

Roy Eugene Davis in his book *Mystic Reflections*, wrote in this poem about our ability to know our true Self.

*Behind the screen of the mind
I imperfectly perceived the real-ness
Of what I am as other than the
Physical body, mind, or characteristics
Of Personality.*

*In deep, thought-free meditation
The unveiled, no longer obscured,
Pure radiance of my essence of
Being, brilliantly Self-shining,
Fully illumined my mind,
Clarified my consciousness,
And revealed the Truth.*



When we care for our bodies, it is easier for us to know who we are and express That into the world.

For Families - Discussion – Caring for the Body Covering

Ask & Say:

- Last lesson we asked some big questions, like, “Who are we? Are we our bodies? our minds? our inner wisdom? or inner joy? (What do you think the answer is? All of these and more! We are the Self!)
- We also discussed the Yogic model of who we are, which includes the Self as our true Self, and the Koshas, or the Covering of the Self. (Review concentric circle diagram.)

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- Another way to think of the koshas is like a series of lamp shades covering our inner light.

Watch the *Intro to the Koshas clip* video.

(Craft instructions found at “[Experience the Radiance of the Soul](#)”)

- Each layer of yarn represents one of the coverings of the Self. If the yarn is too thick and dark, the light can't shine through it.
- The light from the bulb represents our true Self, our inner light.
- And the electricity represents God, the Source of our life!
- As we care for each of the parts of our Self, the whole of us is healthier and happier, and we are able to experience and express our Self into the world in whatever way is ours to do.
- Today, let's discover some ways to take care of our body.



Experiment – Connecting with our bodies - Body Tensing for Relaxations and Strengthening

Mind/Body connection - This exercise is based on Yogananda's Energization exercises. It is abbreviated for our class. You can modify based on your kids. Younger kids can tense the whole leg at once, teens should be able to do the separate sections.

Have children lay down, away from each other so that this can be their own time. Legs are slightly apart and relaxed, arms are slightly away from the body (corpse pose, savasana).

Say: We are going to practice tightening the muscles in one part of our body, while relaxing the other parts. We won't be able to do it perfectly, but we can try, and imagine that we are actually doing this. (As we do this over and over again, we will train our bodies to be actually be able to do it!) We will imagine that we are sending energy into that specific part of the body that we are tensing. Let's begin!

- Focus on your left foot. Scrunch up your left foot without moving other part of the body. Hold for 2 seconds, sending energy into the left foot and then release.
- Focus on your right foot. Tighten up your right foot without moving other part of the body. Hold for 2 seconds, sending energy into the left foot and then release.
- “ left leg below the knee “
- “ Right leg below the knee “
- “ Left leg above the knee “
- “ Right leg above the knee “
- “ Left hip “
- “ Right hip “
- “ Lower abdomen below the belly “

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- “ Upper chest area above the belly “
- “ Left lower arm, below the elbow “
- “ Right lower arm, below the elbow “
- “ Left shoulder and upper arm “
- “ Right shoulder and upper arm “
- “ Front of the neck “
- “ Back of the neck “
- “ Face and skull “
- Now we are going to tense a group of muscles and hold it until all our muscles are tensed. Then we will release them all together!
- Tense...left foot...right foot, left leg below the knee, ...right leg below the knee...left leg above the knee...right leg above the knee...left upper leg...right upper leg...let hip...right hip...lower abdomen...upper chest...left lower arm...right lower arm...left upper arm and shoulder...right upper arm and shoulder...front of the neck...back of the neck...face and skull.
- Hold, hold, hold,
- And release!

Rest here for a short while, then sit up and ask the kids to fill in the blanks to this sentence:

- “I feel _____ when I practice tensing and relaxing.”
- “ _____ would be a good time to practice tensing and relaxing.”

Folder Activity Pages

- There are many pages here. You will want to work on these pages for many days, if not weeks, discovering more about yourself and your body, and sharing with your family.
- Before you begin working on the pages, brainstorm ways that your family keeps your bodies healthy, and add to these pages!

Stories – Watch the 2 story videos:

- *Thank You Body, Thank You Heart* by Jennifer Cohen Harper
- *No Ordinary Apple* by Sara Marlowe. After watching this video, try eating an apple (or other food item) using all of your senses (see page 5)

Teens Quote - Gita Quote and Easwaran’s Commentary on it

<https://www.bmcm.org/inspiration/thought-day/the-body-is-mortal-but-the-person-dwelli/>

Read and discuss. How is our body, our buddy? What ways do you take care of your “buddy”.

Life Application - Daily see if you can tense and relax all the different parts of your body, sending energy to each part! What ways are you taking care of your body today?

Next week we will share ways to take care of our energy. Hint – We can change our energy by purposefully changing our breath!