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The Silence of Movement

May we come together, open, and ready to communicate deeply with each other, ready to communicate inwardly, present with all of our layers, and notice the preciousness of our time, so that each moment swells, and we leave in gratitude for the luxury of learning together.

I love the silence of movement. In this silence we let the body say what the soul feels.

When bothered by weakness, joint asymmetries, tightness, and especially painful injuries, there can be a noise in our heads, static, chattering angst and a constant questioning which interrupts the silence and calm that movement can otherwise provoke.

Considerations for today:

Breath as the Connector - (please see p. 6 *Our Interconnected Bodies*)

- Breathing, for calm, supporting the body, emotions, mind and spirit, with breath
- Breathing for structural integrity,
- Breathing for investigation into where we are at the moment,
- Breathing to let the body act as a mouthpiece for our inner worlds

While breathing is our life force, it also has a beautiful structural gift to give. When we breathe with specific structural anchoring, our ribs expanding and contracting laterally, the spine is literally lengthened, which accompanies every asana.

Example: Make the next exhale long enough to notice your abdomen contract, now pause there and then make the initiation of your next inhale as tiny as a pinhole. Then, grow it like a mushroom into your chest, armpits, and upper back. Pause here, and let initiations of exhales also begin very small, with a gradual growth into fullness. Repeat.

Tadasana and Walking (please see page 7)

- Sustain yogic principles on and off the mat. Use *Prayer Walk* to feel this relationship.

Example: Walk with your hands in prayer, held slightly in front of your heart, and let them glide diagonally tracing above your forward leg as you walk. As you press your hands gently into each other, you'll feel your abdominal muscles working a little extra.

Balance

- **Drishti:** The softer and more opaque the gaze, the gentler the texture of the breath, the more accessible our balance becomes.
- **Surrender:** The more grounded we are into the earth, the more fluid, simple and quiet minded, the movement becomes. We have to surrender in order to trust our balance. We have to allow this process to take any amount of time.
- **Anchor and Lengthen:** Deepening roots, actually pressing into the ground elicits *trusting* balance, breath, focused and pinpointed awareness. By building from the ground, using the downward pull of gravity to lift against and lengthen away from, there is a system of opposing force. With this oppositional force at play our energy lines come alive, and every second of every asana is balance, whether on one foot, two feet, or even sitting on the ground. During balance, even when we feel most still, there are high speed oscillations of muscles as they ‘shiver’ into each other to hold our joints steady or stable. These oscillations may vary in speed but whether in *tadasana*, *ardha chandrasana* or *genu sirsasana*, these oscillations are the way that we manage gravity, so that we can become silent.

Example: Practice *adho mukha svanasana*. For a breath, choose to collapse a bit into your shoulders. On the next breath, fill them with energy. On the next breath, collapse in your knees and wrists so that they hyperextend and become too straight. Then in the next breath, fill these joints with ‘tensegrity’. Tensegrity is to bodies, as turgor pressure is to plants: that which keeps leaves full and lifted instead of hanging listlessly as gravity would have them. Try this self study with *Crescent Pose*: Collapsing on purpose into your hips, hanging in your joints. Notice then, how lifting into muscle is the lighting up of energy lines, and the same work that allows you to fade away into the silence of movement.

Graceful Transitions

- Fill all movement with breath, enhancing the fluidity of movement structurally and energetically. Transitions are the heart of *hatha flow* practice. Each interchange, from pose to pose, is a dance, invigorated with breath and softened with intention. The more grounded we are into the earth, the more graceful, eloquent and fulfilling are our movement patterns. In physical therapy, the term is ‘*kinesiologic chain*’. In ice skating, the term is ‘*energy balls*’ that roll from joint to joint, creating long line airy designs in space.

Example 1: Move into *vrksasana* with resolve and strong perfect alignment principles. Notice how this can stop your breath and you can feel like balance has to be rigidity. This is much more gymnastics than yoga. Now take a long inhale, and flow up into the posture with an exhale, and as you breathe, let the posture breathe. Notice the difference in how you feel following these two experiments.

Example 2: Imagine each fraction of a second, a ‘freeze frame’, like film negatives. Catch yourself in the midst of a transition from one pose to another. Make that frame as buoyant as Virabhadrasana II is, when spirited and filled with energy.

