

Svadhyaya means self-study, and it refers to that self-reflective consciousness that comes from observing ourselves from a bigger lens than that of being merely the “do-er”. Through self-study we become aware of both our strengths and our weaknesses, our infinite vastness as well as our limiting habits and behaviors.

“Any activity that cultivates this kind of awareness can be considered *svadhyaya*. The soul tends to be lured by those activities that will best illuminate it.”* As we are each unique, one person may be drawn to write, while another will drawn to painting, service, academics, athletics or --- (fill in the blank.) “*Svadhyaya* means staying with the process through thick and thin because when the going gets rough that we have the greatest opportunity to learn.”*

By practicing *svadhyaya* (along with a heaping dose *ahimsa*:), we can develop a real intimacy with ourselves --we can begin to compassionately understand and appreciate why we do what we do. The ultimate aim is to use this intimacy to liberate ourselves from that smaller version of ourselves into the wider horizons of our infinite, interconnected (not to mention happier) Self.

Homework: *Observe yourself on and off the yoga mat. Recognize a strength you possess that you haven't yet recognized. With loving-kindness (and without drama), accept a weakness you haven't yet befriended.*

Homework Recommendation: *Continue building your reflection paper or your art project..*

Sources: * [Yoga, Mind, Body & Spirit](#) by Donna Farhi,
“Cultivate Your Connections” by Judith Lasater
“Yamas and Niyamas” by Sarahjoy Marsh, director of *amrita, a sanctuary for yoga*