

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Limbs (Step)</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Qualities</u>	<u>Practices</u>
Body	1) & 2) Yamas/Niyamas (Not Covered) 3) Asana (root meaning "to sit"; translated to posture)	1-2	Observation Stillness (Tension vs. Comfort)	Kaya Sthairyam (Body Steadiness) Sthulakasha (Body Space visualization)
Breath	4) Pranayama (root meaning, energy or force in motion; translated to mean breath control)	3-4	Rhythm Balance	Satki Dharana (breath concentration) Yogic Breathing
Sensory Mind	5) Pratyahara (root meaning, move away from food or ingestions; translated to meaning control over senses)	5-6	Perception Awareness	Indriya Pratyahara (awareness and control of senses) Mano Pratyahara (withdrawing mind from senses)
Mind	6) Dharana (Concentrating on one principle) 7) Dhyana (Meditation, un-interrupted concentration) 8) Samadhi (Absorption, not covered)	7-8	Concentration Knowing vs. Thinking	Chidakasha (Mind Space visualization) Trataka (with flame or objects) Tan Mantra Dharana (Concentration on an object)

2. Teaching Meditation

Teachers are everywhere around us. They fill our classrooms and universities, education centers and seminars, training sessions and sports leagues. At some point in life, everyone fills the role of a teacher; whether it be instructing a friend in a simple task, or teaching a small child how to ride a bike. The passing on of knowledge through formal and informal education practices is intrinsic to human nature because people are curious about the world and they want to learn more of it. There are countless ways through which people can acquire information. The creation of the internet, often dubbed the information age, has established an almost limitless source of it. People also acquire information from books, CDs, podcasts, news broadcasts, TV specials, documentaries, how-to manuals and many other reference places. Despite all of the access to information, the world is now in need of teachers, perhaps more than ever before.

In the professional world, teachers occupy a special place as they play a pivotal part in helping others make sense of information that churns their curiosity. What differentiates a teacher from a website or a book is that they facilitate learning in a way in which information cannot be unlearned. Unlike superfluous information we may read on Google or even in books and then forget about a moment later, the lessons learned from our best teachers become a part of who we are. In fact information is in some respects, quite irrelevant to teaching. A good teacher can inspire a student on a topic they weren't necessarily interested in learning, just as poor teachers can turn people off of areas they may have initially been quite enthused about. Of course the responsibility for learning does not fall solely on the teacher, but nevertheless teaching has very little to do with the information being taught, and much more so with the learning that is being provoked through the teaching of that information. Teaching is a process which aids people in turning knowledge or information into a learned wisdom, so it is not just a study of information but also a study of how people process or learn that information.

Teaching meditation is particularly unique because the wisdom the teacher seeks to uncover is presumed to be present inside each student and the teacher is guiding the student through a practice which reveals that inner wisdom. The information to be learned is not stored on a website or inside a text book rather inside the consciousness of the students themselves. This is especially challenging when you consider that even most beginners coming to meditation classes today are already familiar with meditation in some respect or another. They have heard about it from family or friends who practice it, or they have seen it advertised on social media and television. In the mainstream, meditation is usually associated with the mind and trying to stop one's thoughts. Meditation is also linked with images of people who are enlightened, like swamis and sages who live in complete balance and harmony. Many people assume that those who teach or practice meditation are perfectly calm people who live without feeling or reacting to their emotions. As Yogi's we know that stopping thoughts and directing ourselves towards a Yogic lifestyle is part of what meditation means, but we also know that involves much more than this. Realistically speaking only a small portion of people who teach meditation are monks, and an even smaller portion are truly enlightened. Many of these innocent but incorrect preconceptions around meditation really impede a student's learning experience, precisely because they are confused about where the information is coming from. Although meditation is a skill, it is not a state of mind that is bestowed upon a person because they have learned a particular technique, or followed one *guru* or another, it is a kind of learning which seeks to uncover something each person already contains within the possibilities of their daily, waking human experience.

