

## Week 3: Perspective and Organization

In the first two modules of this course we have focused on laying the foundation for powerful, transformative and fun self-care by taking a look at the vault of ideas you have on a regular basis that have shaped your relationship to your own wellbeing.

Through your daily thought downloads, models and coaching with me by now you have no doubt started to spot your own vault of unhelpful thoughts, feelings and actions. At this point, it is tempting to take the attitude of

*“Hey I have been looking at all this stuff in my mind for two weeks, I know it all and have it covered”.*

I have watched a lot of students think that after doing this every day they have gained everything from the tool they can and are ready at this point to throw in the towel, so I want to offer a few things from my own experience of doing this practice now sincerely for over a year:

1. If you think you have it all figured out, and there is nothing else to see, consider that this too is yet another unhelpful thought or belief that is holding you back (and maybe do a model on it).

2. Think of the Thought Downloads and The Model as your daily warm-up. Remember that top level athletes, artists and visionaries are constantly reviewing the basics of their skill set. Both the beginner and top level musician run similar drills, warm-ups and scales as a vital part of both practice or to warm up for a performance.

Thought work is a chance to warm-up your brain for the day, clear out the cobwebs and deal with any obstacles you may not be aware of.

3. Negative thoughts and feelings are part of life. And this should be a relief to hear.

As spiritual seekers we may long for the day when the negative emotions and thoughts we have disappear, but the truth is these are just part of the human experience.

As I mentioned last week, negative thoughts, feelings and our tendency to focus and place importance on them are also part of our survival mechanism.

The good news is that you don't have to give so much weight and attention to the thoughts and feelings that are negative. One may *prefer* a sunny day to a rainy one, but we all can accept that rain is just another possibility for the weather.

Circumstances will inevitably happen that you won't want to feel happy about. Sometimes you will think thoughts and have beliefs that don't lead to a good "feeling". If you don't get a job you were hoping for or you say goodbye to a loved one then grief may be an emotion you decide is appropriate for that situation.

The Model isn't designed to artificially change your thought and feelings, it is a tool to help you clarify and decide *consciously* what is appropriate for you at any given time. And if you are suffering because you have a thought that is causing a negative feeling, action and result then you can use that tool to shift your thinking in a new direction knowing you are free whenever you would like to.

I hope you will continue to do the thought download followed by an Unintentional and its corresponding Intentional Model and share at least one per week with me in our group Q&A.

During Week 3 your goal is to:

- Continue to cultivate a daily contemplative self-care practice using The Model
- Incorporate at least 5 Yin and Yang self-care tasks into your week (and tell us about them in the Group Q & A)
- Understand the second Element and Obstacle of Self-care

### **Elements of Self-Care: Perspective and Organization**

Knowing your purpose and intention (our main focus last week) is key in getting to the heart of why self-care is important. But still when I talk about self-care with students and clients by far the main thing I hear is "I know self-care is important but I am just too busy to really take it on."

It is understandable.

If it feels like just another item on the to-do list, is it really self-care or just another thing to fail at and feel guilty about?

Hopefully by now you have begun to see that the path to your life purpose depends on one thing more than anything else- *you being healthy and inspired enough to make it happen.*

In the hustle and bustle of life it is easy to lose sight of what a gift we have each and every morning when we wake up; a new day, full of potential and possibility. But most days we don't give ourselves a even a moment to soak that in because the calendar is already full and we are overwhelmed by obligations and responsibilities.

That is why the second obstacle of self-care is "busy-ness".

I recorded a class on this which you can find here:

<http://www.aquinyoga.com/podcast/5>

I encourage you to listen to this especially if you wear the "busy badge" in your life, but the main point is that many people feel like their lives are ruled over by their schedule and not their own conscious decisions.

"Busy" people tend to forget that they have *agreed* to each and every thing they do and to the exact life they are living. Of course there are external circumstances we can not control, but as you have seen through your thought work, the only person responsible for your actions and results based on the thoughts and feelings you have is you.

