

Module 8 Exposing the Dirt & Working for Clarity

Methodology:

Focusing on Rest: Yoga Nidra

- **Yoga Nidra** is a deeply restful guided meditation focused on awareness, intention, and relaxation.
- It begins with setting a **personal intention (Sankalpa)**, repeated mentally three times in the present tense (e.g., “I am healing,” “I am enough”).
- The practice moves into **breath awareness** followed by a **guided body scan**, naming body parts to bring mental attention without movement.
- After the body scan, the facilitator may guide through **imagery, sensory meditations, or visualizations**.
- The session ends by returning to breath, body, and revisiting the **initial intention**.
- Sessions can range from **15 to 90 minutes**; a 30-minute practice may feel as restorative as a **3-hour nap**.
- Yoga Nidra helps promote **nervous system regulation, deep rest, and emotional healing**.

Deeper Joint Support: Yin Yoga

- **Yin Yoga** offers a cool, grounding practice that complements more active, warming movement-based (yang) yoga.
- Postures are held for **several minutes** to target the **connective tissues** (fascia, tendons, ligaments) around the joints.
- The intention is to create **gentle stress** in these tissues to support **circulation, flexibility, and joint health**.
- Practitioners are encouraged to find their “**personal edge**”... the balance between gentle challenge and comfort without pushing into pain or harm.
- **Props** (like bolsters, blankets, or blocks) can be used to support the body, though Yin can also be practiced without props.
- The practice promotes **stillness, introspection, and mindfulness**, offering deep physical and emotional nourishment.
- Exploring different Yin poses and attending a local class can deepen understanding and embodiment of this style.

Joint & Connective Tissue: Exploring Yin Yoga

- ◆ This section focuses on supporting the **hip, shoulder, knee joints, and spine** through Yin Yoga practices.
- ◆ Yin Yoga applies **gentle stress to connective tissues** (ligaments, tendons, fascia) to improve **circulation, flexibility, and joint function**.

The Hip Joint:

- ◆ Hip discomfort can affect the **back, legs, balance, and overall mobility**.
- ◆ Yin postures like **Frog, Bug Pose, Pigeon, and Cow Face** target the hip’s connective tissue.
- ◆ These poses encourage **circulation and gradual release**, supporting **greater range of motion and joint health** over time.
- ◆ Incorporating Yin Yoga into a regular practice can complement active movement and help address **chronic tension or mobility limitations** in key joints.

The Knee Joint:

- ◆ Yin poses help release surrounding muscles for **knee stability and mobility**.
- ◆ Poses like **Hero’s Pose, Squat, and Pyramid** target **quadriceps and hamstrings**, which support the knee

- ◆ Props can enhance comfort:
 - **Towel under heels** in squats
 - **Support behind knees** in Hero's Pose

The Spine:

- ◆ Yin Yoga supports **all ranges of spinal movement**—flexion, extension, twists, and lateral bends.
- ◆ Poses like **Child's Pose (flexion)** and **Bow (extension)** nourish spinal health.
- ◆ Seated and supine twists support gentle **rotation and mobility**.
- ◆ Use of **props** and **personalized guidance** enhances spine safety and long-term benefits.

The Shoulder Joint:

- ◆ **Yin poses for shoulders** target the **connective tissue** of the shoulder girdle.
- ◆ Key postures include: **Thread the Needle, Eagle Arms, Supported Fish, Bananasana**

- The **stillness** of Yin allows participants with **joint pain or limited mobility** to safely explore their **personal edge**.
- These postures promote **circulation**, gentle **mobility improvements**, and **increased comfort** in the shoulders over time.

Yoga Philosophy:

Saucha (Cleanliness & Purity)

- **Saucha** means **cleanliness or purity**, both physically and internally.
- Goes beyond hygiene and tidy space—it includes **moral clarity**, **ethical awareness**, and **emotional integrity**.
- Invites connection with **inner voice**, **instincts**, and **conscience**.
- Encourages reflection on moments when actions **compromised inner truth**, possibly leading to **guilt or shame**.
- Practicing Saucha helps reduce **new harm or trauma**, supporting a **clearer path toward healing**.

