

# The Yoga of Communication

## *The Use of Small Groups & Dyads for Personal Growth*

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A Primer for Kripalu Yoga Teachers

Attend a typical training seminar or personal growth workshop these days and you can expect the leader to periodically break the large group down into small groups or dyads for structured communication exercises. Over the last 30 years, the use of small groups and dyads has become a standard component of the expanding field of experiential education.

These exercises are popular for good reason. They provide group members a valuable opportunity to interact with one another outside the restrictive bounds of social convention. Speakers can express what they think and feel without fear of being interrupted or judged. Listeners can focus on hearing another person without a need to evaluate content or formulate a response. Communicating in this manner stimulates a rich type of interpersonal learning that people find helpful and meaningful in their lives.

### HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

The origins of the communication techniques described in this pamphlet can be traced back to the late 1940's when social psychologist Kurt Lewin was hired by the state of Connecticut to develop a format for small group interaction to lower racial tensions and ease implementation of new employment laws prohibit-



ing discrimination. At the time, no one expected that Lewin would birth the experiential education movement, coin such influential terms as feedback, and initiate a course of events that would bring the human potential movement into prominence in the 1960's.

In the years after the Second World War, American culture had grown increasingly competitive. Healthy individuals who had achieved considerable external success were frequently observed to be inwardly tense, insecure and conflicted. There was growing agreement among educators and therapists that the root cause of this problem was a set of social norms that rewarded individuals who concealed their private self-doubts to project a false self-image or façade.

The process that underlies façade building is socially isolating and when carried to extremes psychologically crippling. Continually projecting a false

self-image stimulates significant cognitive dissonance. To override the dissonance, a person must come to believe in the façade for his or her self. This sacrifice of authenticity and self-knowledge causes a breakdown in communication within oneself that renders interpersonal relationships shallow, stifles creativity, and effectively halts growth towards self-actualization.

Lewin's groups encouraged members to move beyond limiting façades through a new approach to communication that emphasized self-disclosure, emotional expressiveness and a willingness to give and receive feedback. The amazing success of these groups sparked considerable interest in the potential of communication techniques to foster personal change. In the 1960's, a host of pioneering individuals adapted these basic communication theories to the fields of personal and spiritual growth, often combining them with aspects of

Eastern religion and its long tradition of spiritual practice.

Among these pioneers was Charles Berner, who established a growth center in southern California in the mid-60's and began experimenting with a mind-clearing communication technique involving two partners that he called dyads from the Greek *dyo* meaning *pair*. The communication dyads that Berner developed proved so effective and popular that he began considering how they could be used for depth spiritual growth. In 1968 Berner launched a three-day program he called the Enlightenment Intensive. It combined dyad communication, the self-inquiry tradition of Vedanta, and the structured format of a Zen meditation retreat, all for the purpose of facilitating breakthrough and self-realization experiences.

In 1973, Berner traveled to India where he was initiated by Swami Kripalu, given the spiritual name Yogeshwar Muni, and schooled in the scriptures and practices of yoga. During the 1970's, Berner practiced yoga intensively under the guidance of Swami Kripalu and continued to explore the interface of contemporary communication techniques and yoga, personally leading ninety-nine Enlightenment Intensives. During this time, the Enlightenment Intensive enjoyed international success and it is still being offered at various locations throughout the world today.

In the mid-1970's, Yogeshwar Muni offered the Enlightenment Intensive at the east coast ashram of Yogi Desai, a fellow disciple of Swami Kripalu. Afterwards Yogi Desai and his cadre of teachers adapted its basic format to create the Inner Quest Intensive. While drawing heavily on the theory of communication developed by Berner, the Inner Quest includes a broader range of communication exercises. Both dyads and small groups of three or four participants are used. Rather than aiming at a transcendent experience of self-realization, the Inner Quest places greater emphasis on recovering the ability to access, fully feel and express emotion. The Inner Quest was an immediate suc-

cess and is still a prominent part of the Kripalu Center program curriculum. Even more noteworthy, the use of small group and dyads as developed in the Inner Quest became a fundamental component of all Kripalu Center programming.

It is important to remember that the primary purpose of these communication exercises is not improving the social or public speaking skills of participants. By clearing the mind and releasing trapped emotion, these communication exercises bring participants deeply present in the moment to themselves and others. This ability to be present is the touchstone of all forms of experiential education and the essence of the Kripalu approach to personal growth and transformation.

Small group and dyad exercises span a broad spectrum from basic exercises that are simple to lead to deeper group processes that require specialized skills and advanced training. The purpose of this pamphlet is to explain the fundamentals of leading simple small groups and dyads as taught in the Kripalu tradition. Its target audience is Kripalu Yoga teachers wanting to expand their repertoire of skills, and others with a teaching background in personal growth work.

### THE KRIPALU MODEL OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

All Kripalu programming utilizes a three-step model of experiential education:

**Safety:** create an environment of physical and psychological safety that promotes group bonding and is conducive to inner work.

**Transformation:** engage in any one of a wide range of activities, such as yoga or meditation, that bring body and mind together and provide an opportunity for a deep experience of self and spirit.

