



Presents:

**“Yoga Therapy as a
Creative Inquiry into Suffering”**

Heyam Dukham Anagalam:

“Future Suffering Can Be Avoided”

Yoga Sutra II.16

June 10,2016 SYTAR

Matthew J. Taylor, PT, PhD

"Yoga Therapy as a Creative Inquiry into Suffering"

This 2-hour workshop includes lecture covering the ongoing development and emergence of the science of embodied creativity, and how that informs the biopsychosocial/spiritual rationale for easing suffering. This new understanding will broaden opportunities to expand both one's personal practice and therapeutic business. Participants then work experientially to discover the practical implications in enhancing their yoga therapy service and approaches serving their community. The workshop concludes with each participant outlining action steps for maximizing creative inquiry in their specific practice after the conference.

Introduction:

Who is here? Notes Link: www.yogatherapy.com/sytarcreativity.pdf

Taylor, MJ, "Yoga Therapy as a Creative Inquiry into Pain and Suffering" Yoga Therapy Today, International Association of Yoga Therapists, Spring 2016, pp. 32-33. Link: <http://yogatherapy.com/pain.pdf>

What is Yoga Therapy?

- *I was wondering that myself...*
- *Yoga therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and wellbeing through the application of the teachings and practices of Yoga.*
- http://iayt.org/development_Vx2/IAYT%20Standards%20Final_July%206A.pdf

Therefore, away from suffering. Heyam Dukham Anagalam:

"Future Suffering Can Be Avoided" ~ Yoga Sutra II.16

YRx involves

- *Process.* This is not an event, but an ongoing relationship of discovery with the self as well as with the therapist.
- *Empowerment.* Our profession restores the power of the process back to the individual, rather than promoting a passive, "fix me" relationship.
- *Improved health and well-being.* Our philosophy is that health is our natural state, unlike the pathology-based models that grounds most other professions. We do not diagnose pathologies or propose to cure them.

- *Teachings and practices of yoga.* The inquiry into the tenets of yoga carries equal weight with the practices, each informing the other through experience and discovery to arrive at a creative new self-understanding.

What is suffering?

Kleshas

- The Buddha says life is suffering; both the ancient yogis and the Buddhists point to the kleshas as the causes of our suffering. These "afflictions" distort our mind and our perceptions effecting how we think, act and feel. The five main kleshas vary in intensity on our psyche, from being inconsequential in their effect to utter blindness. The kleshas not only create suffering, but are said to bind us to the endless cycle of birth and rebirth, and thus preventing us from achieving enlightenment.
 - Avidya (ignorance) is the misconception of our true reality, believing that the temporary is eternal, the impure is the pure, and pleasure to be painful. This false representation of reality is the root klesha and produces the four others.
 - Asmita (I-am-ness) is the identification of ourselves with our ego. We create a self-image of ourselves that we believe is us, but it is not us. This self-image can contain both external (I am poor) and internal (I am a bad person) false projections. We become trapped within the projections we have created of our life.
 - Raga (attachment) is the attraction for things that bring satisfaction to oneself. Our desire for pleasurable experiences creates mindless actions and blind sighted vision. When we cannot obtain what we desire, we suffer. When we do obtain what we desire, our feelings of pleasure soon fade and we begin our search for pleasure again, becoming trapped in a endless cycle.
 - Dvesha (repulsion) is the opposite of raga, aversion towards things that produce unpleasant experiences. If we cannot avoid the things we dislike, we suffer. Even thinking about unpleasant experiences produces suffering.
 - Abhinivesha (will to live) is the deepest and most universal klesha, remaining with us until our deaths. We know that one day we will indeed die, yet our fear of death is a deeply buried in our unconsciousness.
- The first stage of working with the kleshas is to simply acknowledge them. Reflection promotes self-awareness, self-understanding and self-knowledge to uncover and see the kleshas and their roots as well as how they create suffering.
- The direct opposition of concentration and other yogic techniques can counteract simple kleshas. Gross kleshas are overcome with meditation, tapas and seeking wisdom. Yogic techniques are said to burn away the impurities of the kleshas to purify the mind. By ridding ourselves of our kleshas, we are able to clearly see the reality of the world and our own true nature.
- Accessed 120707 <http://www.yogabasics.com/learn/philosophy-of-yoga/the-cause-of-suffering-the-kleshas.html>

How does YRx and Conventional Healthcare differ?

