

# Yoga Therapy in Practice

## End-of-Life Yoga Therapy: Exploring Life and Death

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**Abstract:** *Loss and death are ongoing, universal, natural aspects of life. Yoga therapy is a profession that inherently addresses the many physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects within end-of-life care and requires extensive preparation both professionally and personally. This article introduces concepts, tools, and specific guidelines that can assist Yoga therapists to more effectively and compassionately serve those who are living with serious illness, loss, and end-of-life issues. Yoga philosophy that supports end-of-life therapy is discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Yoga, hospice, dying, meditation, pranayama*

### Introduction

Many individuals relate to Woody Allen's statement, "It's not that I'm afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens."<sup>1</sup> Society is focused on youth and beauty, as well as being overstimulated and consumer-oriented. All of this can make the experience of dying lonely, pain-filled, and without dignity. This trend is compounded by the human tendency not to confront personal mortality while still living a healthy, active life. But, of course, death, dying, and loss are universal and can occur at any time throughout the lifespan, from infancy to old age.

In 2030, 20% of Americans will be age 65 or older.<sup>2</sup> This aging population, as well as people of all ages and nationalities, will want the same choices in "dying well" as they have had in "living well." Contemporary society would benefit from a vision of death that is not dissociated from life, but that embraces the significance and dignity of each individual.<sup>3</sup> Grief, loss, and dying are not phases to "move through" but rather are natural life experiences that are integrated into and inform our living.

Thanatology is the study of death and dying. Many disciplines contribute to this field, including philosophy, sociology, medicine, nursing, psychology, anthropology, law,

education, theology, and spirituality.<sup>4</sup> Thanatologists Charles Corr and Kenneth Doka propose that these disciplines "strive toward better concepts and a clearer understanding of the issues faced by human beings as they seek to live an examined life and prepare themselves to face death."<sup>5</sup>

Yoga therapy is poised to contribute richly to the field of thanatology. Yoga therapy is steeped in the philosophical tradition of Yoga, which calls students to be aware of the polarities of life, as well as the practical art and science of living. Yoga practices such as *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, and meditation can alleviate the anxiety and suffering that arises from illness, loss, and death, while opening the heart and mind to the mystery of life and death. Paradoxically, a Yoga practice that embraces the natural cycle of life and death can enrich living. The courageous exploration asks, "Knowing that you will die, how do you wish to live?"

### *End-of-Life Yoga Therapy*

For the purpose of this paper, end-of-life Yoga therapy includes 1) the practice of dying while living, 2) support for individuals experiencing grief and loss, 3) support for individuals experiencing life-threatening illness, and 4) support for those transitioning from physical life to death. Personalized end-of-life Yoga therapy emphasizes gentleness,

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listening, and empowerment. It may include a wide range of tools and practices from the Yoga tradition, as well as other therapeutic tools such as music and touch.

Yoga therapy end-of-life care has the overall therapeutic goal of providing a professional, safe, healing atmosphere that allows students to openly explore living, illness, grief, and dying. The care is based in models of service, education, and wellness. End-of-life care aims to alleviate suffering by compassionate, nonjudgmental support as the student moves through the many physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual experiences associated with serious illness, grief, and end of life.

This article is a culmination of 26 years of personal and professional exploration of end-of-life issues. After a personal loss, I sought to find meaning within the experience and ultimately within the universal and natural cycle of life and death. Formally, I began as a hospice volunteer. I later completed two national music certifications, bringing harp music to the bedside for healing. I completed my Master's of Social Work, with my thesis focused on death attitudes and spirituality. My experience working as a social worker in a palliative care hospice unit allowed me to witness and provide emotional and spiritual support to patients, as well as to their families and friends, as they transitioned through the full spectrum of their death and dying experiences. My formal Yoga therapy training has been with Integrative Yoga Therapy, under the guidance of Joseph and Lillian Le Page. I presently offer private and group Yoga therapy to support individuals who are facing health challenges, a change in their lives, a loss experience, or are in the end-of-life transition.

### *Preparing the Therapist*

Compassion for self and others is essential as one explores the natural wholeness and wellness in dying. Before working with any students, it is important to thoroughly address one's own personal grief and experience with loss. An exploration of personal mortality is necessary before opening oneself to others' losses and deaths. For these reasons, an ongoing personal end-of-life practice is essential for the Yoga therapist as they support others who are experiencing change, serious illness, loss, grief, or the end of life. Therefore, Yoga therapists may find it useful to practice the *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *mudrā*, meditation, and Yoga *nidra* practices described in this article. Creative expression, including art, journaling, photography, poetry, or music may also be of value while exploring loss. Allow adequate time to center and ground yourself in right action and appropriate intention before each and every session.

