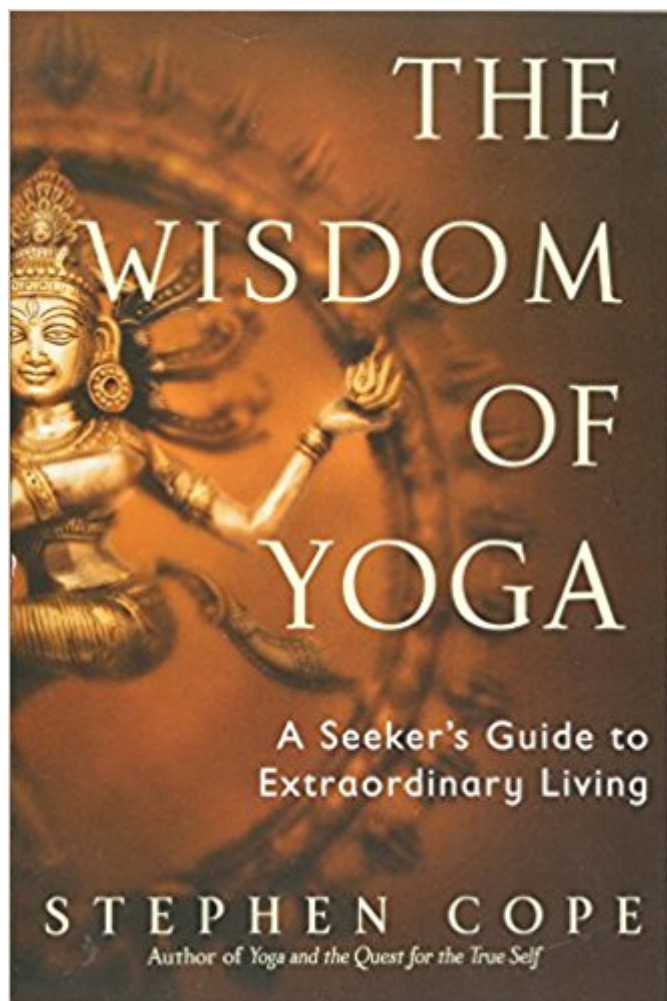


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# The Wisdom Of Yoga: A Seeker's Guide To Extraordinary Living



## Synopsis

For modern spiritual seekers and yoga students alike, here is an irreverent yet profound guide to the most sophisticated teachings of the yoga wisdom tradition—now brought to contemporary life by a celebrated author, psychotherapist, and leading American yoga instructor. While many Westerners still think of yoga as an invigorating series of postures and breathing exercises, these physical practices are only part of a vast and ancient spiritual science. For more than three millennia, yoga sages systematically explored the essential questions of our human existence: What are the root causes of suffering, and how can we achieve freedom and happiness? What would it be like to function at the maximum potential of our minds, bodies, and spirits? What is an optimal human life? Nowhere have their discoveries been more brilliantly distilled than in a short—but famously difficult—treatise called the *Yogasutra*. This revered text lays out the entire path of inner development in remarkable detail—ranging from practices that build character and mental power to the highest reaches of spiritual realization. Now Stephen Cope unlocks the teachings of the *Yogasutra* by showing them at work in the lives of a group of friends and fellow yoga students who are confronting the full modern catastrophe of careers, relationships, and dysfunctional family dynamics. Interweaving their daily dilemmas with insights from modern psychology, neuroscience, religion, and philosophy, he shows the astonishing relevance and practicality of this timeless psychology of awakening. Leavened with wit and passion, *The Wisdom of Yoga* is a superb companion and guide for anyone seeking enhanced creativity, better relationships, and a more ethical and graceful way of living in the world. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Psychotherapist and longtime resident teacher at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, Mass., Cope applies the compassionate insights made in his book, *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self*, to this guide to the *Yogasutra*. Attributed to Patanjali, a second-century sage, the *Yogasutra* barely mentions the physical postures now identified as yoga. But the 196 trenchant entries, scholars say, contain the body of wisdom gleaned by those who sought, through direct experience, the inner workings of body, mind and spirit. This wisdom tradition (*raja yoga*), Cope says, is as effective today in diagnosing and healing "ordinary unhappiness" as it was centuries ago. Drawing parallels between ancient yogis and Buddhists and Western theologians, philosophers and poets, Cope argues that the yogis uncovered the roots of fear, illusion and self-deception. He focuses on the eight limbs of yoga (ethical behaviors, disciplines, postures, breathing practices, sense withdrawal, concentration, meditation and enlightenment) to demonstrate their effects in the lives of modern practitioners. Readers will readily identify with at least one of the challenges discussed — be they failed relationships, dysfunctional families, unrealized ambitions and compulsive behaviors. Beginners will find it helpful to read the *Yogasutra*, provided in an appendix, before diving into the personal stories and Cope's sympathetic commentaries. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Stephen Cope is a psychotherapist, senior Kripalu yoga teacher, and author of *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self*. He is currently Senior Scholar in Residence at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, Massachusetts. From the Hardcover edition.