Buttressing

- Must occur from the inside out (rather than from the outside in) and means, lifting from the center or core, out of every potential holding space (aka joints). When the center of the body is strong it engages all the way into our limbs, all of the time. Likewise, when our limbs are fully engaged, every second of every asana becomes an ‘opportunistic second’, for healing and ultimately sustaining the strength which diffuses, if not dissolves, the vulnerability of the spine.

Example: In sitting to read this, scan and notice if there is anywhere in your body, that you could call collapsed. Notice how blowing that up gently, like filling a balloon shaped like that part of you, engages your center. Imagine that each part of your body is a balloon, that could be filled gently, (like those wonderful animal balloons) softly enough that they could change form, with different postures, strong enough that no joint could collapse.

Play and Joyfulness in your practice

- Using the sattvic or middle way, which is centered between too rajasic and intense, and too tamasic or languorous.
- We all may have learned, that learning was very serious. And learning yoga can take on such a seriousness that I sometimes call ‘morosity’. And yet we can also love focus for its lightheartedness. And that’s what we get to have when we’re in our private sanctuaries. Not pinpointed focus, on a wall, but the inner gaze of drishti, the steadiness of ujjhai which holds us steady in our spines, light in our movements, and quiet inside. When we drift, we can block our paths, and since our strengths vary from practice to practice based on sleep and mood and nutrition, we might miss a moment we should rest, and face a choice we must recognize, if we injure ourselves. Instead, in the beauty of yoga, we choose the yamas and niyamas. Not for moral reasons. Not out of discipline. But for clarity and the richness of each moment, and to keep our health that we may continue to grow in our practice, in all of our layers. Although we practice many of the same movements a thousand times a year, we get to have spontaneity, and the illustrious silence of movement.

Today's sequence for all levels (thoughts may vary).

Begin with Prayer Walk - centering breath meditation.

Throughout this sequence, inhales and exhales will be matched to movement. Should your breath fall out of my sequence, please go with yours and we will find each other.

Opening: Focus, noticing the breath shapes and variances.

Floaty arms

Same, with rotation and rounding over the side, and up by 'unrounding'

Gentle balance

Sun salutations- surya namascar a (several)

Utkatasana, chest and heart opening series, surya namascar b (several)

Temple pose, breath opening with trunk rotation

Level 2, parivrtta utkatasana or level 1, tadasana

All tadasana.

1st Wave: focus, anchoring and lengthening.

Balance and stepping back into virabhadrasana I (focus, transitioning)

Reach half way down, transition to uttita prasarita konasana, back to vira I, arms forward to crescent, twisting crescent.

Level 1, Child.

Level 2, repeat

All meet in adho mukha svanasana,

Level 1 continue to move up and down into vira I

Level 2 vira I to parsvotanasana

Level 1 hands to thigh or shin or mat, up and down through these twice

Level 2 stay in parsvo

Level 3, parivrtta trikonasana

Back through parsvo, back through vira I, and step back up to front of mat.

Transitional posture:

Tadasana and pranayama, extraordinarily long breaths with pauses in between (focus, stabilization for both inhales and exhales)

2nd wave and balance posture: also transitioning from internal to external hip rotations and focus, energy lines and quiet mind.

Utkatasana and stay, or to ardha utkatasana to forward fold in ardha utkatasana

return to utkatasana and parivrtta utkatasana, and either stay, level 1, or Level 2 revolve arms, Level 3 step back into prayer twist.

All vinyasa.

Crescent and level 1 stay, level 2 & 3 back to prayer twist, shift to uttita prasarita konasana and step up into ardha chandrasana, to trikonasana, to virabhadrasana II, vinyasa, child pose.

3rd wave:

Trikonasana series, focus, balance and surrender.

Transitional posture:

Salavasana with opposite arm and leg and movement throughout, child pose.

Hands and knees balance, variations including curling and opening, and level 2 taking hold of back leg, to adho mukha, step or hop to hands.

Balance Posture and 4th Wave : focus, trusting your balance, vasisthasana variations natarajasana, prep level 1, or full posture, levels 2 & 3.

