



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

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Yoga & Spirituality #7

The Power of Manifesting

By Swami Nirmalananda & Vidyadevi Stillman

You have the power of manifestation. Of course you do, for you are Shiva! Unfortunately, if you are not yet Self-Realized, you have only limited use of Shiva's five powers: creation, maintenance, destruction, concealment and revelation. Manifesting is the power to create. Everyone will tell you that you begin with an intention, in order to manifest what you really want.

Life is about accomplishing things. Yoga explains this as part of life's four goals:

Dharma — fulfilling your responsibilities, doing good in the world

Artha — creating and managing wealth

Kama — enjoying pleasures

Moksha — freedom, Self-Realization.

Everyone is doing these, especially the first three: making the world better by volunteering for a local charity, going to school to get a degree, working their way up in the world, or planning their retirement. Whether you are working on attaining your goals through physical means, or through metaphysical or energetic means, you are trying to accomplish certain things so you create a full and happy life.

To get even better at manifesting, you must take action. Setting an intention is not enough. For example, to lose weight, you begin with an intention, "I am going to lose weight." If you don't follow up with specific actions, including changing the way you eat, exercising and even weighing yourself regularly, after a few weeks you might wonder why your waistband is still tight. You actually have to follow through! You cannot move the world with your intention. Ideally your intentions lead you to setting goals, making plans and maybe even figuring out your timeline.

While this is all very good, as a yogi you must look at why you are doing what you are doing. Working with your motivations is what turns ordinary action into yoga. To make it personal, simply look at your to-do list for today. Review the top 3 things you intend to accomplish today or have already completed. What made you pick each of these things to accomplish? Take a moment to delve into your motives.

Over 1,600,000 people ran in marathons last year, most operated by charities as fundraisers. In social media, the runners share their reasons for running: to get fit, to win, to better themselves, to make new friends, to travel, to inspire others to run marathons, etc. Rare on the list is raising money and public awareness for the sponsoring charity. Vidyadevi says,

Raising money was not my primary motive when I ran a half marathon. I ran to have fun with my friends, to exercise so I would be stronger and to push myself beyond what I thought I could do.

After I became a yoga teacher, a Master Yoga birthday party included one hour of Sun Salutations. Each person enrolled sponsors, so each Sun Salutation supported the organization with donations. I accomplished 100 Sun Salutations, finishing ten minutes before the hour's end. I thought, 'Well I will do a few more, to make more money for Master Yoga.'

At the end I was crowned queen! I didn't think that it was about doing more than the person next to me or about winning anything. For me it was all about raising money for a non-profit organization that I believed in and that served so many people through yoga."

Yogis look at their motives. If your motives are altruistic, your plans are to benefit other people or to benefit the world, your plans are more likely to work. If your intentions are based on selfish

reasons, things that will make you happy, you will be less effective. Which of these describes most of the hours of your day?

Self-Realized beings are better at accomplishing the goals they set. The higher someone's spiritual state, the more likely they can accomplish their worldly objectives. Why is this so? Because their decisions and objectives are based on different reasons than everyone else's. Their motivation is service: they ask, "What will serve others most effectively?"

Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras says:

Asteya prati.s.thaayaa.m sarva ratno-pasthaanam (2.37)

When you are firmly established in non-stealing,
all riches present themselves freely.¹

Asteya is not stealing; steya is stealing. This yama, one of yoga's lifestyle practices, says don't take things that are not coming to you. You probably don't have trouble obeying the law or the Eighth Commandment, so your thievery ways are subtler, perhaps even completely unconscious. There are many types of stealing that are legal, even accepted and promoted in our modern world. Thievery includes manipulating the circumstances, getting around the rules or using other people to get what you want. From yoga's perspective, theft itself is not the problem, simply because the karma you create will come back on you. The problem is that thievery impulses arise from need, greed and fear. Living your life in this triad is like carrying a backpack full of sand. It is going to be a lot harder to make it up the side of the mountain.

This sutra promises that all riches come to the yogi who is firmly established in non-stealing.

Imagine if great wealth came to someone who is still stealing, even in subtle ways. Those riches would not be used for a high purpose because too much of that wealth will stick to their fingers.

When you practice asteya, you give up manipulative or underhanded methods and go about things in a logical, practical manner. You utilize tried and true methods without trying to take shortcuts, without trying to get more than you are due. You actually become more effective and accomplish more. When you are not focused on what you are going to get, you can accomplish everything. Every Olympic athlete knows this.

Florence Nightingale is a good example. She nursed wounded soldiers in very primitive military hospitals. Though she was a trained medical professional, she rolled up her sleeves and cleaned. She motivated all the nurses and orderlies to clean. Within weeks, the infection and mortality rate decreased significantly. It was phenomenal. She reformed hospital after hospital.

While she was deeply personally invested in the cause for which she was working, it wasn't about her own personal needs or accomplishments. It came out of a profound experience of God. When she was only 17 years old, she underwent the first of several experiences that she described as calls from God, which prompted a strong desire to devote her life to the service of others. She continued to serve until she was 80 years old, working hard for decades — serving others. She did not just sit in the hospital and imagine people getting well. She didn't invoke energies or set intentions. She rolled up her sleeves and got to work. The same goes for you.

What do you do? Decide which direction to go and apply yourself to the process. You can make anything happen that you choose, for you have "Siva's power of manifestation. You already know that the conditions of your life are created by your actions. More importantly, the quality of your life is determined by your motivations. Still, you have roll up your sleeves and do it!

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¹ Rendered by Swami Nirmalananda