**Integration:** follow up a transformational activity with other exercises designed to help participants integrate what was experienced into their everyday sense of self.

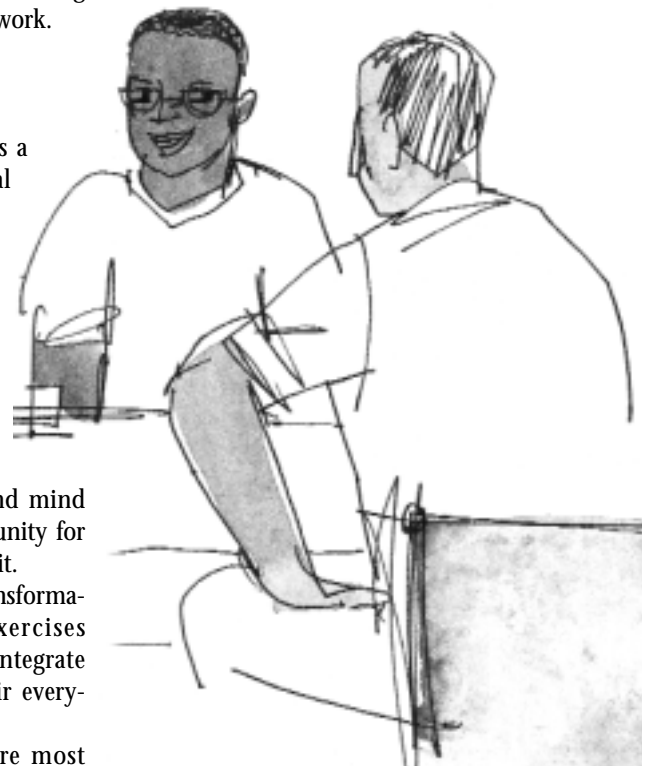
Small groups and dyads are most

often used to bond groups and integrate experiences. Less known is the fact that small groups, and especially dyads, can be structured to facilitate depth mental processing and stimulate powerfully transformative experiences. Thus small groups and dyads can play a role in all three steps of the Kripalu model.

### COMMUNICATION IS A BASIC NEED

Multiple disciplines echo the idea that communication is a basic aspect of being human. Anthropology tells us that humankind has always lived in groups characterized by deep interpersonal relationships sustained by extensive communication. Medical studies show that the physical growth of infants is stunted when deprived of touch, the most basic form of communication, even when they receive adequate food, water and shelter. Psychology also considers the need to be closely related to others as essential to wellbeing as the biological need for food. The human personality is also known to develop primarily through interactions with parents and significant others.

For the duration of humankind's evolutionary history, the ability to



communicate has been essential to the survival of the individual, the group and the species. It was presumably this need to communicate that gave rise to the development of a rich and complex language, a defining element of human culture. Beyond mere survival, good communication is essential to psychological health and spiritual wellbeing. Contemplating the findings of the above disciplines, and looking into our own experience of living, the reason why communication can be such a powerful tool to facilitate growth and transformation become apparent.

### WHEN COMMUNICATION BREAKS DOWN

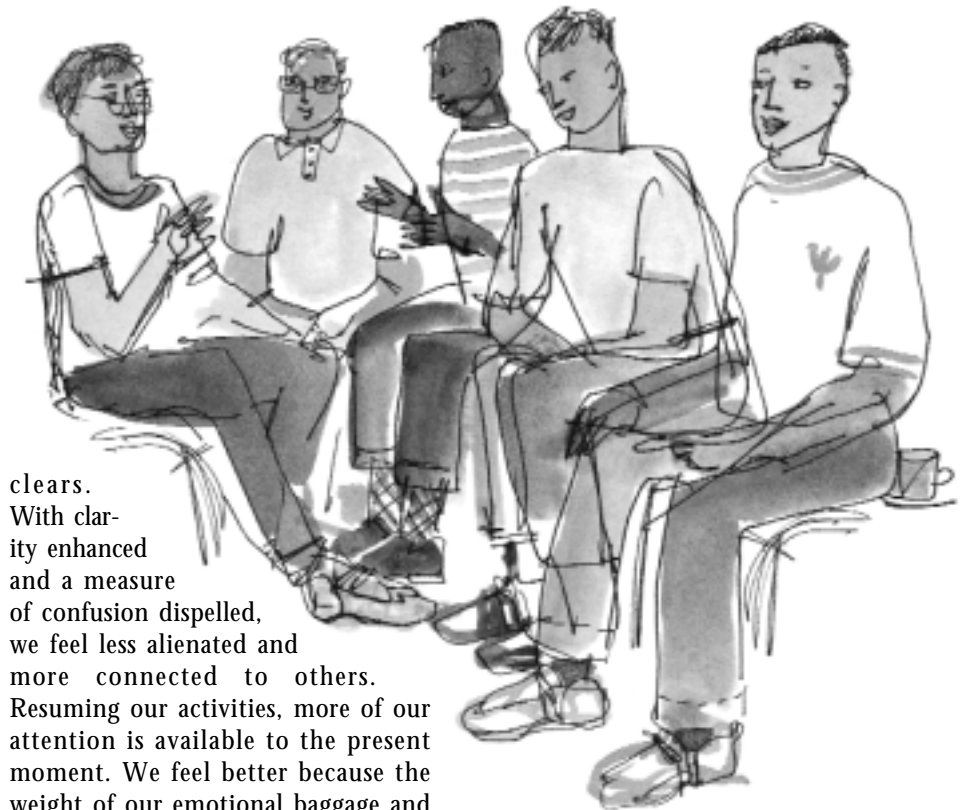
Although the desire to interact meaningfully with others is innate, good communication is by no means assured by heredity or the simple fact of our humanity. At work, it is common to feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of communication required of us on a daily basis. At home, efforts to remain intimate with family members through quality communication often meet with only partial success.