Maintaining a connection to your own teachers or mentors is invaluable for supporting your personal and professional end-of-life practice. It is also essential to develop a broad referral network of mental health professionals and spiritual counselors before working with students. Such preparation insures timely and compassionate support for all circumstances that may arise that are beyond the scope of Yoga therapy. There is the strong possibility that a student with serious illness will have intricate medical needs and physical contraindications. Preparation therefore may include communication with the student's healthcare team.

## Teaching Guidelines

### *Setting the Stage for End-of-Life Yoga Therapy*

Thought and care should be put into creating an environment of peacefulness and comfort. Consider the lighting, temperature, and privacy of the environment. Choose any Yoga props, including bolsters and thick Yoga mats, with care. Also consider bringing in the additions of music or natural beauty, such as flowers, shells, or plants. The use of music to support the individual is an art and science unto itself. I recommend using unfamiliar, instrumental music. The music is intended to provide an atmosphere of relaxation and support for the Yoga practice; it is not intended to provide entertainment or distraction. Without knowing the student's music preferences, present circumstances, emotional state, and spiritual or religious beliefs, the use of predetermined music can add to the discomfort of the student. Consulting with a student on this and other decisions communicates *ahimsā*, respect and care.

From the first session onward, the practice of non-judgmental listening is a skill to be studied and practiced by the Yoga therapist. The initial health history and assessment should set the stage for an open and compassionate therapeutic space and relationship. Consider asking questions that encourage the student to explore the topics of loss, grief, death, and dying. For example:

- What are the main challenges or issues in your life right now?
- What would you consider to be the main losses you have suffered?
- How would you describe the spiritual dimension of your life?
- Do you have close friends or others you can confide in?
- What do you see as ultimately most important in life?
- Do you feel you have a particular mission or vocation in life, and are you fulfilling it?
- What would you consider your philosophy of life?

Any meaningful discussion of death must address what, if anything, exists beyond death. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the many beliefs and implications of life beyond physical death. Ultimately, death is seen as either a door to pass through or a wall where there is nothing beyond. It is paramount to respect all individual religious beliefs and experiences of loss, death, and dying. There will be instances when the therapist needs to resist the tendency to be offer answers or advice. At times, we may feel that we would make different choices if we were in the student's circumstances. Respect requires standing beside the student and serving from a place of nonjudgmental love and support. Proselytizing the therapist's religion, beliefs, and spirituality contradicts ethical boundaries.

### *Yoga Therapy Session Possibilities*

There are many Yoga practices that can support end-of-life therapy. The student's own goals and current needs should always inform the Yoga therapist's selection of practices (based on the therapist's lineage). The following examples are some of the practices I have found most useful. If any of these practices are unfamiliar, further training may be needed before integrating them into your own practice or teaching.

### **Introduction, Greeting, and Sharing**

Begin with the student in a comfortable position. Depending on the individual's capacity, this might be anywhere from a supported, upright seated posture to lying in a hospital bed. Provide an introduction and greeting that is based in professional, unconditional love. Ask questions, and listen to the individuals' story. Use this sharing to co-create a Yoga therapy session that meets their goals, and allows relaxation and awareness to unfold. Share the precept of *ahimsā*, and let students know that if any words, instruction, metaphor, breathing exercise, or movement does not support them in their Yoga and belief system, they may either disregard it silently or share their concern with the therapist. By encouraging students to share their perceptions, you offer additional opportunities for inquiry or reflection.

### **Centering and Intention**

Invite students to close their eyes if they are comfortable with the darkness, and begin to gently focus their consciousness inward. Encourage shifting positions or using a centering breath for physical comfort when needed. Ask if the student wishes to create an intention for the Yoga practice. In some circumstances, modeling by sharing your intention for the session can be helpful. For example, "My intention is

to provide a comfortable, warm, fun, open, educational, inspirational Yoga session that supports and co-creates awareness and peace in heart, mind, body, and spirit."

