

## HOROSCOPE

**ARIES**  
(MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

You won't be able to keep a secret. You are best to deal with those outside your family. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**TAURUS**  
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Losses are likely if you get involved with uncertain individuals. Travel and communications will not run smoothly. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**GEMINI**  
(MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Put all your energy into moneymaking ventures. You won't get the reaction you want from your mate this week. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**CANCER**  
(JUNE 22-JULY 22)

You will be full of energy. Find something constructive to do. The key to feeling good is to do something productive. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

**LEO**  
(JULY 23-AUG 22)

Travel will be good if you are seeking knowledge. Control your emotions and everything will fall into place. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

**VIRGO**  
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Accept the inevitable. Senior colleagues may be able to get the job done. Your charm will be captivating. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**LIBRA**  
(SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

Visit relatives you rarely see. Don't be afraid to start your own small business on the side. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**SCORPIO**  
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

You must steer clear of overindulgent individuals. You may want to take a look at your direction in life. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Secret affairs can only lead to devastating circumstances. Your high energy should be spent pleasing your mate. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

**CAPRICORN**  
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Friendship might suffer if money becomes an issue. Your workload will be heavy. You will experience emotional turmoil. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**AQUARIUS**  
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Too much work and no play will not only result in fatigue and frustration but also loneliness, too. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

**PISCES**  
(FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Avoid getting involved in the problems of colleagues. Get involved in competitive sports. Friends will appreciate your attention. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**KUNDALINI RISING****BY SHAZIA OMAR**

is a yogini. Her classes are available at studio 107. shaziaomar@gmail.com



# Break bad habits to make space for new possibilities



*Samskara saksat karanat purvajati jnanam.*

"Through sustained focus and meditation on our patterns, habits, and conditioning, we gain knowledge and understanding of our past and of how we can change the patterns that aren't serving us to live more freely and fully." —*Yoga Sutra III.18*

Each moment we have the possibility of starting afresh and being new, but instead, most of us race through life making choices based on habit. Our perceptions are determined by what we expect to see or hear as our minds run on autopilot. When walking down the street to a friend's house, we think about our past, our future, our grocery list, the weekend. Rarely do we think about the beautiful present moment. Such mindfulness is obstructed by samskaras, or habits.

Samskaras are patterns and conditioning developed over time, which dictate the way we think and feel on a daily basis. These are mental, physical and emotional habits and can refer to both healthy habits like brushing our teeth in the morning and negative habits like arriving late at meetings. The samskaras that lead to behaviours that harm us are the ones that need to be addressed. A common analogy used to define a negative samskara likens them to almonds planted in the field of consciousness that when given the fertile ground of attachment and aversion ultimately bear the fruit of suffering. At times we may feel like these tendencies are just a part of who we are. In fact, they aren't who we are—they are a result of conditioning that can be unlearned or changed.

The best and most direct way to break a habit is through the practice of the ancient ways of yoga and meditation. We are then able to make space for new habits to form. In scientific terms, this is a phenomenon known as neuroplasticity. Our brains can be rewired. You can change yourself. But don't be self-lacerating. Change takes time. It takes twenty days to replace an old negative habit with a new self-supporting one. Practice ahimsa, non-violence, with yourself. Be gentle but firm, as you would with a child. The process of breaking samskaras and shaping new habits includes these steps:

1. Reflect. Svadhyaya (self-reflection) is a process that helps us recognise our bad habits. Often samskaras are so ingrained that we don't realise their full impact until we start practicing self-reflection. Yoga and meditation helps create the space for reflection, offering insights for self-discovery and personal transformation. We can begin to discern which patterns are no longer serving us and choose ones we want to nurture. As we progress, this will benefit us in increasingly subtle but powerful ways.

2. Acknowledge and accept the pattern. Vidya (awareness) helps us recognise our thoughts, behaviours, and movements as samskara. However, intellectual insights that do not travel beyond the mind, seldom translate into change. Because the body houses our emotional intelligence, it might not assimilate the insight. Through yoga, we integrate and experience physically and emotionally what we intellectually know to be true.

3. Set goals and intentions. Sankalpa (intention) is a realistic goal. Sankalpa unites our mind with those deeper parts of ourselves that can be so hard to access. Conscious use of sankalpa is a way to communicate what we want to our emotional and spiritual self.

4. Be disciplined. Tapas (heat) is the steam or discipline needed to drive the psychological process of change. Stepping onto our yoga mats daily creates the heat which will assist us in the transformation. If we want confidence in real life, we can first begin to create that pos-

ture on the mat. A true yogi is not one who is perfect from the start, but one who recognises his or her harmful patterns and then works diligently to burn through these. We create tapas by committing to the daily discipline of meditation, journaling, practicing yoga, waking early, eating healthy, etc. We also generate tapas by vigilantly avoiding negative thoughts, emotions and behaviours. This energy fans the flame of awareness, bringing our inner wisdom to light. Instead of fighting samskaras from an antagonistic place, the practice of yoga seeks to burn through habits with the light of pure awareness. Breaking harmful habits helps us create the space to act freely, of our own volition, ultimately awakening the true Self.

To write this article, I have drawn from a brilliant book by Bo Forbes, *Yoga for Emotional Balance*.

Shazia Omar is a yoga instructor. Details about her class schedule are available online [www.shaziaomar.com](http://www.shaziaomar.com) and she may be reached at [shaziaomar@gmail.com](mailto:shaziaomar@gmail.com).

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