Exposing the Dirt (Saucha & Earth Justice)

- **Saucha**, the Niyama of purity, extends beyond personal hygiene... inviting reflection on **global cleanliness** and **environmental justice**.
- **Global water crisis**: Over 785 million people lack clean water; 2 billion lack basic sanitation. Contaminated water leads to widespread illness and death.
- **Pollution in the U.S.**: Nearly half of rivers and lakes are too polluted for safe use. 1.2 trillion gallons of waste are dumped into American waters annually.
- **Soil degradation**: One-third of the world's topsoil is degraded; could disappear in 60 years without intervention.
- **Air pollution**: Causes over 4.2 million deaths globally each year due to major respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Prison pollution**: ~600 U.S. prisons are built near toxic Superfund sites, risking the health of incarcerated people and staff.
- These environmental injustices **disproportionately affect vulnerable communities**, including those incarcerated.
- Saucha calls us to **educate ourselves**, **take action**, and **honor our intuition** by aligning with efforts for **sustainability and justice**.

Clearing the Clutter Within

- Becoming a trauma-informed yoga facilitator is as much about your personal healing as it is about gathering knowledge to support others.
- Carrying your own clutter increases your susceptibility to triggers while supporting others.
- Following your own yoga journey builds personal experience and internal resources.
- Clearing the clutter within helps you develop the authentic voice you wish to share with participants.
- Personal healing and self-awareness are key to effectively guiding a safe, supportive, and healing practice.

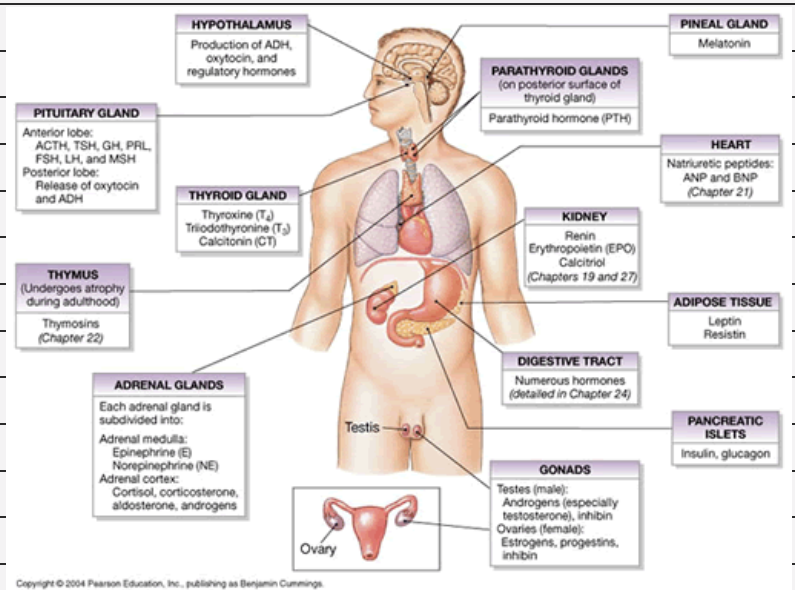
Following your Moral Compass On & Off the Mat

- Your desire to share yoga likely stems from its personal meaning and your awareness of social injustices.
- Intergenerational experiences... such as trauma, cultural beliefs, and access to opportunities... shape your moral compass and influence how you relate to others.
- Reflecting on your ancestry and how past narratives may have been altered or hidden can reveal deeper truths and influence your present understanding.
- Yoga helps access and process these deeper truths by connecting the mind and body and allowing space for healing.
- Your body often registers moral misalignment before the mind does... through tension, illness, or fatigue... signaling a need for awareness and course correction.
- By aligning with your personal truth and understanding your history, you can facilitate healing both within yourself and in the communities you serve.

