

Prison Yoga Project YTT

A sample of
June 2025 Graduate Final Reflections

Avidya Illusions ~ Malikah Hugs

Can't blind me no
Truth finds me yo
My heart gon glow
Peace aligns me slow
Ancestors guide me yo
I see thru veils below
Cacao unwinds me slow
Letting illusions go
Essence gon always show
You can't define me bro
I'm on Goddess Mode
Shine Unstoppable
Rooted & Radical
Spirit inside me knows
Love overflows

The fuel that makes me grow uh
The fuel that makes me grow uh uh
Aligned from head to toe uh
The peace that helps me flow uh uh
My light refused to blow uh
Unfolding as I go uh uh
Dat Goddess energy show uh
My aura's cosmic glow uh uh
Avidya can't blind me, my soul don't
sleep
I'm shakin illusions, these visions
run deep
Might bend but won't break
Stayin rooted in peace
I'll always be mindful of the
Goddess in me

This training has been a breath of life in what would have otherwise felt like an extremely ~~bleak~~ season of life for me. Coming out of an intellectual endeavor of wondering ~~de/reconstruction~~, there were so many parts of this training which affirmed my senses of truth, justice, meaning, ~~relationality~~, and being. From our first session of group storytelling to modules on karma yoga, working for a just and equitable future, aligning your higher purpose, and more, I felt relieved to come back to the grounding reality that theology is meaning-making, as realized by our connections to self, other, nature, other-worlds, past, present, and future. I felt stretched and challenged at multiple turns to notice some of these connections in my life and mourn others where these connections have not been given due space, care, and attention to grow + flourish. I am quite nervous about the prospect of moving from student/learner to facilitator, despite being a teacher of other subjects, and I have seen poking why this is the case. Through our time together and especially while planning my final practicum, I realized that it is much scarier to be vulnerable with bodily knowledge than are many parts of my own intellectual knowledge. There are many parts of my own training I am quite scared with, but this to most authentically embrace, share, and own my bodily movements + rhythms in all their honor and joyous. I am confident that this is only the beginning of my yoga journey. As I continue to encounter and transformations of these human bodies, the imputation and frictions of these bodies will only exponentially increase, within me and all those beloved communities. I will meet in this supposing journey of practicing yoga. There are too many ways yoga has changed my relationship to self, regulation, and agency for me to explicate on a single page. Ever since finding the practice after what felt like unrecuperable personal events, I am consistently surprised by the healing power of something as simple as an awareness of breathing. Thank you to everyone at PYP- instructors, colleagues, students, and all those I will continue to meet in this network, for setting me on this path of healthy movements.



Shivpriya S. Geller

- Shivpriya S.

Final Reflection
Project ~

"Yoga is the journey of the Self, through the
Self, to the Self"
Bhagavad Gita. (6)

"Practicing gratitude, and an
unworthy" (2)

"Yoga doesn't care"
Jon Lidgren
PYP, 04.09.25

Bob Valentino, Module 9,
PYP, 16.09.25

"Karma Yoga is a yoga
of service without attachment
to the result. It's your
best effort with gratitude
from the divine, then
you get out of the
way!" (2)

Jonas Fox PYP,
26.09.25

"I was attached to
expectations. I would
change and become
through this course and
through yoga practice I
always felt unworthy." (5)

As soon as I let go felt
apoor Aparigraha, simply
Honor it, at all
made sense. I realized I
was always worthy and
had nothing 'Yoga'!!
Andy
Friday! 13/11/25.

"These holy words...
I'm feeling them, and
knowing myself my own,
and I don't feel
myself worthy to
be anything more!" (3)
Jonathan R. Service in
'The Chosen'.
@ 02:55

(4)

*What disrupts you from you? (Day 4, Jen)
 *Smile is a yoga pose for the mouth (Day 6, Jen)
 *Some people don't have an idea of how to move their body. (Day 6, Jen)
 *To the best of my ability is to reduce harm but the first is to myself. (Day 6, Jen)
 *How can I educate myself on serving populations who are a different race, gender, ethnicity, religion. (Day 6, Jen)
 *Connecting with your emotions and understanding your vulnerability is practicing yoga. (Day 7, Jen)
 *People light up when you pay attention to them. (Guest speaker Robert Shurman)
 *I don't nurse. (Guest speaker Robert Shurman)

*Everyone deserves safe passage. (Day 10, Jen)
 *When we are comfortable within ourselves, capitalism dies. (Day 10, Jen)
 *I had to get back inside my body because I was stuck in my head. (Day 10, Fellow participant, Aleyshia)
 *Who are you in the absence of stuff? (Day 10, Jen)
 *It's hard to let something go that we haven't yet understood and/or settled our own accountability with. (Day 10, Jen)
 *Just because you feel something doesn't mean you have to feed it. (Day 11, Fellow participant Bob)
 *Sometimes we take offense because we are ignorant. (Day 11, Jen)

Final Reflection

Before this training, my relationship with yoga was simply my performance on the mat for the past eight years. This training has taught me that the Asanas, often being someone's first introduction to yoga, is a very small part of the experience. I now understand to be a true student of yoga; I must open my eyes to how I treat myself and treat others. The choices I make every day are an opportunity for me to live in alignment with the Yamas and Niyamas, while always being mindful not to allow the Kleshas to take hold of me. Yoga is not something I will eventually "get" but rather a lifelong journey of learning about myself and how I choose to interact with the world.

My final reflection is a compilation of statements and text I jotted down over the course of the training (some are not word for word so I did not include quotes). Most are from my thoughtful leader, Jen, others from fellow participants, and some taken from the modules. Short quotes, statements, and insights have always been a part of my learning process. I believe these quotes and statements are beautiful nuggets of wisdom that will help guide my continued yoga journey and make me a better human. Thank you to Jen, and my fellow participants, for creating such a warm space for me to authentically see myself and others.

