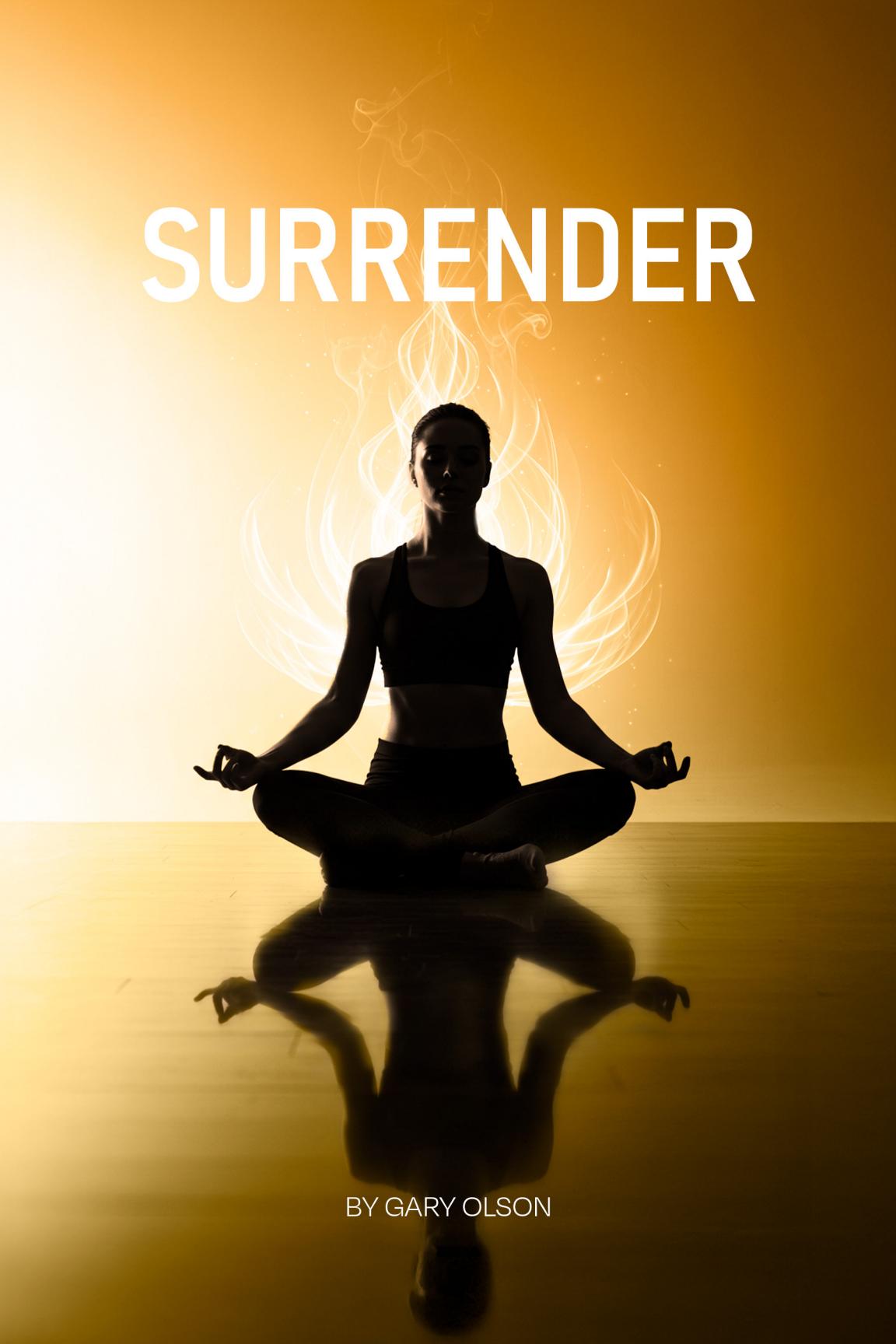


SURRENDER

A woman is shown in silhouette, meditating in a lotus pose. She is positioned in the center of the frame, with her hands resting on her knees in a mudra. The background is a warm, glowing yellow, and there are white, wispy energy lines swirling around her head and body, suggesting a sense of peace and connection. The overall mood is serene and spiritual.

BY GARY OLSON

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Introduction

The Essence of Surrender: A Pathway to the Divine

Surrender is often misunderstood, viewed merely as giving up or yielding to a force greater than oneself. In the context of Kriya Yoga, however, surrender transcends these simplistic notions. It becomes a profound spiritual practice, a sacred act of letting go of the ego and the incessant chatter of the mind. This surrender opens the heart and mind to the divine, allowing practitioners to connect deeply with their true essence. It is in this state of surrender that one finds peace, clarity, and an unwavering sense of purpose. The journey of Kriya Yoga invites individuals to embrace surrender as a transformative pathway, leading to self-realization and unity with the cosmos.

Why Surrender Matters in Kriya Yoga

In Kriya Yoga, surrender is not an act of defeat but a conscious choice to trust the process and the teachings. It is essential for several reasons. First, surrender cultivates humility, allowing practitioners to recognize their

limitations and the vastness of the universe. This awareness fosters a deep sense of gratitude and opens the door to higher wisdom. Second, surrender enables practitioners to release attachments to outcomes, fostering a sense of inner freedom. By letting go of the need for control, individuals can experience the flow of life more fully, embracing each moment as it comes. Finally, surrender aligns the practitioner's will with divine will, facilitating a deeper connection with the spiritual path and enhancing the effectiveness of Kriya techniques.

How This Book Can Guide Your Journey

This book serves as a companion on your journey through the intricate and transformative practice of Kriya Yoga, with a particular emphasis on the significance of surrender. Each chapter is designed to illuminate different aspects of surrender, offering insights, techniques, and reflections that deepen your understanding and practice. Whether you are a seasoned practitioner or a newcomer to Kriya Yoga, the teachings within these pages aim to inspire and guide you toward embracing surrender as a vital component of your spiritual evolution. Through this exploration, you will discover that surrender is not an end, but rather a beginning—a gateway to experiencing the divine presence in every aspect of your life.

Part I:

Understanding Surrender

1. The Concept of Surrender in Yogic Philosophy

Definitions and Misconceptions

Surrender in yogic philosophy embodies a deep, conscious act of letting go—an acknowledgment that there is a greater force at work beyond individual effort. Misconceptions often portray surrender as a passive resignation or weakness. In reality, true surrender is an empowering choice that leads to liberation from the confines of the ego and personal desires. It is the recognition that one's limited understanding can be transcended through faith and devotion, allowing the practitioner to align with a higher purpose.

Surrender in the Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

The concept of surrender is beautifully illustrated in the Bhagavad Gita, where Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to surrender his will to the divine, emphasizing the importance of acting with devotion without attachment

to the results. Similarly, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras highlight surrender (Ishvara pranidhana) as a key aspect of the eight limbs of yoga, wherein the practitioner relinquishes personal will in favor of a higher intelligence. Both texts underscore that surrender is not an abandonment of effort but an integration of devotion and discipline, leading to spiritual awakening.

The Balance Between Effort and Surrender

In the practice of Kriya Yoga, finding the balance between effort and surrender is crucial. While dedicated practice and discipline are necessary, surrender allows for the release of attachment to outcomes. This balance creates a harmonious flow in the practitioner's journey. Effort without surrender can lead to frustration, while surrender without effort may result in complacency. Together, they create a powerful synergy, propelling the practitioner toward deeper states of awareness and connection with the divine.

2. The Spiritual Science of Letting Go

Ego vs. True Self

The journey of surrender begins with the recognition of the ego—our constructed identity, filled with fears, desires, and illusions. Kriya Yoga encourages practitioners to look beyond these layers to discover their true self—the essence that is unchanging and connected to all. Surrendering the ego is a vital step in this process, allowing for a deeper understanding of one's nature and purpose in the universe.

