



**Hersha Chellaram: Accessible Yoga & Mental Health Support for Pregnancy & Early Parenthood**



Hersha Chellaram is an 18-year veteran yoga therapist and teacher trainer. She is the director of Hersha Yoga School of Teacher Training offering 200-hour and 500-hour yoga teacher training and specialty training for prenatal yoga, children's yoga and accessible yoga. Discover Hersha's links to yogic philosophy that underpin techniques to support prenatal mental health and experience some of the tools to explore these.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Pause frequently.

**Empower and Include Through Yoga: Accessible, not physical practice.**

- Understand what it is to live in our bodies and what our bodies are telling us before we can become embodied.
- Through practice, silence and listening, build this relationship. All relationships (including self) have ups and downs.
- **Self-acceptance** - have respect and dignity towards yourself so you can apply that to others; **Holding space** - accommodate discomfort and darkness; do not push through painful experiences, hold space for them without blindly rejecting them or be in a rush to try and fix them - truly understanding them; **Self-reliance** - listen to your own body and mind; **Embracing Change** - present moment awareness; **Unity and diversity** - celebrate what we all share in common which is heart to heart connection.

**Accessible Prenatal Yoga: Pregnancy is the opposite to the usual journey through yoga - from restriction to flexibility.**

- Understand - not all pregnancy journeys are the same. 1. Progression towards limited mobility. 2. Emphasis on sensation and nourishment of body and mind. 3. Acknowledgement of epigenetics. 4. Emphasis on mental health tools. 5. Truthful self-expression

**Tools To Cultivate Strong Mental Capacity: Yoga Sutras and Serenity Prayer**

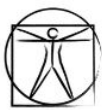
- See the links between Patanjali's kriyas and the Serenity Prayer, to develop our own boundaries. **Tapasya** (accept pain and cultivate the discipline to make changes as you can): **Courage to change what you can. Svadhyaya** (study of the self. Cultivate the wisdom to know what you can and cannot change): **Wisdom to know the difference. Ishvarapranidhanam** (practice of surrender, acceptance, letting go): **Serenity - accept what cannot be changed.**
- Achieve this through abhyasa and vairagya - practice and non-attachment. **Practice is any effort towards steadying your mind** - not just physical. Can be bhakti (creative self-expression and love), dhyana (self-enquiry, wisdom), karma (self-less service, being kind and compassionate), mantra (positive affirmation through coming to terms with negative thought patterns, creating awareness to shed light).

**Key Practices To Cultivate: Art of deep listening**

- Whole hearted attention to verbal and non-verbal communication. ; **Non-judgement** - never assume/don't "should" on yourself/others; **Emotional awareness** - language and adjustment etiquette.

**Resources**

- ❖ **Website:** <https://www.hershayoga.com/>
- ❖ **References:** Patanjali's Sutras, Serenity Prayer.



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