Rachael I.

*Regulate the room not the person. (Day 17, Jen)
 *Individuals are much harder to control and manipulate when they are content within their own lives. (Day 12, Jen)
 *Yogas answer- You have to show up in a content, safe, regulated body or you are just contributing to the harm. (Day 12, Jen)
 *I don't have the capacity for that right now but things may shift in a few months. (Day 13, Jen)
 *Hurt people hurt people. Healing people see people. (Module 7)
 *Are y's in yourself?
 *What stirs you what sticks to you, what shuts you down? (Day 15, Jen)
 *Everything that pulls you away from yourself, question why it is in your life. (Day 16, Jen)
 *Focus on what is felt not necessarily on what it means. (Day 17, Jen)
 *Generational oppression is a root that supports white supremacy and patriarchal expectations. (Module 12)
 *Farmers in but I had to hear it. (Day 8, Jen)
 *Continuing to keep a space? (Day 8, Jen)
 *'shiny squirrels' that sit on aocus. (Day 8, Jen)
 *not finding what I'm offering and another pathway to that.
 *Don't be swayed by things outside of you. What things do you need to balance who you are? (Day 9, Jen)
 *Are you seeking things to complete your wholeness? (Day 9, Jen)
 *What would make you sad if it's tomorrow? (Day 9, Jen)

Power to the Peaceful: Final Project Reflection

Today I had the honor of co-leading *Power to the Peaceful: A Yoga Practice for Inner Strength and Collective Liberation* as my final project for the Prison Yoga Project teacher training. The experience was more than I could have hoped for.

I opened the workshop with a 30-minute flow designed to invite participants into their bodies with gentleness and curiosity. Instead of focusing on alignment or performance, the shapes became a container for reflection. Through movement and guiding questions rooted in the concept of *ikigai*, participants explored what they love, what they are good at, and what the world needs from them. The intention was to reconnect with clarity and purpose, especially during times of uncertainty and grief.

Kait, another facilitator and friend, followed with a grounding *yin* practice, creating space for deeper stillness, integration, and guided meditation. Afterward, we all gathered in a circle over delicious vegan food, sharing what brought us to the practice, the gifts we carry, and how we want to contribute to a more compassionate and socially just world. The presence of a young person in the room was especially inspiring, a reminder that this work is intergenerational and filled with possibility.

Daria



This project represents the heart of what I have learned through trauma informed yoga. The training emphasized that healing comes through choice, agency, and safety, and I carried those principles into every part of the workshop. Each pose was offered as an invitation rather than a directive. Participants had permission to stay, shift, journal, or let thoughts wander if they needed to. Rather than pulling attention back to the breath as in a traditional class, I encouraged them to follow memories

or causes that arose, trusting that those moments might point toward their unique purpose.

Trauma often strips people of connection and power. This practice was about remembering both. It reminded me that yoga is not just an individual pursuit, it is also a collective path that can strengthen our commitment to justice, healing, and liberation. Closing the practice in community conversation and shared food was just as essential as the movement, because it created a circle of support and solidarity where everyone's voice mattered.

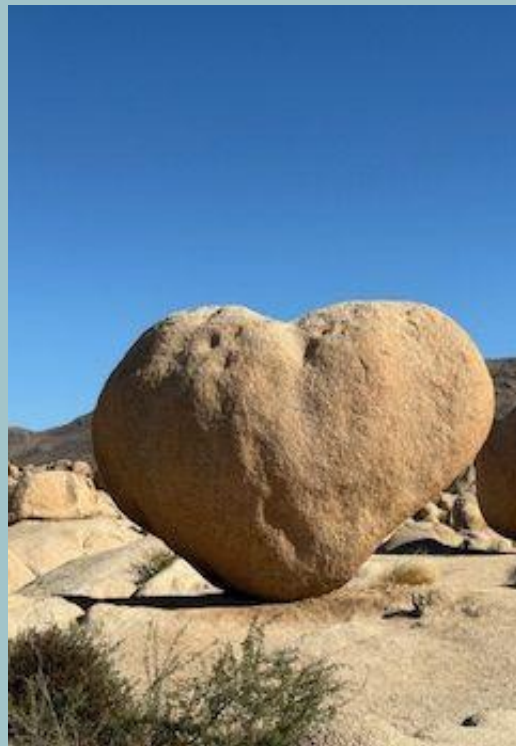
Leading this project confirmed for me that trauma informed yoga is not only about working in carceral settings, it is about bringing the same care, presence, and principles into every community. The skills I have learned in this training gave me the tools to hold space in a way that was safe, invitational, and meaningful. My hope is that the people who came today left with a deeper sense of their own resilience and with inspiration to bring compassionate action into the world.



