

Yoga for a World Out of Balance Meeting 3 Homework
Saturday, June 15, 2013

1. Homework Suggestions

- a. *Live with the awareness of your inherent interrelation – an integral strand of the web of life.*
- b. *Walk in nature, try listening, seeing, feeling without knowing.*
- c. *Meditate for 10 minutes am & pm or 20 minutes once a day*
- d. *Reflect on this week's study questions & try the exercises*
- e. *Consider journaling*
- f. *Reading*
 - i. *Yoga for a World Out of Balance Chapters 6 & 7, Satya: Honesty & Asteya: Nonstealing*
 - ii. *Optional: [Lotus Sutra 11: Nemesis](#) Michael Stone Dharma Talk in COG Blog Archive*
 - iii. *Optional: Being Peace by Thich Nhat Hanh <https://catalog.kcls.org/eg/opac/record/325866?gtype=title;query=being%20peace;page=0;loc=1>*
 - iv. *Optional: An Imperfect Offering: Humanitarian Action in the Twenty-First Century by James Orbinski <http://catalog.kcls.org/eg/opac/record/666703?gtype=title;query=an%20imperfect%20offering;page=0;loc=1>*
 - v. *Optional: War is a Force that Gives Life Meaning by Chris Hedges <http://catalog.kcls.org/eg/opac/record/220809?gtype=author;query=hedges%20C%20chris;page=0;loc=1>*
- g. *Listening*
 - i. *Optional 3-18-12 [Lotus Sutra 14 : Life is Like a Funeral](#) Michael Stone Dharma Talk in COG Audio Talk Archive*

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- ii. *Optional Dr. Rick Hanson's The Compassionate Brain Session 7: Compassion in the Wider World: <http://www.rickhanson.net/podcasts/compassion-in-the-wider-world>*

A fascinating, in-depth conversation with Dr. Jean Houston, co-founder of The Foundation for Mind Research and author of The Possible Human: A Course in Enhancing Your Physical, Mental, and Creative Abilities, about opening one's heart wide without becoming overwhelmed

h. Viewing

- i. *Optional: Peacemaker [Sami Awad](#) describes how non-violence empowers people to deal with injustice and oppression, and breaks down the barriers that prevent people from relating to each other. At Global Oneness Project: <https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/interviews/power-non-violence>*
- i. *In the Chapter 5, Ahimsa: Nonviolence, Michael says that nonviolence can be taught and learned. We take an evolutionary step forward in allowing multiple perspectives with flexibility, tolerance and patience, in acting for the welfare of our ecology as a whole. He says that cultural strategies of exploitation and war are ways of securing ourselves by projecting lack onto others.*
 - i. *What does the practice of nonviolence mean to you? How does it manifest in your life?*
 - ii. *Are you aware of ways you may be projecting lack onto others?*
- j. *Michael says that nonviolence is the essence of change. Elements of a civilized culture include the ability to live in large groups as individuals who accommodate the diversity of others.*
 - i. *Do you see nonviolence as a changing force? How tolerant are you?*

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- k. Michael observes that we have interiorized aspects of industrial materialism to the extent we treat our own bodies as objects that are compelled to keep up with increased productivity. The way we control and repress our own bodies is reflected in how we treat all of life.*
 - i. How do you care for yourself? Is your self-care reflected in the way you treat others?*
- l. The heart of contemporary yoga practice is developing more clarity to better serve others. Yoga offers us tools to cultivate attentiveness, to balance internal energy patterns so we have vitality and clarity to bring to a world out of balance.*
 - i. Can you use your yoga practice to balance your energy? Does it generate vitality and promote clarity in your being? If so, how do you use your vision and energy in the world?*
- m. In order to make traditional yoga teachings relevant, we have to be engaged in the world. Our engagement should be based on the understanding of the unity of all things, on the appreciation of the complex interrelations between everything. This involves tolerance and the willingness to act guided by moderation and common sense. In order to demonstrate these qualities, we can't simply rely on a set of absolute rules – we are obliged to continuously attend to the life as it unfolds, moment to moment, to explore, to investigate, to question.*
 - i. Do you tend to be rigid or flexible in certain circumstances? Would considering our interrelations more deeply affect your moral choices?*
- n. Michael describes Samadhi – the 8th limb of yoga as the complete integration of subject and object. In this state we gain insight into the complete contingency of nature, of others, of our selves. Realizing unity, we are motivated to take action. To act in nonviolence, we must look to the relationship between sustainability and our ethical principles. The inherent interrelation – the web of life - is at the core of a nonviolent attitude. Michael says that nonharming is not*

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something we do; rather it becomes who we are. He asks what does action look like when we are being rather than exploiting?

