

Recommendations for Presenting Fully Being to a Group

Respectfully Submitted by the Pundarika Halifax Group

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The Pundarika Halifax Group ran a 10-week pilot program presenting **Fully Being** for new and experienced practitioners from October 2 through December 4 2019, at the Nalandabodhi Halifax Center. Part of the intention behind holding the course was to create a format used by other Pundarika groups worldwide.

The four of us, students of Tsoknyi Rinpoche and Trungpa Rinpoche, shared responsibility for presenting the material. Each presenter had the freedom to select those videos from each section covering the core material within a limited time frame. Videos listed in the Review Section were included in the presenters' selections and others that particularly resonated for each presenter. Classes were 2 hours in length, including opening practice, viewing videos, contemplating key points, and discussion. Videos were projected on a large screen so that the weekly group of 10 – 18 participants might easily view them.

Each of Fully Being's Immersion 2 sections was presented sequentially, with one class devoted to each section, except for Handshake Practice, covered in two classes, to emphasize its importance. The first class included a brief overview of the eight sections followed by an introduction to Dropping. The final class summarizes all the sections, with 1 – 3 videos from each section reviewed.

Each class began with 5 – 10 minutes of practice, with the presenter first briefly summarizing the previous class's practice instructions from Rinpoche. Following the practice, the presenter briefly introduced the current section's content, placing it within the context of what had been presented to date.

At the beginning of each video, the presenter read one or two questions before the video clip was played. After viewing each video, the presenter read all the Key Points or allowed sufficient time for the participants to read them silently. Sometimes, one or two Exercises were also read and practiced together. Some presenters gave handouts to the participants at the beginning of the classes, were edited versions of the Key Points for the videos. (please see sample handout at the end of the document).

After one or more videos were viewed, time was given for a brief discussion to specifically address any questions the participants might have had about each video's content before continuing to view more videos. Typically, the combined length of the videos selected for each class, including reading the Questions and Key Points and a brief discussion of approximately 90 minutes. At the end of each class, the group formed a circle for discussion, which lasted 15 - 20

minutes. Meetings were open and unstructured, leaving room for addressing a variety of practice-related and content-related questions, from earlier classes up to the current class's content.

The feedback from the participants was very positive – genuinely appreciative of Rinpoche's teachings and their applicability to their own lives and practice, both from relatively new practitioners as well as seasoned 'old dharma dogs.' The format that evolved seemed to work well, keeping in mind that the course was intended to introduce Fully Being, hoping that participants would be inspired to eventually subscribe to go deeper with these wonderful teachings within their daily practice.

Following the course's conclusion, we hosted a potluck celebration, inviting everyone on the greater Pundarika Halifax list along with new students who showed up for the course. Having a purely social event was an excellent way to build connections and introduce new folks to the greater community.

Course Recommendations

1. **Presenters:** While the videos of Rinpoche are more than sufficient to transmit the teachings and practice instructions, having some students familiar with the material that have subscribed to Fully Being and practiced for some time was beneficial for the presentation of the course. It made the teachings more personal and relevant when participants could ask questions and share their experiences working with the material.
2. **Group Practice:** Perhaps groups having completed a 10-week Fully Being Course could come together for one or more short weekend retreat(s), or morning or afternoon 3-hour practice sessions. A selection of a few videos summarizing the practices and learnings from the course could be shown, with the emphasis on practice rather than discussion. Perhaps the last 1/2 hour of a 3-hour group practice could be focused on sharing our experiences of working with the material.

3. Provide a Class Handout for Each Section

The class handout would be the essential Key Points for each Core Teachings talk, about two pages, in printable form. This can be printed out to hand out for classes for people to take home, and it can be printed out for individuals to use in their daily practice sessions. It can also act as a quick reminder of the whole section. The following is an example of a handout circulated for one of our classes by John Gorman.

Please note that we are using Immersion II titles in the new Fully Being Course as examples.

Presenter Spoken Overview: Fully Being, Subtle Body, and Vase Breathing

Because of fear and our speedy lifestyle, all of the subtle body's moving energy does not reside in the gut. It goes up into the chest, shoulders, and head. It then gets stuck between the chest and head.

Rinpoche teaches different ways to bring the lung down to its home below the navel. We can handshake the lung, which is the "automatic" way to bring it down. There is also a breathing exercise, a "manual" way. If we cannot bring the lung to its home through a handshake, we can do a breathing exercise.

Handshaking Lung

There are two ways to bring lung to its home. The first is handshake practice, which is the 'automatic' way.

We drop our thinking mind, become aware of the body, and go deeper until we feel a movement, a pushy feeling — this is speediness.

We connect or handshake and stay with that feeling. We are not judging, supporting, or indulging. Slowly the speedy energy will come down to its natural speed limit.

Lung Breathing

The next way to bring the lung to its home is to use the normal breath and educate the breathing system.

We can learn to breathe from our core in the abdomen.

Breathe in and hold (hold the breath in) for 3 to 10 seconds, whatever is comfortable at first. Push gently when breathing out and hold (hold the breath out) for 3 to 10 seconds. Keep increasing the holding time on the in-breath and out-breath from 3 to 15 seconds (per breath). Don't force the breathing.

Practice doing this breathing practice 30 times in a row during each practice session for a week.

Vase Breath

Be aware of the lung. Drop thoughts. Be mindful of speediness or pressure. Handshake the lung. Do this many times. When we are aware of the lung, it will go down.

We then can do vase breathing with the help of our physical breath. Breathe in from the abdomen, breathe out and feel the abdominal muscles extend. Gently push the muscles and keep the chest open.

First Three Steps

When breathing in, use the side abdominal muscles to push down gently. This is deep gut breathing. Feel tightness in the chest.

The third step for bringing the lung down is scanning or sweeping down. Another image is like pressing down on a French press coffee maker.

The first part of sweeping is scanning or knowing. The second part is using breathing to help. The third part is sweeping from the head down, together with the breathing.

When we inhale, start from the head and sweep the mind's attention from the head to the navel area.

Fourth and Fifth Steps

The fourth step is gently holding the lung in its home. When we know, it's there. We use subtle muscle pressure to hold the lung below the navel gently. We are making a subtle imprint and then reminding the lung to come down. To make sure the lung stays there, we push down with a bit of breath and hold.

The fifth step is gently holding while carrying on **everyday activities** like talking, reading, and walking. We use mindfulness with awareness.

Working with Lung

Find the lung, breath in, and at the same time sweep it down and hold it. Settle awareness gently in the navel area.

If sweeping the lung down method is not effective, use the breathing method. Try both ways.