What is EBM?

1. Patient values and circumstance: originally highest priority per Sackett.
2. Clinical expertise/mastery
3. Research literature that informs #'s 1 & 2.

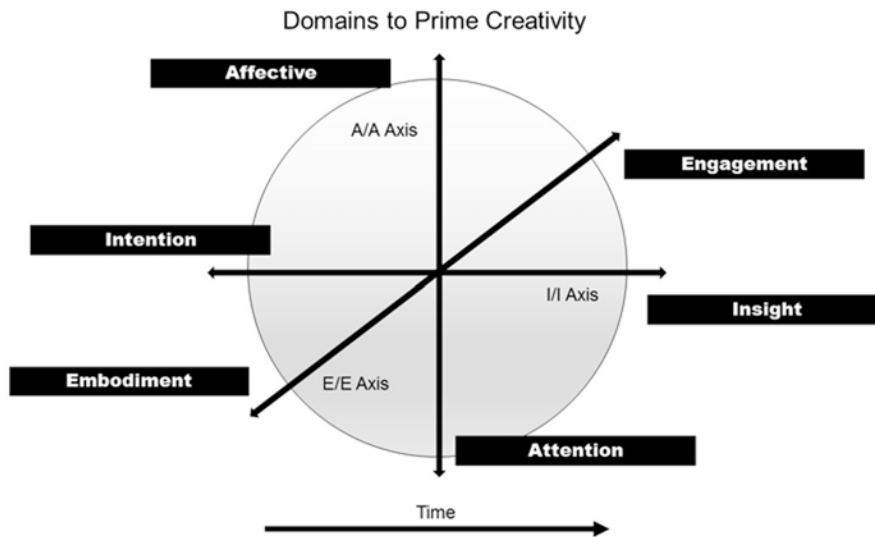
Note the contrast between the intention and the present day interpretation/misconception

Why do we need creative inquiry in healthcare and in yoga therapy?

What is Creativity?

Neti.... Beatles.... Yoga therapy

Halifax Model of Compassion Sutra 2:16



Halifax, J. (2012). A heuristic model of enactive compassion. *Curr Opin Support Palliat Care Vol 6 2*: 228-235.

Define:

compassion:

empathy:

sympathy:

What Yoga technologies do we have to support the various domains?

How do these practices inform EBM?

How does creative emergence happen?

Relationship is key: self (you) and student = student with self (them)

Relationship : Complexity Theory : Panca Maya Kosha

Let's look at back pain/pain theory as an example....

Evolutionary Mechanisms in CBP
Neurophysiological: Peripheral; Peripheral to central; and, Central sensitivity.
Psychological: Behavioral; Cognitive-affective; and, Psychophysiological Premorbid factors: Depression, dysthymia; Predisposition to somatoform disorder; Psychoactive substance-abuse disorder; Personality disorder or traits; Anxiety disorders including panic disorder; Childhood sexual abuse; Cognitive process; Psychosis, delusional pain; Traumatic factors; Anxiety/panic; Fear Psychophysiological response: Loss of control; Abnormal dependence; Posttraumatic factors; Anxiety, panic; Depression; Posttraumatic stress disorder; Anger/hostility; Iatrogenic substance abuse; Somatoform pain disorder; Symptoms magnification; Increasing time since injury; Disability mind set.
Physical, Medical and Surgical: Surgical history; physical trauma/deformity; complicating medical diseases/limitations.
Social/Spiritual: Job dissatisfaction or conflict; Compensated unemployment as disincentive; Family or spousal dynamics; Perception of norm, i.e., family history; Legal influences; Financial security; Limited education or vocational potential; Age-related factors; and Environmental stressors.

Demo with a volunteer

Lab:

Dyad: Your six domain practices....one for each axis

Triad: Take it two 12 with sangha support

Private: List blocks to creative emergence

.....now list action steps to address these....

Dyad come up with more....

How Your Yoga Practice...

- Does allow creative emergence
- Doesn't allow creative emergence

Using your focus or most prevalent diagnose...

- Break it down through multiple lens
- Dyad and see for the other

Greater Group Share/Discover several most common to build out....