### **Body and Breath Scan**

Lead students through a body scan, guiding them in nonjudgmentally sensing and witnessing the physical body. Allow them to focus inward and rotate consciousness through body regions. Invite them to notice what might be present for them, today in their physical body, in the present moment. This is a practical means to create a deeper relationship with the physical body. This can be an appropriate time to introduce Yoga philosophy, which says that we are more than our physical bodies.

A guided breath scan is a bridge to more subtle awareness. Assist students to non-judgmentally explore their breathing and the qualities of breath. Allow them to experience and embody their natural breath by watching the breath. Later on, if appropriate, ask questions such as "Who am I today in this breath?" "Can you let the breath come into you?" "Who or what is breathing you?" and "Where did your first breath come from?"

The body and breath scan often are the foundation for an extended Yoga *nidra* practice. Yoga *nidra* is a form of *pratyāhāra* practice that should be used with precautions for this population. For therapists interested in the profound power and value of this practice, further study is warranted (see Resources List below). The practice has immense potential for the experienced student and therapist, but it requires more than a cursory introduction to instruction.

### *Prānāyāma*

Simple and straightforward *prānāyāma* is indicated for this population. More technically demanding techniques should be used sparingly and only with experienced Yoga practitioners. Possibilities for practice may include:

- Abdominal Yogic breath.
- Sounding "Ahhhh" while releasing the breath.
- Directing breath, energy, and awareness to different regions of the lungs or body.
- Balanced breathing (even ratio of inhalation to exhalation).
- Moving toward longer exhalation than inhalation during times of stress or anxiety.
- Exploring the natural pause (silence) between inhalation and exhalation.
- Balloon Breath—expanding as if the lungs or regions of the body were balloons. Guide and allow students to visualize their deep, slow abdominal inhalation "inflat-

ing” their arms and hands fully like a balloon and on the exhalation releasing or “deflating” the fullness of the balloon sensation.

- Skin Breath—after cycles of centering in full abdominal Yogic breathing, asking students to visualize the subtle sensing of where their skin ends and the air and outer world begin, or asking them to sense the pores of their skin breathing.

### *Mudrâ*

Individuals of all levels of mobility are able to experience *mudrâs*, hand gestures that direct breath, energy, and awareness. The subtle energy of a *mudrâ* affects all *koshas*: body, breath, energy, mind, emotions, wisdom, and spirit. There are *mudrâs* to open, to receive, to ground, to pray, to offer, and to meditate.<sup>6</sup> A few of the possibilities for an end-of-life Yoga therapy *mudrâ* practice include:

- *Anjali mudrâ*: Hands in “prayer” position, near the heart. A balancing, calming *mudrâ*.
- *Vajrapradama mudrâ*: Hands interlaced openly, palms toward chest, with thumbs upward. A *mudrâ* that can elicit steadfastness, confidence, connection, and trust.
- *Padma mudrâ*: A *mudrâ* that creates the image of a lotus flower. Hands in *anjali mudrâ*, allow the base of the palms to stay together as the mid-palms and fingers open like a flower blooming. Thumbs and little fingers touch lightly at tips. An opening *mudrâ* that may bring sensations of hope and healing.
- *Samputa mudrâ*: Hands cupped, palms together one on top of the other, creating a space within the hands. A *mudrâ* that may evoke gratitude.
- *Adhi mudrâ*: Fingers lightly curled around the thumbs, place the soft fists palm down on knees, floor, or bed. A grounding *mudrâ* that may calm and comfort.
- *Mandala mudrâ*: Right cupped hand resting in your left cupped hand, creating an oval. Thumbs come together at the top, completing the circle. A balancing *mudrâ* that may bring a sense of wholeness and connectedness.

### *Âsana*

*Âsanas* may vary from strong, active sequencing to adaptive, restorative poses, but should always reflect the stated goals and needs of the individual on that day. The session can be a creative, organic exploration of postures based on meeting the student where he or she is. Throughout the *âsana* practice, provide ongoing cues for how to integrate breath with movement.

When selecting postures, follow the wisdom of “less is more.” For this population, postures may be explored with

a focus on the energetic or symbolic properties of the *âsana*, rather than a focus on achieving a picture-perfect pose. The therapist must be prepared to provide modifications, supports, and adaptations for the student. Be aware that accepting support or modifications is sometimes difficult for students, as it may appear to be another example in their life of present or future loss. This situation provides an opportunity for a student to explore accepting, receiving, and surrendering within life.

