

Yoga for a World Out of Balance Meeting 5 Homework
Saturday, June 29, 2013

1. Homework Suggestions

- a. *Experiment with living your life as an expression of deepest caring*
- b. *Meditate for 10 minutes am & pm or 20 minutes once a day*
- c. *Reflect on this week's reflection questions & try the exercises*
- d. *Consider journaling*
- e. *Reading*
 - i. *Yoga for a World Out of Balance Chapters 10, 11, 12 & 13
Nothing is Hidden, Jewels Shower Down, Samadhi in
Community & Final Thoughts Listening*
- f. *Listening*
 - i. *Optional: Audio Talk: We Practice Because We Forget <http://www.centreofgravity.org/podcast/2011/6/15/we-practice-because-we-forget.html>*
 - ii. *Optional: On Being's Interview: "The Science of Trust: Economics and Virtue." Paul Zak, is a leader in the emerging field of neuroeconomics. He helps explain how circumstances can dampen the human inclination towards moral behavior; but he also studies how human and economic interactions are driven by trust and says that can be measured and nourished biochemically. <http://www.onbeing.org/program/science-trust-economics-and-virtue/223>*
- g. *Viewing*
 - i. *TED: Louie Schwartzberg: Nature, Beauty, Gratitude. Louie Schwartzberg's stunning time-lapse photography, accompanied by powerful words from Benedictine monk Brother David Steindl-Rast, serves as a meditation on being grateful for every day. http://www.ted.com/talks/louie_schwartzberg_nature_beauty_gratitude.html*

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- ii. *Global Oneness Projects: More with Less: <https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/themes/more-less>*
- iii. *Global Oneness Project: The Land Owns Us: <https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/themes/land-owns-us>*

- h. *In Chapter 8, Michael explains that Brahmacharya refers to the way one uses sexual energy as a way of entering the raw ground of human being & experiencing sexual energy as movement itself. He asks whether we can allow this energy to unfold without repression or entanglement. If we are constantly distracted & living in quick time our relationships occur as instant gratification. Consider how you approach intimacy and what your intimate exchanges reflecting.*
- i. *Michael describes sexual energy as a subtle life force. He asks whether there is a way one can move with this energy without consuming or being consumed by it. He asks whether we can use sexual energy in a way that gives us access to something greater than our own perspectives. Have you considered the experience of sexual energy as a way to go beyond your own perspective?*
- j. *Michael says that sexual energy and sexual activity are not the same thing. The point is how we work with sexual energy without unconscious habit energies on one hand or repression on the other. A meditation on sexual energy returns us to the body which places us squarely in nature. The sun shines through us in the same way sexual energy moves through us. They both nourish us & give birth to our existence. Does your experience of sexual energy nourish and shine on you like the sun?*
- k. *In Chapter 9, Non-acquisitiveness, Michael observes that the “old turnings of satisfaction-dissatisfaction cycle” aren’t sustainable. He says that letting go of ways we accumulate ideas, knowledge, stories is the beginning of inner renunciation. We can do this by coming back to the breath and body awareness in this moment. Here we can take*

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refuge from the distracted habit energies that drive us to over-consume. When we are in genuine harmony with the natural world we're more concerned with authentic living than possessing goods.

- i. Have you tried practicing ways of inner-renunciation?*
 - ii. What does it mean to have a harmonious relationship with the natural world?*
- l. Michael observes that when we enter into relationship, any intimate sharing, renunciation is required. He describes this as a deep letting go that happens when we decide to meet life as it is.*
- i. Have you had these "deep letting go" experiences? Did they foster or spring from intimacy?*
- m. Michael defines Kaivalya, a Sanskrit term, to be the way awareness stands apart from fluctuations in the mind. Thoughts and emotions arise and pass yet awareness is unchanging. Renunciation, letting go of clinging, brings us deeper into the world - it creates the ground of practice. He says that when we join life we find our true nature. Awareness of the interdependence of all life makes Ahimsa, nonviolence, possible. Conversely, the environmental alienation of our lives separates us from our very ground and source of life.*
- i. Consider all that separates you from your ground and source of life. Conversely, what views and habits bring you deeper into the world?*
- n. Michael observes that accumulation is sometimes subtle - like acquiring knowledge. The difference between wisdom and knowledge is flexibility. The constant movement toward mental accumulation makes it more difficult to rest in the kind of psychological stillness where the mind & body can truly receive and respond to life situations versus react to them.*

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- i. Consider the ways you accumulate on subtle levels. Does this hinder or help your ability to truly receive & respond to life situations?*
 - ii. Do you give yourself enough time to rest in psychological stillness?*
- o. Michael states that accumulation is based on the premise that it will provide security - against want and toward a more solid sense of self. Hidden in our fantasies of security and permanence are the realities of our death and the ultimate impermanence of all that we acquire. He says that where there is a compulsion to accumulate there is a deep fear of death. He views Western philosophy as having hollowed out and sectioned the world in such a way that it gives us a sense of autonomy and separation in relation to the physical world.*
 - i. Have you considered these viewpoints? Do they inform the way you acquire things in the world?*
 - ii. How is your perception influenced by this interpretation of Western philosophy?*
- p. The energy of generosity is an antidote to acquisitiveness and it establishes a loop of happiness when we take others into account.*
 - i. Consider how this energy flows through your life. Do you feel part of a loop of happiness?*
 - ii. Are there ways you can practice generosity as an antidote to your own acquisitiveness?*
- q. Michael views the yogic alternative to unlimited growth as seeing ourselves living within nature and as nature, not apart from it. We need the earth to live, it's what sustains us. It cannot be considered a commodity because it is our greatest resource. He believes that we have created an economic machine that is out of control mainly because it has no internal restraint and our very survival depends on*

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immediate transcendence of our unrestrained lifestyles and shopping habits.

- i. Would you be willing to practice a yoga of restraint in service to the greater good?*
 - ii. What actions can we take beyond restraint?*
- r. Michael believes we need to use our capacity to reflect on the damage we've done to the environment so we can improve our relationship to the earth, to each other and to ourselves. In pausing, looking, listening and we return to our senses. Yoga teaches us that our current personal, collective and ecological problems all begin with perception. What if we could replace our idea of progress based on serving the "autonomous individual" with concern for what is sustainable in terms of relationship?*
- s. Ethics and values are what we agree to live by. What we give value determines the kind of families and friendships we have and also determines how we relate to ourselves. The yoga of Patanjali is radical because it challenges us to awaken to the inherent insubstantiality of self-image. It encourages us to make a friend of not knowing - to open to the body, the breath, varying states of mind. We tune in to awareness to be free to respond to what is happening. We have a responsibility to clarify our means of seeing.*
- i. What are the ethics & values you live by?*
 - ii. While self-image may be insubstantial don't we need a sense of self to act in the world?*
- t. Michael describes the Yamas as a set of commitments that are expressions of our deepest caring. We are both a "self-project" and a "caring about others project". The Yamas help us determine what we should be committed to in order to consistently return to our place in the web of life. Do you consider these interpretations of the Yamas*

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*helpful in realizing your place in the web and participating in a
“caring about others project”?*