Group: What is asana? Goal: Find something (s) to change in your practice and your teaching then....
And that is???.....

Creative Inquiry Marketing....

What do you do now?

Is "creativity" a need in society? For who? How do you use it for common health challenges?

Task: What will you change in your elevator speech, written material, social media platforms?

Additional References:

1. Taylor, M. J. (2007). What is yoga therapy? An IAYT definition. *Yoga Therapy in Practice*, Dec 2007, p. 3.
2. Taylor, MJ, "Fostering Creativity in Rehabilitation" In MJ Taylor, *Fostering Creativity in Rehabilitation*, 1st ed. New York: Nova Publishing, 2015.
3. Montuori, A. (2008). The joy of inquiry. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6:1, 8-26.
4. Montuori, A. (1998). Creative inquiry: From instrumental knowing to love of knowledge. In J. Petrankar, (Ed.), *Light of Knowledge*. Oakland: Dharma Publishing.
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Yoga Therapy as a Creative Inquiry into Pain and Suffering

By Matthew J. Taylor

"Yoga therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and wellbeing through the application of the teachings and practices of Yoga."¹

We are a community co-creating the profession of yoga therapy to "make yoga a respected and recognized therapy."¹ I'm sure we can all nod in agreement that there are more than a few stereotypes of modern yoga that represent barriers to achieving this mission. To establish the respect and recognition that a therapy to relieve pain and suffering demands, we need a way to entice and educate potential clients and referral bases to answer the question, "How is yoga therapy appropriate for chronic pain?" I believe describing yoga therapy (YRx) as a creative inquiry (CI) can bring us a long way toward answering such important questions of our profession.

First, some background perspective on the short definition of YRx, and then a practical example for your use on how CI and YRx are appropriate terms within modern society.

Background on the Definition of YRx

The IAYT board of directors spent over a year researching, petitioning definitions, and then creating a short, functional definition to present to the public. The target audience included potential clients, health-care professionals, regulators, and researchers. Our intention was to mark out what YRx is as well as how it differs from other therapy professions. In order to gain recognition and respect, the definition needed to be culturally congruent so that even a novice or a bureaucrat can grasp its essential meaning. The recent development with the Yoga Alliance prohibition of the term "yoga therapy" in their registry highlights the very real importance of such a definition as well and of our ability to communicate effectively across social milieus. Here is a way to conceptualize IAYT's definition of yoga therapy as it

relates to professional practice followed by how it may be applied with CI to alleviate chronic pain.

YRx involves

- *Process.* This is not an event, but an ongoing relationship of discovery with the self as well as with the therapist.
- *Empowerment.* Our profession restores the power of the process back to the individual, rather than promoting a passive, "fix me" relationship.
- *Improved health and wellbeing.* Our philosophy is that health is our natural state, unlike the pathology-based models that grounds most other professions. We do not diagnose pathologies or propose to cure them.
- *Teachings and practices of yoga.* The inquiry into the tenets of yoga carries equal weight with the practices, each informing the other through experience and discovery to arrive at a creative new self-understanding.

Now, how do we effectively communicate this to our potential clients and referral sources so they can appreciate how uniquely YRx can ease their or their patients' pain and suffering? How many people understand that those last two words aren't synonymous?

The Need for Relief

People in pain seek relief from both pain and suffering, and YRx invites just that. "*Heyam dukkham anagalam,*" Yoga Sutra, II:16. Future suffering can be avoided. We work together with the individual to avoid the future *dukkha*.

Modern science now understands pain to be an output of the human nervous system. This output is a highly contextualized matrix of assessments unique to each individual and circumstance, including all of the *koshas*. Therefore, any remedy or prevention of a pain output must be a unique, creative set of therapeutic responses. Additionally, suffering has been described as "Suffering = Pain x Resistance" or "Suffering = Pain – Meaning."

This means that suffering depends on the stories we author about the presence of pain from any of our *koshas*. As humans, we are always creating stories about our experience, including the experience of pain. Whether these stories add to or subtract from the pain output requires discernment (*viveka*) by both the individual and the therapist. So how will you and your clients know whether the current creation of specific responses is therapeutic?

Where Does CI Fit in This?