Embodied Anatomy:

The Endocrine System

- The endocrine system is a network of glands throughout the body that produce and release hormones.
- Hormones are chemical messengers that regulate many vital bodily functions, including:
 - ◆ Growth and development
 - ◆ Energy and metabolism
 - ◆ Digestion
 - ◆ Body temperature
 - ◆ Sexual function and reproduction
 - ◆ Fluid balance and water retention
- Glands in this system include the pituitary, thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal, pineal, pancreas, and gonads (ovaries/testes).
- Hormones travel through the bloodstream to organs and tissues, helping them function properly.
- Imbalances in the endocrine system can lead to health issues like diabetes, thyroid disorders, infertility, and hormonal imbalances.
- Understanding how this system functions can support a trauma-informed yoga practice by recognizing how stress and trauma impact hormone regulation and overall wellness.



Energy Locks (Bandhas) :

- **Bandhas** are energetic locks or holds in yoga that support both physical and energetic alignment in the body.
- The term *bandha* in Sanskrit means “to lock,” “to hold,” or “to tighten.”
- Bandhas are used to **direct prana (energy)** and stabilize the body and mind during yoga practice.
- There are **three primary bandhas**:
 - **Mula Bandha (Root Lock)** – engages the pelvic floor muscles (similar to a Kegel). Supports pelvic and hormonal health.
 - **Uddiyana Bandha (Abdominal Lock)** – involves drawing the abdomen inward and upward. Stimulates digestive and metabolic systems.
 - **Jalandhara Bandha (Throat Lock)** – involves tucking the chin toward the chest. Balances energy flow to the brain and regulates breath and mood.
- The **fourth bandha, Maha Bandha**, combines all three locks and is considered the “great lock.”
- While not a direct part of the **endocrine system**, practicing bandhas can **support hormonal balance** and overall internal regulation (e.g., digestion, sexual energy, metabolism).
- Engaging bandhas can deepen physical postures and also lead to greater **mental clarity, emotional stability, and focus**.
- Mastering the bandhas is seen as a key to mastering both the **external** (asana) and **internal** (concentration, breath, stillness) elements of yoga.

Posture & Sequencing:

Integration & Relaxation:

- **Final phase** of trauma-informed yoga, offering space for rest, reflection, and nervous system restoration.
- Allows the **benefits of the session to settle** into body and mind, supporting clarity, regulation, and balance.
- Emphasizes building **awareness of embodied cues** related to regulation and dysregulation.
- Practices like **Yoga Nidra** and **Yin Yoga** are especially effective for deep relaxation and integration.
- Guided by the Niyama of **Saucha** (purity), this phase invites reflection and inner connection.
- Facilitators should approach with **care and sensitivity**, recognizing this stillness may bring up unexpected emotions.
- Encourage **self-agency** and offer **choices** to help participants feel safe and supported.
- This phase reinforces tools that participants can take **off the mat** for real-life self-regulation and healing.
- Themes of **self-regulation, presence, and honoring inner truth** are key elements to explore and guide.

Integration & Relaxation Cont:

- Follows **Concentration & Focus** and transitions participants into stillness and reflection.
- Emphasizes **modifications and personal agency**—participants are encouraged to explore variations that feel safe and comfortable.
- **Journaling** can be offered to process emotions or thoughts that arise during stillness.
- Alternatives to **Corpse Pose (Shavasana)** are suggested, such as side-lying, seated, or propped shapes, to avoid feelings of vulnerability.
- **Invitational language** empowers participants to make choices that honor their own boundaries and needs.

- Incorporate **Yin Yoga** and **Yoga Nidra** to deepen relaxation and integration:
- Yin supports stillness and long holds for gentle release.
- Yoga Nidra guides participants through deep rest and inner connection.
- Postures like **Supported Bridge**, **Supported Fish**, **gentle twists**, and **forward folds** promote reflection and connect to **Saucha (purity)**.
- Facilitators should offer **grounding reassurance**, as emotions may arise during deep rest.
- End with calming **Pranayama** (e.g., Alternate Nostril Breathing) to support regulation and prepare participants to transition back into daily life.
- Reinforces the tools and awareness developed throughout the practice for **long-term self-regulation and healing**.