

1) What is *Santosha*?

Santosha means satisfaction or contentment (feeling or showing satisfaction with one's possessions, status, or situation).

It is about recognizing happiness at present, at every moment of life in any circumstances. Santosha requires our willingness to enjoy exactly what each day brings, to be happy with whatever we have, whether that is a lot or a little.

Santosha is interpreted as the greatest internal satisfaction, the underlying joy that cannot be shaken by life's tough moments, by injustice, hardship, bad luck. Contentment is really about accepting life as it is. It is not about creating perfection. Life will throw whatever it wants at you, and you ultimately have little control. Be welcoming of what you get.

It is easy to practice Santosha when things are going well. When you have money, good family, comfortable home satisfaction comes naturally. But consider flip side of that, such as having little or no money, passing away of a close family member or failing in the school. How can we be happy and satisfied despite such unfortunate circumstances? This is the challenge we are presented with in the face of santosha: unconditional contentment. This means choosing to fully and wholeheartedly accept our circumstances no matter what they may be. Santosha is the choice to be happy, not the choice to be happy *unless* something horrible happens, but the choice to be happy no matter what happens because it can be no other way than the way it is. Santosha means never having to ask 'what if?', never wondering what 'could have happened' because you have accepted the idea that whatever could have happened, did happen. This is where the true contentment is found.

Contentment should not be confused with happiness. We can be in difficult, even painful circumstances and still find some contentment if we are able to see things as they are without any personal expectations. We are at peace with whatever stage of growth we are in and the circumstances we find ourselves in. This doesn't mean that we accept or tolerate unhealthy relationships or working conditions.

2) How can you practice Santosha?

- Release your mind from constantly wanting your situation to be different.
- You can't change your reality. But you can let go of the war with reality. If you do, you will be able to think more clearly and be more effective in making a difference.
- Practice patience and attempt to live as best you can within your situation until you are able to better/improve your condition.
- We can easily practice Santosha in beautiful moments and joyous experiences of our lives. Practicing Santosha in difficult moments of our life is hard. It can be practiced by being equally willing to embrace (hold or accept) the difficult moments and being open to accept the facts.
- In our relationship accept those around us as they truly are, not as we want them to be.
- Do not daydream about the future nor let your mind linger (stay behind) in the past. Be content with where you are which will make you feel happy or give true satisfaction

- Be happy with what you are and what you do. If you do not like being what you are, you won't find any happiness. You have to be contented with what you do, if you have done your best.
- During those times when you do not feel content, just act for one moment as if you were and smile ☺. You might kick-start a positive feedback loop, which can generate real contentment. It changes everything. Practicing smiling is like planting the seed of a mighty redwood. The body receives the smile, and contentment grows. Before you know it, you are smiling all the time. Remember to find joy in every moment and experience.

3) What are the benefits of Santosha?

- Contentment not only implies acceptance of the present but tends to generate the capacity for hopefulness.
- When you are balanced within any situation, this strengthens your faith that there is the possibility of living even more fully.
- A central sense of balance might be present in different circumstances.
- Even though material wealth and success are not evil, they cannot provide satisfaction. Santosha can provide satisfaction.
- By putting santosha into practice, you can get rid of cravings and attain great happiness to progress on the spiritual ladder, path or journey.
- By practicing Santosha you will realize your own strength and power. That strength and power will give you steadiness of mind and contentment.

4) Story – “The Unsatisfied King”

In a village there lived a *FAKIR*. He used to help the poor people daily by donating goods and or money to anyone in need who would pass by him. One day a King sitting on an elephant was passing by the village. Just like any other poor person, the *FAKIR* gave the King a handful of money. The King was surprised and wanted to know why the man had given him the money instead of other poor people that needed it more than him. Very patiently the *FAKIR* answered, “I committed to give money to poor people, but in my eyes, you are the poorest of all.” The King questioned how he could be so poor when he had all of the wealth in the world. The *FAKIR* asked the King, “Have you ever been satisfied with your life?” The King answered, “No. I have never been satisfied with the amount of wealth that I have. I always wonder how I can increase my wealth.” The *FAKIR* said, “You have always been tricking your own villagers into trying to gain more wealth.” That was when the King realized that living a materialistic life does not always make you satisfied, but sharing and giving what you have to others is what life is about. You should always be satisfied with what you have and not what others have.

GGKLI-Culture Group IV
Niyama Principle 2 – Santosha
Date:

Homework:

What is Santosha?

Write three ways to practice Santosha.

Write about a time when you were really upset because things did not work out as you wanted to. Describe if same thing happened again how you would practice Santosha?

Over the next week, try a little experiment. Choose something you do not like or would not typically choose. Practice Santosha and acceptance of the situation for a week and keep a log of the events when you practiced Santosha. It can be same event or different event everyday.

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday
