

WEEK 4 : SHOOTING BOW EMBRACE THE SUN

Step 1: Embrace Your Inner Sun

THREE THINGS CANNOT LONG BE HIDDEN: THE SUN, THE MOON,
AND THE TRUTH — CONFUCIUS

Why have I called this week's theme shooting bow?

In the yoga tradition the energy of self-awareness is the divine masculine – 'Purusha' the seer – the observer. Unlike in our phallogocentric western language, the masculine isn't the active force here, it is the passive – the witness. To create, to give life, to 'move' it must draw its strength from the feminine active principle, 'Shakti.' The feminine brings the vision of the seer into material form, this is 'Prakriti' – the binary opposite to 'Purusha,' both are forms of reality, and working together, in harmony, they animate the Universe.

The Sun is the ultimate symbol of the masculine, the father, the leader, the visionary – the shooting bow – the one with the aim. He is Purusha. Consciousness. The Sun is your inner King, whereas the Moon is your inner Queen. He is the light bringer and helps you embody and speak your inner truth.

The feminine is pure energy and the masculine is the containment for this ever-expanding power. He is your physical body. Yang energy. Structure. He keeps us in alignment with our vision – our path and purpose. A strong healthy inner masculine gives us the focus, the tools, the resources to hold the vision. These are your daily and routine grounding rituals that keep you moving forward in flow with your goals.

JOURNAL THIS:

How connected are you to your inner authority – the masculine? Your self-expression? Your truth? Like the blazing, shining Sun, do you allow yourself to shine and be seen in your physical body? In what ways?

If not, in what way does the vision you have for yourself call you to stand in your self-truth, your power?

WEEK 4 : SHOOTING BOW BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Step 2: Embrace Your Inner Sun

"I AM THE GREATEST, I SAID THAT EVEN BEFORE I KNEW I WAS."

— MUHAMMED ALI

The shooting bow yoga video I made embodies the energy of Sun, the masculine. This week, practice being the observer with the steady focus and clear aim. Keep strengthening your physical body so it can be a healthy container for your creative warrior energy. Do your core strength building exercises as this will enhance your third chakra, 'Manipur' located at your solar plexus – where self-belief, self-discipline and a healthy ego reside. This requires willpower – another characteristic of the warrior, the martial artist. It comes from making a choice. How badly do you want to meet your vision? Keep asking yourself this.

A balanced Manipur chakra helps us be active and confident rather than reactive, holding on to self-doubt. It creates the awareness for the choice we have between these two experiences!

If you're not ready, you won't take the action. Simple. If you're done with not getting results, you will. Again, how badly do you want change? You get to choose NOW what experience you wish to create for yourself going forward. It helps when you believe in yourself! Believe in your dreams, goals and visions. If you're finding that you're not moving closer to your vision, perhaps it's time to dream a new dream that gets you pumped and excited to thrive and really live! You can create your own reality and always make a different choice.

My kung fu instructor was the first and only person ever in my life to constantly repeat to me, "Believe in yourself!" I am fortunate and grateful to have had this healthy representation of the positive masculine in my life. About 9 years in, I finally asked him 'How?!' His response was "Practice." Boy, was that a self-realisation! I finally understood it. Self-belief doesn't magically appear. It appears through the willingness to step into the fire, so to speak. To keep taking action towards the fear. To practice your art and your craft. Put yourself out there. Be seen. Do what you love and do what you fear.

On the other side of your fear is your secret desire; the medicine that will help you grow and move even closer towards your vision. Train your mind. Focus only on your goal. All else is distraction and noise. Keep clearing away the clutter – mental, physical, emotional. Trust in your vision. Keep taking your warrior potion, whether this is self-love, self-care, art, writing, music, self-loyalty, self-trust etc. – this requires taking specific action steps regularly.

JOURNAL THIS:

What does it look like to believe in myself? If I had an unwavering focus and faith in myself how would my vision unfold step-by-step?

WEEK 4 : SHOOTING BOW

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Step 3: Express Your Boundaries Through Your No

“IF SOMETHING IS NOT A ‘HELL, YEAH!’, THEN IT’S A “NO!”
— JAMES ALTUCHER

Your ‘No’ is the masculine force. Remember the masculine holds connotations of ‘father’ and ‘authority’ the one whose role is meant to be of protection and safety. The feminine is ‘Yes’ – the receptive, playful energy. In times of conflict with the ‘Other’ we get to see how strong and balanced our connection is to our inner masculine nature. Self-love and self-care is your armour against those who attempt to violate your boundaries. When you begin to see the amazing person that you are, when you open to that love of yourself, it becomes easier to protect your borders because you begin to see your inherent value and worth, and realise your needs are just as important as the other person’s.

Remember we are multidimensional beings, therefore our boundaries can be violated on the many layers of our being – mental, emotional, physical and spiritual etc.

MIND – if others don’t respect or allow you to express your values, thoughts, beliefs or opinions, or if they consistently put you down, then that’s a sign that a clearing or cutting of ties is required. **BODY** – this can represent physical or sexual boundaries, your material surroundings. If you’ve ever attended a self-defence class, you’ll know that the other person should always respect your personal space, which is always at arms length. You are allowed to even place your hand out – arms distance so they know their limits, no matter who they are. **HEART** – Who doesn’t cringe at emotional enmeshment?! Violation here could mean taking on other people’s emotions, perhaps even offloading our intense emotions on to others. As sensitive souls we are porous in nature. We must protect ourselves from overly attaching to others (this can take the form of co-dependency) and again from others attempting to infiltrate our space and emotional wellbeing. Communicating with our emotions (**Week 3**) is one technique to overcome deeply embedded behavioural patterns that keep us locked in unhealthy entanglements. Writing and drawing out what we feel in the moment helps us see the emotions that have attached to us. Begin regularly drawing an image of the challenge you are feeling after your 4-level check-in meditation. You must be aware of your feelings before you can transmute them. If you react instead of respond to conflict with the Other – then that’s a sign of a need to cultivate stronger boundaries on this level of your being. Revisit Week 3 to do your shadow work to help you here. Anger is a sign that we’ve given our power away and that action needs to be taken to reclaim it. However, anger is a supreme ally against those who pose a high level of threat to all levels of our being. **SPIRIT** – I believe we can be drained on this vibrational level. There are methods to protect your spirit. Meditation is the easiest way. Periodically visualise a ball of white light protecting you or imagine sitting in a circle of fire. Go with what works for you. Your mind will believe whatever you feed it – consistently!

ACTION:

Practice this qigong movement to centre and protect your energy.
Do this to daily, in the morning and before you sleep.

W E E K 4 : SHOOTING BOW

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Step 4: Use Non-Violent Communication

“SOMETIMES ‘NO’ IS THE KINDEST WORD.”
— VIRONIKA TUGALEVA

When you say No, do you feel riddled and overcome with the energy of guilt, shame or fear? If so, stay with these feelings. Feel it. Fully experience it. Allow it to pass. It's an old repetitive energy that needs to be moved and transformed. Watch it. Feel this space – what arises? A lump in your throat? A burning sensation in your chest for example? Your task is to be present to it (through conscious breathing) and watch it. With consistent practice, this uncomfortable energy dissipates.

To express your needs, attend to and re-wire your languaging to make it assertive. Use "I won't", "I'm not able to" instead of "I can't" etc. Use the active instead of the passive verb. Try this and get used to hearing your voice out loud. Visualise yourself holding a strong posture as you say these words.

Practice saying No out loud. Practice saying Yes to yourself out loud. Let your voice be strong – feel the vibrations emanate from your solar plexus down to your gut as you speak out loud. If you're worried about saying No in anger, know that anger has its place. (For example, when enough is enough, you've reached your limit and the other person doesn't respect your boundaries.) Anger is self-protection. Befriend your anger. However for everyday situations, it's possible to state your boundaries in a non-violent way. A calm way in which the other person can become receptive and listen to your needs.

ACTION:

Check out Marshall Rosenberg's idea of 'Non-violent communication' which will be an invaluable resource to you for conflict resolution: [Click here for a simple but awesome overview via Wiki](#)

Download and read through the PDF '[An Introduction to Non-Violent Communication](#)' (linked on the course page!)

Listen to Marshall Rosenberg's interesting and enlightening [audio on thoughts Vs feelings](#).

JOURNAL THIS:

What are you afraid of at the thought of saying No? What unconscious vows could you have taken that stop you from expressing your needs? E.g. needing to please, afraid of their reaction. Keep asking why? until you get to the root of the problem as much as possible.

What are you afraid of losing when you risk saying No? How important is this loss and how does it relate to the vision you're moving towards?

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Step 5: Practice Sun Salutations

“TRUTH DOES NOT SIT IN A CAVE AND HIDE LIKE A LIE. IT WANDERS AROUND PROUDLY AND ROARS LOUDLY LIKE A LION.” — SUZY KASSEM

The Surya Namaskar, or Sun Salutation yoga practice is a form of embodied prayer that shows your gratitude for the Sun - the Sun that is physically manifest outside and the microcosmic solar energy within you. It is, in essence a physical prayer.

Surya or the Sun is a form of the Vedic/Hindu God Shiva, referred to as Savitr in the Rg Veda- the spark of dawn that gives Surya his illuminating power.

Chanting the Savitri Gayatri Mantra invokes this energy of purification, light and inner knowing that moves you towards your truth. It's taken from the Rg Veda. This mantra and vibration is quite literally a wake up call that charges and moves each layer of your being towards self-realisation.

The Gayatri Mantra:

Om bhūr bhuvah svaḥ
tāt savitúr váreṇ(i)yaṃ
bhárgo devásya dhīmahī
dhíyo yó naḥ pracodáyāt

A Simple Translation:

Earth (body) Atmosphere (air/space) Heaven (higher self)
We meditate on the sacred light of the luminous source.
May that guide our intentions.

If you want to learn it – send me an email and I'll send you an audio recording of me chanting it.

ACTION

External Sun Salutation videos to help you practice: (incorporate the Shooting Bow movement I've recorded in your salutations to build extra strength and vigour).

Traditional version

Variations {incorporate Shooting Bow}.

W E E K 4 : SHOOTING BOW BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Step 6: Mandala Art Exercise

“I SAW THAT EVERYTHING, ALL PATHS I HAD BEEN FOLLOWING, ALL STEPS I HAD TAKEN, WERE LEADING BACK TO A SINGLE POINT — NAMELY, TO THE MID-POINT. IT BECAME INCREASINGLY PLAIN TO ME THAT THE MANDALA IS THE CENTRE. IT IS THE EXPONENT OF ALL PATHS. IT IS THE PATH TO THE CENTRE, TO INDIVIDUATION. I KNEW THAT IN FINDING THE MANDALA AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE SELF I HAD ATTAINED WHAT WAS FOR ME THE ULTIMATE.”

— C. G. JUNG



The mandala or 'sacred circle' is used as a symbolic representation of the Self and in particular the unconscious Self. In this task, I'm going to take you through a yogic heat building breath technique, followed by a creative visualisation before we do the drawing exercise. The purpose for this activity is to create more consciousness and move you forwards towards your vision. **Click the mandala above to begin!**

W E E K 4 : SHOOTING BOW



Honour your inner divine masculine this week!
Let this energy be a pillar of strength, truth, support and protection!

Keep going! I've got your back!

I'd love to know how you got on!

Share your progress in the [Shero Rises Facebook group](#), this will help others keep up and follow through.

Have any questions?

Feel free to email me: payal.mindbodyspurityyoga@gmail.com

Stay connected :)

::Payal::

