



The Joy of Transitions

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THE WAVE

David Whyte

You arrived as a ripple of change emanating
from an original, unstoppable,
memory, a then made now,
entirely yourself, found now in the world,
now as creator of that world.

You were a signature written in sand
taken by the ocean and scattered
to another wave form, your disappearance
only made more beautiful
by the everyday arrival of a tide
where my voice can still join yours,
hungering for the fall of water,
so that walking the reflected sand,
I set myself to learn by your going,
knowing across death's wide ocean,
the ultimate parallel to friendship.

The idea that we are ever not in movement is an illusion, one of the veils of maya (illusion). In fact, the image we hold is a kind of snapshot in a never-ending progression of movement, extending infinitely forward & backward in time. As long as we are alive, we are never actually still.

~ Lesley Kaminoff, Yoga Anatomy

“The Goddess Never-Not-Broken promises that the greatest magic is in the transformative moments: the heartbreak, the uncertainties, the pause before we hit the ground... and what we do with ourselves after we land. In our brokenness, we are unlimited” ~ JC Peters

Truly, if you met this Goddess on the street, your heart would pound and you'd break into a cold sweat: "What's coming for me now?!" She's not the goddess you'd want to take home to your mother.

It's normal to fear and resist change, but Akhilandeshvari whispers to us also of freedom — liberation from the past, from habits and wounds, from stifling routines, from everything that once was good but has become a burden or a prison. Liberation, indeed, from all the illusions of the ego.

She is, in the same instant, the personification of destruction and rebirth. But not like Kali the Destroyer who levels us all with Her sword. Akhilandeshvari yields to the destruction of herself, her ego and self-identity, so that She can remain in contact with Truth -- the Divine Source that is manifesting Itself as one individual.

This is the idea of yoga, breaking our habits, our samskaras, or at least looking them in the face and making a conscious decision whether they should stay, or go.



Akhilandeshvari (ah-kee-LAN-desh-va-ree)
The Always Broken Goddess
The Goddess of Surrendering to Change

Akhilanda = a spinning, multi-faceted prism
Imagine the Hope Diamond twirling in a bright, clear light. The light pouring through the beveled cuts of the diamond would create a whirling rainbow of color. The diamond is whole and complete and BECAUSE it's fractured, it creates more diverse beauty. Its form is a spectrum of whirling color.
Ishvara = goddess, surrender
She shows us the power and opportunity of being broken into pieces by heartache, disaster, great fortune, and other life changes and traumas. However She takes this to the furthest extreme, purposefully keeping Herself broken wide open, allowing Herself to flow with every current, creating and fragmenting and recreating Herself endlessly.
She steadfastly refuses to paste Herself together into a stable form, shunning the limitations that She'd have to abide and the false identities that would hide Reality.
She rides on a crocodile: the very survival-fear that keep most of us chained to the known and routine is Her flying carpet!
She is not controlled by the need to keep her identity consistent, or even alive. She dances and spins and breaks herself into shards of light, tossing out new possibilities for herself like flower petals from a cherry tree.

Vinyasa ~ Alchemy of Form, Function & Flow

Stillness is not the absence or negation of energy, life, or movement. Stillness is dynamic. It is unconflicted movement, life in harmony with itself, skill in action.” ~ Erich Schiffmann,

Ancient Yoga Philosophy on Vinyasa Krama

1. Yoga Sutra I.1 “atha yoga anusasanam” The practice of yoga begins now.
2. Vendantic (Early Hindu, Jain, Buddhist) “Parinamavada”, aka “Transformation Theory”, constant change is an inherent part of the cause and effect nature of life.
3. Applying vinyasa in yoga and life has parallels such as the flow of sailing a boat; moving through life demands a synchronization with the natural forces that require skill and intuition, the ability to set a course yet change with the wind and currents. If you want to sail, you have to know how to assess the conditions which constantly fluctuate as do our physical, emotional and spiritual states (parinamavada). To proceed skillfully with any action, we must first assess where we are starting from today (atha yoga anusasanam)...we can't assume we are the same person we were yesterday (parinamavada).
4. Yoga Sutra III.53 “kshana-tat-kramayoh samyamad vivekajam jnanam
By samyama-simultaneous concentration, meditation and samadhi-on the sequence of indivisible moments of time, the past, present and future are known simultaneously, along with the nature of the world of objects.
5. The word vinyasa is composed of two words: vi = order + nyasa = placement
6. krama means "the uninterrupted sequence of events from beginning to end". The entire term means "the ordered placement of the sequence of events." Usually shortened simply to "vinyasa," it refers to a flowing sequence of asanas linked by breath and intention.

Modern Science on Change

1. Bushy brain - embrace imbalance.
2. We are the cookie uncrumbling. Contemporary physics describes the unfolding Universe as infinitely expanding in every direction. This is very good news indeed. If the Universe is unfinished, then so are you. The song of your life evolves - you can sing it in ways that enrich you. In an infinitely expanding Universe, the center is anywhere you choose. ~ Anonymous
3. A properly executed vinyasa practice can help break the habit of viewing the world around us as a collection of objects or viewing life as a series of distinct events. It mimics the way nature works-always moving, changing, curvy. Events in nature do not just happen, they unfold, they develop. Thus in our vinyasa practice, we do not "do" standing forward bend, then upward-facing dog, then downward-facing dog in a choppy, static way, but rather we let each asana unfold into the next, the way a seed unfolds into a stem, then into a bud, then into a flower, then back into the earth to nourish the next generation. When asanas, the sequence of changes, are woven together with breath and conscious intention, we align ourselves with the continuous flow, the undulating rhythm, of the universe. ~ Sharon Gannon

Techniques for practicing being present with Transitions:

- a. Focus on Foundation -feet (pada bandha), hands (hasta bandha), pelvic floor (mula bandha) get grounded
- b. Move from **Center, Bandhas, Key Actions** - Hug center line, light up your core, Core Power Meridian.
- c. **Similar alignment** (approximations). Alignment of posture A matches alignment of posture B, 99% of the time. Good alignment = the greatest economy of effort, easiest on joints. “A little movement from a lot of joints.” Leslie Kaminoff
- d. Breath - 99% of the time- inhale on the opening, exhale on closing or during transition to increase power and core connection. Remember, your muscles are usually contracting more strongly between the postures (when moving slowly) than they are in the postures.
- e. Slow Down - Slowing the movement between postures helps you notice the subtleties involved. In particular, you’ll observe what muscles have to engage in order to maintain your balance as you make your transitions. I encourage you to take an extra 2 or 3 breaths in your transitions on occasion—especially in the more accessible transitions like those between your standing postures (Jason Crandall). Slowing down will also help you focus on the transfer of weight.
- f. Focus on the transfer of your weight - The key to making a skillful transition is to focus on the movement of your weight. This will help you counterbalance your body where its necessary. Essentially, you want to limit the weight of your body from moving too quickly in any one direction. Bringing your attention to your core (specifically, your pelvis and lower belly) is usually the most effective way to tune into your weight as it is transitioning.
- g. **Transitions are the Bridge to transformation.** Allow yourself to really be in the transition as great physical and character strength is developed there. Repeat transitions often to develop strength. Begin to notice when you rush, avoid, or physically/mentally disengage.
- h. Stay SUPER AWARE. Most injuries occur coming out of an asana (coming out of an event).