When efforts to communicate with important others repeatedly fail, a jungle of disturbances arise in the mind. Feelings of frustration, being misunderstood, anger and resentment build. Tension accumulates in the body. As communication breaks down, we are left with a sense of being cut off from ourselves, separate from others, mentally confused and unhappy. We feel worse because the weight of our emotional baggage and mental burden has increased.

If the experience is occasional and mild, a portion of our attention is drawn away from present time as we internally sort things out. We may seek out a friend with whom communication comes easily to help us do so. If the experience is chronic and severe, however, it can lead to psychological, social and even physical problems.

### WHEN COMMUNICATION WORKS

When efforts at personal and genuine communication are successful, tension is released from the body and the mind



clears. With clarity enhanced and a measure of confusion dispelled, we feel less alienated and more connected to others. Resuming our activities, more of our attention is available to the present moment. We feel better because the weight of our emotional baggage and mental burden has diminished. If good communication and supportive relationships characterize our life, we tend to feel understood and exhibit a greater ability to thrive in the face of life's challenges.

It can be said that communication, when successful, causes a moment of yoga, or union, to occur within the miniature universe of the relationship. Generally it is not the union of deep spiritual oneness or samadhi. It is the union of understanding. Understanding unburdens the mind and causes our awareness of self and others to expand. In the same way that a disturbing emotion can be fully felt and let go in posture practice, or that a habitual pattern of thought can be observed without reaction in meditation, communication can be a tool for clearing the mind, opening the heart, and increasing self-awareness. Although the means are different, spiritual practice and the types of communication exercises described in this pamphlet share many of the same goals. Communication has the potential to release emotional holding and related "body armor," to bring habitual patterns of fear-based thinking into full awareness, and to help us move beyond rigid ways of thinking and being.

Communication is a two-way street and benefits accrue to both speaker and listener. A person giving voice to thoughts and feelings unburdens his or her mind and grows in self-awareness. A person listening at the depth required to really hear another grows in empathy, the ability to open the heart and feel with another. A good listener also broadens his or her experience base, learning from the perspective of the speaker. In the back and forth of speaking and listening, many of the barriers that confound and isolate us can be gradually dissolved.

### THE COMMUNICATION CYCLE

Effective communication takes place in an active flow of speaking and listening called the communication cycle. Understanding how the communication cycle works, and where it can break down, is essential to leading small groups and dyads. To clearly describe the communication cycle in this section, we will use the example of a dyad exercise with one person being called the *speaking partner* and the other the *listening partner*. The same principles apply to small groups where there are multiple listening partners.

A complete communication cycle contains five stages:

1. The communication cycle begins when the group leader announces the instruction, such as *Share with your partner about a happy memory from your childhood*. In some dyad formats, the communication cycle begins when the listening partner gives an exact instruction, such as *Tell me what is important to you in your life right now*.

2. The speaking partner receives the instruction, searching inwardly for a meaningful response or allowing one to arise in his or her field of awareness. Upon finding one, he or she communicates it to the listening partner. The speaker's intention is not to merely report out a response that verbalizes his or her thoughts. It is to genuinely try to get the listening partner to understand what he or she has to communicate by speaking in a way that gets it across to the listening partner.

3. The listening partner actively listens, receiving the flow of expression without adding anything to it, blocking some part out, or judging the content. While being attentive, the listening partner refrains from the normal social cues of nodding, commenting or responsive facial expressions.

4. When the time allotted for the speaking partner ends, the group leader announces *Thank your partner and change over*. The listening partner says *Thank you*, acknowledging that the communication was received. In small groups, listening partners indicate that they received the communication in some appropriate manner, perhaps by nodding, making a short verbal statement affirming understanding of what was expressed, or thanking the speaking partner.

5. When the speaker receives the acknowledgement and can tell that his or her communication was received, the communication cycle is complete. The partners change roles at this point and continue with the exercise, initiating a second communication cycle.

All small groups and dyad exercises are designed to facilitate the completion of this basic communication cycle by eliminating the obstacles that often hamper communication.

## COMMUNICATION STIMULATES INNER WORK

Completing communication cycles, especially in a retreat or workshop setting, is valuable because it stimulates the

type of internal processing that leads to personal growth.