The fact that you are taking a course like this means you have at least some amount of time, energy and personal resources to invest back into your own well-being. You have a degree of autonomy that allows you to create your own calendar- the truth is nothing you think you "have to do" is actually an obligation.

"But what about going to work? I have to go to work so I can pay my bills."

If you think about it, no one is forcing you to go to work *or* pay your bills. You are deciding to do that whether it feels like it or not. Of course there would be consequences from your boss and bill collectors if you stopped going to work, but only you can decide if those consequences are meaningful to you.

We are all free to do almost anything we want to do, for better or for worse and you might find it personally helpful to remember this when you feel overwhelmed by your schedule or routine.

If you are interested in learning more about the Elemental connection when it comes to perspective and planning watch this week's videos.

### **Homework for Week 3**

1. Continue with your daily Thought Downloads followed by an Unintentional and Intentional Model. Continue your downloads and models around your thoughts and feelings about self-care or reviewing your day yesterday, your time and energy and whether you were in a more Yin or Yang type of energy.

BUT remember you can also use this model for anything that's happening in your life that has you feeling stuck, confused or preoccupied. This is a tool that you can use to clarify what you are thinking about and shift how you are thinking and feeling into a more helpful or conscious result in your life.

2. Review your list of 10-20 Yin and Yang self-care and how they relate to your life purpose right now. If you need help or feedback about your list, post it in the Group Q & A. The most important thing is that you create a list where the Yin items are things that you feel are nourishing and will help to recharge you. The Yang items are developmental, inspiring and will help you grow. Yang doesn't have to feel like punishment, but it also isn't going to always be comfortable. For instance, going to the gym (Yang) isn't something I love as much in the moment as taking a nap (Yin) BUT I love how I feel and the results I get from doing a workout.

3. Schedule at least 5 Yin and 5 Yang Self-care activities for yourself. DO NOT DO THIS IN YOUR HEAD ONLY. Put it down on the calendar you look at daily. I use a Bullet Journal and a Google Calendar and I will put my self-care items in both with defined times around them (see my example below).

4. Share your activities and how you are doing. Ask for support when you encounter resistance in the Group Q and A.

Some tips:

- Avoid trying to pile a new habit and a self-care activity together into your calendar. If you aren't a morning person, don't decide that this week you are going to wake up at 5:30 and meditate for an hour. Those are two things- a new habit (getting up early) and a self-care activity (meditating). Most people can't sustain this. Instead I challenge you to set aside something in your day that you don't need to be doing this week. Perhaps you can make time to meditate if you decide not to sit down and scroll Facebook before you get out of bed or you can skip watching a TV show at night to pave the way for an hour of reading and still get to bed on time.
- Avoid over committing. If you are getting inspired and excited and want to design an elaborate self-care routine make sure it is realistic. The main point of this exercise is to get as close to 5 Yin and Yang self-care activities that you personally select for yourself this week. You are free to experiment as you like, but I suggest that if your life feels full, rather than making one of those items "Meditate for an hour each day" you start with "Meditate for 15 minutes 3 times this week". Get an early win on the books to help you build your confidence and give you the freedom to try out different things. You can always do more but get the bare minimum done!

**Bonus:** *In our Live Group Call this week, I challenged everyone to start to say "yes" when someone offers to support you or doing something for you. Self-care is ideally something we do or initiate for ourselves, but it doesn't mean that other people can't be involved. When my husband offers to do the morning routine with both our children so I can get some extra sleep, I have learned to say yes. In fact, many days I will even ask him if he is able to give me some extra time to sleep because I know the difference that little bit can make in the day ahead as I show up for myself, my family and my clients.*

## **A Sample of the Schedule**

**1. First, review your purpose and your 10-20 Yin and Yang activities + the reasons you chose to pick them**

Example:

Purpose: Help my students realize their potential

Yin (10-20 actives and why they connect with my purpose) :