As teachers of meditation one of the best habits we can get into is presenting material in terms which are relatable to the average student so they have a real shot at experiencing some change from within. This means moving away from using lofty, spiritual language and dwelling on overwhelming terms like enlightenment so that we can speak to people on their own terms and in a language which reflects where they are at. Most people do become interested in meditation because they want to make real changes, even if they are not able to properly articulate what those are; nor should we, as teachers, be trying to articulate these changes for them. On the other hand what we can do is present them with the practice of meditation in a way that is perhaps more simple and accessible than they might have expected. By its simplest definition, meditation is just the sole act of sitting down with oneself and being mindful of what arises. The point is not to control one's thoughts, rather it is to be more conscious of how we feel and what we are thinking when we are thinking and feeling it. The best part is that this process of noticing is not only simple, but begins all on its own, the moment one closes their eyes and chooses to become still. Many students are surprised to find that their first experiences in meditation are not nearly as peaceful as they imagined, or as enlightening as they have heard others describe them. Instead of feeling relaxed, focused and calm, many people describe feeling antsy, scattered and just downright physically uncomfortable, while others attest to the opposite. There is no such thing as 'wrong' sensation or experience, in fact, all information which arises in a meditation is useful information, because it stems from the experience of each individual. This is perfectly normal and we should make it our first priority to reassure new student's that, unlike so many other skills, there is really no doing meditation wrong, there is only doing meditation or not doing it.

When teaching meditation it is best to capitalize on the experiences people can already explain and identify with in order to create a foundation from which to provoke a more penetrating investigation with time. You could call this a kind of information gathering, where you tap into people's existing experience to help them gather information about that very experience. Good teaching methodology will translate the language of Yoga philosophy into relatable terms and concepts people can identify with. When teaching material from the course, speak to people in terms they understand so they may gather information around concepts like body, breath, senses and mind. As Yoga teachers, we know that the wisdom of a concept like *prana* extends well beyond the reaches of breath and into every facet of our consciousness. But a person who has trouble sitting still for 3 or 4 minutes at a time is probably going to have a difficult time being present to the flow of prana in the body. Everybody, on the other hand, can describe the contrast between the sensation of breathing inwards, compared to the sensation of breathing outwards, because, everybody breathes consciously. If you were an astrophysicist teaching an introductory course on the principles of the universe, you probably wouldn't begin by teaching the theory of relativity equation to a class of students who are currently unable to make simple calculations around the effect of gravity on material objects. If you did, the chances are high that most, if not all of the students, would leave the course feeling as if they had absolutely no idea about how the universe works nor what the heck was involved in astrophysics. Perhaps a smarter place to begin a class in universal laws would be to simply introduce the concept of gravity through example and have people experiment with by playing with objects of different sizes and shapes. While students in the class would leave none the wiser to Einstein's relativity principles, it is certainly foreseeable that the initial hint of curiosity provoked by the introduction to gravity could pave the way for future learning.

Don't feel pressure to teach it all in one go. A good principle to practice when teaching meditation is to lower all expectations, yours included. No matter how perfect you may have taught a meditation course, no one is going to leave enlightened, many people may not even leave interested in continuing on with a regular meditation practice of

their own. As teachers we shouldn't feel responsible to live up to such expectations nor should we make our students feel responsible to live up to them either. Like any other skill, meditation takes the time of dedication and the perseverance of commitment to master, yet, its effects are long lasting and quick acting. It is truly amazing the effect just ten minutes of meditation a day can have on one person's life. Start by outlining achievable goals for yourself and your students. Consider that topics and practices like enlightenment, *prana*, and *samadhi* are the 'theory of relativity' equivalents to the world of meditation. While no one is going to leave an 8 week meditation course properly schooled in the inner workings of the subtle body, everyone can leave having been inspired by a new experience of their breath. Teach your techniques clearly and mindfully and do not suggest what people should be feeling but encourage them to be mindful of what they feel. They might not leave your first class levitating out of the room, but perhaps they had small insight into the nature of being steady or attentive.

At the end of the day it is the little details which matter most to people. The lessons you impart do not have to be omnipotent, or life-changing to shift the consciousness of one of your students. What you will probably find is that most of the positive feedback you receive is regarding small details that even you had forgot about on your own journey. When you watch a person perform a headstand or full wheel pose it is easy to forget about all of the hard work it may have taken that person just to get there. Imagine how many little lessons learned and previous attempts are piled together into that one physical expression you are witnessing. Whether or not you have been there to see it, each big pose a student conquers started in some breath, or tiny experience, months or years, even decades before which inspired them to chase after something different. Probably the most important tenet we can adhere to as teachers is not to underestimate the power of small, transcendent experiences that turn an eyebrow to the side for just a moment. When you begin teaching an exercise, make a clear outline of a simple objective you would like everyone to experience. For example, if you are teaching Yogic breathing, the intention to have everyone leave with a total awareness of breath is unrealistic. The goal to have everyone experience breathing in a more 3 dimensional way is perfectly achievable. Starting with realistic goals means teaching lessons that translate into small meaningful experiences for your students. Over time it is the collection of these small experiences which really amounts to the change people are seeking after. The techniques presented in this course are designed to open these tiny doors of experience to get at much of the information that is already there inside of each student. Try not to mistake the potential of meditation for the real, practical and hard inner work we have to do down in the trenches of our own experience to make lasting change in our lives, but at the same time don't doubt that a single breath felt differently could be equal to a lifetime lived differently than before.