Yamas and Niyamas

In Nature

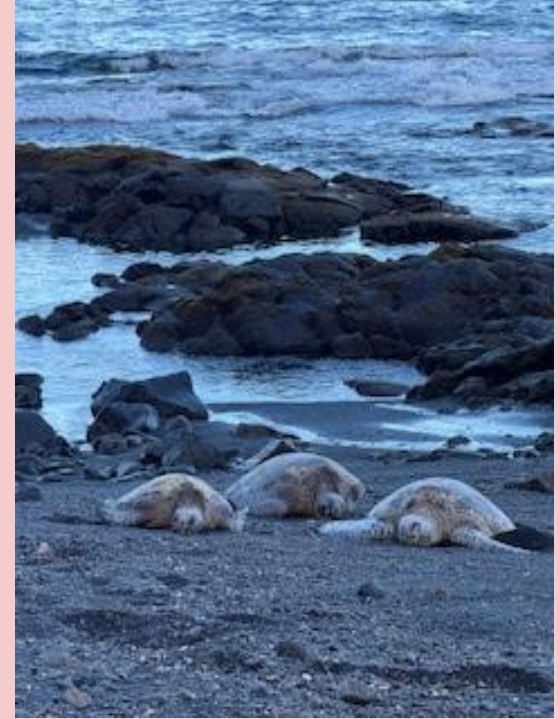
Photos by: Julie Knapp



Yamas Ethical Restraints



Ahimsa Non Violence

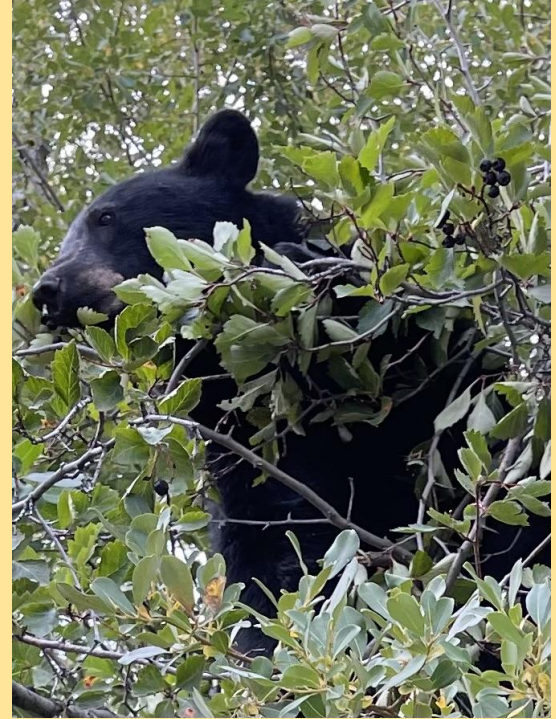


Satya Truth



Astaya

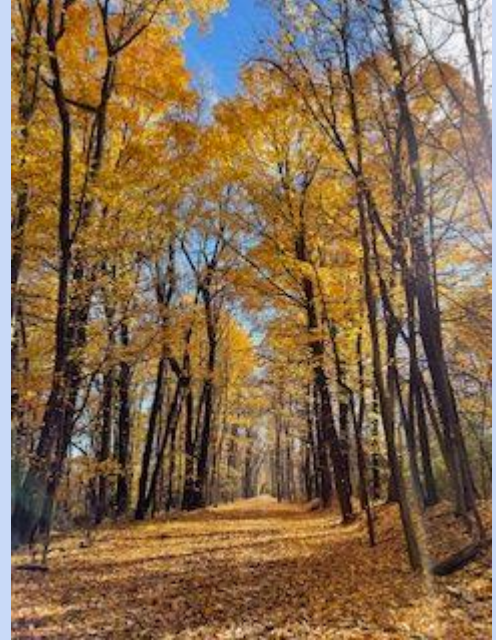
Non-Stealing



Brahmacharya Non-Excess



Aparigraha Non-Attachment



Niyamas

Personal Observances



Saucha Purity





Santosha Contentment



Tapas Self-Discipline



Svedyaya Self-Study



Ishvara Pranidhana Self-Surrender



Robert V.

The Hidden Connection of Yoga

Heather came to a stop in front of her dad's house. She could not hide the subtle smile on her face that gave away how grateful she felt today. Her daughter, Emma, opened the car door gathering her things, energetic and loquacious. Words were coming fast. Too fast to hold the thread of any one single topic. Heather just laughed enjoying the moment. Eight year old little girls might intuitively hold the mystery of the universe somehow.

The front door opened and Heather's father stepped outside to greet them. There was her hero. Strong, sober, happy, healthy, vibrant and most importantly, present. A few tattoos were beginning to fade thanks to second hand work years prior. There is one tattoo that Emma will never see. Dad removed the white pride tattoo simply saying there was enough hate in the world already. Besides the man who chose that tattoo does not exist anymore. A couple of scars were visible that had stories of their own. The internal scars today were all but healed. Their relationship was stronger than ever bonded through connection and mutual forgiveness. Heather had her dad back and back for good. Plus now she had free babysitting. It was win-win. Emma adored her grandfather affectionately calling him G-pa.

G-PA, Emma shouted running to jump in his arms.

Emma Bear, he said squeezing her tight before setting her back down. That will never get old, your turn honey, he mused turning his attention to his daughter, the love of his life. My running and jumping days are long gone dad, Heather said as they embraced.

How are you kiddo? he asked.

I am really good today, she said.

Glad to hear that. Remember our monthly lunch date is next week.

I have it in my calendar, Heather said with an exaggerated eye roll.

Dad, I should only be a few hours,

Take your time honey, Emma Bear can stay forever.

Yeah, forever, Emma squealed from inside the house playing with the dog.

Forever is a little too long, see you later, love you both, Heather said.

Love you more, he said.

Bye mommy, love you.

He shut the door and turned his attention to his granddaughter. Deep breath, feel the joy and Gratitude soaking in this tiny amazing human person. The promise of a good life can always be found in the creation of experiences with the ones who mean the most.

Emma Bear, what do you want to do today?

Can we make cookies? I think grandma would like that when she comes home.

Oh, how very thoughtful, but I have a feeling you want to eat cookie dough, and make a mess.

Can't all of that be true at the same time, she said.

I guess so. You might be the smartest girl in the world.

Duh, I have been trying to tell you since I was born.

How about I teach you how to make cookies,

I like that idea, but only if you tell me a story, too.

A story? Hmmm, that depends, do you believe in angels?

I think so. Mommy calls me an angel, but I don't believe her.

Why not.

I don't have wings or special powers.

I beg to differ, honey, have you seen your face when you smile? Wings are obvious and special powers come from the heart and we all have the ability to find them at the right time. If you say so G-pa, she concluded.

Then I do have a story for you that I have recently been writing about and that I have not shared with anyone yet.

Cool, Emma said clapping her hands in anticipation.

