

Aparigraha means non-grasping, non-possessiveness, non-hoarding. It could be thought of as letting go. *Aparigraha* implies letting go both in the physical world (e.g. money, clothes, what we think we must have) and in the non-physical worlds (e.g. behaviors that no longer serve us, habitual negative emotions, perceived limitations, etc.)

Bernard Bouanchaud writes in The Essence of Yoga, “The more one owns, the more one needs to protect...When the mind no longer worries about acquiring and keeping goods, we understand where we come from, where we are, and where we are going. We discover the meaning of life.” Hmm. .

Regarding the non-physical (or behavioral) realm, consider that you may be holding on to decisions and reactions from the past - no matter how negative or limiting they might be. When you are willing to acknowledge and release that grasp on who you think you are (the good, the bad, and the ugly), then you have more room to experience your fullness, and maybe even surprise yourself and be surprised by life!

On the yoga mat and in life, we can always connect to the natural “letting go” energy of our exhale – to the constant and balanced flow of breath in (receiving) and breath out (releasing).

Homework: *As a yoga detective, investigate: What are you holding on to that no longer serves? (Remember to bring some ahimsa (loving-kindness) to your observations.) Play with letting go and notice what that is like.*

Recommendation: *Create your reflection paper (a paragraph or so on your practice of each of the five yamas) or your art project and have it ready to turn in next week.*

Sources: The Essence of Yoga by Bernard Bouanchaud

www.yoganorthwest.com/reflections/aparigraha.htm by Ingela Abbott,

“Yamas & Niyamas” handout by Sarahjoy Marsch, director of ‘amrita—a sanctuary for yoga’

Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit by Donna Farhi