

Wakeful Body Course Syllabus 2022

Meetings: Tuesdays 3:00-4:30 ET, February-July 2022

Instructor: Willa Blythe Baker

Host: Natural Dharma Fellowship

Required Text: *The Wakeful Body: Somatic Mindfulness as a Path to Freedom*, by Willa Blythe Baker

Supplemental Texts and Articles (see below)

*****Audio Resources for Wakeful Body Guided Meditations with Lama Willa*****

<https://soundcloud.com/shambhala-publications/sets/the-wakeful-body-audio>

GROUND Standing Practice Guided Audio: See Wakeful Body audio series, Chapter 8, GROUND II.

February

Theme: Grounding

Supplemental Book: *The Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love and Wisdom*, by Rick Hanson

Supplemental Article: "Mindfulness, Interoception and the Body" by Jonathan Gibson

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02012/full>

Reflection Question for your February Home Group Meeting (getting started):

Begin with meet and greet.

Then, how is it going "flying solo"? Is it hard or easy to get to the cushion? What helps you feel connected to the ground/earth? What is good about it? What do you resist?

Feb. 5-6 Launch Retreat

Reading: WB (Wakeful Body) pp 1-16

Practices: G.R.O.U.N.D., Descent into Feeling, Surrendering to the Breath, Finding Ground

Week of Feb. 8 (no meeting)

Reading: WB pp. 17-29

Practices: Descent into Feeling, Surrendering to the Breath

Week of Feb. 15 (no meeting)

Reading: WB pp. 30-44

Practice: The Precious Human Body

Week of Feb. 22 (no meeting)

Reading: WB pp. 44-50

Practice: The Natural Refuge Tree

March

Theme: Relaxation

Supplemental Book: *Anchored: How to Befriend Your Nervous System Using Polyvagal Theory*, by Deborah Dana

Supplemental Article: "Sense of Self", by Emily Underwood

<https://www.science.org/content/article/newly-detailed-nerve-links-between-brain-and-other-organs-shape-thoughts-memories-and>

Reflection Question for your March Home Group Meeting:

What helps you unwind and relax? What is at stake with holding on vs. letting go (in all the ways that might manifest in your life)? What is "blessed exhaustion" for you?

March 1 (review of grounding)

Reading: WB. pp. 51-63

Practices: The Now Body, The Body's Honesty, Finding Ground

March 8 (on to relaxing)

Reading: WB pp. 64-71

Practice: Screen Fasting, Letting Go

March 15

Reading: WB pp. 71-78

Practice: Taking Your Seat, The Gentle Breath

March 22

Reading: WB pp. 78-82

Practice: Blessed Exhaustion, Finding Ground

March 29

Reading: "Sense of Self", by Emily Underwood <https://www.science.org/content/article/newly-detailed-nerve-links-between-brain-and-other-organs-shape-thoughts-memories-and>

Practice: Touching Base with GROUND, Finding Ground

April

Theme: Opening

Supplemental Book: *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West*, by Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston and *Open Heart, Open Mind*, by Tsoknyi Rinpoche

Supplemental Article: "Science Finds Overlays Between the Subtle Body and the Central Nervous System", by Heather Mason <https://lifelabs.psychologies.co.uk/posts/6632-science-finds-overlays-between-the-subtle-body-and-the-central-nervous-system>

Reflection Question for your April Home Group Meeting:

What is the subtle body, in your experience? How do you understand it? Check in: How is your personal practice going, on and off the cushion?

April 5

Reading: WB, pp 85-97

Practice: Mother Channel Breathing

April 12

Reading: WB, pp. 98-103

Practice: Transforming Exercise into Sadhana

Watch and Begin: Vajravinyasa Practice (or GROUND poses), Mother Channel Breathing

April 19

Reading: WB, pp. 103-107

Practice: Summoning Grace

Continue: Vajravinyasa Practice (or GROUND poses), Mother Channel Breathing

April 26

Reading: pp. 107-109

Practice: Encountering Natural Bliss

Continue: Vajravinyasa Practice (or GROUND poses)

May

Theme: Untangling

Supplemental Reading: *The Body Keeps the Score*, by Bessel van der Kolk

Supplemental Listening Resource: Eve Ensler interviewed by Krista Tippet

<https://onbeing.org/libraries/the-body-healing-trauma/>

Reflection Question for your May Home Group Meeting:

How are you meeting the difficult in your life at this moment? How is it manifesting as your body and emotions? Is befriending happening? What else is also happening?

May 3

Reading: WB, pp. 111-118

Practice: Feeling Entanglement, Mother Channel Breathing/Finding Ground/Surrendering to the Breath, Vajravinyasa

May 10

Reading: WB, pp. 119-120

Practice: Finding Ground/Surrendering to the Breath/Mother Channel Breathing, Feeling Your Thoughts, Vajravinyasa

May 17

Reading: WB, pp. 120-124

Practice: Finding Ground/Surrendering to the Breath/Mother Channel Breathing, Hosting, The Shaking HA, Vajravinyasa

May 24

Reading: WB, pp. 124-129

Practice: Finding Ground/Surrendering to the Breath/Mother Channel Breathing, Befriending Feelings, Befriending Your Inner Critic, Vajravinyasa

May 31

Reading: WB, pp. 129-134

Practice: Finding Ground/Surrendering to the Breath/Mother Channel Breathing, Dancing with Prana, Vajravinyasa

June

Theme: Nurturing

Supplemental Reading: *Aware: The Science and Practice of Presence*, by Dan Siegel, and *The Magic of Awareness*, by Anam Thubten

Supplemental Article: Decoding the Neuroscience of Consciousness

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02207-1>

Reflection Question for your June Home Group Meeting:

What is awareness, in your experience? Is it the same or different from consciousness? What is the relationship between love and awareness? What is your sense of the “sky body”?

June 7

Reading: WB pp. 137-141

Practice: The One Who is Aware

June 14

Reading: WB pp. 141-142

Practice: The Three Naturals

June 21

Reading: WB pp. 142-145

Practice: As It Is, The Radical Now

June 28

Reading: WB pp. 145-151

Practice: Mind the Gap, The Sky Body, The Loving Witness

July: Boundless Body

Theme: Dissolving

Supplemental Reading: *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, by Yasuo Yuasa

Supplemental Article: A Brief Guide to Embodied Cognition <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/a-brief-guide-to-embodied-cognition-why-you-are-not-your-brain/>

Reflection Question for your July Home Group Meeting:

When do you feel the most as if your body and mind are integrated? What does it feel like when they are dis-integrated? How will you carry forward what you have learned in the course?

July 5

Reading: WB pp. 152-156

Practice: Interbeing

July 12

Reading: WB pp. 156-161

Practice: Be the Doing

July 19

Reading: WB pp. 161-163

Practice: Flow Meditation

July 26

Reading: WB pp. 163-169

Practice: Returning to GROUND