First let's get everything out we need to make cookie dough, G-pa said.

Cookies, G-Pa, Emma laughed.

Right, that too, G-PA said with a wink.

He began to instruct Emma on reading instructions and how important they are to follow if you want to craft the perfect cookie. The cookie recipe was a family secret passed down from his wife's grandmother that rivaled Mrs. Fields any day. No offense to Mrs. Fields.

He was patient with her showing her what ingredients to get, what bowls to use, and helping when she was unsure. They caught up on school and Tik Tok, and many other everyday things that consume the mind of an eight year old. Strange to think of all the moments he visualized that freedom could bring, making cookies with his granddaughter was not one of them. But it probably should have been. Just the idea of her existence motivated him to keep moving forward. Although, no mental image would have equaled what he was experiencing today. Great job, is that everything? He asked.

Yep, I doubled and tripled checked, now start your story.

This is a story about a not so young man named Robert, a yoga instructor, and an ancient practice that came at the right time.

Hey yoga, like you teach, Emma said already suspicious.

Save the interruptions, measure the flour out,

An exaggerated eye roll from the sassy side of Emma, but she complied nonetheless.

...Robert was in prison for a long time. He was angry, sad, lonely and struggled to cope with the reality of his existence. His past mistakes kept him locked up in a mental prison scared to try a different way of life completely disconnected.

Sad, I feel bad for him, Emma said immediately covering her mouth with her hands, eyes wide. She then zipped her mouth shut, locked it with an imaginary lock and threw the key over her shoulder. G-PA smile only wishing that strategy would work on adults. He continued with his story.

...Robert was sober holding tightly to his recovery from drugs and alcohol abuse. But he wanted to know more about healing and how to be a better person. He sees a flier one day announcing a new eight week yoga class from the Prison Yoga Project. A volunteer would be coming in to teach yoga, breath work, meditation, inner peace, and how healing from trauma is possible. Robert ignored most of the announcement save for one word: healing. He wanted that and made the decision to try something new. If nothing changes, then nothing changes. He did not know then that that simple choice would alter the course of his life forever.

Emma's eyes widened as her tiny brain tried to extrapolate how one thing could be so monumental.

Robert showed up to that first yoga class with low expectations and only one goal. That was to show up each week and finish what he started. Yoga in a male prison is not a popular choice. He ignored the social chatter doing what he felt right for him. Somehow he wanted to find the

Robert V.

strength and determination to leave prison transformed. The yoga instructor, Madison, was kind and quiet welcoming each of us into the space she set up. Soft music played in the background. It was strange, but peaceful. She greeted us with a smile instructing us to grab a yoga mat and find a space to get started. There was something about the way she carried herself, looking at each of them, connecting with them in a way that felt real. Robert felt seen for the first time in years. It was like she carried a secret about life, but was willing to share that secret with them.

G-Pa paused briefly to help Emma measure something else.

Robert did not remember everything from that first session. He meditated for the first time and it was strange. He took deep breaths, twisted his body in strange positions that he had only witnessed on TV. Madison invited him to explore how it felt, focus on mindful awareness, and connect to his body. It was challenging. There was something peaceful about the whole thing. At the end, the final position was corpse pose. This is where you lie flat on your back in deep relaxation letting all the positive energy flow through the body, heart, and mind. It was the best part. Madison asked for some feedback encouraging all of us to speak. A few guys spoke and asked questions. Robert stayed silent. She passed out free Prison Yoga Project books along with a journal. Take the practice of Yoga with you this week reflecting on the philosophy that has life applications hidden within. Write down thoughts or questions and take a few moments every day to write down anything you are grateful for. Most importantly, she said, come back next week and believe in yourself and be kind to others. That was her message.

Robert was impressed how she took time to learn their names and treated everyone with dignity. A word that would come later to him. He felt really good after this hour and half yoga class.

I was going for kind and thoughtful, but yes crazy works too.

He paused to watch her measure and follow instructions on her own for the second batch of cookies. He was very proud.

The day came. It was a quick flight followed by a long drive to the Oregon coast. He found the small coffee shop they were set to meet in. The smell of the ocean lingered in the air. It was serene. Madison came on time and we embraced in a hug. I fought back tears. Teacher and student reunited years later, in a different setting, an unlikely duo sitting together at that little coffee shop connected by the power of yoga.

Freedom looks good on you, Madison said.

Thank you, I agree completely, I replied.

I wasted no time explaining to her the impact she had on me for that short eight weeks all those years ago. It sparked a radical journey of healing, facing my past trauma, and embracing the human spirit all of us share. I have never stopped practicing yoga and applying the philosophy to everyday life. Today I am now a Prison Yoga Project instructor impacting others in service and selfless action. I would not be who I am today without your love, kindness, and dignity. You saw me as a person with potential. You believed in me until I was empowered to believe in myself. Thank you. I still practice gratitude on purpose today.

The tears streamed down her face as she listened to something that she really needed to hear. She sat there in silence for several minutes letting the moment linger in the air like the salt water.

G-Pa, one person can really make a difference in the life of someone else. Because of her, and because of your dedication, you help people all the time.

That will always be true Emma bear. Most of that work is simply done by how you live your life, but what Madison shared with me next was surprising.

