

Conducting a Class: The “do’s and don’ts” of a KY teacher: or Good Practice – Bad Practice

Part of your training process will include you leading a yoga class [practicum] for the training group and receiving feedback from the group and the trainer. This section gives you an outline of good practice based on previous observations of trainers.

Note: if you cannot make it to lead the assigned class then it is your responsibility to communicate with your colleagues [fellow trainees] and find a replacement; which could mean arrange a direct swap.

GOOD PRACTICE	PRACTICES TO AVOID
<ul style="list-style-type: none">. Prepare for the class – choose a kriya, get to know it, study it and write it out so you can formulate your thoughts on how to teach it beforehand.. Comb your hair backwards and forwards to renew your energy if you can while getting ready.. Make sure you are well presented – clean cotton clothes, a head covering in order to command the 6th centre [although head covering isn’t a rule, it’s recommended by YB].. Arrive early to set up the room, prepare silently for a few moments by repeating the Teacher’s Oath and Adi Mantra.. Have a questionnaire so it’s discreet to find out if people are on drugs, medications, etc.. Have a disclaimer form especially if teaching in “specialist” settings.. Prepare written material for students such as tips for practicing at home or the words and pronunciation of mantras. If you use a poem or a quote from YB, you could hand it out.. Introduce yourself.. Ask if anyone is new to KY and have some brief points in your mind beforehand if this is the case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. Be late.. Get up and walk around during the class. Unless absolutely necessary.. seek approval.. Get into intellectual conversation/ discussion.. Eat anything or suck sweets, or chew gum!. wear perfume. Natural fragrance may be ok; i.e. no chemicals; people may have allergies.. Touch people/ physically alter their postures.. Individualize, or isolate – either with correcting or with praise.. Make people feel like they are failing if not able to keep up but encourage them to remain connected if they have to lower arms, etc.. Add or subtract – maintain the integrity of the kriya and teachings.. Mix the teachings with other teachings.. Change the timings unless all in proportion.. Do the yoga set with the class. Your job is to watch, guide, inspire and time the postures.. Do meditations or postures longer than YB indicated.. Excuse yourself or feel you have to explain or justify yourself.

- . Explain the Adi Mantra and Mangala Charn Mantra so students understand and connect to it.
 - . Remind everyone they are body, mind and spirit – KY is awareness of all.
 - . Invite/tell people to take off their socks and share the benefits.
 - . Remind people to keep awareness of their breath.
 - . Remind people to carry Sat Nam on their breath during postures on the inhale and exhale [On the inhale hear the breath as SAT, on the exhale hear the breath as NAAM.]
- It's not you saying it – it's your breath. It's consciously conscious. So you are listening in awareness – not thinking. The breath is always doing Sat Nam but are you are with it.]
- . Explain the exercises clearly and demonstrate as needed.
 - . Remind students to keep their eyes closed so as to direct the attention to, and enhance, their inner experience [unless otherwise indicated], and to generally focus on the 3rd eye, unless otherwise instructed.
 - . Remind students to relax any muscles not needed. Students often put unnecessary tension in their face, neck and shoulders like during breath of fire, Sat Kriya etc.
 - . Emphasize that students respect their body's limits, as each person is unique. Postures with extreme angles should be attained gradually.
 - . Encourage students to try the postures for the full time. If they feel they must stop, have them concentrate on their breath and start again when they feel able [either in the current posture or the next one].
- Keep up is an attitude, it doesn't prevent one from taking a necessary pause
- . Say things [instructions, corrections, adjustments] 3 times, then let it go.
 - . Smile ☺ and bring in a sense of humour.

- . Apologize, or say sorry – it isn't helpful to the group. They need to know you can manage a situation gracefully. If you make a mistake, with a posture for example, you could just repeat the posture and tell them they are going to experience it again another way. Then move on.
- . Panic! [ie. when there are outside disturbances or some screaming in class. You bring in a trauma attitude if you do this].
- . Tell a student to continue with a posture if there is sharp pain, numbness or lack of muscle control in the arms or legs. There can be pain that comes from structural problems, bruises, inner organ difficulties and referred pain from a variety of injuries and illnesses. This pain will not pass nor can it be “worked through”. Tell them to stop the posture and get it checked out with a doctor.
- . Allow someone to participate if they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs – It's absolutely incompatible with yoga [people take drugs for 2 reasons – to stimulate or to sedate].
- . Play music other than from the KY/YB tradition or Indian classical [music from other religions/ spiritual traditions confuses the psyche if from a different lineage. KY is from a Sikh Spiritual lineage which served to maintain the bhakti. At home people can add their own prayer from their own tradition after they've finished the kriya].
- . Do certain visualizations for relaxation – eg. imagine yourself swimming with dolphins. They will take you on a journey and this takes the person out of the body. The point is to stay conscious – or aim to stay conscious and present. Yoga is to be here, in the body – so not astral travelling stuff.
- . Lie down in relaxation with the students!
- . Promote yourself – you are not all-knowing, it is not about you but the teachings & technology.

- . Always make it clear when the kriya is going to start so students are aware of the sequence for themselves and the experience of it.
- . Bring in relevant quotes.
- . Bring in spirit psychology behind the kirya – can also help when in a difficult posture – eg. remind everyone of the light of the soul and how the posture will radiate our light so the soul shines etc.
- . Explain the difference between good pain/bad pain or discomfort/pain [ie. pain of the nerves being knotted, working out tensions. Or a sharp pain -> alarm – that stops you doing the posture so don't push it].
- . Caution women on the first/ second day of their menstrual cycle about breath of fire, double left lifts, inverted postures etc. Pregnant women could do light breath of fire up to 3 months but may choose not too. Invite women to trust what feels comfortable and appropriate themselves.
- . Manage the time. See yoga in pregnancy section in this handbook.
- . Manage the space; adjusting for light, air, heat and so on.
- . Sing *Long Time Sun...* before the Sat Nams and have it on a sheet for people to sing along.
- . Finish on time.
- . Inspire – encouragement to come back [people come to the class because they need support].
- . Make yourself available at the end of class for people to ask questions.

- . Try to be popular or to please.
- . Take credit.
- . Discriminate in your service to the students. You can't tell from outward appearance or action anything about the destiny of your students. Your job is to help them discover that destiny for themselves.
- . Become attached to your students – they are not yours. No matter what you do, students will come and go according to their destinies.
- . take things personally.
- . Dwell on mistakes or get caught up in being overly self-critical after teaching a class. Note any mistakes and ways of doing something differently next time... then let go and let God ☺
- . Apologize, in the sense of justifying or explaining or defending yourself, just practice humility, learn and gracefully move on.

All of the above does not need to be forced, yet applied consciousness is necessary for it to happen. Then, with practice, it just becomes part of your natural flow.