- i. Notice how you approach activities - even meditation practice - and people. Is there a subtle expectation of attaining or gaining something? How would your experience differ if you could drop expectations?*
- o. Michael observes that environmental degradation is an ecological psychological, social and spiritual crisis. We must evolve our imaginative response to the world's complex problems as though they were our own – as imbalances within ourselves.*
 - i. How do the world's imbalances manifest within your life?*
 - ii. How do your life's imbalances impact the world?*
- p. Michael asks us to consider the death penalty as punishment and punishment as harm. The intent to harm sets up conditions for future aggression and violence. He observes that conflict, aggression and violence occur as the result of ancestral habit energies we are born with. These tendencies require attention, redirection and transformation. If we cannot accept the shadows within – we will be forever constrained by them.*
 - i. Have you reflected on your own harmful tendencies Can you accept these shadows? Can you extend acceptance to others?*
 - ii. What steps could you take to transform them?*
- q. Michael observes that we all want security and freedom – yet when we act out of fear we find ourselves alienated and threatened by the world. He challenges us to consider the social and economic conditions that produce a terrorist. He asks us to consider what war is doing for us. He says that if it were not satisfying something in us we would not continue. When we react out of fear and hatred we do not yet have a deep understanding of the situation. He says that if we wait and follow the process of calming anger, looking deeply into the*

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situation, listening to and understanding the roots of suffering that cause violence, we'll have sufficient insight to respond. How have you engaged this process in conflict?

- r. Michael says that yoga teachings can realign our attitude so we can contribute to the welfare of others and see beyond our clinging and aggression. Any long term corrective to terror and violence must grow out of a commitment to re-imagining the quality and meaning of relationships – our individual and collective patterns of interdependence.*
 - i. Have you considered the patterns of interdependence in your individual relationships? Do they warrant re-imagining?*
 - ii. How do your choices contribute to the harm or the welfare of others? How do our collective choices contributed to the harm or the welfare of others?*
- s. Michael describes love and listening as a practical antidote to fear. Generosity sets up conditions for letting go. He believes we can bring creativity and our capacity to re-imagine conflict in nonviolence to our intolerance and inflexibility. In the face of fear what we need most is flexibility and imagination and the willingness to offer others generosity and help.*
 - i. Have you tried using these kinds of antidotes - listening generously with love - to your own anxiety and fear?*
 - ii. Can you re-imagine how you might bring these same offerings to others?*
- t. Michael suggests that we try meditating on sound – listening without knowing. He says these same skills reverberate in the collective culture. Practice inside moves outside and the outside is reworked internally. Have you tried listening, seeing, tasting, touching without knowing?*

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- u. Michael says that peace involves understanding the relationship between love and fear. The fruit of the yoga path is the end of life organized by fear. The practice asks us to try to understand the origins of suffering that give rise to violence. He says that each of us is to some extent implicated in contributing to the conditions from which acts of violence arise. Our challenge is to refrain from responding to conflict with an “us versus them” attitude. Our challenge is to clarify the difference between reactions and responses to challenging situations.*
 - i. Are you aware of the circumstances that give rise to an “us versus them” attitude? Who, what, where and when do you make another “other”?*
 - ii. Are you aware of the ways you may be “splitting” off parts of your self that you judge unworthy?*

- v. Michael asserts that equanimity grows out of compassion for everyone involved in conflict. Our ideas often get in the way of seeing the complexity and interdependent relationships in a given situation. The only antidote to violence is compassion. Can suspend your ideas about a contentious situation in your own life and explore the complexities that give rise to conflict?*
 - i. How clearly to you see, hear, smell, taste and touch the world?*
 - ii. Does what you see inspire you to live with restraint, nonviolence, honesty, generosity & moderation?*