Madison explained, I ventured into new territory teaching that yoga class. I wanted to help, serve, and contribute. I agreed quickly when the opportunity came to me because it absolutely terrified me. I was tired of living in fear. I was stuck between low expectations and high hopes for a positive outcome. It was the first and last yoga class I taught in Arizona prison. What I realized today that I didn't fully understand then was how much personal healing and transformation I had to go through to show up for others. In a way it was selfishly unselfish hoping the message was received. I am grateful that it was. The whole thing almost didn't happen. Let me share with you a very dark time in my life that I am finally comfortable talking about. G-Pa only reflected on this part of the story in was head as Madison showed her own vulnerability. During her Prison Yoga Project teacher training she was in an extremely abusive relationship trying unsuccessfully to drink herself into oblivion. She was struggling to find her truth. Every week she would log on to the live virtual training session with dozens of future yoga teachers from all over the world bringing their unique spirit to the training experience. This was her first opening into a true yoga community. She kept her video/audio off during those live calls. She was scared to share. The instructor, Jen, was remarkable. Jen taught her the value of truth, non-harm, purity, and developing a moral compass. An insight into emotional regulation through breathing and yoga. It was this community that gave her strength. Amazing humans that wanted to help others with no expectations of anything in return. There was even an incarcerated male participant with so much zeal for life. It was inspiring. Madison wanted to experience that joy in her life. First she had to get out of her own prison. It was scary and she almost quit training several times. But she just kept showing up, learning, and listening. Eventually she quit drinking to clear her mind and face reality. This helped her listen to her heart finding a way to be brave and courageous. She asked for help, got honest with someone who cared about her, and left that abusive relationship. It was liberating. Through that yoga training she found a way to heal. G-Pa, hello, what did Madison share with you? Emma asked bringing him back to moment. Madison told me how much she struggled personally while she trained to be a yoga instructor and almost quit. But she found strength to be brave and vulnerable acting with courage using yoga philosophy to live a better life. That is how she was able to show up and serve people like me when she did. Pretty remarkable huh? Today she is married, teaching yoga to young kids, and most importantly happy. Before I left that day she gave me a present. It was a poem she wrote during our yoga class that reminded her to stay committed to her purpose. That is that nice framed poem hanging in the hallway by front door.

That was a great story, and now you teach yoga to people. I am really happy Madison did not quit. Here, taste my cookie dough, did I do a good job?

Wow, what is a better word than perfect? Now all we have to do is clean up. G-Pa said with a big grin.

Emma let out a long sigh and rolled her eyes.

G-Pa, that story made me think of this girl in my class. She is new, very shy, and does not talk to many people. People whisper that she is weird. Now I am thinking she might have other things going on in her life and maybe she needs a friend. I want her to know that there are kind people in this world. She never brings a big lunch. I think I am going to make an extra lunch and invite her to sit with me. Maybe we could become friends.

Robert V.

G-Pa fought back tears listening to that cool idea.

That is an excellent idea. Bring some of our cookies. Please share all the deets with me afterwards. G-pa said failing to sound cool.

Emma left that day with her mom learning many valuable lessons and new things about her grandfather. The power of connection is real. There is much more to the practice of yoga and the communities that exist.

Before she left that day, she and her mother stopped by a framed poem by the door to read it together. Emma wanted to hear the words of a woman she would never meet, but respected greatly for showing up for her grandfather long ago.

It Matters

The universe spins invisible thread from years past
empowering yoga communities to inspire personal healing

United by our shared humanity

Destiny crashed into the present moment

Watching fate conspire with karma

Honoring the goodness that drives change

Like it was perfectly designed this way

The tiny seeds of kindness are never wasted

Even when the proud trample the humble

Destiny, fate, karma, connection

Big words that are ambiguous at best

That mean little compared to

The power that can only be found

In small acts of selfless-service

Gratefully showing up for someone else

And holding all of this together

Keeping the world turning and the sun shining bright,

Connecting people to the impossible,

Giving optimism room to grow

Is the greatest gift of all: LOVE

The message of love is clear, whispering

To the quiet mind and the open heart

What you do will always matter.



- Lourdes

One of the Prison Yoga Project's suggested texts for the training is Dr. Gail Parker's *Restorative Yoga for Ethnic and Race-Based Stress and Trauma*. This summer, I started listening to the audiobook during morning walks. I was pleasantly shocked at how relevant the book seemed, not only as a Black woman living in America, but as a teacher and trainer of future public interest lawyers.

The examples Dr. Parker gave of why regulating the emotions was important blisteringly reminded me of incidents I had experienced with my students, especially from around 2020-2023. I often thought at the time, "*I totally agree with the students' critique of the school, but why are they reacting in such dramatic and unhealthy ways?*" As their professor and someone who shared their critiques of our school's racial and social politics, I found myself in rooms with some of them agreeing with them—but I couldn't shake this idea that something seemed wrong with their ways of addressing the critique. Unfortunately, I shook off this concern and chalked my hesitation up to becoming old and out of touch. I thought of Ella Baker, who often elevated the voices of young people in the movement because of their clarity of vision and willingness to put themselves on the line. I also did not want to be accused of silencing students or engaging in "respectability politics" or "tone policing." So, rather than expressing my concerns about how activated they seemed, I either silently nodded or actively supported many of their reactions to the race-based stress and trauma they were experiencing, even if to me they seemed more reactive than strategic.

As the text unfolded, I found myself having to stop repeatedly and take notes on several mind-blowing insights Dr. Parker shared. I eventually purchased a hard copy of the book to make it easier to mark passages and take notes. One of the many wonderful aspects of the book is that Dr. Parker's message is *not* to remain silent in the face of injustice. There is no "respectability politics" here that implies accepting racism. But there is a difference between engaging reactively and engaging intentionally, and Dr. Parker invites us in both theoretical and concrete terms to explore those differences. It is too late to share this with that particular group of students, but the resources offered by Dr. Parker, and by yoga in general, are so needed in legal education and practice.

I decided on one of these walks to teach a seminar in Fall 2026 on *Law, Emotion, and Regulation*. This course would allow me to blend academic topics that I am required to teach in my courses (like, how emotions affect and are expressed in constitutional law and criminal law) with topics that feel very present for law students and lawyers, like reacting to race-based stress, managing the stress of supporting people who are facing injustice (most of the students I work with are pursuing careers in social justice lawyering or movement lawyering), and working with

populations who are experiencing their own race-based stress and possibly addiction and other traumas. There are courses that teach about law and the emotions in a purely academic way, and some courses on mindfulness and the law that are inspired by the teachings of yoga that are not academic, but I have not yet come across a course that combines the academic and embodied forms of knowledge in conversation with each other. Inspired by this YTT, I already signed up to teach the course. Yet, it has no course description or content.

