



## **Kum Nye in Five Trainings**

### **– Introduction**

#### **Lesson 1: Feel, feeling and Body-Awareness**

Kum Nye is a body of knowledge introduced to the West by Tarthang Tulku in 1969. It aims to awaken the precious human embodiment. Your Kum (sKu) is your embodiment: your authentic existence, the real you, the presence of your being. Nye (mNye) refers to awakening the Kum through internal massage of the energies that make up your being. Through activating the flow of feeling and mixing it with the energy and wind of the breath, Nye stimulates and awakens your presence in the world.

The heart of Kum Nye practice is to activate the flow of feeling. Therefore, we need to develop and refine our ability to feel. In Kum Nye, we do this by first acknowledging feelings in the body, then learning to feel them more – to follow, expand, integrate and stimulate the flow of feelings. Awakening feelings brings your body, mind, senses and heart more to life. As your being becomes increasingly present, more of your personal inner resources will emerge, such as vitality, inner knowing and direct contact with open awareness.

#### **The Body**

The ability to feel resides in the body. Just as we see with the eyes, hear with the ears, taste with the tongue, and smell with the nose, we feel with the body. With the body, we can touch inner and outer experience – the world of feelings. For example, you probably find your way in the dark mostly by feeling your immediate environment, ‘touching’ the space around you and the ground beneath you with your feeling-awareness. Your body senses its way. You cannot feel with your thoughts. You do not feel by observing feelings; you can only feel with the body. It is the body that feels. This requires body-awareness – not awareness of the body, but the sensitivity of the body. Body and awareness are one.

Through body-awareness, contact is made with life’s experiences within and outside the body. When you see, you can feel what you see. However, we usually think about what is being seen, disconnected from the feeling aspect. Similarly, we probably do not feel what we hear; rather, we interpret and label what we hear. If we would feel what we see, we would sense its shape and form, getting a feeling from the form. There is aliveness in another person, a tree or an area in the garden. Even an inanimate object can be ‘felt’,

such as an object of art, photograph or book. Through feeling-awareness, we make contact with this particular manifestation of life or presentation of knowledge. Through feeling, we would directly experience what is being seen.

For example, when we notice a person, instead of thinking about what we observe, we can sense his or her presence. There is a person behind what we think about him or her. Our feeling-awareness would inform us how the person is doing and maybe even where the person is 'coming from.' If body-awareness is well developed, we would always sense our own being and make contact with the environment and everything we encounter simultaneously – the atmosphere in the room, the story in a photograph, the energy of an object, the vibrations of a place. Feelings are a major source of knowledge, and body-awareness is the gate to inner knowing.

### **Sensations, Feelings and Emotions**

In the beginning, people may struggle with the difference between sensations, feelings and emotions. In Kum Nye, we develop sensations and, more importantly, feelings. Sensations come when you rub your skin, burn your hand, jump in cold water, sit in the dentist's chair, and so on. Sensations are on the surface of our experience; feelings go deeper. When somebody puts a hand on your shoulder at just the right time, you may relax and experience the feeling of the hand deep in your body. When you think of a dear person, like a deceased grandmother or grandfather, just bringing them to mind, hearing their name or imagining their perfume may give you experiences deep in the body. Feelings are life's experience in the body; they could have a location, make up a field of energy or a specific sense of space(s) in the body.

Emotions are a different animal altogether. In the terminology of Kum Nye, emotions are judgments of experience, thoughts of what is happening. 'I am upset' is a thought, a label of an experience – not the experience itself. The racing energy, the trembling legs, the blush on the face, and the shiver down the spine are feelings. Thoughts can hurt you (and others); feelings never do, as they are the energy in the body. Even a negative emotion can have positive, cleansing feelings like warmth and clarity. In Kum Nye, a good way to transform emotions is to contact and enter their feelings – to feel rather than to think about it. Some of us can hold on to emotions for years. They will last as long as you think them. As soon as you feel them, they will change and open up. The bad memory may be gone, and with it a sense of our false identity. For emotions to yield, all that is needed is to feel the energy in the body and let the feelings flow through the entire body, including the heart center.

The heart chakra is the center of our being, the original starting point of our life on earth. Whereas thinking and emotions will bypass the heart, leaving its inner qualities dormant, feelings and beauty nourish the heart and awaken the treasure that the ancient teachings remind us of: a sense of eternal belonging.

### **Learning to Feel**

The number one method to learn to feel is *body-awareness*. Differently put: Mind is body and body is mind. They are no longer separate.

To strengthen body-awareness, the starting point in Kum Nye is the seven gestures. They will make you become aware of the entire body and provide space for the feelings to flow through. Rely on the seven gestures; contact them one by one and, eventually, simultaneously.

