



Kum Nye in Daily Life

Lesson 1: Continuity

When you finish your Kum Nye practice and get up, don't you feel quite different than before you started? Aren't you just feeling better? Isn't it true that you are more open to other people and to what needs to be done? Something happens when we do Kum Nye. Something is happening to us.

Usually, Kum Nye-ers have more energy compared to others. For example, when setting up a party or family reunion, people often moan and groan about the work that needs to be done but the Kum Nye-er seems to have energy to finish things late into the night. A good Kum Nye practitioner is less likely to hold on to superficial conflicts; it is easier to start up again without carrying a grudge. Especially during retreats, people become quite happy and even feel love for other people and objects more strongly than before.

Of course, we would like to be able to carry these feelings into daily life. After a ten-day retreat, the feelings usually last for two or three months and then begin to subside. Often people stop practicing Kum Nye after a retreat because they feel so good. They find they are a little disappointed, in themselves and even in Kum Nye because the experience doesn't sustain. Before trying to explain the theory of why that is so, let's appreciate for a moment what Kum Nye is doing to us.

This program will give suggestions on how to sustain and build up the feeling of inner wholeness and positive outlook that results from Kum Nye practice. It would be easy to come up with a list of things we should or should not do but over the past years we are not even doing them ourselves. Even the best suggestions don't seem to click in a way that they become second nature in our lives like brushing our teeth or combing our hair. Our personal hygiene, learned from a very young age is just part of our daily routine but having learned Kum

Nye much later in life, there is already a fabric of energy patterns, with blockages and entanglements in place. Even the best intention is not capable to break these ingrained tendencies. That is until you take ownership of Kum Nye.

Using Kum Nye as a method or technique helps with superficial tension. We relax some, feel a little better, and are appreciative of the quick results. During retreats, we go much deeper and work with blockages in the channels, touch layers of Kun gZhi, and begin to contact the knots in the chakras. Now we are really re-engineering the system. Our breath will be different, our body more flexible and our mind softer. Even if you take a three-month Kum Nye retreat, the effects will slip away if the mechanism of the fabric of life is not changed. This is what we will endeavor to do in Kum Nye in Daily Life.

The shift from treating Kum Nye as a method or technique to owning Kum Nye is a matter of falling in love and taking ownership of Kum Nye's body of knowledge. Kum Nye teachers will probably agree that leading a Kum Nye session requires going deeper and that something seems to be carrying over in their lives, simply because they are leading. Yet even Kum Nye teachers seem to reach a plateau where they stop asking questions, are less inclined to continue to learn, and they too tend to limit their teaching to a fifteen minute preparation of which exercises to do in the class. How can we merge with Kum Nye in a way that Kum Nye is like an ongoing partner? How do we contact the source of Kum Nye?

When you do this Level 10 of eKum Nye, you obviously have a strong connection with Kum Nye. Maybe all that is needed besides doing Kum Nye is to let Kum Nye come to you. The words Kum and Nye, a title of an exercise, a sentence or paragraph in a book, need a place in your mind. How is it that you never forget the name of your child or the whereabouts of your dog or cat? How is it possible that you don't forget what you love? It could simply be because you gave it a place in your mind and heart. It found a home in you, in your Kum, and now you will never forget it.

Practicing Kum Nye works but what may cause the switch to living Kum Nye in your daily life is by letting Kum Nye come inside you. Copy a paragraph and learn the names and the numbers of the exercises. Let there be no distance between you and Kum Nye. In the traditional teaching this would be a form of Guru Yoga but this practice is usually limited to the teacher. Yet the guru can also be a teaching, a discipline or even the nature of mind. Kum Nye brings us in contact with the reality of our nature. What an ally! What a friend! Kum Nye may not even leave you even when you are alone or in the final stages of your life.

In this program, we will look at all kinds of situations in our lives and see how we can introduce Kum Nye into them. However, until you fall in love with Kum Nye, you do need to have a discipline of practicing, and you do need to be able to articulate why you do Kum Nye. During a retreat, sometimes the question is asked, “Why are you doing Kum Nye?” Quite often the student is not able to answer that question and in fact becomes kind of bothered by such an obvious request. But to ourselves and to whoever also practices Kum Nye, we should be able to articulate our connection with Kum Nye.

You do not need to be able to talk about Kum Nye with people who don't know about it because, if they listen, they likely compare it with something else. Since you may not know what they're comparing it to, such a conversation is useless. However, amongst ourselves, we need to be able to stand up and say, “I'm doing Kum Nye because...” We need to be able to articulate what we stand for.

At some point, like many of you have already done, you will also be able to stand up and say, “I'm committed to Kum Nye. The Kum Nye lineage can depend on me. I will be a torch bearer of Kum Nye.” The deeper the love, the more simple the gestures of appreciation appear, and the more Kum Nye will become an ongoing process. Ultimately it may only be deep fear or great love that can alter the energetic system of the fabric of life's energies. Each of us is a manifestation of life's energies. There is a system to it, and it is entirely energetic. Through a wake up call or a deep appreciation can that be intrinsically altered.