My final project for this training is a course description and list of resources and potential readings for this 2-3 credit, 13-week Fall 2026 seminar—a project for my community of law students. It will take more time to develop a full syllabus, but this is the seedling of a course that I hope to teach many times in the future. Perhaps farther into the future, after I have gained more expertise and experience, it would be something I would offer in a more generally accessible form.

Law, Emotion, and Regulation: Course Description

This course interrogates the complex roles of emotion in legal doctrine, legal theory, legal education, and lawyering. The first portion of the course delves into the topic of emotion in doctrinal areas including constitutional law, family law, criminal law, property, contract, and tort, critically analyzing how emotion shapes outcome-determinative legal concepts and procedures. In the second portion, the course examines law and emotion in theory and method, drawing on both classic and cutting-edge scholarly texts to ask, what is the relationship between law and emotion, and what should it be? We also analyze creative examples of how lawyers have written about emotion in both practice and scholarship. Throughout the course, students will reflect on their own emotions and learn about techniques for understanding and regulating them. In the third portion of the course, students will delve more deeply into this topic, exploring how emotion influences the legal academic environment and the practice of law, and learning about how various tools such as mindfulness, yoga, therapy, spiritual practice, and other methods might contribute to a sustainable and meaningful career in the legal profession.

Initial Resource List

Books

Catharine Abell & Joel Smith (editors), *The Expression of Emotion: Philosophical, Psychological and Legal Perspectives* (2018).

Jacoby Ballard, *A Queer Dharma: Yoga and Meditations for Liberation* (2022).

Susan Bandes (editor), *The Passions of Law* (2001).

Martha Chamallas & Jennifer B. Wriggins, *The Measure of Injury: Race, Gender, and Tort Law* (2010).

Martha Ertman, *Love's Promises: How Formal & Informal Promises Shape All Kinds of Families* (2015).

Jivana Heyman, *Yoga Revolution: Building a Practice of Courage and Compassion* (2021).

Michael D. Huggins, *Going Om: A CEO's Self-Discovery Behind Bars* (2019).

Michelle Cassandra Johnson, *Skill in Action: Radicalizing Your Yoga Practice to Create a Just World* (2021).

Steven Kieve, *Transforming Practices: Finding Joy and Satisfaction in the Legal Life* (1999).

Cynthia Lee, *Murder and the Reasonable Man: Passion and Fear in the Criminal Courtroom* (2003).

Nathalie Martin, *Lawyering from the Inside Out: Learning Professional Development through Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence* (2018).

Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (1999)

Martha Minow, *When Should Law Forgive?* (2019)

National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, *The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change* (2017).

Hallie Neuman Love & Nathalie Martin, *Yoga for Lawyers: Mind-Body Techniques to Feel Better All the Time* (2015).

Martha C. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (2013).

Gail Parker, *Restorative Yoga for Ethnic and Race-Based Stress and Trauma* (2020).

Scott L. Rogers & Jan L. Jacobowitz, *Mindfulness and Professional Responsibility: A Guide Book for Integrating Mindfulness into the Law School Curriculum* (2012).

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Monica B.



Kurt

Coming Home

Lauren C.

The Prison Yoga Project Yoga Teacher Training has solidified the notion that through the different seasons of our life we have the opportunity to grow out of, and into, more evolved versions of ourselves. These transitions are born of awareness, inviting us to recognise and reflect on the ways we habitually relate to ourselves and the world around us. Through shining a light on our inner world, we can transform engrained and familiar patterns into intentional, conscious living – allowing what we cultivate at our roots to create meaningful and sustainable change. Through Yoga I have come to understand that the practice can assist us to cultivate congruence between what we feel and how we move, both on and off the mat. Within this process we arrive at an introspective environment where we can discern between our own values and the ways in which we wish to emulate this within our practice and in our lives. Through deep inner contemplation we can connect to that deeper essence that is within each one of us; that which is unchanging, constant and ready to be awakened, seen, felt and known, it is here that newfound awareness and direction begin to call us home.

O'Dette

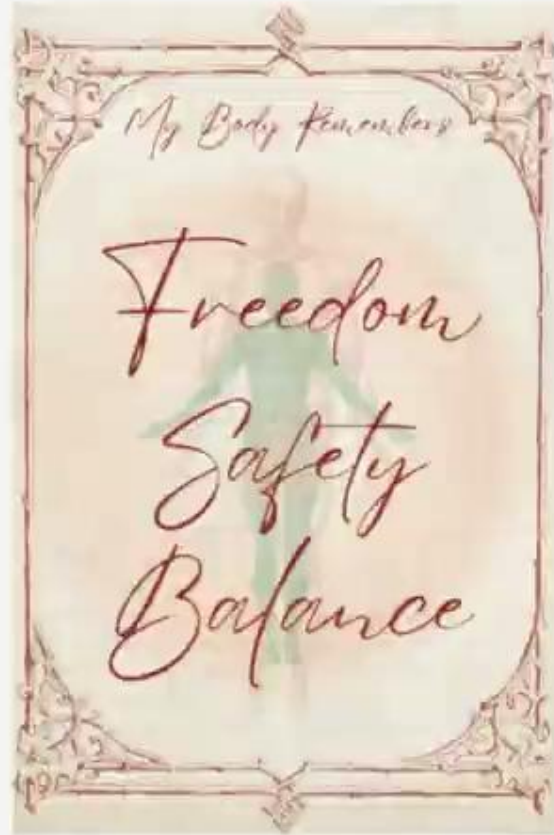
Title: My Body Remembers

Description: 'My Body Remembers' is a recollection of my body's wisdom. An offering of a supportive argument to the popular idea that "The Body Keeps the Score"

I submit for consideration that if my body's capacity for remembrance is that powerful, then surely it also remembers my innate state of wellbeing (not just the trauma).