Level 1, child

Level 2 , vinyasa,

All adho mukha svanasana,

Vinyasa

1st Stretch Sequence, hanumanasana as peak pose

Inversions, pinca mayurasana or vipariti or handstand

Backbends, setu bhandasana, or ustrasana or urdhva dhanurasana, choose 2 altogether

2nd Stretch Sequence, pigeon as peak pose
and final pranayama
and savasana

Om chant.

Our Interconnected Bodies ~ Seeing Breathing Patterns for Healing

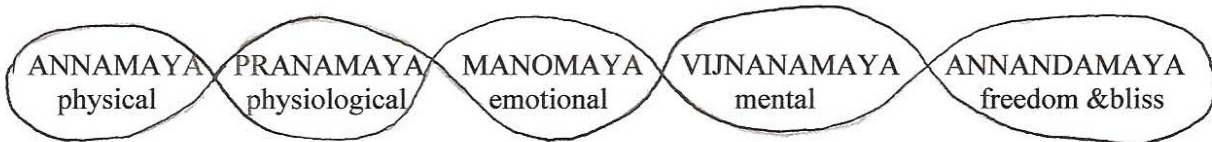
Everyone has had or has structural pain. Sometimes, we heal spontaneously and other times we have to search, understand and process intentional healing. This is also true for pain with any of our koshas, or layers. Structural pain is used here as a representative, or a way of seeing how to work with healing in any layer, i.e. we may heal with time and more often, we must seek depth of understanding and process the experience of healing.

In western medicine, we are accustomed to seeing our layers as:



It is impossible to effect any of these without effecting all, whether in the process of hurting or healing. Today, even conservative doctors in the west, speak of the mind/body connections.

In eastern medicine, we learn how all of our layers or koshas are interconnected by breath, and so too, each is affected by the others, whether in a negative or a positive spiral throughout.



To the extent that in both western and eastern paradigms, no layer can exist without the others, they are the same. Pain in one, causes pain in the others. Healing work with one affects the healing of the others.

Pain and fear in combination, play a huge role in our capacity to find *our natural healing*, from an injury initiated in any layer. Breathing patterns often reflect feelings, and change in the following specific ways, depending on the most troubled layer.

Structural Pain can be found in the Annamaya & Pranamaya Koshas →	It may be seen as shallow and tense breathing →	Is eased by bellows or sideways breathing →	Which creates body balance and spinal stability →
Emotional Pain can be found in the Manomaya Kosha →	It may be seen as gasping or sobbing →	Is eased by long drawn out breathing →	Which creates trusting your capacity to heal →
Mental Pain can be found in the Vijnanamaya Kosha →	May be seen as tightened down →	Is eased by softening the breath →	Which allows you to learn, and become informed →
And Spiritual Pain can be found in the Annandamaya Kosha →	May be seen as frozen and stuck, or holding →	Is eased by releasing into breath →	Which allows you to be still, meditate open your heart and envision your healing →

Tadasana and Walking - We pass through Tadasana with every step we take.

Essential common ingredients to Yoga and Walking

Balance is necessary for walking and for yoga. In yoga, every asana is a balance posture, even the ones on the ground. In walking, every step we take can be and is best as, a balance posture. Imagine a 'freeze frame' at any moment during a step.

Core strength, defined here as trunk, hip, knee, ankle, shoulder, elbow and wrist joints capacity to hold steady and create stability when gravity or weight force would otherwise have them drop or collapse into their ligamentous endpoints.

Strength is necessary, throughout every joint for it's own sake, to give it the symmetrical forces to perform with stability and to send messages to the joints above or below. If an ankle is crooked, out of balance, or rolling too far in or out, the knee above is definitely compensating for that and also 'crooked'. These may be subtle, and eventually they surface.

Flexibility is necessary similarly to strength in that each joint acts as a message center, sending notes to all areas above and below and, there are no possible secrets. If a toe doesn't bend enough to let the body weight come over it symmetrically at Push-Off, the ankle above it is making up a crooked way to get to it's next necessary range of motion.

Breathing properly, in the sideways direction; 'Bellows Breathing', will help to elicit and substantiate, all of the above.

In every Asana Moment and in every walking moment, these five elements are constant.