

Outward Focus/Inward Focus Study Guide 2017

How to work with this Guide:

You will need 2 copies of this blank study guide, one for your primary Outward Focus, and one for your primary Inward Focus.

Please select a single topic for your Outward Focus (Seva), AND a single topic for your Inward Focus (Svadyaya) to hand in for approval. Most of you have completed this step already.

Over the coming months, complete one Study Guide for your Inward Focus and one study Guide for your Outward Focus - so two (2) Study Guides will be handed in.

You are welcome to keep notes or fill out additional Study Guides on other topics/conditions for your own use, and I am happy to go over them with you if you wish, but they will not need to be handed in. For most people, a single Inward Focus and a single Outward Focus is the best and clearest path through the material.

You may want to work with these Guides in the form of two renamed electronic documents, so you can easily add and edit. If you prefer, it is okay to work with them in hard copy, increasing the blank spaces or adding sheets.

Due date for completed Study Guides: October 8, 2017

Presentations will be scheduled for:
November 18 and 19, and December 9, 2017

For the remainder of the program, through November, you will have individual conferences every 4 to 6 weeks to help keep you on track and ease any stuck points or anxiety.

You will present to the group on one topic only: your choice of either your primary Outward Focus or your Primary Inward Focus.
The presentation will be 20 to 30 minutes, with an additional 10 to 20 minute Q and A.

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Outward Focus/Inward Focus Study Guide 2017

Instructions

For each of your 2 (two) topics:

1) Answer the Study Questions below, over the course of the program, and hand them in by October 8, 2017. These questions are intended to help you explore this condition/challenge from a variety of perspectives, and contribute significantly to your depth of understanding and insight, as well as skill in assisting the healing process. For the Inward focus, you will also include your own experience/experiments as reflected in your Action/Reflection journal.

2) After you have mostly completed the study questions, take a class or two – “embodying” that condition. Discuss the experience briefly. Given what you now know, would that class have accommodated you and your needs? Would it have been safe/beneficial? Anything you would like to have heard the instructor say or have them do or not do? Record the date, time, place, name of class(es). This is not to judge the teachers or the class – it is an exercise in discernment for a particular situation or challenge.

3) Generally include/cite your sources as you answer the questions. These can include an in-class lecture or learning from a specific teacher, in addition to the course books, and outside reading especially from the

course library. You can also cite your personal experience.

Study Questions

A. Is this topic an Inward Focus, or Outward Focus?

B. What is the Topic?

C. **If this is your Inward Focus**, enjoy a few deep easy breaths with awareness. Connect with your motivation for healing. How would your life be different if this condition was healed or eased?

Why did you select this topic?

What emotions come up when you consider this?

What would you like to be doing/ How would you like to be living - in 5 years? 10 years?

What is your current yoga and/or meditation practice?

What purifications are in your daily routine? (such as brushing teeth, scraping tongue, jala neti, oil pull....)

If this is your Outward Focus, enjoy a few deep easy breaths with awareness. Connect with your motivation for selecting this topic. What is the service you wish to offer to others through this work? What difference might it make in someone's life if this condition could be healed or eased?

D. What is the "western" understanding of this condition -- How would you summarize it? This can be from websites such as WebMD, or Mayo Clinic, or other reputable books, articles, etc. Include/cite your source(s).

E. What is the yogic and/or Ayurvedic understanding of the condition -- How would you summarize it? Include your source(s).

F. What does Dr Ballentine say about the condition? (And are there other understandings/paradigms you are aware of that you wish to include in this summary – such as from Traditional Chinese Medicine, Native American medicine, etc.) Include your source(s).

G. Discuss any insight you have into possible “root causes” of, or contributing/important factors related to, this condition.

Note - Consider each of the following, but know you will likely not be able to have an answer in each

** Include/cite your source(s)! Consider:

Imbalances related to Agni, Ama, poor digestion?

Doshas/prakriti?

Shallow breathing? Breath holding? Mouth breathing? Other disturbances of the breath?

Posture?

Avidya?

Depletion? Ojas effected?

Gunas?

Koshas?

Prana/pranic body?

Systemic inflammation? (Likely caused by.. thoughts? diet? other?)

Previous injury or trauma? Physical, emotional?

Difficult emotions suppressed/held?

Lack of coping skills for challenging times/emotions?

Lack of adequate coping skills for stress? (Any particular stressors to note?)