For example, directed to *Tell me an important goal you have for life*, a dyad participant is called upon to look inside for a real answer, a true response. He or she is likely to think, *What do I really want? I haven't thought about that for a long time*. Distractions, inner conflicts, or confusion may arise. Continuing with the process, the participant eventually finds a real response: *I want to regain good health*. The participant has to then come out of his or her inner world and get it across to their partner. Barriers are also likely to arise here, such as shyness or fear of being judged. The whole process of taking a topic seriously, looking inside for an honest response, and coming out to communicate it to another is called processing or sometimes inner work.

When the instruction is not challenging, processing is easy. When the instruction is more challenging, such as *Tell me something about yourself you think others have not understood*, the processing is deeper and calls for inner work. It takes more focus to search inside, encounter resistance, maintain self-honesty, and risk exploring and exposing sensitive areas. Depth processing allows participants to bring hidden aspects of themselves that have long remained in darkness into the light of consciousness.

In small groups and dyads, completing the communication cycle is the workhorse of the transformative process because it requires participants to engage in the type of processing where introspection takes place, resistance is encountered, insights arise, and barriers to communication crossed. Growth occurs as a side effect of completing the communication cycle. In other words, participants cannot force their growth or impose it on others. What they can do is support each other in listening deeply, honoring ground rules, and doing their own inner work. As participants complete communication cycles on meaningful topics, growth happens.

After a group has had some experience in small groups and dyads, explain-

## Inner Quest Intensive

The Inner Quest Intensive is a life changing personal growth program that has been offered regularly at Kripalu Center for more than twenty years. Over the course of three full days, the IQI is designed to facilitate a breakthrough in how participants experience themselves and their lives. The schedule for the IQI is demanding, with fifteen hours per day spent in a wide variety of activities including yoga, breathwork, guided introspection, honest dialogue, creative movement and play. Dialogue is facilitated by a combination of dyads and small group exercises, as well as supportive interactions with program staff, intended to encourage participants to connect with hidden parts of themselves and share openly and authentically with others.

Participants learn step-by-step how to recognize and soften around physical, emotional and mental blocks. Dynamic Kripalu Yoga postures and integrative breathwork stimulate vital energy, making the body a doorway to spirit. Yoga principles are applied off the mat to experience and let go of emotional holding. Guided introspection and partner dialogue reveal the underlying beliefs that limit free expression. Participants practice stepping beyond fears and facades into the vitality, freedom and joy possible in life. The IQI is an immersion experience in yogic living. For more information on the IQI, visit the Kripalu Center website at [www.kripalu.org](http://www.kripalu.org) or call 800-741-7353.

ing the principles underlying the communication cycle and processing can help demystify the methods and allow participants to understand what they are doing on a deeper level.

## COMMON OBSTACLES TO COMMUNICATION

In daily life, the format of our communications is highly flexible and not limited by a structure of chosen topics, equal periods for speaking and listening, and the watchful monitoring of a group leader. While the freedom we enjoy in our communication styles offers many benefits, it also leaves us prone to an endless variety of obstacles that can prevent us from completing communication cycles.

One of the biggest obstacles is the pervasive habit of many listeners to interrupt the speaker. Speakers need time to complete what they have to say. The trouble caused by this habit is compounded if the listener's interruptions are statements that judge or comment upon what is being said. If a speaker is constantly being interrupted and/or judged, the attempt at communication will cloud versus clear the mind, and the speaker will naturally begin to feel unfulfilled. A variation of this obstacle occurs when one person dominates the interchange, taking up most of the air time and leaving the other person hard pressed to get a word in edgewise. Good communication requires a back and forth of sharing that does not leave one person marginalized in the relationship.

Another significant obstacle occurs when the speaker is not sure if the listener has understood the attempted communication. This can happen if the listener gives vague indicators of understanding, or simply fails to respond at all. This keeps the speaker in the dark as to whether the expression was received and understood, preventing the completion of the communication cycle and the genuine understanding that goes with it.

The fast pace and numerous sources of distraction inherent in contemporary life lead to two other noteworthy communication obstacles: time pressure and

lack of focus. Completing communication cycles, especially on important, sensitive or complex issues, takes time and attention. Relationships suffer when issues get swept under the carpet and accumulate because time is not set aside for focused communication.

Small groups and dyads create a protective environment that supports communication by eliminating the major obstacles that hamper communication. Quality time is dedicated to communication. Distractions are set aside. Listeners learn not to interrupt speakers. Time is divided equally among participants, and all communications are acknowledged. These structural supports provide participants a tangible experience of good communication. They also allow participants a forum to improve their communication skills and work with the common obstacles to effective speaking and listening.

### Other common obstacles to effective speaking include:

- Shyness, a hesitance or unwillingness to express thoughts or feelings.
- Not making "I statements"
- Avoiding eye contact and other indicators of interpersonal connection.
- Presenting a mask or façade instead of being genuine.
- Wandering off topic before an idea or feeling is fully expressed.
- Continuing to speak in a run-on fashion when you have nothing further to say.

### Other common obstacles to listening include:

- Not being genuinely open to receive a communication from this individual.
- Not really listening because you are busy formulating a response.
- Making responses that prematurely evaluate what is being said.
- Judging or wanting to change the listener in some way.
- Avoiding eye contact and other indicators of interpersonal connection
- Hearing the content but missing the feeling, or vice-versa.
- Being distracted.
- Withholding acknowledgement that something was received.