Resistance and the Fear of Surrender

Despite its transformative potential, the act of surrender often evokes resistance and fear. The mind clings to control, fearing the unknown and what might happen if one lets go. This resistance is a natural part of the spiritual journey, but through Kriya practices, individuals can learn to navigate these fears. By gradually cultivating trust in the process and

in the divine, practitioners can transform their fear into faith, embracing surrender as a source of strength rather than vulnerability.

Trusting the Unknown

Trusting the unknown is a fundamental aspect of surrender. In a world filled with uncertainty, surrender invites practitioners to embrace the mystery of life. Kriya Yoga teaches that by surrendering to the present moment and the unfolding of experiences, one can access greater wisdom and guidance. This trust fosters resilience, allowing individuals to navigate life's challenges with grace and equanimity, confident in the knowledge that they are supported by a higher intelligence.

3. The Role of Surrender in Kriya Yoga

Surrender as an Active Process

In Kriya Yoga, surrender is not a passive state; it is an active, dynamic process. Practitioners engage in dedicated practices that require focus and effort, while simultaneously cultivating an inner attitude of surrender. This dual approach allows for deep inner transformation, where the act of surrender becomes a conscious choice made in each moment, enhancing the effectiveness of the Kriya techniques.

Alignment with Universal Intelligence

Surrender in Kriya Yoga facilitates alignment with universal intelligence—an interconnectedness with all that is. When practitioners surrender their personal will, they open themselves to the flow of divine guidance and insights. This alignment fosters a sense of unity and purpose, allowing individuals to move through life with a sense of direction and clarity. As practitioners deepen their surrender, they begin to experience a profound connection with the cosmos, recognizing themselves as integral parts of a larger whole. This realization is not just a spiritual concept but a lived experience that transforms one's perception of self and the world.

Part II:

The Practice of Surrender

4. Kriya Techniques and Surrender

Pranayama: The Breath as a Bridge

In Kriya Yoga, pranayama—the conscious regulation of breath—serves as a vital bridge to the practice of surrender. Breath is the life force, connecting the physical and spiritual realms. By mastering pranayama techniques, practitioners learn to calm the mind and body, creating a space where surrender can naturally arise. As one breathes consciously, the distractions of the ego begin to fade, allowing for a deeper connection to the present moment and the divine. This rhythmic flow of breath facilitates the process of letting go, encouraging practitioners to release tension and embrace surrender as they merge with the essence of life itself.

Meditation is a cornerstone of Kriya Yoga, providing a sacred space for practitioners to witness their inner landscape. In this stillness, one can observe thoughts, emotions, and resistance that hinder surrender. By cultivating the witness consciousness, practitioners learn to detach from their mental patterns, allowing them to dissolve the barriers built by fear and doubt. This practice of observation fosters an openness to surrender, inviting a deeper understanding of the self and the transformative power of letting go. As resistance diminishes through meditation, the practitioner finds freedom in surrendering to the flow of existence.

Stillness: The Doorway to Surrender

Stillness is essential in the practice of surrender. In a world filled with constant noise and distractions, finding moments of stillness allows practitioners to connect deeply with their inner selves. Kriya Yoga emphasizes the importance of creating a quiet space—both externally and internally—where surrender can unfold. This stillness serves as a doorway, inviting the divine presence to enter and guiding practitioners toward a state of peace and acceptance. Within this serene space, the mind can quiet, and the heart can open, facilitating a profound experience of surrender.

5. Cultivating Trust and Faith

Developing Shraddha (Faith) in Practice

Shraddha, or faith, is a fundamental aspect of surrender in Kriya Yoga. Developing faith in oneself, the practice, and the divine is essential for overcoming obstacles and doubts. Through consistent practice and personal experiences, practitioners begin to cultivate a deep-seated trust in the process. This faith acts as a stabilizing force, allowing individuals to navigate the uncertainties of life with confidence and resilience. As faith deepens, surrender becomes more natural, transforming the practitioner's relationship with their spiritual journey.

