

Recommendations for New Clients

Nervous System and Trauma

The nervous system is an important component of the treatment I offer my people. Our nervous system, through our body, is always communicating important information to us about our feelings, our perceptions, our wants, and our needs. Often we have learned to 'override' our nervous system's messages in order to "be good" or to keep ourselves safe. We all carry unprocessed emotional material that is stored in our bodies – often we refer to this material as **'trauma.'** Learning how to listen to our bodies and how to unwind all the material our body is carrying from times past is an essential aspect of healing in our modern culture, in my experience.

Begin to educate yourself about the nervous system and trauma. I recommend ["The Body Keeps the Score"](#) or visiting [Irene Lyon's YouTube channel](#) and watching the videos that appeal to you.

Begin to notice your nervous system throughout the day. Are you in freeze? Fight flight? Social engagement? Experiment to begin to uncover what brings you back into social engagement (aka your window of tolerance). Begin to make a habit of making choices based on what supports your nervous system.

This video shows how a [polar bear](#), when tranquilized (artificially put into freeze) in the middle of a fight/flight response, processes the activation as it emerges from the effects of the tranquilizer. The point of this video? To show you how mammalian bodies process fight/flight energy that has not yet discharged. Yes, you may end up shaking or moving like this bear. [Note: the polar bear is not harmed by this, but please don't watch if you have sensitivity to seeing a wild animal tranquilized by humans]

In addition to the video above, I will also attach some additional resources to complement this exploration.

Intuitive Movement Practices

I encourage all my clients to find an intuitive movement practice that works for them. An intuitive movement practice will help you connect with your body, reestablish the ability to follow pleasure, and provide supportive regulation for your system. These practices also often help individuals connect to community, something many people are sorely lacking. Beyond all this though, intuitive movement helps us connect to the wisdom beyond our egoic mind, to begin to know this wisdom, to trust it, and to follow it. This is an essential element of the awakening or healing process.

Some examples of intuitive (or potentially intuitive) movement practices include:

- Ecstatic dance or 5 Rhythms
- Contact improv
- Authentic Movement
- Tao chi or chi gong
- Martial arts
- Yoga
- Pole dancing
- Hoop dance

Even walking or hiking can become an intuitive practice, and there are many other examples of practices that lend themselves well to intuitive practice.

If the practice involves a form, such as martial arts, yoga, or chi gong, I recommend to learn the form first and then begin to practice intuitively. Practicing intuitively means learning to listen to the movements your body is asking for, to follow, and to relish the pleasure this brings.

Mindfulness

If you don't already have a mindfulness practice, I recommend that most of my clients start one. Most mindfulness practices either focus on cultivating concentration or stability of mind, or they focus on supporting the practitioner in understanding the nature of their experience. Practices that encourage concentration on one object usually come first, and support the mind in becoming stable enough that clear seeing of the nature of things becomes possible.

Anchors for your attention can include:

- Breathing
- Hearing/sounds
- Hands
- Sitz bones
- Or whatever works for you

Recommendations for accessing **guided meditations** and **instructions** for beginners can be found on the following page.

Heart practices such as Metta (aka Lovingkindness practice) are also often useful and can be found in many of the same places.

Once a practitioner is ready, (meaning the mind has the capacity to move away from the anchor and open to experience in a general way without completely getting lost in thought), I recommend **Vipassana** practice. Vipassana practice helps us recognize the changing nature of our experience, as well as making it possible to clearly see the nature of our thoughts, emotions, and ultimately, our sense of self. Beginning to relate differently to our mind is an essential aspect of healing.

I recommend [Dharmaseed](#) most often for guided Vipassana meditations.

Ultimately the therapy I offer facilitates **the awakening process**. If you are new to this, I recommend listening to [Adyashanti on YouTube](#) and/or his book, "[Falling Into Grace.](#)" Please do not jump into what are called "Direct Path" practices without discussing it with me, as these practices can have intense or dramatic effects.

Additional Beginning Meditation Resources

Guided meditations and talks by Western Insight teachers:

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/>

How to access the felt sense:

<https://app.box.com/s/vafz3m14e8m2hwuglqw2m53rd1bze54b>

10 Percent Happier App: <https://www.tenpercent.com/coronavirussanitymeds>

The daily sit via the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies (BCBS):

<https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/resources/daily-sit/>

Freely offered self study resources via BCBS:

<https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/resources/freely-offered-dharma/courses/>

<https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/resources/freely-offered-dharma/events/>

Guided meditation series adapted from practices of Tibetan Buddhism for people of all backgrounds, secular and religious: <https://sustainablecompassion.org/audio/>

A series of audio recordings here that teach Anapanasati and other forms folks can use to practice: <https://sacredmountainsangha.org/resources/dharma-talks/>

Introduction to Mindfulness Series:

<https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/introduction-to-mindfulness-meditation/>

<https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/mindful-postures/>

<https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/postures-for-meditation/>

<https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/walking-meditation-instruction/>

<https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/meditation-instruction/>

A series of guided meditations grouped into various topics, by Sean Feit Oakes:

<https://www.seanfeitoakes.com/audio/guided-meditations/>

An intro reading list, by Sean Feit Oakes: <https://www.seanfeitoakes.com/practice-resources/>

Other Notes

Please explore [my website](#) for other book recommendations, and check out [my resources](#) page for resources I have created for clients, or [my guided meditations](#) page for meditations I have recorded.

Feel free to follow my personal page on Facebook (all business posts are public). I frequently offer my thoughts, reflections, or post resources there.

On tools: In my practice I emphasize going beyond control-based tools or techniques, so that my clients can learn to listen to their own system and let it begin to heal itself. At the same time, I recognize tools and techniques are often essential for the healing process and help us get to the point where we can go beyond them. I teach my clients some tools, just know it's not my focus or emphasis. I encourage my clients to explore other possible tools on their own to supplement our work together. Examples include breathwork, EMDR, tapping, and plant medicine or micro-dosing, but there are many, many more possibilities.