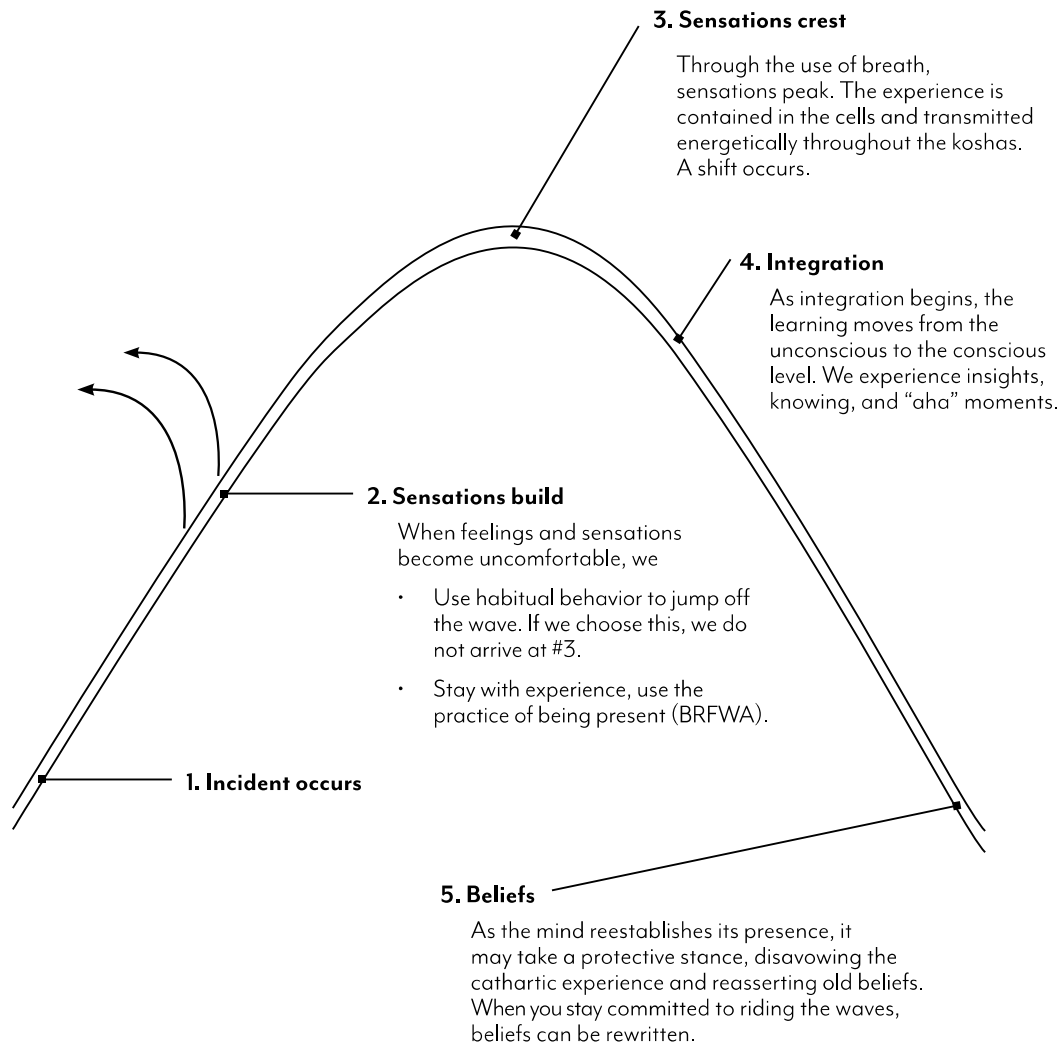


RIDING THE WAVES OF LIFE

Overview

When an intense situation, feeling, or experience occurs we have two choices. We can choose to accept or “be with” the experience or we can choose to “push away” from the experience by distracting ourselves, acting out unhealthy habits, or simply denying the experience isn’t happening. Yoga invites us to practice “being with” and “turning towards” experiences. Riding the Wave and BRFWA are two tools to support this process. Below are the steps to Riding the Waves of Life.



RIDING THE WAVE: BRFWA

Breathe

- Notice your breath's natural rhythm
- Take a deep breath
- Let the breath call up your Witness

Relax

- Scan the body and notice where you are holding tension
- Begin to soften the places in your body that are holding tension
- Resist the impulse to control or push away the sensation

Feel

- Actively move your awareness toward the sensation in the body
- Stay with the feeling, how does it feel now ... and now
- Resist the impulse to name or label the feeling and simply feel

Watch

- Witness your experience without judgment
- Let go of any evaluating, judging, or comparing about this experience
- Watch your experience even as it may intensify and change, stay with it

Allow

- Allow your experience to unfold just as it is
- Surrender to your experience without trying to understand it
- Let your experience happen

Research on the Management of Emotions and Well-being

There is an abundance of research that documents the positive and detrimental effects of different methods of emotional management. Suppression (or denying a feeling is present) has been shown to increase sympathetic activity, decrease a sense of connection, and negatively impact memory.¹ Distraction (or paying attention to something other than the feeling) reduces the immediate intensity of a feeling, but impedes one's ability to learn from experience.² Mindfulness (a form of BRFWA) has been shown to improve emotion regulation, immune functioning, and lower heart rate.³

¹ Gross, James J. "Emotion Regulation." Handbook of Emotions. Ed. Lewis, Michael, Ed. Haviland-Jones, Jeannette M. and Ed. Felman Barret, Lisa. 3rd ed. New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2008. 497-512. Print.

² Mauss, Iris B., and James J. Gross. "Emotion Suppression and Cardiovascular Disease - Is hiding feelings bad for your heart?." Emotional Expression and Health. Ed. Nyklicek, Ivan, Ed. Temoshok, Lydia and Ed. Vingerhoets, Ad. 1st ed. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge, 2004. 61-81. Print.

³ Bishop, PhD, Scott R. "What Do We Really Know About Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction?." Psychosomatic Medicine. 64. (2002): 71-84. Print.