Overcoming Doubt and Fear

Doubt and fear are common barriers to surrender. Kriya Yoga offers tools and techniques to confront these feelings head-on. By acknowledging and exploring the roots of doubt, practitioners can transform these limiting beliefs into opportunities for growth. Through meditation, breathwork, and self-inquiry, individuals learn to embrace uncertainty as a natural part of the spiritual journey. As doubt and fear are faced and released, practitioners find themselves more willing to surrender, trusting in the unfolding of their lives.

Living in Surrender, On and Off the Mat

The practice of surrender extends beyond the mat and into daily life. Kriya Yoga encourages practitioners to integrate the principles of surrender into all aspects of their existence. This means approaching challenges with an open heart, releasing attachments to outcomes, and trusting the flow of life. By cultivating a mindset of surrender in everyday actions, individuals can experience a profound shift in their perspective, leading to greater peace and fulfillment. Living in surrender becomes a way of being, enriching one's spiritual journey and deepening the connection to the divine.

6. Surrender Through Service and Devotion

Karma Yoga and Surrender

Karma Yoga, the yoga of selfless action, embodies the essence of surrender. By engaging in service without attachment to results, practitioners learn to let go of personal desires and ego-driven motives. This selfless approach fosters a deep sense of connection to others and the greater whole, allowing surrender to flourish. In performing actions with love and dedication, individuals find liberation from the confines of the self, experiencing the joy that comes from serving a higher purpose.

Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion, highlights love as the ultimate expression of surrender. Through acts of devotion—whether through prayer, chanting, or worship—practitioners cultivate a heartfelt connection to the divine. This love encourages a deep surrender of the ego, allowing individuals to experience the profound joy and peace that comes from aligning with a higher power. As love deepens, so does the ability to surrender, transforming the practice into a beautiful expression of unity with the divine.

Surrender in Everyday Actions.

Part III:

Transformations Through Surrender

7. The Inner Journey

Stages of Transformation: From Effort to Grace

The inner journey of surrender in Kriya Yoga unfolds through distinct stages of transformation. Initially, practitioners engage in rigorous effort—practicing techniques with discipline and determination. This phase, characterized by striving for spiritual progress, is essential for establishing a foundation. However, as one progresses, a significant shift occurs: the realization that true transformation cannot be solely achieved through effort. This transition aligns with the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna advises Arjuna to perform his duty without attachment to the fruits of his actions (Gita 2.47). Here, practitioners begin to experience grace—a state where the divine begins to work through them, leading to deeper insights and realizations.

As surrender deepens, practitioners may experience moments of profound clarity and understanding, often described as “aha” moments. This phase

is beautifully captured in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which state that through sustained practice and non-attachment (samyama), one can attain higher states of consciousness (Yoga Sutras 3.4). The journey transforms from one of striving toward a state of being, where individuals recognize the flow of grace guiding their spiritual path.

Letting Go of Attachment to Results

One of the most significant aspects of surrender is the release of attachment to results. This principle is emphasized in both the Bhagavad Gita and the Yoga Sutras. In the Gita, Krishna instructs Arjuna to focus on his duty without being attached to the outcomes, emphasizing that true freedom lies in the act of surrendering results to the divine (Gita 3.19). This shift allows practitioners to experience life more fully, as they engage in their actions with sincerity yet remain detached from the outcome.

Letting go of attachment does not equate to apathy; instead, it cultivates a sense of empowerment and liberation. Practitioners learn to trust that their efforts are not in vain, as they surrender the fruits of their actions to a higher intelligence. This practice fosters resilience and acceptance, allowing individuals to navigate life's challenges with grace.

Freedom in Surrender

The concept of freedom in surrender is paradoxical yet profound. While surrender may initially feel like relinquishing control, it ultimately leads to greater freedom—the freedom from the burdens of the ego and the limitations of the mind. In Kriya Yoga, this freedom is experienced as a lightness of being, where individuals no longer feel constrained by their desires or fears.