If we start using the words *dukkha*, *viveka*, and *vrittis* in our modern Western society, we will lose before we've even started. However, if we begin with *inquiring* into what the person has tried so far and why the person is still not better (has not found a creative solution to date), we are initiating CI as a form of action research as described by its primary proponent, Alfonso Montuori, PhD.^{2,3} Such language is far less scary and feels secure compared to classical yoga terminology in Sanskrit, even if the listener doesn't really yet understand what CI or YRx means. So let's do some translation from the yoga-speak in the paragraph below in order to explain YRx to potential clients using CI.

In yoga, we have the *kleshas* that outline the causes of suffering. Through *viveka*, together we discover the cause(s) of pain and suffering, and then work to weaken or eliminate those causes. We understand the experience of *dukkha* as valuable because it points us toward our ignorance of the causes of suffering. *Dukkha* literally means "bad space," also discomfort or suffering in our *citta* (heart-mind). Using the teachings and practices of yoga yields insightful information about ourselves that might have been hard to get through other therapies. The core of these practices includes *tapas* (effort), along with *svadhaya* (self observation/study), and *isvara-pranidhana* (faith/letting go). Much of this *dukkha* arises due to change and our resistance to it, as well as from wanting what we want and what we are used to and not wanting what we have. There are at least four steps we go through in YRx. 1. Identify the

symptoms/*duhkha*. 2. Find the cause(s). 3. Set intention to eliminate the cause(s). 4. Put into the practice the means of eliminating the cause(s) from all the *koshas*.

We can, however, also phrase the same strategy in this way: "In YRx we believe each individual's pain and suffering to be unique to that person. Working together, you and I will creatively inquire into and search for a deeper understanding of where they come from. Modern science says that pain is very complex and made up of the many parts of our lives while suffering is the story or narrative we have been told or have told ourselves



about our pain. In YRx, we have many gentle methods of creating new ways of moving, thinking, sensing, and story-telling in order to understand not only how you have arrived at this bad space of pain and suffering but also how to change it. Together, we will research and test if these new ways alleviate your pain and your suffering. These same processes of discovery can then also be used by you to avoid or lessen future suffering and future pain. YRx teaches you invaluable strategies for living a richer, higher quality life no matter the situation. In effect, you then can create your responses to life with this self-care science of discovery we call creative inquiry.

Do you hear and feel the difference?

More about CI

CI is a form of research that can be used with individuals and groups. It consists of a process of

1. Learning new skills and perspectives about pain and suffering;
2. Practicing and paying attention to the outcomes; and then
3. Re-assessing and modifying practice and teachings based on those discoveries.

Because CI is focused on making change in the individual's unique real-life circumstances, the person develops the ability to alter pain and suffering through this empowering process. The cycles of change experienced within CI are characterized by joy, wonder, passion, hope, and conviviality.²

CI and YRx are not some drudgery of fixing or self-help. They mark out a way of being human that embraces and addresses the age-old problems of pain and suffering. The language of CI is familiar, commonsensical, and removes the barriers to modern society recognizing and respecting

yoga as a therapy. As a profession, we can insist there is some purist form of practice—and by doing so reach the 15% of the population that are early adopters and befuddle the rest—or we can transform our story as practitioners in order to relieve our collective suffering of not being recognized and respected. We do this by creating an accessible next evolution of yoga that invites a much greater proportion of our communities to experience, explore, and then promote YRx as the profound therapy that we all know it is.

Our future suffering is avoidable just like that of our clients. Your creative inquiry into how best to fulfill our mutual mission as yoga therapists promises to yield the joy, wonder, passion, hope, and conviviality we all earnestly seek. Do the *tapas* of birthing something new rather than accepting the easy momentum of habit. By inserting these concepts of CI and YRx into your marketing, conversations, and referral source interactions, you will be able to invite many others into the inquiry. **YTT**

References

1. Taylor, M. J. (2007). What is yoga therapy? An IAYT definition. *Yoga Therapy in Practice*, Dec 2007, p. 3.
2. Montuori, A. (2008). The joy of inquiry. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(1), 8–26.
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Matthew J. Taylor, PT, PhD, is past president of the IAYT board, owner of a yoga-based rehab clinic, and editor of the textbook *Fostering Creativity In Rehabilitation*. He also directs www.smartsafeyoga.com.