Secondly, when sitting still, *sense the stillness of the physical body*. This has a threefold benefit: The breath will begin to find its natural rhythm; your sense of space instantly expands beyond the physical body; and feelings will emerge wherever you place your focus.

During the day, you can develop body-awareness by *focusing on the hands*. Wherever you focus, energy will flow there. If you think a lot, the forehead will receive much energy. Where focus is minimal or even absent, energy will be sparse and the dormant area's connection with your being will become ineffective. For example, bringing attention to the hands is quite productive for stimulating feelings in the body. The hands each have their own chakra, and each finger represents one of the elements that make up your being: thumb/earth, index/water, middle/fire, ring/air and pinky/space. If you are only aware of the thumb and index finger, the elements represented by the remaining fingers will become weaker. As soon as you focus on the other fingers, your objects of focus will come to life, drawing more aliveness from the elements represented by the remaining fingers. The same is true for each and every part of the body.

*Choose any location in the body and as soon as you bring your attention there, feelings will come.* The particular area comes to life, and the aspect of your being that it represents awakens too – more energy, more knowing.

Gradually become aware of the entire body as a unit. Another practice to cultivate feeling-awareness is to *focus on the activity of walking*. It is best to begin by walking slowly. As you focus on the bodily movements, focus and moving become inseparable, like a moving-awareness. Rather soon, you will get a sense of presence, and a sense of joy in its wake.

Feelings have a different pace and rhythm than thoughts, but if you remain in contact with the body, the feeling component will be ever-present.

You have been doing Kum Nye for some time now. How would you teach others to learn to feel? Please let us know so we can expand the list for others.

### **Suggested practices**

#### **1 Seven gestures and sensing the stillness of the physical body**

Make contact with the stillness. Taste it, drink it, savor it.

#### **2 Extending Energy from *Joy of Being* (J 220 - 224)**

Where in the body is experience? Are there feelings anywhere? *Feel them more*. How do you do that? By entering them, following them or expanding them, or how do you do that?

### **3 Energy Freely Rising (J 236)**

Imagine the experience in the body. The feelings and sensations expand the physical body, as if they gently overflow in the space surrounding the body. You may like to alternate these two exercises: J 220, then J 236, then return to J 220, followed by J 236, and so on. Decide beforehand how you are going to do them and how many times (once each, three times?).

### **4 Inner Clarity (SM chapter 1)**

How can you get back in touch with your real self? What can you do to become genuinely free? How can you discover and expand your Kum? We can begin to discover our inner nature by simply acknowledging the activity of experience within the body. Sit still, sense the stillness of the physical body, let the breath begin to find its rhythm, and turn your senses inward, as if you can feel with the body (and not with your mental focus) what is happening inside. Now, call to mind a dear person, either from your present life or deceased. When you hear the name, or retrieve a memory, where in the body do you notice a surge of feelings? Where in the body do you notice a new experience evoked by, say, remembering your grandmother? Let's say you experience some energy in the upper chest; acknowledge this new experience by welcoming it. In the traditional teachings, the advice to maintain your inner freedom is to "not accept/not reject" experience that comes your way. In this practice, neither become it nor push it aside, but acknowledge it by saying "welcome" or "hi, there you are". This way, you do not become this new experience or identify with it. Your acknowledgment comes from another place than the localized feelings.

You begin to get two experiences: the localized, newly energized place, and your being from which you acknowledge the new feelings. This is the beginning of expanding your Kum. By acknowledging the new feelings from this neutral place, you begin to regain the freedom of your being – the very first beginning. The location with new feelings – for example, the upper chest – will change. Either another feeling emerges in the same place or in a totally different area of the body altogether. Again, acknowledge it, welcome it. Continue this practice for 10 minutes, and whenever your being deepens, the part of you from which you acknowledged new experience in the body will strengthen it. Your Kum is awakening.

When you begin to observe how each word, name or memory brings up experience within your body, you can discover how much you have held in, locked up your feelings by associating yourself with the newly emerging experiences and identifying with them. Every time we do that, we lose our ground. We are prone to emotions, and our true nature has temporarily been covered over. By neutrally acknowledging these feelings, you allow the energy that has been held within to release, as your true self finally has the room to emerge.



### **Suggestions for during the day, separate from practice time**

- Focus on the activity of walking. Focus and moving are one.
- Whenever you enter a place, can you feel the atmosphere? Is it heavy, bubbly, flat, contracted, light, open or...? Feel it, then add the second part of the practice: Can you, alone or with others present, elevate the atmosphere to a higher-frequency, lighter atmosphere? Can you bring the energy up?

### **Suggested readings**

*Gesture of Balance*, “Expanding Feeling” chapter (pp. 47-53)

*Openness Mind*, “Opening to Feeling” chapter (pp. 44-49)



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