The teachings of the Upanishads resonate deeply with this notion, particularly in the expression “Tat Tvam Asi” (That Thou Art), which signifies the inherent unity between the individual soul (Atman) and the universal spirit (Brahman). This realization can only occur when one fully surrenders the ego, allowing for the true self to emerge. The liberation

found in surrender allows individuals to transcend the dualities of life, experiencing a profound sense of peace and fulfillment.

8. Experiencing Unity

Surrendering the Individual to the Collective

As practitioners deepen their surrender, they begin to experience a shift from individual identity to collective consciousness. This process involves recognizing that the self is not separate but an integral part of a larger whole. The teachings of Kriya Yoga emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings, aligning with the concept of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,” which translates to “the world is one family.”

In this state, the individual surrenders personal desires and ambitions, embracing a collective purpose. The Bhagavad Gita encourages this perspective by illustrating the importance of selfless service (Karma Yoga) as a means to contribute to the welfare of all beings (Gita 3.20). This surrender fosters compassion, empathy, and a profound sense of belonging, allowing individuals to transcend the limitations of the ego.

Realizing Oneness with the Universe

The realization of oneness with the universe is a transformative experience that arises from deep surrender. In Kriya Yoga, this realization is often facilitated through meditation and contemplative practices, where practitioners cultivate an inner stillness that allows them to connect with the cosmic consciousness.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras articulate this profound experience, stating that when the mind is still, the seer abides in its true nature (Yoga Sutras 1.3). In this state of unity, practitioners experience a dissolution of boundaries between self and other, leading to a sense of interconnectedness with all of creation. The realization that “I am that” becomes a lived experience, bringing with it immense joy and a deep sense of peace.

In the transformative journey of Kriya Yoga, the bliss of self-realization stands as the ultimate culmination of surrender—a state where the seeker transcends the illusion of separateness and awakens to their true nature as pure consciousness. This bliss is not simply a fleeting emotion; it is a profound, abiding state of being that emerges when one fully surrenders to the process of spiritual awakening.

To understand the bliss of self-realization, it is essential to grasp its essence. Self-realization signifies the deep recognition that the individual self (Atman) is intrinsically connected to the universal consciousness (Brahman). This realization transforms the way one experiences life. The teachings of Kriya Yoga guide practitioners through the layers of the mind and ego, leading them to a profound inner awakening. As the layers of ignorance peel away, the seeker begins to glimpse their true essence, revealing a state of bliss that is both timeless and unshakeable.

At the heart of self-realization lies an overwhelming sense of inner peace. This peace is not contingent on external circumstances but arises from the understanding that the true self is eternal and unchanging. In the stillness of meditation, one learns to quiet the restless mind and connect with the deeper layers of consciousness. As the Bhagavad Gita beautifully articulates, “In the midst of movement and chaos, keep stillness inside of you” (Gita 6.6). This inner stillness fosters a tranquility that remains unbothered by the fluctuations of life, allowing individuals to navigate challenges with grace and equanimity.

The bliss of self-realization naturally manifests as unconditional love and compassion for all beings. When one truly recognizes their oneness with the universe, the barriers of separation dissolve, and the heart opens wide. This love is not dependent on personal desires or attachments; rather, it is a spontaneous expression of the interconnectedness of all life. Kriya Yoga emphasizes selfless service (seva) as a vital practice, allowing practitioners to embody this love in their thoughts, actions, and relationships. By surrendering the ego, practitioners find joy in uplifting others, experiencing a profound sense of fulfillment that comes from contributing to the greater good.

Self-realization brings with it an exquisite joy rooted in the present moment. In this state, individuals learn to embrace the here and now, free from the burdens of past regrets and future anxieties. The teachings of Kriya Yoga encourage mindfulness and awareness, guiding practitioners to fully engage with life as it unfolds. This presence reveals the beauty and divinity inherent in every moment—a vibrant experience of life that is rich with joy and wonder. The realization that “this moment is all there is” allows individuals to experience life in its fullness, celebrating each breath as an expression of the divine.

