

## Spanda® Yoga Movement Therapy Orienting Values, Principles and Concepts

Spanda Yoga® Movement Therapy (SYMT) is a living practice that at once strives for clarity yet promotes the unique individuality of each of its practitioners. It is not so much a method as it is methodical, investigating positive change at each *koshic* level for individuals seeking betterment, alleviation of pain, and restoration to more balanced living.

This list is organized around SYMT's Values, Foundational Principles and central Concepts. Together these begin to portray a point of view about therapeutic yoga practice and how it functions in individuals' unique journeys to regain health. These lists are not complete but stand as open-ended points of departure for exploration as does this work itself. Ongoing and ever expansive investigation and discussion are implicit to this approach as well.

### Values, Principles and Concepts of Spanda Yoga® Movement Therapy

These are the fundamental beliefs or values of Spanda Yoga® Movement Therapy.

#### Values Listed:

1. **Self-realization**
2. **Awareness**
3. **The objective witness**
4. **Client-centered**
5. **The humanistic core conditions:** empathy, congruence, unconditional positive regard
6. **A state of play**
7. **Communication**
8. **Repatterning**
9. **Willingness**
10. **Inner guidance**

#### Values (Fundamental Beliefs)

1. **Self-realization** . . . also called "union" is the goal of all yoga. This involves the expansion of consciousness which can be thought of as the expansion of self. It can also be experienced as, and through, love. This transformative expansion of self is the arc of healing.
2. **Awareness** . . . is the most subtle and profound tool of a living being.
3. The **objective witness** . . . as sought after in meditation, that of non-judgemental awareness, is the ground of a SYM therapist's point of view.
4. **A client-centered** approach arises from this ground with the focus on each individual's needs as they define them.
5. The **humanistic core conditions** . . . arise from the above point of view to form the basis of valuation and acceptance of the client. These conditions are empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard (UPR).
  - *Empathy* as a frame of reference involves attempting to understand the client from the client's point of view.

- *Congruence* in this context means the therapist is genuine; this fosters real trust. This also allows clients to feel valued, which in turn builds self-esteem and eventual trust in their own judgement. This can also include consistent behavior on the part of the therapist.
  - *Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR)* allows the client to open up and speak about difficulties without a fear of being rejected, criticized or judged.
6. A **state of play** . . . is a creative state and one in which new solutions can be found. It requires a genuine state of interest and curiosity, and to some degree freedom, all of which are important for both client and therapist.
  7. **Communication** . . . is foundational to well living, whether it be within and between the functional parts of a single cell, bodily tissues for optimal functioning, between human beings individually, in collectives or organizations.
  8. **Repatterning** . . . forms the roots of change.
  9. **Willingness** . . . to experiment for the purpose of positive change and growth allows inner guidance to contribute to creative solutions that bring in the newness of discovery, and the delight of life. Support this in clients helps them find what works best for them in terms of tailored practices, behaviors, lifestyle and daily choices.
  10. **Inner guidance** . . . development of this along with self-valuation and self-trust (internal locus of evaluation) in all concerned.

## Foundational Principles

These are some central principles of SYMT held to be basis of its practice.

1. The right amount of **flow** for a situation is a sign of good health, well-functioning.
2. As a **person-centered** or client-centered approach focuses on the individual person's needs as they define them. Here are some specifics:
  - A. The client's identified needs may be placed above those needs and goals identified as priorities by healthcare practitioners.
  - B. Supporting the client in establishing and trusting the inner witness is important as the gateway to their autonomy, discernment, self-guidance and empowerment.
  - C. This is a primarily **empathic, suggestive, and less directive approach** that seeks to empower and motivate clients and students to develop their own powers and abilities to discern and act on their own self-direction in service to their own self-development.
  - D. We are most **interested in the client's point of view** and interpretation of the situation they face, and far less in the therapist's or someone else's interpretation.
  - E. The **role of the therapist** is first to witness, observe, support, accept, facilitate, hold space, and create a safe container; second to provide guidance, inquire, encourage, reflect back, and third, to teach; and fourth as a last resort, direct.
3. Everything we do is an **experiment**. Experimentation is how we learn. Another word for this is play. "**Pleasure** (aka fun, enjoyment, humor) is at the heart of tantra in that it has the capacity to heal and is closely identified with its corollary, play." - R. Ballentine

