

Isvari pranidhana - *isvara* means “Lord” and *pranidhana* implies “throwing down” or “giving up” It sounds like “let go and let God,” doesn’t it? Being religious (or even believing in god), is optional to practice. It’s about opening up to what lies beyond what we already know. It’s about ‘throwing down’ the results of your efforts to _____ (fill in the blank: to God, the Universe, Life, Humanity, the Unknown -- whatever truly resonates with you.)

We tend to be very concerned with “getting there”, with “making it,” with results. Nothing wrong with that – it’s just that this *niyama* suggests that what truly matters is not the achievement, rather the process. It is in direct opposition to the saying that “the end justifies the means,” (which is derived from a Latin proverb). Rather, *isvari pranidhana* addresses the “how” and “why” of what we do, and invites us to allow the “end” or the results to work themselves out.

Isvari pranidhana recognizes that there is more to Life than what we might think – more than we can necessarily measure or define; that there lies a greater reality beyond our desires, fears and agendas. *Isvari pranidhana* is about opening up to the bigger flow of life of which we are a part.

Paradoxically, this surrender can take tremendous strength. To let go of our driving personal agenda and habits can require a full-hearted expression of doing our best and trusting in ourselves, each other, and the Mystery of Life!

On the yoga mat, when you open yourself to a bigger whole, when you listen to your body and your breath, when you soften into a deeper sense of ease and connection, you are practicing *isvari pranidhana*.

Homework: Practice offering your best to each moment and allow the outcomes to unfold. Be a warrior and release any attachment to the results. Have fun and see what happens.

Homework Recommendation: Complete your assignment (paper and/or art project) as you practice this *niyama*.

Sources: Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit by Donna Fahri, “Yamas and Niyamas” by Sarahjoy Marsh
“Cultivate Your Connections” by Judith Lasater (<http://www.yoga-journal.com/wisdom/455.cfm>)