## PURPOSES

Small groups and dyads can be used for many purposes. Among the most common are:

- Icebreaking and bonding a group.
- Inner work such as clearing the mind of mental and emotional blocks, facilitating insight, intensive self-inquiry, couples work and communication training.
- Integrating lecture material and transformational experiences such as yoga, movement, breathwork, meditation, etc.
- Bringing a group to completion at the end of a workshop or retreat.

## GROUP SIZE

Leaders vary in their preference for using dyads or small groups of three or four participants. Bear in mind that people new to personal growth activities may find it threatening to sit facing a stranger, as in a dyad. Making eye contact in this unfamiliar setting can bring up discomfort, nervousness, giddiness, or other unpleasant sensations. For this reason, some workshop leaders believe that small groups of three or four participants are better suited to the task of icebreaking and group bonding. Other leaders feel that dyads offer a higher quality of communication and overcome this hurdle by starting with dyads that are short, simple and easy. People in larger groups of more than four people start to display what are commonly called *group dynamics* and require advanced training to lead competently.

In terms of integrating lecture material or transformative experiences, small groups and dyads have different qualities that can be adapted as appropriate. Small groups allocate more time towards listening and offer participants an opportunity to hear the perspective of several different individuals. Speaking partners address their comments to multiple listening partners, which can be a powerful experience. Dyads offer a more intimate opportunity conducive to a greater depth of self-disclosure and allocate more time to speaking. Dyads are better suited to depth inner work such as clearing the mind of mental and emotional blocks. A larger group diminishes the intensity that can result from an exclusive focus on self and other.

Either dyads or small groups or a mixture of both can be used to bring a group to completion after sharing time and working together.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DYADS AND SMALL GROUP PROCESS

The same basic skills are required to lead small groups and dyads. As a leader, your primary purpose is to create a safe and sacred space conducive to deep inner work. Although following certain guidelines is important in creating a structure that is safe and supportive of communication, group leadership is not ultimately about enforcing rules. It is about educating and inspiring people to the inherent sacredness of being in authentic relationship.

As a leader, model good communication in your interactions with the large group. Communication with a group must move at a slower pace than with a single individual. Take the time required to be calm and clear in your instructions. Ask if group members have received your communication and understand what has been asked of them. An unhurried pace allows everyone to receive your communication and move forward together.

Leaders vary in how they approach the topic of confidentiality. Some discuss it up front, getting a general group agreement that what is said in the room will stay in the room and not be discussed with others. This is perhaps the best approach as it informs participants ahead of time on an important parameter for the exercise. Others reinforce a norm of confidentiality at the end of an exercise or session. As a leader, you are bound to honor confidentiality, which means refraining from repeating or making comments to others about a participant's communications. Exceptions to this rule include instances in which you are working with another staff member to help the person, or when you are speaking with a colleague for professional consultation. Even in these circumstances, always honor the sanctity of the communications.

It is important for leaders to understand that these communication exercises

are not necessarily about a participant sharing his or her deepest and darkest secret. Participants can respond with any sharing that complies with the instruction, selecting the depth at which they choose to comply and self-disclose. If an instruction brings up material that is disturbing to a participant, a leader can assure the participant that he or she can share at a level that feels appropriate.

Here are a number of other basic guidelines that support small group process and dyads.

Participants sit facing each other, a comfortable distance apart without touching. Chairs or cushions can be used, but it is important that dyad partners and group members are roughly at the same height.

In dyads, participants alternate being the speaker and the listener in equal turns, usually of five minutes duration or less. In small groups, each person is allotted equal time to speak, usually five minutes or less. As a general rule, time spent in beginning level small groups and dyads should be limited to 20 minutes to avoid fatigue and thereby ensure focus. In advanced dyads requiring specialized training, up to 40 minutes may be spent in repeated communication cycles, to encourage depth processing.

Speaking partners refrain from referring to their dyad partner or to other group members, or commenting on their sharings. Participants stay on the pre-determined topic. Listeners give their full attention to their partner or the group member who is speaking. They listen without commenting or responding non-verbally with nodding or facial expressions.

At the end of each sharing, listeners acknowledge the speaker's sharing, usually by saying Thank you.

## GUIDING A SMALL GROUP PROCESS

Here is an example of what you might say and do leading an exercise for a group of four. The sentences in italics represent what you might say to the group. Different instructions are used to give you a feel for the ways questions or sharing topics can be introduced. (Many of the examples used later to

describe the different form of dyads can also be adapted for small groups.)

1. Announce that the group will be breaking up into groups of four. Give people time to find partners and get situated. Before anyone feels left out, say *Raise your hand if you or your group still needs a partner.* Assist the groups in forming and use assistants to even out the numbers as needed. Resist the tendency to hurry, as it takes time for people to join and feel comfortable sitting together.

2. *Invite everyone to Bring your attention back to yourself.* Allow a moment of silence for a deep breath or two. Explain the exercise and announce the question or instruction the group will be working on, such as *Share with the group what drew you to this particular workshop at this time in your life.* Repeat the instruction at least twice and allow ample time for them to reflect on it.

