

EFFECTIVE CUEING IN YOGA

Yoga is meant to be calming for the mind

- Cueing should be precise yet simple allowing the students to easily follow & stay in a calm state of mind
- We want to avoid having students think too much
 - o Every teacher has their own unique style of cueing & students will learn you just as you learn them. However, we want newbie students to be able to feel comfortable too
- Too many words crowd the students' mind which impedes on their ability to be in the present moment (observing their body, breath, and inner experiences)
- Allows for the mind to calm & quiet throughout the practice
- Gives students the opportunity to experience their own spirit & energy

Ask yourself: Why am I talking?

- Why are you talking? Is what you're saying enhancing the practice? Can you offer more silence?

Common Cueing Mistakes

- Too many filler words
 - o X "We are going to..."
 - o X "Now, let's do..."
 - o Okay occasionally, but be careful not to overdo it
- Complicated instructions – Less is more
- Little space to for students to integrate themselves into their own practice – give time for response and inner experience
 - o let them feel & be in the pose
- Assumed Experience – "this feels so good!"
 - o Okay to create a connection with students (occasionally)

Effective Cues

- Speak directly to body parts using single action verbs
 - o STEP your left foot back
 - o LUNGE into you right leg
 - o LIFT your back heel
 - o REACH your arms overhead

Elements of a pose/asana

- Foundation
 - o Find stability
- Alignment
 - o Forward, back, side, neutral?
- Intention
 - o Quality of the pose
 - o Purpose of the practice
- Refinement
 - o Deepening or lessening the effort/experience

- Modification
 - o Shifting the form to match the individuals needs
- Breath
 - o Key for balance, stability, and ease of body & mind

Simple system for cueing

- Announce the pose first so your students have an idea where you're headed
 - o This also helps newer students learn the poses & their names
- Transitional Cues
 - o Simple directions moving in/out of poses from the core
- Refinement Cues
 - o Help refine the pose with 3-4 cues so students can understand the alignment & understand where they're supposed to "feel" the pose

Support Cues (using breath)

- Breath 1: Foundation (physical support)
- Breath 2: Alignment (physical support)
- Breath 3: Intention (emotional experience)
- Breath 4: Refine/Modify (mental support – note details, notice attitude)
- Breath 5: Silence is golden (energetic support, be in the moment)

Exit Cues

- Enjoy a final breath/cue breath
- Exhale, engage your core. Inhale, lift out of the asana

Verb Choice

- Direct action verbs (progressive w/ -ing words)
 - o Step your feet together. Inhale, raise your arms overhead
 - o Inhale, expanding your chest. Exhale, hinging forward from the hips into Uttanasana

Cueing Breath

- Breath in/Breath out
- Inhale/Exhale
- NOT "don't forget to breathe"
- RATHER simply suggest "return to your breath"
- Count the breath (don't abandon your students)

Anatomical Direction

- Up vs Extend
 - o Ex: raise your right arm up vs extend your right arm
- Extension vs Flexion
- Tilt pelvis forward (anterior tilt)
- Scoop your hips under/Draw tailbone down (posterior tilt/tuck)

Deepening The Practice

- Allow for meditation & concentration to unfold
- Offer silence from a position of support vs abandonment
- Our mind is a reflection of the state of our nervous system
- If nerves are tense or overactive, mind will follow suit
- When breath slows the body calms down due to the nervous system relaxing, the mind will calm
- Bring students to present moment with in-the-moment observations
- Bring awareness to feeling – notice how you feel in your body
 - Physical sensations
 - Where emotions/mental state are manifesting physically
 - Observe without judgement
- Speak to the essence/energy of the practice