In our view the more you know about the theory of Kum Nye, the deeper your practice will become and the more likely your love for Kum Nye will be sparked. Do not shy away from the theory. Do not present yourself as a practitioner who focuses on experience only. The theory provides the structure for life's energies to freely flow through you instead of through a pre-arranged, habitual pathway. New pathways open up, for the Kum and the Nye to unfold. The theory is like a GPS of the journey of your practice.

Many of us worked with the first Kum Nye book – *Kum Nye, a Tibetan Yoga* for many, many years before *Joy of Being* was published. Every time that we read a paragraph we discovered something new that we hadn't seen before. One could explain this by saying that the text is multi-layered but it is maybe more appropriate to consider the possibility that when you read with real interest that you actually enter a tradition that is alive. By reading the text, the words become like a door and urged by your interest, you enter into the stream of Kum Nye's body of knowledge.

The word Kum represents your manifestation, who you really are, whether you know it or not, whether you consciously operate from that basis or not. Even in your small mindedness when the experience of Kum is very tiny, your “real” Kum remains unadulterated. The teachings on Samantabhadra give us a theoretical insight into the reality and the qualities of our Kum – the optimal Kum contains 'all and everything'. The word Nye continues to have more meanings, but in this description of Kum, the activity of Nye refers to gathering all life’s energies and let them flow, interact, stimulate one another, waking up Kum! At heart Kum Nye points to the act of restoring the natural continuum of life, with all its dimensions including past, present, and future through the body and in the body.

What is unique about Kum Nye is that we restore our natural aliveness, the experience of our true nature *through the body*. The more interested you are in the body, not its beauty but its fabulous mechanism and container of actually all and everything, the easier it will be to fall in love with Kum Nye. If we let the theory and practice of Kum Nye restore the reality of our natural being, only then can we agree with Longchenpa's insight when he says, “If you practice what is right, your life will unfold as it should...”(*Now that I come to die* – Dharma Publishing)

It is tempting to come with a list of ideas. But our lives are already full and demanding. This program cannot become another demand on you. We will only succeed if it can become a love affair with Kum Nye and then Kum Nye will naturally become a part of our daily life.



Main Theme

Initially the purpose of Kum Nye practice is to activate the flow of feeling or life’s energies in the body, integrating body, breath, and mind, and circulating their united stream. Differently put, Kum Nye restores life’s continuity in us. Because of the way that we use our mind and body, how we move and act, and how we think, as exemplified in the irregular patterns of our breathing, life’s stream is not continuously flowing through us; it starts and stops, or it is even being held and turned into superficial tension, blockages in the energy channels or knots in the chakras. Later on in the program we will discuss many different situations in life and see how to sustain a continuity of experience. But for now, let’s realize that there are two main ingredients needed when we are practicing Kum Nye: First, we need to be **still** or at least **slowing down**. Secondly, what is being **held begins to melt**.

The sole purpose of Kum Nye is to restore continuity (this is one of the meanings of the word Tantra). Of course, this ideal begins to happen as soon as we sit still, become aware of our breath, and do slow bodily movements or hold poses, enabling tension to release and aided by the energy of our breath, be restored to its natural flowing quality.

Remember that making time to be still is crucial for the continuity of life's energies to either start up again or to mellow down some. When we sit still and focus on the slow movements of body and breath, our whole system begins to unwind. We may not enjoy the feelings when blockages first begin to be released but within a short span of time anyone will feel more *whole*. The key ingredients are stillness, slow movements, and holding poses to activating the flow of feeling for restoring life's natural continuity in us. Body and mind join in the flow of breath with its coming in, going out, expanding and condensing, the mind-body unit begins to be traveling in waves – continuing.

Difficulties in sustaining the experience of Kum Nye in Daily Life in a nutshell:

- Stillness – We hardly ever sit still and catch our breath.
- Body and mind are not integrated – The body moves but mind tends to be preoccupied with where we came from or where we are going.
- Breath – Our irregular, shallow breathing patterns reflect that body and mind are not together because when they do join, the breath turns from being irregular and physical to smooth, internal, and maybe even hardly noticeable. When the breath almost disappears, there is an inner calm in our experience, and this signals that body and mind are together.
- Senses – When we practice Kum Nye, we turn the senses inward and endeavor to feel, see, hear, smell, and certainly taste the quality of experience and specifically feelings. Our senses are becoming two-way channels and more neutral. Technically speaking, the senses functioning with duality become non-dual, and we will feel increasingly whole and complete. But in daily life the senses tend to operate one way: outward.



Practice Time

In this lesson, we will pay attention to how to better practice so that the benefits of Kum Nye go deeper and last longer.