3. Tell the group: *We will be going around the group in a clockwise direction, speaking in turn and sharing our response to the question.* Let them know that they will be speaking for a set period of no longer than five minutes each. Reassure

## Circle

When we sit here in a circle and grow still, the energy of Spirit fills us. Until we surrender to silence, we stay on the choppy surface of the mind. As the breath grows quiet, we go behind thought, beneath confusion, fear and doubt. When we sit here in a circle and share truth, the mystery of speech and listening transforms our separate energies into one heart, one consciousness, one being—present and fulfilled.

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them: I will be timing you and letting you know when to move on to the next speaker. Remember that listeners simply listen; this is not a time for cross talk.

4. Clarify who will start by saying something like *The person with the longest hair is going to go first*. It is desirable to direct a small group because this avoids confusion and makes it simpler for the group to get started. Choose some distinguishing feature that has little likelihood of embarrassing any participant, such as person with the brightest colored shirt or longest fingers. Once a group gets acquainted with the flow of these exercises, you can let small groups choose among themselves.

5. Start the exercise with a clear instruction, such as *The first speaker can begin, sharing with the group how that experience of guided visualization was for you*. Use a watch to time each speaker. Near the end of their allotted time, give the speakers a one-minute warning: Speakers will have one more minute to complete their sharing. After a minute, direct the speakers to end their sharing and become silent.

6. Repeat the instruction and have the groups move on to the next speaker. For example, *Moving on to speaker number two, complete the following statement: This is a time in my life when...* It is best to follow the same protocol and give the same instruction to each speaker. *Moving on to speaker number three, share with the group what are you taking with you from this workshop, and what are you leaving behind.*

7. At the end of the exercise, allow for a moment of silence or a deep breath in and out as group members take in what was said and heard. Invite people to *thank their partners*. Allow hugging or touching at the close of a small group exercise, pointing out that it should be consensual.

## GUIDING DYADS

Here is an outline of how you might approach the task of acquainting a group with dyads. The topic is chosen beforehand and might be something general announced by the leader such as *Share your responses to the lecture we just heard*.

Or it might be a more specific instruction given by the listening partner such as *Tell me your goals for life*.

Start with one or more simple and non-confrontive exercises, which helps to get people comfortable with the dyad structure. Initial success will inspire the group to follow the ground rules as you take them deeper.

1. It works best to get people into the dyad structure without a lengthy explanation of what dyads are beforehand. This learn-by-doing approach is simple and more efficient. You might say: *Okay, we are going to do a communication exercise called a dyad. In a dyad, two people work together. Choose a partner and sit facing each other. Assist any people who can't find a partner and then: Say hello and if you don't know your partner, introduce yourself.*

2. Explain what they are going to do. *In this exercise, one person is going to be the speaking partner and the other the listening partner. The speaker is going to take three minutes to talk about what his or her main interests in life are right now. The listening partner is just going to listen without responding. After three minutes, I will say: Thank your partner, and change*

## Dyad

I sit across from you;  
you sit across from me,  
and where our eyes meet  
there is an infinity of  
being. Words build a  
bridge between us;  
sentences reach beneath  
the surface and seek to  
share the mystery of  
truth. Heart to heart,  
we speak and listen.

The poetry of the soul  
weaves us into one whole  
cloth, its borders stretching  
beyond the span of body  
or thought, where limits  
have no meaning.

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*over. At that point, the listening partner says: Thank you, and you will switch roles and repeat the exercise. Are there any questions? You may have to repeat or clarify something. Keep your responses short and simple, since the majority of people will be ready to go.*

3. *Decide between yourselves who will go first.*

4. *Remember, the topic is: What your main interests in life are right now. Go ahead and begin.* People usually dive right into a dyad like this. It is a topic that is not confrontive and one that most people will have no trouble speaking about.

5. Use a watch to keep track of the time. At the end of the first sharing, announce: *Okay, thank your partner and change over.* When the dyad is complete, say: *Thank your partner and stand by.* Once everyone completes their thank you, inform the group whatever they will be doing next.

## DIFFERENT FORMS FOR DYADS

There are different types of dyads, each introducing the topic of the dyad in a different manner. In the simplest form, the group leader gives a general instruction to the group just before the dyad begins. This form is best suited to beginners and can be used with each partner getting one five-minute period to speak. This makes for a ten-minute exercise in total. It can also be used with each partner getting two five-minute periods to speak for a twenty-minute exercise. For example: *Each partner take five minutes and share about how you are feeling this morning and what's on your mind. Go ahead and begin.*

### Other examples of questions suitable to this form of dyad include:

- Tell your partner a little about yourself and what brings you here.
- Talk about what you would like to get from this seminar.
- Talk about any fears or considerations you have about taking this seminar.
- Get across to your partner what came up as a result of listening to the lecture (or process just completed.)
- Share about a time you felt very happy (loved, successful, acknowledged).