- Get 7-8 hours of sleep each day - a bad sleep means I have trouble focusing on my clients
- Get a massage - yoga is physical work, taking the advice I give others
- Meditate daily - meditation allows me to work with a clean slate, I am more effective with people when I have grounded myself
- Plan and cook nutrient rich foods - help me get the fuel I need to have energy in the day so I am not reaching for snacks before a call
- Get my house cleaned professionally (every other week) - feel great in my space and use the hours I would have spent cleaning on work projects
- Sauna - enjoy quiet time reading, thinking, meditating without any distractions
- Nap with the baby - use his nap time as a chance to slow down, recharge and catch up on the missed hours from night time
- Take a warm bath and read - alone time to decompress, enjoy some beautiful writing that might inspire me or entertain me
- Go for a walk with my family - enjoy the fresh air, move and connect with the most important people in my life
- Yin Yoga before bed - unwind and reconnect to body and breath

Yang:

- Buy a package of sessions with a coach or mentor 1 - they help me see what I need to work on and challenge me to go deeper
- Work with trainer - challenges me in a different fitness realm than yoga and expands my knowledge of the body which I can take back into my own classes
- Take an art class - I am not an artist so it would be a stretch outside my comfort zone to do something creative that does not come naturally to me, just for the fun of it. I ask my students to expand outside their comfort zones and find joy, so I need to do the same
- Take a Hot Flow class with one of my favourite teachers - experiment with my practice and get new ideas I might use later
- Have a brainstorm session with my accountability writing partner - hear what she has been working on and get inspired to start working on the next project
- Go to the gym - push myself to get through a workout without the help of a partner
- Listen to new podcast on my drive to teach- get inspiration and see what other creators are talking about
- Take a photography workshop - learn a new skill and find a new creative outlet

- Plan a mastermind weekend with some of my creative friends - get the wheels turning to host a group of people who inspire me for a visit
- Take an Aerial yoga workshop - totally out of my comfort zone but so fun
- Host a dinner party - challenge myself to cook something new and connect with friends that inspire me

2. Next narrow down your list to 5 Yin and 5 Yang activities that you will do this week. You can pick 5 different ones or double up, whatever works best for you.

Example:

Yin:

1. Get a massage
2. Get house cleaned
3. Cook healthy dinner for family 3x
4. Meditate 15 min 3x
5. Nap with baby 2x

Yang:

1. Get coached
2. Go to the gym 2x
3. Go to a Flow class
4. Listen to a new podcast
5. Do an online photography class

3. Create your weekly schedule but start with your self-care items giving them defined dates and times.

Yin:

1. Get a massage - Thursday 6:45pm 1hr
2. Get house cleaned - Thursday 9am 2hrs
3. Cook healthy dinner for family 3x - Mon, Tues, Thurs (Plan meals Sunday night 8pm for 30 minutes, begin dinner prep at 4:30, eat at 5:30 each time)
4. Meditate 15 min 3x - 7:30 am Mon, Tues & Thurs at 9pm
5. Nap with baby 2x - Tues & Thurs (approx 11am or when baby settles) 1 hr

Yang:

1. Get coached - Tues 10am, 45 min
2. Go to the gym 2x - Tues & Thurs 1pm, 45 min
3. Go to a Flow class Friday 4:30, 1hr
4. Listen to a new podcast Friday 9am 1hr
5. Work on online photography class Wed 8pm 30min

4. Put these appointments into your calendar and look for any potential obstacles and conflicts. Plan ahead to deal with these as well as any excuses you may have to skip your appointment with yourself when you get there.

5. Meet yourself for each and every self-care activity and report back to us in the Group Q and A with how you did, your challenges, success and everything in between.

### **Week 3 Worksheet**

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Pick your self-care activities for this week and restate why they are important to your overall purpose. Next, add the date, time and duration of this activity that you will do it in the following 7 days then add them to your calendar.**

Yin:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Yang:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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