A few examples of supported, modified *âsana* include:

- Supine or seated wrist, neck, shoulder, feet or ankle warm-ups.
- Seated *ardha chandrâsana* (half moon) side bend or *tadaka mudrâ* (supine crescent moon) with the cue to open, lengthen, and breathe into the side body.
- *Paschimottanâsana* (seated forward fold) or *sukhâsana* (easy pose, with a forward bend) with the cue to breathe fully into the back body and, when appropriate, placing hands on the student’s upper and lower back to assist with the awareness and direction of the breath.
- Supported *matsyâsana* (fish pose) with a bolster/blanket under the torso, a bolster under the knees, head support, and a comfortable arm position.
- *Makarâsana* (crocodile pose), explored from a resting posture to fuller spine extension.
- *Tadâsana* (standing or supine mountain pose), exploring the bidirectional energy of being grounded, rooted, and connected into the earth (downward energies), and being open and lifted (upward energetic qualities).
- *Savâsana* (corpse pose), with modifications, adaptations, bolsters, and support to ensure comfort for the physical body (see below for more detailed discussion of this important pose).

Within each and every posture, create space for the “sweet spot,” where all instruction and striving is suspended, and silence and effortlessness may be enjoyed. Take into consideration that stillness in certain poses may elicit a strong emotion in the student. Being prepared for these moments is essential. Compassionate, entrained breathing can hold the space for the both the student and therapist to fully experience the emotional response in a safe atmosphere.

### *Savâsana*

In its fullest expression, *savâsana* is a courageous exploration of the mystery of life and death. Dying is natural and universal. *Savâsana*—literally translated as “corpse pose”—provides an opportunity to practice moving toward the ultimate letting go. As we lie down and rest in stillness, we honor the “being” of life. We rest in our wholeness, just

as we are in that moment, in that body, with that current emotional and mental state, and the current circumstances of life. This nonjudgmental awareness also provides an opportunity to witness our impermanence and mortality. Through *savāsana*, a glimpse of what some call the true Self—the unborn, undying consciousness—may occur as we move beyond our personal experience toward a connection with the universal.

It is essential to include *savāsana* in every session. In *savāsana*, the physical body should be supported and comfortable; the breath and energy body should be natural; the mind should have a quiet, gentle, inner focus; the emotional body should be moving towards equanimity; the wisdom body should be honored; and the bliss body should be open. As thoughts, emotions, and sensations are witnessed, they can be gently released to allow fully being present in the moment. The practice encourages finding comfort in our deepest self.

Gentle, supportive verbal cues assist the student in *savāsana*. Some examples are:

- Allow your bones to melt into the Yoga mat.
- Imagine your entire body breathing.
- Witness thoughts and emotions as they pass by.
- Honor your wisdom as you connect to the universal wisdom.
- Let joy, peace, and bliss wash over you.
- Release, relax, guide, notice, receive, rest, dissolve, allow, open, let go, accept, honor, soften, welcome, be present, be still, connect, permit, embrace, sense, enjoy, surrender, pause, unfold.

### Sharing and Closing

It is essential to allow time for sharing of the student's experience as the session comes to a close. If appropriate, the use of a carefully chosen quote, poem, or prayer can be inspirational, once you have understood the student's spirituality and circumstances.

### *Extending Yoga Therapy into Everyday Life*

It is important to remember that individuals experiencing change, loss, serious illness, and the end of life have goals. Researchers Kinnier, Tribbensee, Rose, and Vaughan observed, “Confrontation with death can serve to shake individuals into reassessing their priorities and may provide them with sagacious insights about life.”<sup>7</sup> Yoga practice cultivates introspection and distills what is important in life and living. *Svādhyāya*, or witnessing and introspection, helps the student prioritize goals and assists in finding meaning in life.

If it supports the student's goals, a home practice may include a wide range of activities and experiences. Never as “homework,” but as an organic extension of Yoga and the awareness that unfolds from the practice. Through nonjudgmental listening and sharing, the synergy between the student and therapist can guide the co-creation of a creative home practice.

A daily practice of *savāsana*, or any practice of connecting with silence, is very beneficial. Beyond the obvious home-practice possibilities of *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, and meditation, other possible activities might include creative expressions inspired from the Yoga therapy session. For example, writing a letter or poem, painting, or gardening as a natural expression of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual awareness that arises from Yoga practice.

