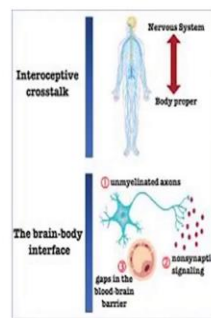


Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
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Asanas as the Intervention of Managing Self and Career
Lecture - 69
Interoception, Asanas and Well-being

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Interoception:
The Key to Bodywork and Self Management



- Remember the definition of mind; a relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information; whole body is brain.
- Every tissue and system in your body contributes to how you know things, even to the formation of intuition. They all contribute to a “sixth sense” called interoception.
- The interoceptive structures in the brain—the lamina of the spinal cord, vagus nerve, and the insula of the middle prefrontal cortex all collect information from the body and connect it to various parts of the cortex.
- This is how we get “gut feelings”, how we come to know things in our bones.

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Asanas predominantly enhance our metacognition and many other benefits, preservation of energy and cognitive abilities. All these impact of asanas happen because it enhances our interoception. What is interoception?

We all or most of us are familiar to the term perception is looking out, making sense of the stimuli which we are receiving from outside. Interoception is looking within giving attention to within our own inherent internal states of being.

An interoception is about giving notice to what is happening in our body. Please remember the definition of mind this definition says that mind is a relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information. And if we look at the asanas and the process of asanas, we can

understand that mind actually whole body is mind whole body has the function like the function of mind.

Every tissue and system in our body contributes to how we know things and even to the formation of intuition. They all this is sum total of our perception direct inward and as a result of that our bio feedback mechanism and our metacognition both are enhanced.

Interoceptive structure in the brain that is the lamina of the spinal cord that is vagus nerve and the insula of the middle prefrontal cortex all of these elements actually collect information from the body and then it connected to the various parts of the cortex which is the frontal part of the brain.

This is how we get the gut feelings and how we come to know things in our bone you must have used this term in my stomach my gut feeling is saying something I am knowing this in my bones what is that? That is interoception when I instead of processing the stimuli and processing the information not just with the help of my prefrontal cortex; that means, not only processing information through logic and thoughts using language, but we are also processing information through our body itself which is pre language pre thought how actually I am feeling about something.

And that feeling can occur in the stomach that can happen in the brain part that can happen in our limbs when we give attention to that signal comes from those roots as well. And all those signals are further processed by the cortex and with that processing when it is combined with the language and thought, we get a something what we called gut feeling or our intuition.

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Interoception, Asanas and Wellbeing



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- Interoception is how we sense emotions within the physical body and how we often sense intuition.
- Emotions are stored in our tissues. One, the unconscious mind may create discomfort in the nerves and muscles by changing the circulatory patterns in those tissues.
- Another pathway is trauma. When we are traumatized physically or psychologically, the structures in the midbrain, principally the amygdala and hippocampus, take a traumatic snapshot, which may include physical sensation, images, cognitions and emotions.

So, interoception is how we sense emotions within the physical body. How we are able to sense emotions in the physical body? We are able to sense emotions in our tissues because unconscious mind keep creating comfort or discomfort in the nerves with several stimuli. So, in a way emotions are trapped in some body tissues or all the body tissues.

So, muscles by changing the circulatory pattern in those tissues they keep responding to the different information emotions and environmental stimuli. There is another pathway which is called pathway of trauma. When we are traumatized physically or psychologically the structures in the midbrain particularly amygdala and hippocampus take a traumatic snapshot which include the physical sensation images cognition and emotion.

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Interoception, Asanas and Wellbeing cont..



No wonder, recent advances in the treatment of trauma have demonstrated that effective therapies always include the body somehow.

Body plays important role in less extreme cases as well such as during examination, talking to someone with whom you have difficult relationship, interacting with authorities.

What do you feel in your neck, your shoulders, your lower back, your stomach, your heart?

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So, no wonder while treating the severe traumas most of the treatment methods particularly the modern treatment methods involve body because body play a very important role in the traumatic situation. So, treatment of the trauma cannot happen without involving body, but body also plays important role in the less extreme cases like during examination, talking to someone with whom we are not comfortable, we have a difficult relationship or interacting with the authorities etcetera.

So, in day to day situations as well body play a very important role. So, what do you feel in your neck? Your shoulder, your back, lower back, your stomach, your heart while talking to authorities while performing certain task, while planning your work, while thinking about your projects while negotiating all these are important to be noticed.

Because if I wish to be effective in this situation, I cannot be effective just by having certain knowledge or by having certain thoughts if we want to be effective in the day to day situations of life we need to take care of our body and we have to give attention to the experience we have in the body.

When we are able to address the stretches when we are able to address the stress in the different parts of the body, we not only make our body flexible and relaxed we actually make ourselves more effective in day to day situations day to day professional and personal situations in life.

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Asana: Sthir and Sukh

स्थिरसुखम् आसनम् ॥२.४६॥

- Asana is that which is 'steady' and 'comfortable'.
- It is not only about no trembling of the limbs.
- Rather it is the quieting of the mind/body relationship to the point where the mind/body loses its desires to move altogether.
- VB says this "sama-samsthana" "balanced configuration" which refers to maintaining the alignment of the head, neck and trunk in meditative awareness.
- This refers not just to sitting meditation, but also to every posture the body assumes.
- Naturally people who have mastery of the mind/body through asana sit and move with balance and grace.
- Change and Sthir both are aspects of the same coin.

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Maharshi Patanjali talks about asanas in a very succinct way in three sutras. The first is the definition of asana what he says sthira sukham asanam. You must have use this term asan in the sense of sitting posture you might have also noticed that asan the term is used for the place of sitting of some knowledgeable people or some vrddh or senior people.

We with the with the respect say that this is asan of my guru or this is asan of bhagwan in the in my temple. So, asan is a place we sit or place someone sits. In the yogic term in the rajyog term in the ashtang yog term the posture in which we can be sthir meaning steady and sukham when we are comfortable that is asan.

So, it is not only about no trembling of limbs it is more than no trembling of limbs. So, rather it is a quieting of mind body relationship to the point where mind body loses its desire to move all together. We may say that by sitting very comfortably in the couch I feel good that is comfortable to me and that is yogasana for me, but that is not so.

Because we may sit in the couch in a distorted posture and it may feel comfortable for few moments, but if you can if you sit in that posture for longer time maybe 5 minutes or even 10 15 minutes you will realize that we develop pain if we sit in a posture which is not correct.

Even if that is feeling comfortable for initial few minutes. Asana can be steady and comfortable only when it is right when our body is aligned. Initially asana may look little uncomfortable we may feel little discomfort, but if we wish to have ekagr mind we should be able to sit in asana for long time and to sit in any posture in the long time it must be asana it must be correct.

Only in the correct posture we can sit for the longer time and with practice we become comfortable in that posture. Psychologically speaking mind and body are deeply connected. Yog asanas are those posture where mind and body get aligned when that alignment happens body does not feel like moving mind does not feel like wondering.

So, naturally there is an ekagr chitt the fourth quality of chitt as explained in the earlier session that emerges. Vyasa bhashya says that what is asana. Sama samasthana balanced configuration that refers to maintaining the alignment of the head, neck, trunk in a meditative awareness this refers not just to sitting meditation, but it is also about every posture body assumes on a day to day situation.

So, naturally people who have mastery of the mind body through asana they sit and move with balance and grace you must have noticed that. Change and sthir both are aspect of the same coin we in order to be sthir have to sometime change the posture. So, in the practice of yogasanas we change one posture to another to achieve one stability to the next level of stability.