In the second type of dyad, the topic is introduced by asking the speaker to finish a sentence. In this style, the group leader writes on a blackboard or flipchart the beginning of a sentence. The speaking partner then completes and expands upon the sentence. Give each partner one five-minute turn to speak, or two five-minute turns to speak. The speaking partner will repeat the process of finishing the sentence as many times as natural in the time allotted.

**Examples of this type of dyad include:**

- What I love most about life is...
- One of my biggest challenges in life is...
- Something I am good at in life is...
- What I am aware of in my body right now is...
- What I will take home from this seminar is...
- A way I will use what I've learned here is...

In the third type of dyad, the listening partner gives a specific instruction and the speaking partner responds. Receiving an instruction from your partner brings more immediacy to the communication. In this style, the group leader writes the question in the form of a directive on a blackboard or flipchart, and the listening partner uses those exact words in giving the instruction to the speaking partner. Once a group is familiar with the basic structure of dyads, this form is best suited to depth work. For beginning work, these dyads are more suited to twenty-minute periods, giving each person two five-minute opportunities to speak.

**Sample instructions include:**

- Tell me what's important to you in your life right now.
- Tell me your current goals in life.
- Tell me something you have learned about life.
- Tell me about a time you felt connected to Spirit or a Higher Power.
- Tell me what you have gotten from this seminar and how you plan to use it in your life.

For those who like dyads and use them easily, the following more advanced forms can be used in 40-

minute segments, giving each partner four opportunities to speak:

- Tell me something about yourself you think others have not understood.
- Accept yourself as you are and tell me what you become aware of.
- Accept others as they are and tell me what you become aware of.
- Connect with your body and tell me what you become aware of.

The dyads suggested above do not have to be done in order. Before leading any dyad in a group it is recommended that you try it yourself beforehand.

### DEPTH DYADS

Doing the same exercise more than once stimulates a greater depth of internal work and processing. By repeating the same instruction multiple times, depth dyads encourage participants to reach into the unknown for intensive mind-clearing, insight and issue resolution. It's a powerful technique that can lead to unexpected breakthroughs.

An inescapable part of depth dyads is the possibility of encountering various forms of resistance such as dullness, confusion, boredom, unpleasant sensations, distraction, sleepiness, etc. By continuing with the technique in the

face of strong resistance, a participant has an opportunity to pass through whatever barrier is preventing positive change or resolution. In the struggle of this process, a participant's capacity for inner work grows. At the same time, group leaders should be aware that any dyad done with a repeated instruction stimulates depth processing and is likely to generate resistance. As a general rule, continuing with the dyad technique is what most often enables a participant to pass through his or her resistance and move beyond it. A leader's calm and supportive presence can assist this process. Sometimes it is effective to educate the participant on the nature of resistance and gently encourage him or her to continue with the exercise. In extreme cases, it may be advisable to have the participant change to another dyad question or discontinue their participation in the group process altogether.

### OFFERING CORRECTIONS

Participants will make progress to the degree they are able to comply with the structure of the exercise complete the communication cycle with their dyad or group partners. During the exercise,

## Enlightenment Intensive

The Enlightenment Intensive is a three-day retreat in which participants set aside all distractions to contemplate a time-honored question such as Who am I? or What is life? Contemplation is done in a structured dyad format, with the results of contemplation being communicated to a listening partner. Partners take five-minute turns, speaking and listening, and a new partner is chosen for each 40-minute contemplation period. The contemplation process continues throughout the three days, with regular breaks for walks, rest, meals, sitting meditation, and lectures. This combination of depth contemplation and depth communication has awakened many to a direct experience their own true nature, helping them live from a truer sense of self.

At least 100,000 people worldwide have taken the Enlightenment Intensive since its creation in 1968. Afterwards, people report a variety of benefits including the release of inner tensions, an improved ability to communicate, enhanced clarity, insight and profound spiritual awakenings. Often called a pure method because of its straightforward approach, the Enlightenment Intensive demonstrates that deep truth and the secrets of life can be found within ourselves and in the sacredness of our relationships. For more information, see *The Enlightenment Intensive: Dyad Communication as a Tool for Self-Realization* by Lawrence Noyes, available through Amazon.com or directly from the publisher at 1-800-337-2665. Anyone interested in taking an Enlightenment Intensive can contact Lawrence at [Lawrencenoyes@aol.com](mailto:Lawrencenoyes@aol.com).



watch to see that individuals understand what they are to do and assist them as needed in honoring guidelines, staying on topic, and completing cycles. Most people will get the hang of things quickly, but in the first few exercises some will not. Expect to see listeners making comments, partners just conversing with each other, and people looking around and appearing rather lost.

In a friendly, gentle way, help these folks get going in the right direction. Go over to the group or dyad, get down to their level, make contact, and instruct the group what to do. Do this in a positive, simple way, bearing in mind that people are very sensitive to being singled out and corrected. Instead, be encouraging and bring people along gradually, knowing that they will improve as they get more experience. There is an art to this that comes with experience.