Above all else remember that despite the fact we are navigating people through a practice which really changes consciousness, you do not need to be enlightened to teach meditation. The simpler you keep your lessons and objectives; the easier it will be to fill the seat of teacher. *Guru* is the Sanskrit term for teacher. It means dispeller of light. Tradition has it that *gurus* bring light to places where there is dark so that we may see again something which has been cast into the shadows. Shining light into the darkness of people's experience does not mean solving their relationship issues, or resolving a traumatic past, or personal illness, it means only shedding a tiny light into a little corner of human experience - which as yogi's might call, layers of consciousness. The smallest lessons in life are the most important. *Gurus* teach small lessons in big ways and big lessons in small ways, because they never give all of the information away. When you turn on a bright light in a dark room, it is blinding. Instead of opening our eyes, we have to shut them due to being overwhelmed by brightness. A dimmed light turned up slowly reveals more in the end. This is what lasts, but it takes control and steadiness in teaching. Most of us are still learning the simplest lessons

of Yoga, if we teach from this place we can connect with others who are also sharing that journey with us. Teaching does not need to be extraordinary to make a difference. Trying to be larger than life only creates conflicts between the way you live, the experience you have, and that which you are trying to teach. This is a complex way of saying don't take yourself or your students too seriously. The spiritual language of Yoga can make the work of Yoga appear quite romantic, but sometimes the work is sloppy, sticky and troublesome but rewarding nevertheless. Treat the practice with reverence and respect but be humble and honest with the nature of the work you are doing.

2. Principles of Methodology

Methodology is a set of principles which guide the approach to a specific discipline or subject matter. In simple terms, methodology implies there is a underlying method to the madness of inquiry and investigation. The best methodologies are those which are simple and easy to follow. Perhaps the most famous methodology is the scientific method, composed of 7 steps. You might remember from high school these seven steps being turned into the silly, but memorable phrase: "People Really Hate Elephants on Compact Cars." They steps are: problem, research, hypothesis, experiment, observation, conclusion and communication. What this means is that every scientist who conducts an investigation into the nature of the world follows this method. Not only does this give the scientist a step by step process to follow, but it also ensures his or her research is replicable for others to follow also. In teaching meditation, methodology gives us a tool for effectively translating the philosophy of Yoga into a language that is understandable to others also, our average student. This is especially important because the system of Yoga, as it is presented in the 8 limb path, is itself a methodology. The 8 limbs of Yoga guide a practice for self transcendence into deeper states of awareness. On the one hand we want to preserve the integrity of this method and cherish that path for its sophisticated understanding of human experience. While on the other hand, we want to pass on the wisdom of Yoga without intimidating people or making them feel like change is something requiring them to overhaul every detail of their entire lives, even though we may well know that is exactly what might be required in the end.

What makes this course unique is that we are trying to navigate through material from both the position of student and teacher. This means we are both learning information and trying to process in ways in which we can pass this information along to others. Methodology is critical in helping us accomplish this effectively. As students, we want to penetrate concepts in Yoga philosophy we might be already familiar with, but in ways which allow us to make clear statements about what we have learned. For example, almost every Yoga teacher knows about *prana*, and can probably also offer an accurate definition of it. But being able to define *prana* as energy is very different from being able to offer an explanation for its significance when compared to other understandings of energy. As we are learning about particular concepts we want to be able to continuously come back to the question of why something matters so that we can properly explain that "why" to our students. For the information provided in this course, we are going to make clear statements about why a particular understanding in Yoga philosophy is important so we can in turn make deliver strong themes regarding words like stillness, concentration, energy and knowledge. In order to make the information you are learning accessible, we will also try to parse out the stronger philosophical work we do as students, into a meaningful format that you can present to your own students in the future. This structure is meant to be footing onto which you can step and expand from as your own practice and learning continues in the future.