A key aspect of the bliss of self-realization is liberation from the cycle of suffering. As practitioners awaken to their true nature, they transcend the identification with the body and mind, which are often the sources of pain and dissatisfaction. This liberation brings a profound sense of freedom, allowing individuals to navigate the complexities of life with a light heart. The teachings of the Upanishads resonate deeply here, reminding us that the true self is beyond suffering: “Realize the Self, that which is beyond the dualities of life, and be free” (Upanishads). In this state of realization, suffering is seen as a transient experience, one that can be transcended through understanding and awareness.

In the bliss of self-realization, individuals often discover a deep alignment with their true purpose in life. This clarity arises from the understanding that one’s existence is part of a larger cosmic design. As practitioners surrender to their authentic selves, they find fulfillment in their actions, recognizing that their contributions matter. The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes that when one acts in harmony with their true nature, they experience a profound sense of joy and purpose that transcends personal desires and ambitions.

The bliss of self-realization in the context of Kriya Yoga represents the culmination of the transformative journey through surrender. It is a state characterized by inner peace, unconditional love, joy in the present moment, liberation from suffering, and alignment with a higher purpose. As practitioners embrace this bliss, they not only awaken to their true selves but also become conduits of that joy, radiating love and light to the world around them. In surrendering to the divine flow of life, they discover that the ultimate truth is not just to be realized but to be lived—a

life imbued with the bliss of self-realization, where every moment becomes an expression of the divine dance of existence.

9. Living the Surrendered Life

In the profound journey of Kriya Yoga, surrender emerges as a cornerstone of spiritual practice and personal transformation. To live a surrendered life is to cultivate a deep trust in the divine flow of existence, allowing oneself to be guided by a higher intelligence beyond the confines of the ego. This chapter explores the significance of surrender, offering practical insights on how to integrate it into daily life through consistent practice, the creation of a Kriya Yoga sadhana, and the incorporation of surrender into relationships, work, and the challenges we face.

Surrender is not a one-time event; it is a daily practice that requires conscious intention and awareness. Each day presents opportunities to let go of the need to control outcomes, to release attachments to specific results, and to trust in the unfolding of life. In the context of Kriya Yoga, surrender can be cultivated through practices such as meditation, pranayama, and mindfulness.

One powerful way to practice surrender daily is to set aside time for meditation, allowing thoughts, worries, and distractions to gently fade away. As practitioners connect with their breath and inner stillness, they learn to let go of the incessant need to analyze and control. This space of silence becomes a sanctuary where one can surrender to the present moment and the divine flow of life.

Additionally, incorporating affirmations or mantras centered around surrender can serve as reminders throughout the day. Phrases like “I trust the process of life” or “I surrender my worries to the universe” can help anchor the mind in a state of openness and receptivity.

A well-structured Kriya Yoga sadhana can facilitate the practice of surrender, guiding practitioners toward deeper levels of awareness and connection with the divine. When creating a sadhana focused on surrender,

consider incorporating the following elements:

1. *Meditation:* Begin each day with a dedicated meditation session that emphasizes surrender. Focus on the breath, visualize letting go of attachments, and cultivate a sense of trust in the universe.
2. *Pranayama:* Include pranayama techniques that promote relaxation and openness, such as Nadi Shodhana (alternate nostril breathing) or Ujjayi (victorious breath). These practices help to quiet the mind and prepare the body for surrender.
3. *Self-Reflection:* Set aside time for introspection, journaling about areas in life where you may be holding on too tightly. Reflect on the lessons of surrender in your experiences and identify opportunities to let go.
4. *Service:* Engage in selfless service (seva) as a way to practice surrender. By offering oneself to the service of others, practitioners cultivate humility and the understanding that they are part of a greater whole.
5. *Gratitude:* Conclude your sadhana with a practice of gratitude. Acknowledge the blessings in your life, expressing thanks for the journey and for the lessons learned through surrender.