- Open Eyes – the first two Kum Nye books suggest that we practice with soft, half open eyes. For years, many of us have practiced and even taught classes with closed eyes. Although there are times when it is helpful to have the eyes closed to regroup the senses when we have just sat down. When you do a visualization practice you may also want to start with having your eyes closed. But, after a short while, we all need to practice with eyes soft, half open, no energy going outwards through the eyes. When you practice with closed eyes you may facilitate the senses to turn inward but you are also isolating yourself and creating a boarder between inner and outer that in fact does not exist. If you have always been practicing with eyes closed, it is no surprise that you cannot sustain the Kum Nye experience very long because once you open your eyes, you are likely to disconnect from your inner experience and focus more on the outer. For many people this has been a main reason why the transition from a retreat to daily life has been so great. Keep the eyes open during your practice and the Kum Nye experience will unite inner and outer.
- Body-awareness – Remain in contact with the body during your practice. When the mind begins to drift, make your body awareness stronger. Hold the pose longer. Make the movements slower so that your awareness can remain within, without drifting away.
- Mindfulness of feeling – Direct your attention to the experience *in* the body and away from distracting thoughts; become expert in opening, entering, accumulating and expanding feelings.
- Be very conscious of transitions. Kum Nye knows of no transitions, right? It is about continuity. Your experience does not last because there is no continuity during practice. There are gaps in your experience. Even when we do the exercise three times, there are gaps between each one. Try to open the gaps by staying with the transition, *feeling* the space and the time in between. In Kum Nye the transitions are equally important as the actual movements or poses themselves. In daily life, we begin something, we forget to end the experience, and we start something else again, causing many gaps with experiencing. These gaps are like black holes which tensions are not being

released and in which the wholesome feelings get lost. Opening the gaps diminishes the loss of Kum Nye experience.

As you practice Kum Nye, make sure that there are no transitions, no beginnings and endings, that you move from one pose to the next, from sitting still to making movements. You do not start and end something. Every part of the exercise builds on what is already happening. Your Kum Nye practice is one long exercise without gaps in awareness.

Gaps in awareness suck your energy, your good experiences, and even your insights. The more frequent and the heavier the gaps in your awareness, the shorter the experience of Kum Nye will last. Therefore, in your practice, let there be no stoppages as if the whole 30 or 60 minutes is one continuous practice.

It is recommended to do the exercise # 22 Flying for at least twenty minutes and emphasize your practice in the following manner:

1. Firstly, focus 5-10 minutes on the arms moving. Stay with the movement, nothing else.
2. Then, become aware of breathing. For the next 5-10 minutes let the breathing and the 'flying' movements join. Your experience will last as long as your movements and breath are united.
3. After you are good at the first two parts, make a shift. Do not focus on the movements and the breath because they should already be together. But instead, focus, for the next 5-10 minutes, on the space that your arms are moving through. First the fingertips of one hand, then the whole arm, then the fingertips of the other hand and arm. Practice moving through space without skipping being aware of any section of space. No space escapes you; you are traveling completely through every miniscule distance in space with fewer and fewer gaps in awareness of space. The result will be that awareness and space become identical.
4. This combination of movement, breathing, and space-awareness being unified will probably ensure optimal Kum Nye experience. Try to extend the practice to 30 minutes a session and become really good at it. In our teachings if you enjoy it, you are probably learning it.



Daily Life

It is imperative to find some moments of *doing nothing*. Whenever we have given programs to organizations and businesses, we have always included three times five minutes a day of doing nothing. The result was usually the same: people were very clear and could describe in detail why they did not have time to practice.

Can you imagine that we cannot control our lives to the extent that we cannot find five minutes a day for ourselves to do nothing? Maybe it is fair to say that we come from stillness and we will return to stillness. This is our natural habitat it is the fabric that Kum is made of. Let us become very acquainted with stillness, of doing nothing.

Stillness in Daily Life – Find a moment of complete stillness a few times a day. It is important to not move. Of course at first it is likely that the head will continue to be active. If you focus on the stillness of the physical body a major shift will take place. First sit completely still, do not move. Secondly, sense the stillness of the physical body. Third, enjoy the feelings that come from the stillness – stillness has a feeling to it. Contact it, float in it. Fourth, become aware that the separation between internal and external experiences is beginning to dissolve – you will find yourself living in one space, uniting inner and outer. These few moments of complete physical stillness, of not doing anything, might be best done with the eyes closed. At the end of the few minutes, gently open your eyes and invite the light into yourself.

In Kum Nye terms, the stillness is essential for dormant areas to get the chance to emerge and for active areas to slow down. By experiencing your stillness, by feeling it, the breath by itself will begin to find its natural rhythm and circulate the emerging feelings within the body. Body and mind make contact with one another and you will feel refreshed. Please make sure that you have some absolutely still moments throughout the day where you just feel the stillness and yourself in the great expanse of the universe.



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