4. **The body is a source of profound and varied information.** Here are some specific ways this is identified in SYMT:
  - A. **The body is intelligent** and has its own consciousness as do each and every cell and group of tissues.
  - B. **The body requires time to rest and full autonomy** to be healthy.
  - C. **The body does not and cannot lie.**
  - D. A change in the body will effect a change in the state of mind and emotion, and vice versa. **Body-mind, mind-body.**
  - E. Whatever exists within us as part of our form (prakriti) can be **embodied** and **experienced directly.**
  - F. **We can learn to follow the body** by becoming quiet and paying attention to its sensations and concomitant imagery, movements, sounds, impulses and tensions.
  - G. **Body sensations and symptoms** can bring conscious awareness to unconscious information hidden from our everyday ordinary experience of reality.
  - H. Body sensations and symptoms can be **amplified** for better perception and they can change channels of awareness and also reach an edge of conscious comfort and understanding.
  - I. It can be useful to talk in terms of **channels of awareness**, such as visual, auditory, tactile, etc. when it comes to the locus of perception. These channels can be considered *occupied* when in use and *unoccupied* when not in use by consciousness.
  - J. **Meeting tone** is a way to connect and to invite change at the body level in terms of our relation to self and environment (which includes others), aka “the big in and the big out.” JSS
5. **Movement can be a profound tool** in self-revelation, in repatterning, in easing bodily tension, in creating flow, and in restoring health in many other ways.
  - A. **Movement itself can be healing.**
  - B. **Free spontaneous movement** itself can be healing. It can also play a role in a larger healing process.
  - C. **Repetitive movement themes** may appear in open free movement, and in life. They are often loaded with meaning for the mover.
6. Working with the **deep psycho-mythical foundations** of personality is a function of authentic yoga practice. These foundations of personality can be helpful, neutral, or impediments to health, relationships, achievement, and self-betterment in other cases. Here is further articulation:
  - A. Yoga can bring us to states of **non-ordinary reality** in which the deep psycho-mythical foundations of personality can be discovered and transformed.
  - B. **Dreams** can be relevant as can fantasy, imagination, and art-making in working toward wholeness.
  - C. **Imagination** can be used as a way to access unconscious information such as beliefs, myths, rules for living, thoughts, patterns of behavior and other themes that sometimes unwittingly run our lives.
7. Tantra includes **various experiential “realities”** with the normal world being only one of them.
  - A. **Field theory** (that phenomena interact as fields) applies to this aspect of the work.

- B. **Unexpected, quicksilver mercurial experiences** at the edge of our awareness can be the tail of tiger we need to catch to understand messages coming to our consciousness.
  - C. **Symbols**, like allies on our journey, can arise in our consciousness from the body, the field of our environment, and from insight and clairaudience.
  - D. **Including the un-includable** about ourselves, even though it may seem we are traveling in a wrong direction, can be the way to a more expanded state of being and thus closer to wholeness. (We make room for all our parts. - A. Crow)
8. The **dis-ease or problem holds its own solution**.
- A. **Trauma is stored in the body as incomplete action.**
  - B. Somatic practices, like SYMT, can create enough safety and comfort in the experience of bodily sensation and concomitant multi-channel experience that **trauma responses may be safely moved through.**
9. Healing is a **process of transformation** that requires both *spanda* (opening to the flow of the present moment) and *tapas* (containment/structure).

## Orienting Concepts

These additional concepts provide more context for this approach to yoga movement therapy.

1. Yoga therapists do not diagnose disease in the same way as western healthcare providers but address presenting issues through **multi-level assessment** of the whole person and their needs and goals in the current moment.
2. **Holding space** in a therapeutic relationship entails calmly enacting the core conditions with a baseline of witness consciousness. Then other options from the continuum of engagement can be decided on in terms of usefulness to the client.
3. **Resonance** is valuable in the therapeutic relationship and in relationships of all kinds, like: tissue, therapeutic, empathic, seeing and being seen, holding space, tonal, dancing and synchronous movement, flower essence, color, rapport, vibrational and homeopathic, platonic, etc.
4. **Adding to and diminishing (*brahmana and langhana*)** are basic approaches to wellness with far-reaching effect, such as in tonifying or sedating, nourishing or cleansing, focusing inward or outward, etc.
5. The **present moment** continuously holds the point of decision of an awakened mind.
6. **Narratives** or stories can be real, made-up, dreamed, and recreated based on our purpose. If the story is meaningful to the story-teller in the healing process, it may not matter if it really happened.
7. We continue on through **many lifetimes**. At times, themes or feeling tones we cannot place in our present day life may be from another lifetime.
8. A **creative art process** can be useful in seeing what is going on within a person.
9. **Delight** is a good indicator that the work is moving in the right direction.
10. **Impediments** can be experienced and explored in multifarious ways but are unfinished trauma or difficulties registering on some layer or layers of the *koshic* sheaths - waiting for us to unravel, understand and thereby unload them in our life journey to wholeness.

11. **The energy body can hold trauma** not detected in the physical body.
12. We can be **boxed in by our belief systems** even though they serve us in some ways.
13. **Basic Ayurvedic principles** applied through ordinary lifestyle changes and common remedies are powerful tools for initiating positive changes in clients' wellness.
14. **Lifestyle changes** as guided by the yoga tradition create a strong foundation of wellness.
15. True **healing is transformational**. A qualified yoga therapist can be an excellent support for this process.
16. *Attention* takes place in space, while *intention* involves mobilizing in the field of gravity. *Decision* exists in time and is the impetus of activation.
17. The **emerging paradigm, which includes holism** is necessary for healing and the continuation of life on this planet.
18. **Non-linearity** of complex systems is at play in understanding and working with human lives and issues within them.
19. Kundalini Shakti is the **Mother Divine** within us. **Kundalini Shakti rises** within an awakened soul and activated the chakras on various pathways to Union with Shiva. This is one way of conceptualizing yoga's ancient goal.
20. A human being is of a **dual nature** possessing qualities of both male and female, yin and yang, sun and moon, Shiva and Shakti. These dual aspects can also be divided into dual aspects, e.g. yin within yin, yang within yin, yang within yang, yin within yang.
21. This same duality causes the world to come into being and powers the cosmos. This urge or **generative pulsation** is called *spanda*.