By consistently practicing this Kriya Yoga sadhana, practitioners can deepen their connection to the concept of surrender, allowing it to permeate their lives and facilitate spiritual growth.

Surrendering is not limited to personal practice; it extends into every aspect of life, including relationships, work, and challenges. Here's how to integrate surrender into these areas:

1. *Relationships:* In interpersonal dynamics, surrendering means letting go of the need to control others or to impose expectations. It involves embracing acceptance and understanding, allowing relationships to unfold naturally. By practicing active listening and compassion, one can foster

deeper connections grounded in trust. Acknowledging that each person is on their own journey invites a sense of freedom, both for oneself and for others.

2. Work: In the professional sphere, surrendering can lead to greater creativity and productivity. Instead of clinging to rigid plans or striving for perfection, allow for flexibility and adaptability. Trust in the process, and be open to new opportunities and insights. This approach can foster a more harmonious work environment, where collaboration and innovation thrive.

3. Challenges: Life is filled with challenges that test our resilience and patience. Surrendering during difficult times means reframing obstacles as opportunities for growth. Instead of resisting or feeling overwhelmed, practitioners can approach challenges with curiosity and openness. By trusting that every experience serves a purpose, individuals can navigate through difficulties with grace and fortitude.

Living a surrendered life is a profound commitment to the journey of Kriya Yoga. Through daily practice, the creation of a purposeful sadhana, and the integration of surrender into relationships, work, and challenges, practitioners cultivate a state of openness that allows the divine to guide their paths. Surrender transcends mere acceptance; it is an active engagement with life

Conclusion

As we reach the culmination of our exploration into surrender and Kriya Yoga, it becomes evident that the ultimate gift of surrender is a profound sense of liberation and love. This journey is not merely about relinquishing control; it is about awakening to the boundless possibilities that arise when we align ourselves with the flow of the universe. Surrender opens the heart to a deeper experience of love—both for oneself and for all beings—transforming the way we relate to the world around us.

In surrendering, we liberate ourselves from the shackles of fear, attachment, and the incessant need for control. This liberation is not a loss but a profound gain—a release into the vastness of existence where we discover our true selves. As we let go of the ego's demands, we awaken to the ever-present love that surrounds us. This love is unconditional and transcends the limitations of personal desires, allowing us to connect with others in a more meaningful and compassionate way.

Kriya Yoga teaches us that this love is our inherent nature. In the stillness of meditation, we experience the unity of all life, realizing that we are not separate from each other or the universe. This realization fosters a sense

of belonging, peace, and joy, guiding us toward a life enriched by love and connection.

The path of surrender is an ongoing journey, one that invites continual growth and exploration. Each moment presents an opportunity to practice surrender, whether in meditation, relationships, or daily activities. As we deepen our understanding of Kriya Yoga, we learn to embrace life's uncertainties with grace, recognizing that every experience, whether joyful or challenging, contributes to our spiritual evolution.

To continue this journey, it is essential to remain committed to our sadhana, integrating the principles of surrender into our daily lives. This practice may evolve over time, adapting to our changing circumstances and insights. The key is to approach each day with an open heart and a willingness to let go of preconceived notions, allowing life to unfold in its unique way.

Final Thoughts

In embracing surrender through the lens of Kriya Yoga, we embark on a transformative journey that leads us to the heart of our true selves. This journey is one of liberation, love, and connection—a path that invites us to trust in the divine flow of life and to experience the beauty of existence in its fullest expression. As we move forward, may we carry the essence of surrender within us, allowing it to guide our actions, enrich our relationships, and illuminate our path toward self-realization.

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Gary Olson has been immersed in yoga and meditation since birth. A lifelong practitioner and teacher, he holds multiple black belts, studied directly under Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and has practiced Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhis daily for over 45 years.

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