End-of-life Yoga therapy sessions may also move students to experience a “life review,” either formally or informally. It is an honor to witness individuals who come to their personal understanding of what their mission and purpose in life is and has been. Contemplation, *vichara* (self-awareness), and discernment supports this process. Furthermore, the practice of *aparigraha* (letting go and the releasing of control, transgressions, fears) can allow for peacefulness and joy to emerge. Students may choose to communicate to their loved ones emotions such as love, forgiveness, and gratitude, as well as memories and beliefs. The open communication and dialogue with family and friends allows for perspectives and life stories to emerge, which may support personal meaning-making for the student.

## Yoga Philosophy for End-of-life Yoga Therapeutics

Yoga philosophy is rich in its ability to deepen the experience and understanding of an end-of-life yoga therapy practice. When appropriate, sharing Yoga philosophy with students allows the theoretical background to come to life.

### *The Pancha Maya Model*

The *pancha maya* model (originating from the Vedic scripture the *Taittiriya-Upanishad*, and later found in the *Vedanta* doctrine of the five sheaths, or *panca-kosha*)<sup>8</sup> creates a practical structure for Yoga therapy. The *kosha* model provides a framework for understanding the integration of body, mind, and spirit, which is essential in end-of-life Yoga therapy. It may be useful to share this model with students when describing the many ways Yoga therapy can be of support.

### *Pancha maya model*

- *Anna maya kosha*: physical and medical considerations
- *Prana maya kosha*: breathing and energy considerations
- *Mano maya kosha*: mental and emotional considerations
- *Vijna maya kosha*: inner knowing and wisdom considerations
- *Ananda maya kosha*: spiritual and joyful bliss considerations

In our living and our dying, the *kosha* model provides a framework for experiencing unifying wholeness. Held together, the concepts of life and death can seem paradoxical. Yet, Yoga allows for the integration of all opposites. The balance of “opposites,” such as will and surrender, can be explored at all levels—body, breath, energetic, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Starting with the physical body and *āsana*, we can experience bidirectional muscular, skeletal, and energetic forces that ultimately bring a pose into alignment. Within the *prana maya kosha*, seemingly opposite forces may be experienced in the differing effects of the inhalation compared to the exhalation. Upon closer exploration, the breath can be viewed and experienced as the natural circular cycle it is. The energetic body also reveals seemingly opposite forces when one is sensing the subtle nuances of “doing” versus “being.” Additionally, the energetic body allows for sensations of feeling “grounded” and “expansive” simultaneously.

Outwardly, emotional opposites such as joy and sorrow seem radically different. However, the bittersweet emotions can be viewed as a spectrum of emotion that occurs during serious illness, loss, and dying. During end-of-life, our wisdom body may move toward the recognition of connection with all of life. But as human beings, there will likely still be moments when we also experience separation, doubt, and fear.

The dying individual, along with family and friends, will likely experience the capacity to hold “opposite” emotions at the same time. Tears of sadness, tears of fear, tears of memories, tears of laughter, tears of relief, and tears of joy can fluctuate rapidly, and even be present simultaneously. These tears are a physical expression of the integration of opposites. Life is strong and fragile, complex and simple, sorrowful and joyful.

Through each and every *kosha* there lies the opportunity for this paradoxical awareness to move us toward freedom from experiences such as physical pain, mental anguish, emotional upheavals, or spiritual separation. Ultimately, glimpses of bliss and *vidya* (non-duality/wholeness) remind us of our true and essential nature. Present in the moment with an open heart, along with *prasadam* (grace), we enter into *rahasya*, the deep mystery of life and death.

### *Pantajali's Yoga Sūtras*

There are many classic Yogic references to support the philosophical foundations for end-of-life Yoga therapy, including the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali. The *yama* of *ahimsā* (firmness in nonviolence) referred to in Patanjali's *sūtras* is integral to end-of-life Yoga therapy. The following overview will highlight some of the *sūtras* that I have experienced as most relevant for end-of-life therapy. The translation of these *sūtras* is by Swami Venkatesananda.<sup>9</sup>

*Yoga Sūtra I.2: Yoga citta vrtti nirodhab.* (Yoga is the stilling of the movement of thought in the indivisible intelligence.) In end-of-life care, there are times when confusion, anxiety, and fear are present. Through Yoga practices such as meditation and *savāsana*, equanimity and peacefulness are cultivated.