My Body Remembers Freedom, Safety and Balance.

I created a mini three-card Oracle Deck with one title & contents card.





Tatum B.

Yoga Teacher Training Reflections

Hannah Moore
November 12, 2025



On this experience coming to a close
and where we go from here:
“We were never perfect.

Yet, the journey we make together is perfect on this
earth
who was once a star
and made the same mistakes as humans.

We might make them again, she said.

Crucial to finding the way is this: there is no beginning or
end.

You must make your own map.”

- Joy Harjo (from “A Map to the Next World” in
Poet Warrior, p. 189)



On seeing and being seen:

Uncried Tears

Imagine teardrops left uncried
from pain trapped inside -
waiting to escape
through the windows of your eyes.

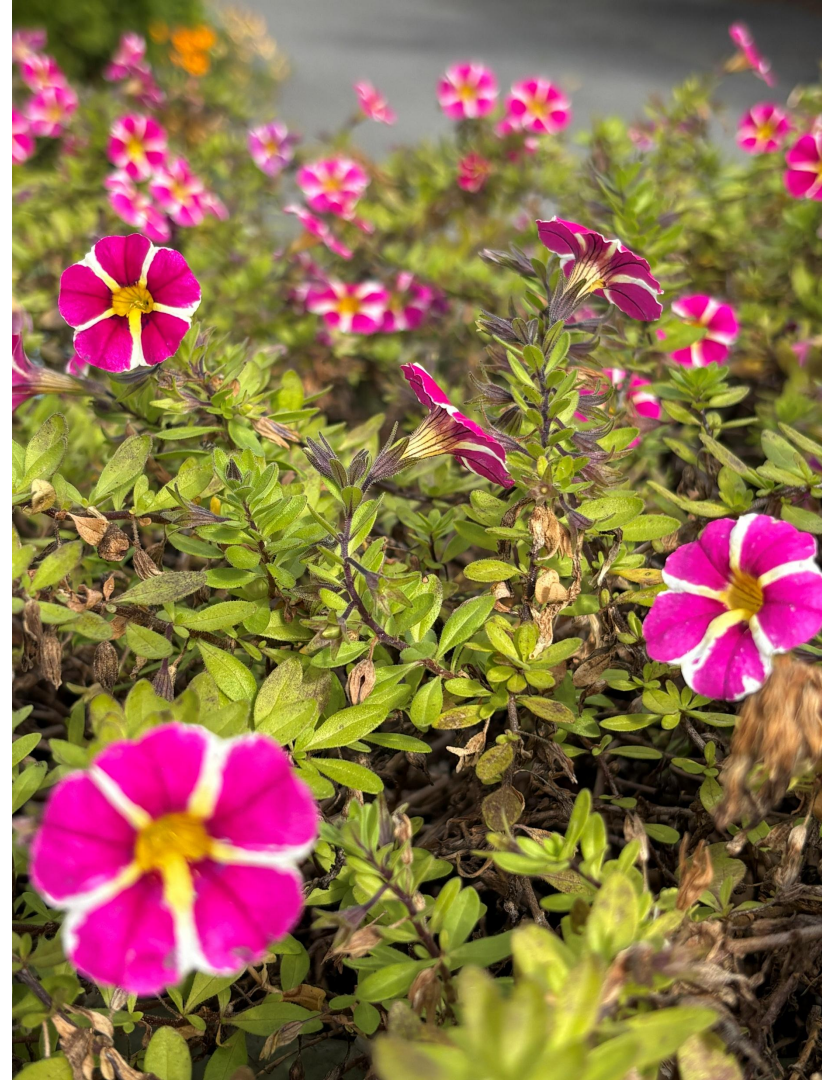
"Why won't you let us out?"
the tears question the conscience,
"Relinquish your fears and doubts
and be healed in the process."

The conscience told the tears,
"I know you really want me to cry,
but if I release you from bondage,
in gaining freedom you will die."

The tears gave it some thought
before giving the conscience an answer -
"If crying brings you to triumph
then dying's not such a disaster."

Bryan Stevenson shared this poem in his book "Just Mercy."

It was written by Ian E. Manuel, who in 1990, at the age of 13,
was convicted to die in prison.





Presence

Presence
Stream of understanding,
Of recognition, care
And healing

Is this justice? Emerging justice?

For the 12-year old who abandoned her plan for
retribution
Pillowcase in tow
What does it take to heal lifetimes of rawness,
numbness, And chains?

And, one more poem from Joy Harjo:

PREPARE

“That first earth gift of breathing
Opened your body, these lungs, this heart
Gave birth to the ability to interact
With dreaming

You are a story fed by generations
You carry songs of grief, triumph
Thankfulness and joy
Feel their power as they ascend
Within you

As you walk, run swiftly, even fly
Into infinite possibility
Let go that which burdens you
Let go any acts of unkindness or brutality
From or against you

Let go that which has burdened your family
Your community, your nation
Or disturbed your soul
Let go one breath into another

Pray thankfulness for this Earth we are
For this becoming we are
For this sunlight touching skin we are
For the cooling of the dark we are

Listen now as Earth sheds her skin
Listen as the generations move
One against the other to make power
We are bringing in a new story”

- Joy Harjo (from *Poet Warrior*, p. 3)



Final Reflection Essay

Carlee Ferrell

Walking through this training alongside my Yoga Therapy certification and mentorship with Hari-kirtana Das has felt like all the threads of my path are finally weaving together. Each part of this journey has illuminated the other — the philosophy, the practice, the service. When I first began studying with Hari, he encouraged me to find the place where my love for ideas met the tangible act of service. He told me my dharma lived “in the field of ideas,” where intellect and embodiment meet, and then pointed me directly toward the Prison Yoga Project as a living expression of that truth. He reminded me that yoga is never separate from the world — it’s how we bring consciousness into spaces that have forgotten it.