A good approach with minor imperfections is to refrain from making individual corrections. Instead, make a mental note of the problem. At the beginning of the next exercise, make the correction to the whole group. For example: *Remember that when you are the listening partner your role is to listen without commenting. Give your partner your full attention, without saying anything.*

If a person is violating the guidelines in a major way or otherwise disrupting the small group or dyad process, instruct his or her partner(s) to stand by and try to correct the problem on the spot. If this doesn't work, invite the person to speak with you privately. In a small group, you can have the other participants continue with the exercise. In a dyad, have an assistant sit down as a temporary dyad partner, or instruct the person to contemplate the dyad instruction silently for the time being. The willingness to confront people who are openly resisting the structure of the exercise is necessary for you to maintain the respect of the large group. If gently done, it can also promote a deep interaction with the non-complying participant. Allow yourself to use your intuition to sense when communications are complete or incomplete, and when the spirit of the dyad or group work is being

honored. This is how you gradually develop your own style of leadership.

## BENEFITS

People who participate in small groups and dyads benefit from a valuable form of interpersonal learning. Beginning benefits are a better integration of seminar material and experiences; a less-burdened heart; a clearer mind, and a greater sense of connection to others. Longer-term benefits include an ability to accept self and others more deeply; communicate with more authenticity; listen with greater sensitivity; remain present in relationships; and gain release from rigid patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. More intensive dyad work offers opportunities for spiritual experience similar to depth meditation.

To maximize the benefit, structure the communication exercises in a way that allows participants to work at a level that is neither too difficult nor too easy, and which enables them to complete communication cycles on topics supportive of growth and transformation. This can be done using dyads and small groups, or a combination of both.

This pamphlet offers only a brief synopsis of small group and dyad techniques. If you encounter any difficulties in leading these techniques, seek out the help of an experienced mentor, preferably with a background in the Kripalu model of experiential learning. For more information, visit the Kripalu Center website at [www.kripalu.org](http://www.kripalu.org).

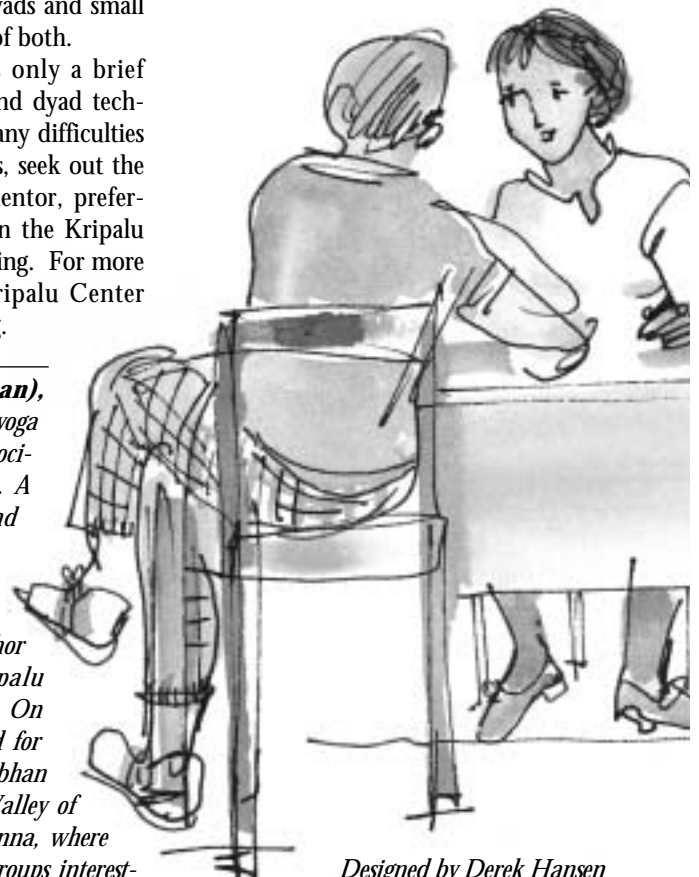
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**Richard Faulds (Shobhan), M.A., J.D.,** has practiced yoga for over 20 years in close association with Kripalu Center. A former ashram resident and Kripalu's President from 1998 to 2001, Shobhan currently chairs the Board of Trustees. He is the author of the Bantam Book *Kripalu Yoga: A Guide to Practice On and Off the Mat* scheduled for publication in 2004. Shobhan lives in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia with his wife, Danna, where they host individuals and groups interest-

ed in practicing the teachings of the Kripalu tradition and passing them onto others. He can be reached at [rafaulds@aol.com](mailto:rafaulds@aol.com).

**Lawrence Noyes (Skanda)** studied yoga with Swami Kripalu, Yogeshwar Muni and other prominent teachers in the Kripalu tradition, playing a leadership role in the Kripalu ashram communities in California and South Australia from 1978-1992. Now based in Toronto, Lawrence has been teaching internationally since 1980, integrating the use of communication techniques with the contemplative practices of yoga, especially in the form of the *Enlightenment Intensive*. He is the author of *The Enlightenment Intensive: Dyad Communication as a Tool for Self-Realization*. Lawrence can be reached at [Lawrencenoyes@aol.com](mailto:Lawrencenoyes@aol.com).

**Shobhan and Lawrence** are partnering to integrate the teachings of the two Kripalu ashram communities and make those teachings more accessible to teachers and practitioners of Kripalu Yoga. ☯



Designed by Derek Hansen