

Yoga for a World Out of Balance Meeting 1 Homework
Saturday, June 1, 2013

Homework Suggestions

- a. *Live with self care: get rest, nourishment, exercise & nature*
- b. *Meditate for 10 minutes am & pm or 20 minutes once a day*
- c. *Reflect on this week's study questions & try the exercises*
- d. *Consider journaling*
- e. *During the length of this course create two mandalas: A Mandala of Relationship & A Mandala of Caring. Let them be whatever arises without judgment*
- f. *Reading*
 - i. *Yoga for a World Out of Balance Chapters 2 & 3, Restraint in Times of Unrestraint & Lack*
 - ii. *Optional: The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A New Translation by Chip Hartranft. You can access the complete text for free at: <http://www.arlingtoncenter.org/Sanskrit-English.pdf>*
 1. *Book pages 31-35 & Appendix C Outline of the Yogic Path*
 - iii. *Optional: [Yoga Sutra 1: The Field Practices](#) Transcription of talk Michael Stone Dharma Talk on Centre of Gravity Blog*
- g. *Listening*
 - i. *[Yoga Sutra Chapter 3 ~ The Other Shore will Come To You](#) Michael Stone Dharma Talk in COG Audio Talk Archive*
- h. *In the Introduction, Michael states that purpose of yoga is to become free of suffering. We use movement and stillness to entrain our minds to the present moment experience of simply being. One of the primary insights that arises in this practice is everything, all observable,*

sensory phenomena is temporary and ever changing – including our notion of self. We have a direct experience of the inherent transience of life. He says that the yoga practice of meditation offers us a direct experience of the inherent transience of life. In meditation, a freedom arises when we let go of wanting and glimpse the truth that no thing is “me” or “mine”. This state is the basic intelligence of mind. Would anyone care to comment on your personal experience of these insights?

- i. How did you respond to Michael’s basic premise? What draws you to go beyond the mat in Yoga?*
- i. How do we integrate yoga philosophy, movement and meditation into our daily lives? What is our motivation to practice and how does the manner in which we practice contribute to our personal and collective well-being? How does our practice inform our ambitions, intentions and choices in our daily lives?*
- j. We begin with the exploration of the body/mind – in movement and stillness we realize their interdependence. Michael says when the mind quiets; he can actually become the breath. The second yoga sutra defines yoga practice as the stilling of the mind. When the mind is still we can experience pure awareness. In this process Michael states that we can release our habitual patterns of attachments and reactivity – from this state we are better able to take action in the world.*
 - i. How does this resonate with you? Have you become aware of habitual responses to the world that may not serve you?*
 - ii. Do you find yourself resisting change? Are you familiar with the ways you avoid or cling to experience to keep life comfortably familiar?*
- k. Michael observes that we are living in times of unrestraint, which has lead to our current state of imbalance. Our practice challenges us to look deeply at ourselves: recognizing the effects of our actions and becoming increasingly more sensitive to all life. This involves*

bringing our unconscious “habit energies” into awareness. Habit energies are psychological, physiological, ancestral and cultural patterns that inform how we perceive, think and choose from moment to moment. Have you contemplated the effects of your choices deeply enough to recognize habit energies being expressed?

- l. Michael says we’re made of our ancestry: earth, air and water are all elements, which we “are”. Yet we treat elements as commodities instead of resources both inside and outside ourselves. On a psychological level we treat our “selves” as objects to be improved or perfected. This separates us from the realization of our own elemental being – and relationship of interdependence with all life. When we recognize the self as an element of all life – we can act beyond the motivations of self-concern, self-doubt and self-aggrandizement. He describes this realization as the non-dualism that forms the structural foundation of an authentic life characterized by ethical responsibility, meaning & compassion.
 - i. Have you treated your “self” as an object to be improved?*
 - ii. Have you considered your “self” to be an elemental being – part of a web of life?**
- m. Michael acknowledges the difficulty of slowing down, attending to that, which is outside our preferences and expectations. Yet being distracted and caught in habitual patterns of addiction and/or aversion leads to a life of alienation and apathy. Lost in self-judgment, guilt, blame, anxiety and depression makes it hard to take in the world outside. Ironically focusing only on these symptoms reinforces them. He encourages us to suspend our reactivity and refocus our attention on what is happening in the current moment both inside and outside ourselves. When we become more open, flexible and sensitive we can open to the greater world beyond “me”. Spiritual awakening challenges us to examine ourselves and at the same time observe the greater world of being of which we’re a part.*

- i. *What is your experience of slowing down and simply examining what is happening in the present moment?*
 - ii. *Are you aware of the habitual patterns you may cling to or avoid aspects of your life? Have you ever tried to interrupt the pattern with a mindfulness practice?*

- n. *Michael aims to show how the yoga teachings on causality and restraint can give rise to an experience of intimacy and ethics, which help us, integrate mind, body and culture. This experience can help us to live in a sustainable and respectful way. Have you contemplated your personal ethics? Have you considered the relationship between ethics and your relationship to your self as an individual and as a world citizen?*

- o. *In Chapter 1, The Path Unfolds, we have the 8 interrelated limbs of the path of Raja yoga. (See outline) The path begins with the first limb of restraints and ethics, the Yamas. The Yama's are intended to clarify our relationship to the human and nonhuman world. Michael observes that this first limb grounds us; we use our yoga practice to grow roots and realize our role in the greater web of relationships.*
 - i. *Have you approached your yoga practice in a manner, which adheres to the Yamas? How do the principles of: non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, moderation and non-greed apply to yoga practice?*
 - ii. *How does your yoga practice help you to realize your relationship with the greater web of being?*

- p. *Michael states that a non-dualistic approach to our worldview proposes a radical challenge to the presumption that human beings have dominance over nature. Nature is not simply an object outside ourselves – we are nature. He argues that once we realize our interconnectedness we are motivated to take action. We recognize our actions have consequences we need to attend to for the benefit of sentient and non-sentient existence.*

- t. *Try giving someone your face during the day. Michael was quoted as saying: Some of us who are on the path of trying to be people know how hard it is to give someone your face. It easier to look away or give our social face. When someone else's face really arrives for you, it's impossible to do harm to them. . . . If you can approach without knowing, giving up fixed ideas about self and others, they you can open up to the field of experience. You can't bear witness if you already have the answers. We do things to protect ourselves from having the experience we don't want.*