*Yoga Sūtra I.3: tada drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam.* (Then the seer exists by itself and as itself.) Yoga allows students to explore and discover who they truly are, their essential Self, through introspection and witness consciousness. Through the awareness practices of Yoga, what is important and meaningful in life may shift and be reprioritized. Daily life is re-examined and daily concerns tend to fade as death approaches.

*Yoga Sūtra I.18: virama pratyaya 'bhyasa purvah samskara seso 'nyah* (Different from this is the practice which is based on cessation of all effort.) Whether in *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, or meditation, integrating a philosophy of non-striving opens the body, breath, mind, heart, and spirit to relaxation and peacefulness within. The cessation of all effort is, in essence, “permission” to “just be” and rest in Self. Non-striving is an expression of the “being” of Yoga. The philosophy can extend to affirming to the student that they are complete and whole just as they are.

*Yoga Sūtra I.23: Isvara pranidhāndād vā.* (Surrender to the omnipresent, ever-existing reality, or God.) The theme of “surrender,” understandably a very difficult practice, is ultimately the core of end-of-life Yoga therapy. The practice of *savāsana* provides an opportunity to practice acceptance and surrendering to the “ever-existing reality,” however named, and to the mystery of life and death.

*Yoga Sūtra I.26: sa esa pūrvesām api guruh kālenā 'navacchedāt.* (Enlightening experience of all the sages from the beginning of time is not conditioned by time.) Timelessness or a shift/loss in the sense of time arises in both Yoga and at the end of life. An end-of-life Yoga practice allows for personal philosophies of life and death to be re-examined, strengthened, or transformed.

*Yoga Sūtra I.31: duhka daurmanasyā 'ngam ejayatva svāsa prasava viksepa saha bhuvah.* (The presence of the following

symptoms reveals the disturbance of the mind: sorrowful mood, psychological despair, the motions of the body, and inhalation and exhalation.) Sorrow, anxiety, physical discomfort, and despair, which are recognized in this *sūtra*, are often present for the dying and their families and friends as they face the physical, mental, and emotional anguish of saying goodbye. The practices of Yoga offer preparation, compassion, and a deeper exploration of death and dying that may alleviate some suffering.

*Yoga Sūtras II.3-4, 6, 7-9: avidyā smritā rāga dvesā bhiniesāh klesāh:* (ignorance, egotism, attraction, repulsion, and clinging to life); *avidyā ksetram uttaresām prasupta tanu vicchinno dārānām* (Ignorance is the cause of all the other sources of psychic distress, whether dormant, weak or spread out.); *dr̥g darsana-saktyor ekātmateva smitā* (The power of sight sees; however, when fragmented identifies itself as the seer; there is ego-sense.); *dukha nusāyi dvesah* (repulsion abides in the erroneous classification of an object or experience as pain-giving.); *svarasavāhi viduso pi tatha rudho abnivesah* (Clinging to life is self-sustaining and a dormant factor in wise beings.)

The *kleshas* of *avidyā*, (ignorance of the truth of oneness, duality, separation); *asmitā* (attachment to a disintegrating experience of ego); *raga/dvesha: sukha* and *dubkha* (attachment and aversion); and *abhinivesha* (clinging to life, finite self, fear of death) can be present through experiences of loss, grief, death, and dying. The relevance of the *kleshas* can be seen in Kübler-Ross's widely known five stages of grief and dying, which incorporate experiences of denial, fear, and anger.<sup>10</sup>

## Closing

Through the philosophy and tools of Yoga therapy, we have the honor and opportunity to heal ourselves, our society, and our planet. Each of us is a part of this transformation as we allow Yoga to guide the courageous exploration of life, illness, grief, and physical death. I continue to be amazed that with all of the “doing” of Yoga, the moments of “being” Yoga are, to me and my students, the most profound. End-of-life Yoga therapy has the capacity to allow the strength and beauty of the human spirit to shine.

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## Resources

### Books

- A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as If It Were Your Last* by Stephen Levine  
*Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying* by Stephen Levine and Ondrea Levine  
*Handbook for Mortals: Guidance for People Facing Serious Illness* by Joanne Lynn & Joan Harrold  
*Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* by Jon Kabat-Zinn

### Websites

- [www.adec.org](http://www.adec.org) Association for Death Education and Counseling  
[www.nhpco.org](http://www.nhpco.org) The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization  
[www.nondual.com](http://www.nondual.com) Richard Miller's Yoga *nidra* training

### Experiences

- Local hospice volunteer training  
Network with local end-of-life care professionals  
College course in death and dying

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