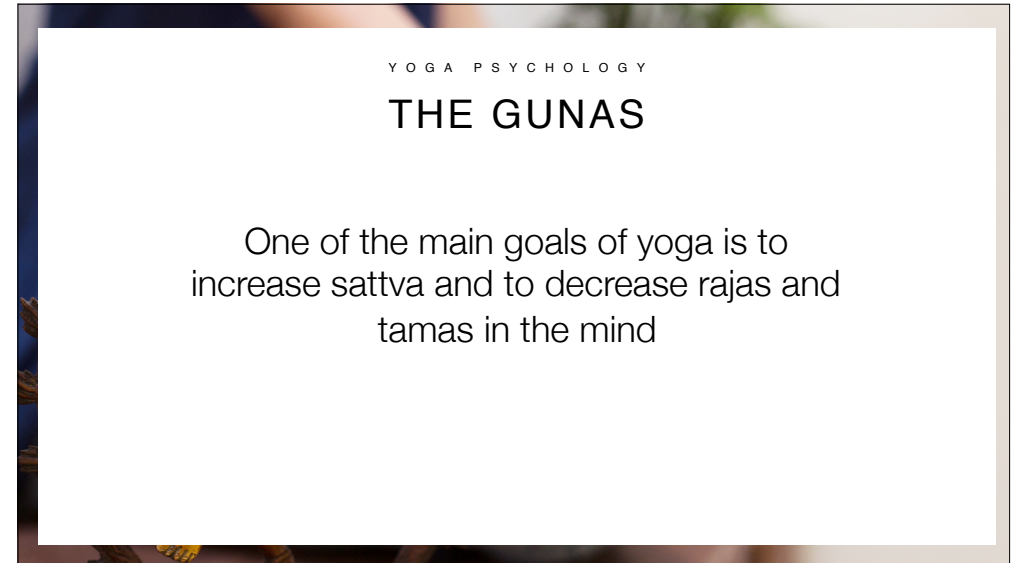




YOGA PSYCHOLOGY  
THE GUNAS

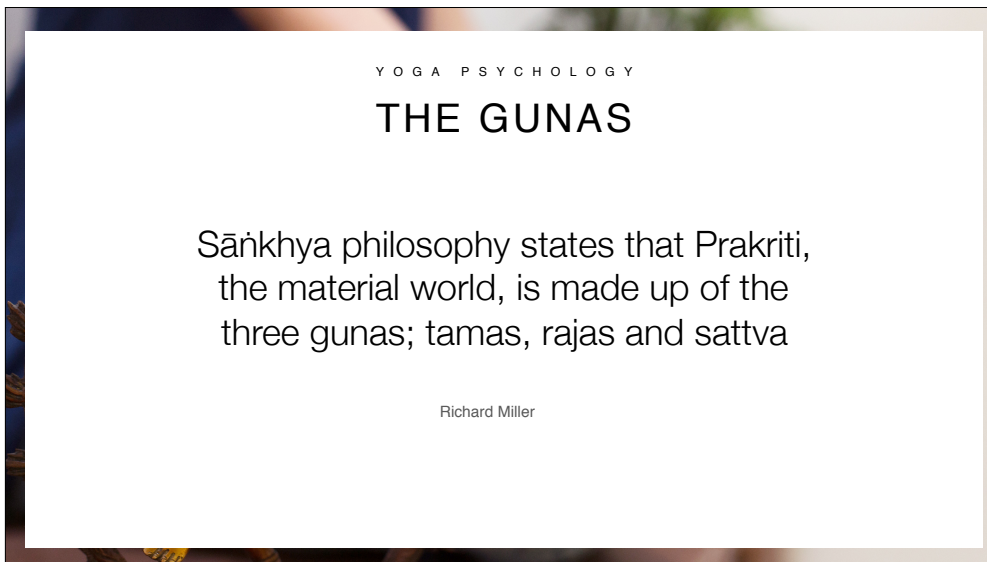
1



YOGA PSYCHOLOGY  
THE GUNAS

One of the main goals of yoga is to increase sattva and to decrease rajas and tamas in the mind