Isolation/lack of social connection?

Inadequate exercise? or poor choice of type of exercise? Sedentary lifestyle? Excessive exercise?

Other lifestyle challenges?

Environmental considerations such as endocrine disruptors, air pollution...?

Fear? Generalized anxiety? Fear of death?

Samskaras/ behavior or thought patterns?

Lack of, or confusion regarding, sense of life's purpose?

What else?

H. For Outward Focus Only:

Let's say you have been asked to work privately with someone who is experiencing the challenge that is the topic of your Outward Focus. While you are not yet a yoga therapist, you can begin to consider how to personalize a practice to truly honor yoga's foundation principle.

- 1) What questions might you want to ask the student in advance, or at the start of the session? (such as: any other health challenges, restrictions given by healthcare provider, what are *your* (*the student's*) objectives for the practice or the work together, what previous yoga experience, what treatments they have already tried and if it was helpful....)
- 2) Will you (the teacher) do any kind of personal practice to prepare you for the private session? (A mantra or prayer or blessing, pranayama, wash hands...?)
- 3) What will you do to welcome the student and put the student at ease?

I. For Outward Focus AND Inward Focus

- 1) What might be the objective(s) of this practice you are creating (perhaps decided on mutually with the student?)? One objective may be enough, or you may have multiple (eg stress reduction, increasing digestive fire, movement of lymph/detox, overall strengthening, strengthening of certain muscles/muscle groups, reducing kapha or pitta or vata, increasing flexibility (where),

increasing range of motion (where), decreasing pain (where?), reduce anxiety, connection with sense of meaning or purpose in life, better sleep, general wellness, better relationships....)

2) What observations, without judgment, perhaps made together with the student, might guide the choice of initial practices?

(diaphragmatic breath available? Other qualities of the breath – smooth and flowing and easy, pauses or jerks in the breath, delay after exhale?...) (muscle tension, flexibility, energy level, general fitness level, anxiety level, etc....?)

3) What specific categories of practices might be most helpful?

(asana, pranayama, mudras, kriyas, spiritual study, mantra jappa, guided relaxation, yoga nidra, lifestyle education, Langhana vs Brahmana...?)

4) Are there asanas that would likely be helpful? Which? Why?

How might you discern if an asana or other practice is having the intended effect?

5) Are there asanas that should probably be avoided? Which?

Why?

Are there asanas that should probably be done with modifications, or particular awarenesses? If so, provide an example or two.

6) Are there pranayama practices that would likely be helpful?

Are there pranayama practices that should probably be avoided?

Are there pranayama practices that should probably be done with modifications, or particular awarenesses? If so, provide an example or two.

7) Any other practices to be included or avoided? Such as specific Mudras, Mantras...? Why?

8) Any considerations with regard to sequencing?

9) Are there symptoms to be aware of related to this condition that may indicate the need to refer the student or self to a doctor or other healthcare professional?

10) Even expert and highly experienced yoga therapists often change direction once they see how the student/client responds to an initial set of practices. How might you determine if what you are doing is helpful, or if a modification is needed?

11) How much do you think you want to introduce in a first session so as to give a satisfying session but not overwhelm?

How many sessions might you want to recommend, for the student or yourself!? What key approaches or information do you want to share over time? How can you communicate the reason for multiple sessions to the student?

12). The student says they want to try to take a regular yoga class in addition to working with you. What advice do you have for them: (recommend/notrecommend?), what should they keep in mind or modify to make the practice beneficial and not harmful. Are there particular classes/teachers in their area you would recommend they take?

General

J. How will you assure the student's health info remains confidential?

K. Do you have liability insurance as a yoga teacher?

L. Has the student signed a waiver of liability?

M. What, in your opinion, is your role as a therapeutic yoga teacher?

M. After all your research, what things do you still have questions about, or are unclear about related to working with students with this condition? (It's okay to still have questions!!)

O. Please cite **at least** 5 top quality sources (including books, articles) that you used in your research. One of the 5 can be a "verbal" : your own experience with the condition, conversations with someone who has the condition, a therapist who works with the condition....)

And last,

A thousand thanks for your heartfelt exploration of these topics. Please be confident and aware that we, individually and collectively, are already perfect. Nothing is broken; there is nothing to fix. Through this process of yoga and healing, we rediscover our true nature. AUM Shanti, Shanti, Shanthi!

All love,
Andrea Ananya

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