

Richard Miller's comments on the design of the practices for the iRest Level II Training – Austin, Texas 2010

Practice 1 – Sunday

1. Sankalpa, Heart's Desire, Inner Resource
2. Tense/relax progressive relaxation (mouth to feet)

Good to teach to beginners because many people can't tell the difference between tension and relaxation.

3. 5 senses/5 elements

Earth element: foundation, weight, staying with the sensation, feeling how sensation is vibration...Water element: feeling energy...Fire element: expansion...Air element: feels like it's expanding everywhere, touching everything...Space element: awareness of greater spaciousness.

Because it's the beginning of the training, he is starting with the bottom of the Cosmological Map.

4. A little bit of breath-noting
5. Weaving in the quality of Awareness

Practice 2 – Monday

1. Sankalpa, Heart's Desire, Inner Resource
2. Autogenics: cool forehead, warm hands, warm feet, heavy arms, heavy legs, sense of relaxed heart beat and regular breathing ... interwoven with 61 point meditation
3. Heart rate variability (with metronome)
First guiding students to find their regular breathing rate, then extending the exhalation.

To deepen a plasticity between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. Not trying to take out the SNS, but to come to a nice balance. The long exhalation deepens the parasympathetic relaxation response.

4. Interweaving Pure Awareness

Not really going into the other koshas other than to say “Can you just notice if there are any emotions present and welcome them in?” Trying to pay attention to the earlier stages.

Practice 3 – Tuesday

1. Again, the 61 point meditation.
2. Increasing heart rate variability...by bringing it into opposite sides of the body.

For example, on long exhalation one side of mouth / then exhale other side of mouth...one ear / other ear.

This is both soothing and also integrates the two sides of the body.

3. Weaving in joy
4. A little bit of the Asmitamaya kosha...a sense of just noting the ‘I-thought’.

So in the first sessions, introducing heart rate variability more than once, because we know it takes more than one time to learn something new.

Introducing alternate side breathing because it is soothing.

Introducing joy

Beginning to set up for the potential a few days later of noting the ‘I-thought’ and the possibility of seeing it as a deeper object and as another ‘dis-identification’.

Practice 4 – Wednesday – Kelly Boys

1. Bringing in the manomaya kosha...emotions, images. opposites.

Interviewing the group for images to be used later in the iRest meditation.

2. A bit of the micro-cosmic orbit to show a different way of using breath...the sense of the breath moving down the front line, up the back line.
3. Guided imagery

Ordinarily wouldn't introduce so many changes in the practice. Would build stability over the weeks to get a sense of mastery before moving on to a new technique.

Practice 5 – Thursday

1. Pulling out the Vijnanamaya kosha.

Richard says he intended to investigate beliefs and associated imagery but got carried away by 'mining' beliefs.

Practice 6 – Thursday

1. A little bit on body sensing
2. A little bit on breath
3. More time bringing in the "Pointer Sister" and the "Bhramaviharas" (love, friendship, gratitude, equanimity)...the essential aspects that rise out of our Pure Awareness.

Set up for the Pointer Sisters by giving an earlier talk so students could dive in more quickly.

4. Always weaving in Pure Awareness.
5. The later stages of the Asmitamaya (see Level I manual).

When our attention is free and available, we can feel a sense of our Awareness, or consciousness, pervading (expanding like the element of fire) ... touching (like the elements of earth and air)... moving (like the element of water).

Inquiring into the space feeling...how it not only touches, but also pervades... how it potentially empties the solidity of the objects around you.

Asked students to differentiate between the density of an object ... and one's own translucency as consciousness interpenetrating. Then asked students to come back to the solidity...then the openness...then more solidity and then more openness...then both simultaneously.

Trying to give a bit of instruction in the asmitamaya kosha where we're beginning to feel this sense of wholeness and inter-connection.

Further Comments:

In a 10-week course, Richard would spend more time on the sankalpa, heart's desire, inner resource, annamaya and pranamaya koshas so that students go home soothed and saying, "What was THAT?"...so they want to come back for more.

And when they are 'hooked', begin to weave in the manomaya and vijnanamaya koshas.

RCM comments that he doesn't spend much time (in military, homeless shelters, with chemical dependency) with the asmitamaya kosha. He doesn't think its "fair", because they aren't coming to him for "deconstruction" of the self.

He works more with the "constructive" phase...a sense of okay ness, solidity, friendliness with themselves, self-healing around judgments of themselves. He works with getting enough JOY going so that people feel more contained.

He says that he doesn't tend to use a lot of asmitamaya with beginners other than weaving in Awareness and getting a sense of "I AM MORE THAN ALL THIS". He says if that's all a student "gets" then it is a good service, because they are breaking their identification enough so they can be with, and on friendly terms with, all the movements in themselves...and have that sense of "GREATER THAN"...

And the sense of JOY that this can liberate. As this begins to liberate, that's when he starts to go into the Bhramaviharas, and the essential aspects of True Nature. So in the middle and later phases with a group, he will wave in these essential aspects. We're set up now...there's enough free attention so that joy is wanting to erupt and we just go with it.

Richard says he is careful with the asmitamaya unless on retreat where he has a sealed container and where students are coming to retreat to explore deeper... He figures on retreat you are "fair game"..... he chuckles.