I've participated in yoga courses for quite a few years now on and off, --some excellent and some not so great, depending on the instructors. I have an excellent teacher now and she is about to offer a new course in meditation and yoga. This is the text for it. I am excited to be learning more about what yoga is all about on spiritual/philosophical/meditative levels. This book is easy to read and offers insights about yoga for the average Westerner and how it can both simplify and enrich your life and help you understand more about yourself and others, how you can become more mindful in your daily life. Life in the 21st century is crazy, fast-paced, and full of pressures, stresses, and negativity (war, global warming, worries about the economy). Yoga is one of various paths to greater understanding, serenity, clarity, and wisdom. Earlier this year I took a course called Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction which included some yoga as well as meditation, and other exercises for reducing stress. This course resulted in my wanting to learn more about what is behind

yoga and meditation, their history, to understand more about their modern-day and past expert practitioners. I guess the only thing that bothers me at all about the book is all of the unfamiliar terms that are introduced that I can't get fixed in my mind, but perhaps taking the course will help with that, or perhaps that doesn't matter so much. The book is easy to read and understand and is very informative and insightful.

This is my second time around reading this book. With a little age and wisdom behind me, it takes me much deeper and answers the questions I couldn't have answered before without experiencing life a bit more. The author does get a bit technical from a psychology point of view, but it is in the stories of the individual people and their struggles to find an authentic, peace filled way to live that we learn and grow from it. I don't doubt that at some point I will revisit these stories again in the future.

I ordered this book before I did my yoga teacher training, since it was on the recommended reading list. It's a fascinating book that reads almost like a novel. I started reading it, then actually started over when I was just a few pages in so I could get a highlighter and mark the passages that really sang to me. The best part of this book, for me, was learning about metta meditation. Doing that meditation was the first time I was really able to let myself sink into a meditation, and it taught me an appreciation for and interest in further study of meditation. You might not find this book interesting if you're not into yoga. I would definitely recommend it, certainly for any yoga teacher or aspiring yoga teacher.

In his book, "The Wisdom of Yoga," Stephen Cope has created a small masterpiece. He has not tried to answer questions about man's place in the universe or the existence of an external world. He has, however, by means of telling vignettes from the lives of people he knows well and insightful comments about what must be one of the most gnomic series of insights into the practice of Yoga, given the average reader a sense of what it is to become involved in the practice of Yoga and some of its life-changing potential. In addition to this, he has included illustrations from other belief systems, specifically Buddhist thought and Christianity that provide a wider context for his practice. The Yoga practitioner, as well as the average person who would like to learn a little about Yoga, could both benefit from the wonderful book.

After completing yoga teacher training with a non-dualist, I had a very disjointed view of the Yoga

Sutra by Patanjali. This book reaffirmed my dualist interpretation and greatly clarified the process of meditation. The modern life examples furthered my understanding of the Eight Limbed Path of Yoga.

Super book. I love the way he weaves theory with gentle narrative. A great read for anyone who want to deepen their thinking along with their practice.

I love this book from the first page to the last! The introduction, prologue and appendices are quite helpful in providing vital information to the reader. Cope takes some everyday people and their life's challenges and brings to light some answers to the struggles of the human condition. The book reads like a novel, in a way, but is very scholarly and cites the words and philosophies of many pundits in the field of religion such as Mircea Eliade, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Thomas Merton and Georg Feuerstein, to name but a few. I didn't want the book to end and the final chapter made me cry with joy of the knowledge of contentment, despite challenges, in our lives. Thank you Stephen Cope!

great book!!!!

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