Facilitating *Group Yoga Therapy for Trauma* and *Mood Support* has shown me exactly what he meant. Week after week, I’ve watched participants learn how to regulate through breath, through choice, through presence. In the trauma group, I see what happens when someone realizes they can exhale without fear; in the mood support group, I witness how a single moment of stillness softens the nervous system. These moments bring the sutras to life. *Ahimsa* is no longer theoretical — it’s in the way I cue gently, the way I remind them that everything is optional, the way I say, “You are the expert of your own body.” The *Niyamas* show up as consistency, as contentment in small progress, as surrender to the pace of healing that’s already unfolding.

My mentorship deepened how I see *Dharma* — not as something grand or abstract, but as right action aligned with truth. When I asked Hari how to discern between resistance and emotional overwhelm, he told me dharma isn’t always comfortable. It often asks us to stay when

we’d rather run. That guidance shifted something in me. It made me realize that stepping into the Prison Yoga Project isn’t just a professional move — it’s a spiritual vow to keep showing up where healing feels hard, where compassion is most needed. Through this program, I see that yoga isn’t about removing struggle; it’s about remembering the steady stillness beneath it.

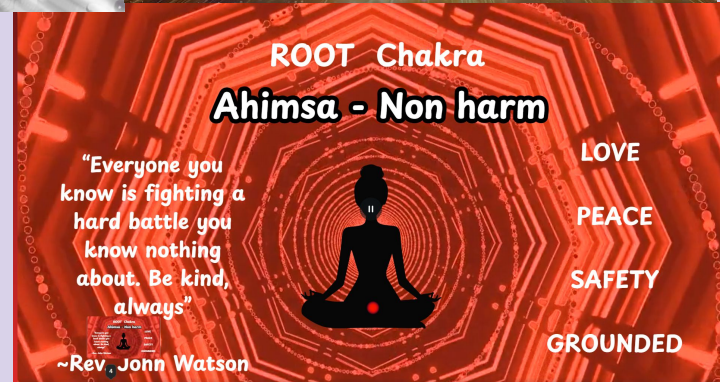
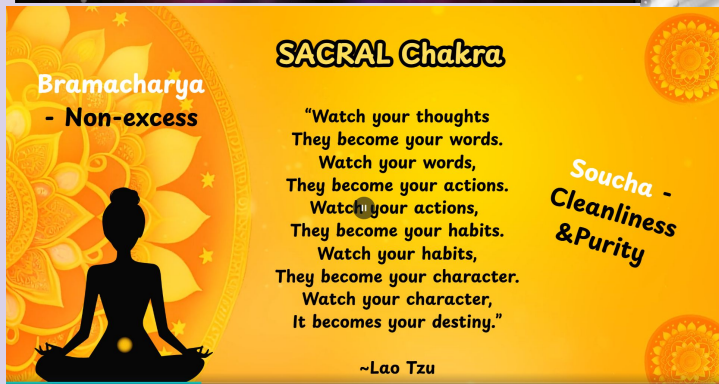
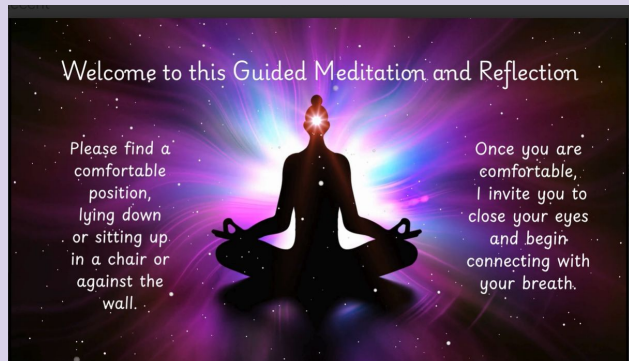
Studying the *Yoga Sutras* during this time created a framework for everything I was witnessing in the clinic. *Samadhi Pada* taught me that yoga is the stilling of the mind’s fluctuations — a truth I see every time someone’s breath deepens in practice. *Sadhana Pada* reminded me that transformation comes through discipline, self-study, and surrender — exactly the structure of both my personal sadhana and my group facilitation. When a participant shares that they “feel more here,” I hear Patanjali’s voice in that. The practice becomes real through lived experience. These teachings aren’t distant philosophy anymore — they breathe through my work, through my words, through the quiet space I hold for others.

What makes this season of my life sacred is the integration — how theory becomes embodiment, how philosophy becomes service. The Yoga Therapy Clinic allows me to see yoga’s impact in real time, while the Prison Yoga Project extends that work beyond comfort zones into spaces of reclamation and resilience. Each prepares me for the other. The clinic sharpens my trauma-informed approach, while the Prison Yoga Project reminds me that healing is a collective act — one nervous system at a time. Together, they mirror what Hari has taught me all along: that true yoga happens at the meeting point of the internal and the external, the sacred and the ordinary, the personal and the systemic.

As I move forward, I carry the understanding that my dharma is to translate ideas into healing — to take what I study, feel, and embody, and bring it to life through service. The sutras, the mentorship, and the clinic have all trained me to be both teacher and student — attuned, compassionate, and grounded. This training hasn’t just shaped the way I teach; it’s reshaped the way I see humanity. I know now that every breath, every pause, and every moment of awareness is an opportunity to remember who we really are: whole, luminous, and free — even inside the walls that try to make us forget.

Carlee F.

Slide examples from the Guided Meditation and Reflection



Scan the code for access to the meditation

By: Jennifer A.

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Phillip P.