2

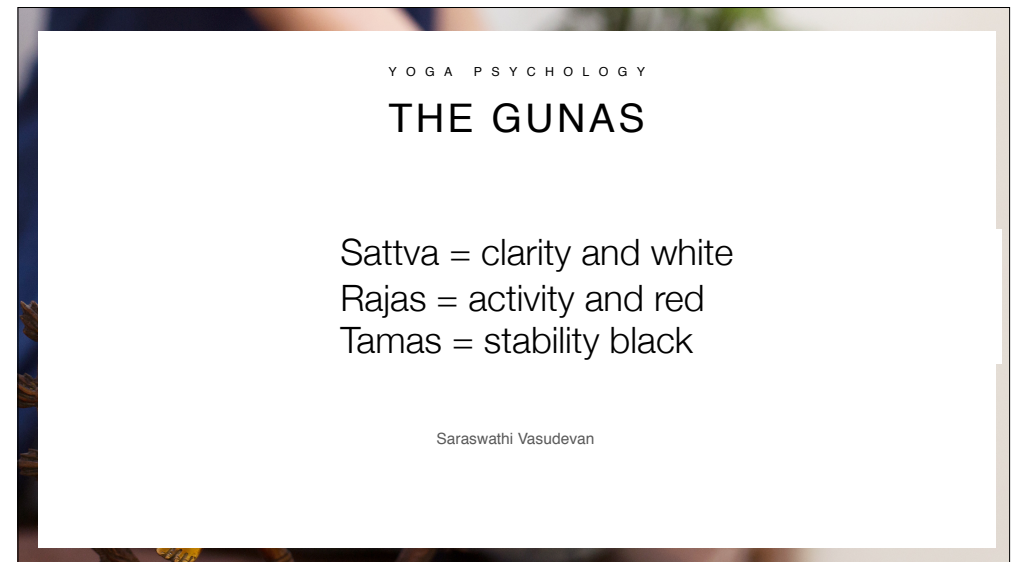


YOGA PSYCHOLOGY  
THE GUNAS

Sāṅkhya philosophy states that Prakriti, the material world, is made up of the three gunas; tamas, rajas and sattva

Richard Miller

3



YOGA PSYCHOLOGY  
THE GUNAS

Sattva = clarity and white  
Rajas = activity and red  
Tamas = stability black

Saraswathi Vasudevan

4

## THE GUNAS

Gunas can be both traits and states

Putra and Sedlmeier (2014)

5

## THE GUNAS

Sattva:

- ▶ Lucidity
- ▶ Tranquility
- ▶ Wisdom
- ▶ Discrimination
- ▶ Detachment
- ▶ Happiness
- ▶ Peacefulness

Edwin Bryant

6

## THE GUNAS

Rajas:

- ▶ Action
- ▶ Hankering
- ▶ Attachment
- ▶ Energetic endeavour
- ▶ Passion
- ▶ Power
- ▶ Restlessness
- ▶ Creative activity

Edwin Bryant

7

## THE GUNAS

Tamas:

- ▶ Inertia
- ▶ Stillness
- ▶ Ignorance
- ▶ Delusion
- ▶ Disinterest
- ▶ Lethargy
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Disinclination towards constructive activity

Edwin Bryant

8

## THE GUNAS



TAMAS



RAJAS



SATTVA

## THE GUNAS

While sattva is the only quality of the mind that can lead to a reduction of duḥkha (suffering), there are times when tamas and rajas can be helpful

T.K.V. Desikachar

## THE GUNAS

Yoga as *'sattvification'*

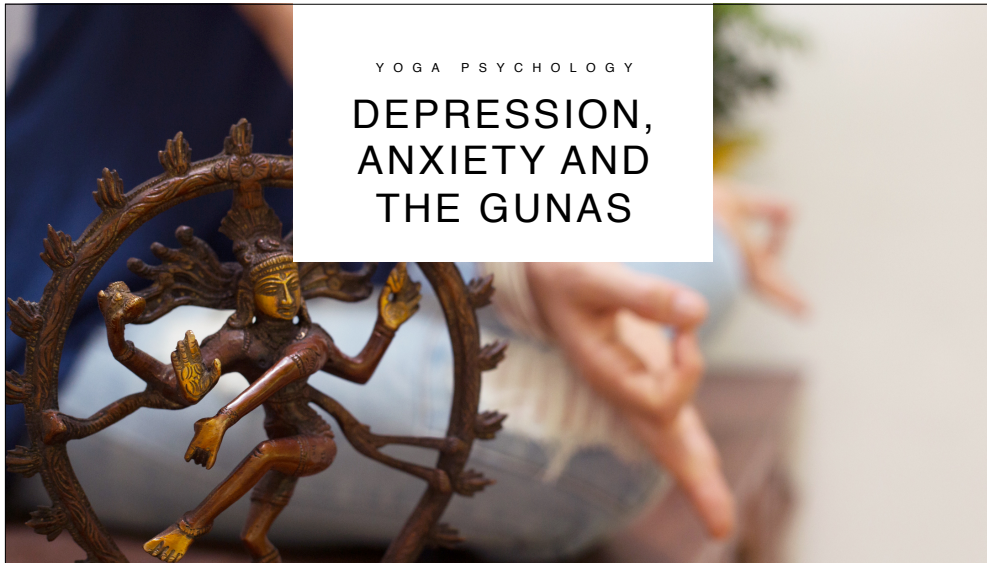
Georg Feuerstein

## THE GUNAS

The goal is not to completely eradicate rajas and tamas.

Gunas are not separate, but rather function as one, *'like the lamp flame which is the result of the cooperation of the wick, oil and fire.'*

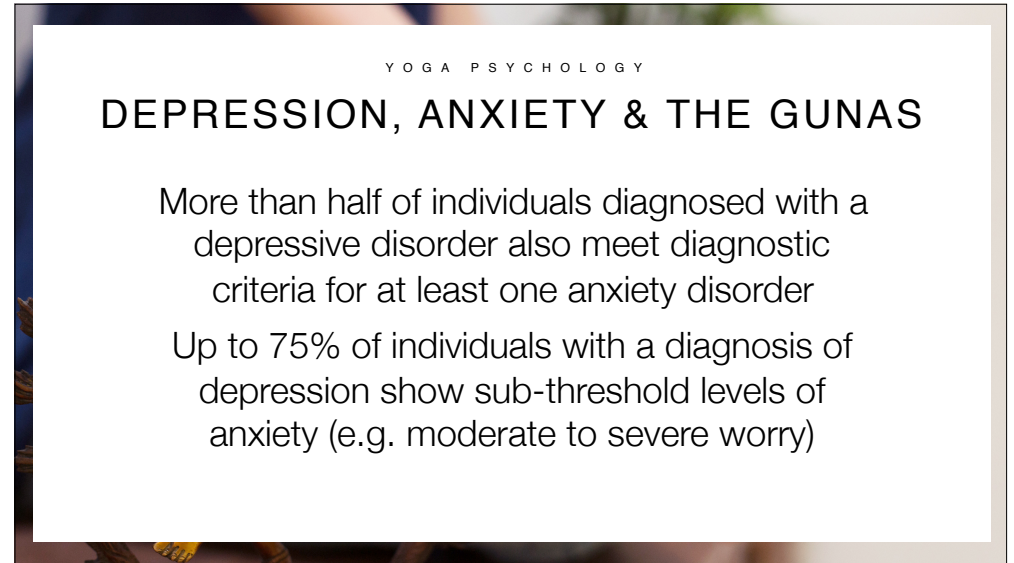
Kumar and Balodhi (2016)



YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND THE GUNAS

13



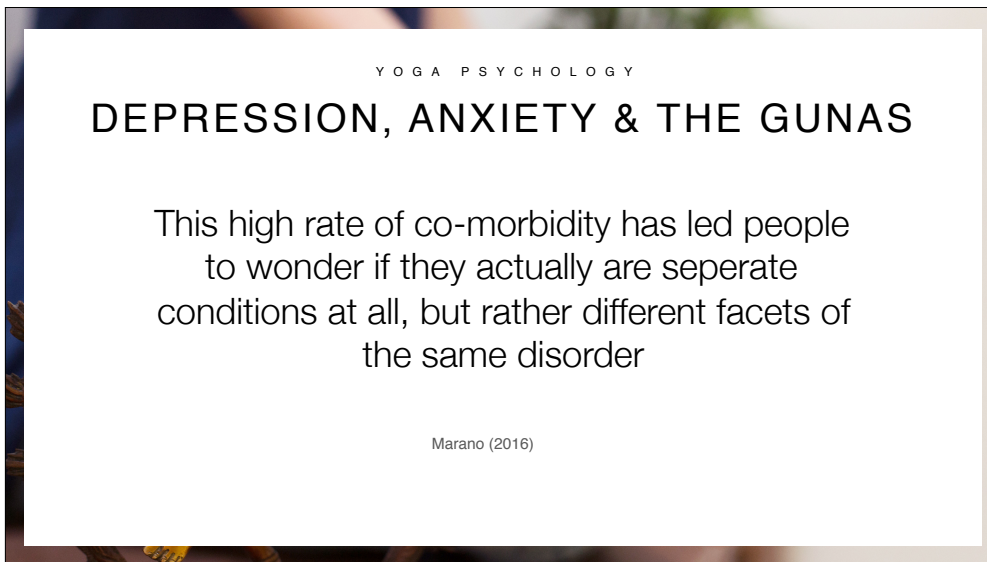
YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS

More than half of individuals diagnosed with a depressive disorder also meet diagnostic criteria for at least one anxiety disorder

Up to 75% of individuals with a diagnosis of depression show sub-threshold levels of anxiety (e.g. moderate to severe worry)

14



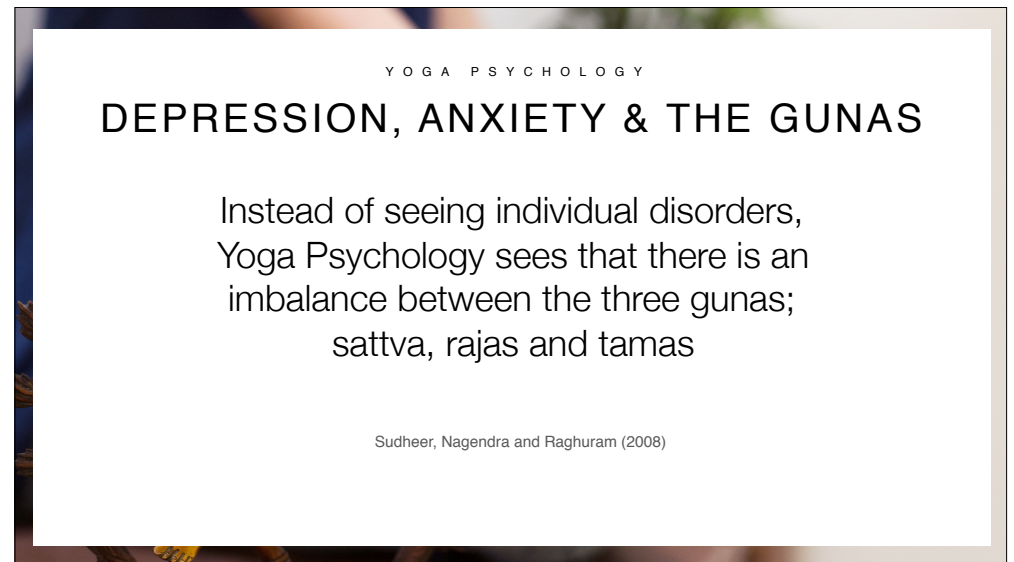
YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS

This high rate of co-morbidity has led people to wonder if they actually are separate conditions at all, but rather different facets of the same disorder

Marano (2016)

15



YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS

Instead of seeing individual disorders, Yoga Psychology sees that there is an imbalance between the three gunas; sattva, rajas and tamas

Sudheer, Nagendra and Raghuram (2008)

16

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS

Studies have found a positive correlation between sattva and positive psychological states

Putra and Sedlmeier (2014)

17

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS

A positive correlation between rajas and anxiety

Putra and Sedlmeier (2014)

18

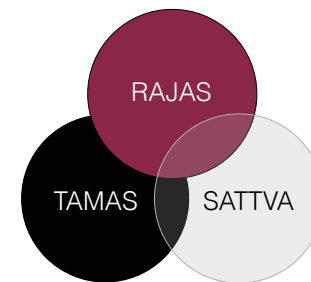
## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS

And a positive correlation between tamas and depression

Putra and Sedlmeier (2014)

19

## DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & THE GUNAS



Kumar and Balodhi (2016)

20

## THE GUNAS

### Tamasic Depression Attributes:

- ▶ Lethargy
- ▶ Feelings of hopelessness
- ▶ Melancholia
- ▶ Inertia
- ▶ Dullness

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

21

## THE GUNAS

### Tamasic Depression Body:

- ▶ Slumped shoulders
- ▶ Collapsed chest
- ▶ Droopy eyes
- ▶ Expressionless face
- ▶ Tension in the abdomen

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

22

## THE GUNAS

### Tamasic Depression Breath:

- ▶ Shallow
- ▶ Hard to inhale
- ▶ Can barely see them breathing

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

23

## THE GUNAS

### Tamasic Depression Behaviours:

- ▶ Crying
- ▶ Unable to get out of bed in the morning

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

24

## THE GUNAS

### Rajasic Depression Attributes:

- ▶ High levels of anxiety
- ▶ Racing mind
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Agitation

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

25

## THE GUNAS

### Rajasic Depression Body:

- ▶ Tightness in muscles
- ▶ A kind of 'hardness' in and around their eyes

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

26

## THE GUNAS

### Rajasic Depression Breath:

- ▶ Quick
- ▶ Erratic

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

27

## THE GUNAS

### Rajasic Depression Behaviours:

- ▶ Can't keep still
- ▶ Fingers moving continually

Timothy McCall and Patricia Walden

28