Building a useful methodology is tricky because it needs to be flexible, in order to allow for the incorporating of our future learning, but also fixed, in that it gives us a reliable model to organize material. The system of methodology we are using here is very simple and based of 3 fundamental principles which can be summed up by asking yourself three simple questions: one, what have you learned? (understanding the philosophy); two, what are you suggesting is unique about what you have learned? (theme); and three, what does the student need to experience in their own body to make sense that experience for themselves? (making it relatable). Every class we teach should be principled on these three questions, because every class we teach should be fundamentally based on something we have previously learned, for which there is developed a keen interest in passing that onto others. But at the same time we need to be able to translate what we have learned into physical experiences. The scientific method works because it simple, yet

complex in that it reduces many language to a single experience. So it can explain complex and basic principles of science alike. Applying methodology in meditation should allow to achieve a similar degree of clarity, at least as a teacher. We should be able to express equally simple concepts like posture, but also more complex concepts like *prana*, or *samadhi*. The outline for this methodology is detailed in the chart below, and expanded on in the following pages.

Outline of Methodology

<i>Understanding the Philosophy</i>	<i>Evoking the Theme</i>	<i>Making it Relatable</i>
What have I learned about?	What am I saying about?	What does it feel like in/to?
<i>Consciousness / Transcendence</i>	<i>Meditation</i>	<i>Change</i>
<i>Annamaya / Asana</i>	<i>Stillness</i>	<i>Body</i>
<i>Pranamaya / Pranamaya</i>	<i>Energy / Balance</i>	<i>Breath</i>
<i>Manomaya / Pratyahara</i>	<i>Perception</i>	<i>Sensory Mind</i>
<i>Vijanamaya / Dharana / Dhyana</i>	<i>Concentration</i>	<i>Intellect</i>
<i>Anandamaya / Samadhi</i>	<i>Knowledge / Wisdom</i>	<i>Truth</i>

2.1. Understanding the Philosophy

In the world of Yoga, one of our most guilty pleasures is using yogic terms in colloquial ways without a proper understanding of what is actually implied by these terms in their historically unique position of meaning. Of course this is done most innocently, but it results in the recycling of language that does not accurately express the heart of what many philosophical concepts embody in the practice and study of Yoga. The primary risk being not that we teach a concept incorrectly, because every concept is open to varying degrees of interpretation, rather that we miss out on a real opportunity to connect students to a new sensory experience contrary to what they might have previously been accustomed to. A simple but clear example is found in how many teachers encourage students to breathe deeply. When Yoga teachers want students to take a mindful breath, they often instruct the class to "take a deep inhale" or "take a deep inhale." The common result is that most students in the room will try to breathe as deeply as they can by using their physical effort by contracting their neck and shoulder muscles while inhaling through flared nostrils. Despite the fact their effort seems to indicate the student is doing their best to inhale deeply, what we know about the physiology of breathing tells us that the student is not taking a deep breath, but rather quite a shallow one. The not uncommon misperception is that when breathe we are pulling air into the lungs through the nostrils. What is actually happening is that, through the contraction of the diaphragm, the pressure inside the chest cavity becomes negative in relation to the pressure of the atmosphere causing air to rush the lungs. So, air is not so much being drawn into the lungs as it is pushed in, by the atmosphere. While the difference may seem small it fundamentally alters the characterization of the inhale, from an action of taking in oxygen, to one of receiving it. When we teach about breathing from this new perspective it really shifts the both the language and exercises we might use to teach people proper and full yogic breathing.

These incongruent pairings between philosophy and practice are littered throughout the study of Yoga precisely because they are being taught pre-emptively, prior to a teacher really making sense of a concepts *significance*. Understanding the philosophy of yogic concepts, such as yogic breathing, in a useful way does not mean you have to know exactly what the terms mean, absolutely. The practice of Yoga, being based in transcending knowledge implies by default, that the manner in which we understand yogic concepts will be always be subject to change as we continue onwards in our own Yoga practice. Although in order to properly pass onwards knowledge to students, we must be able to make sense of how a concept is significant to us, specifically in the potential it opens up for the practitioner. As a teacher, the best question to ask yourself when you have been inspired by a piece of information, or when you feel compelled to begin teaching a concept, is: what have I learned about the topic that is unique? The answers to this question are ultimately going to begin shaping the stance you take towards different phenomena so you can communicate your themes with both meaning and efficacy. In the yogic breathing example, the *significance* of understanding the physiology of breathing as a by product of the relationship between pressure and volume is that it stands upside down the notion that deep breathing is effortful, necessitating that deep breathing actually become effortless. This empowers us to teach breathing from an entirely different place altogether. Instead of encouraging students to try to breathe deeply, we might shift our focus onto receiving breath by relaxing and softening our shape, especially inside of the Yoga poses. So it is not just the method by which we teach breathing that changes but everything else along with it. Every piece of useful philosophical or physiological knowledge should have a meaningful twist which sort of spirals open a host of new potential this way.