

BE HERE WELL

# Session Four

## Nervous System & Breathing

# Agenda



- Questions & Check-In
- Guided Practices
- Autonomic nervous system
- Yin / yang balance
- Heart rate variability
- Vagus nerve
- Next Steps

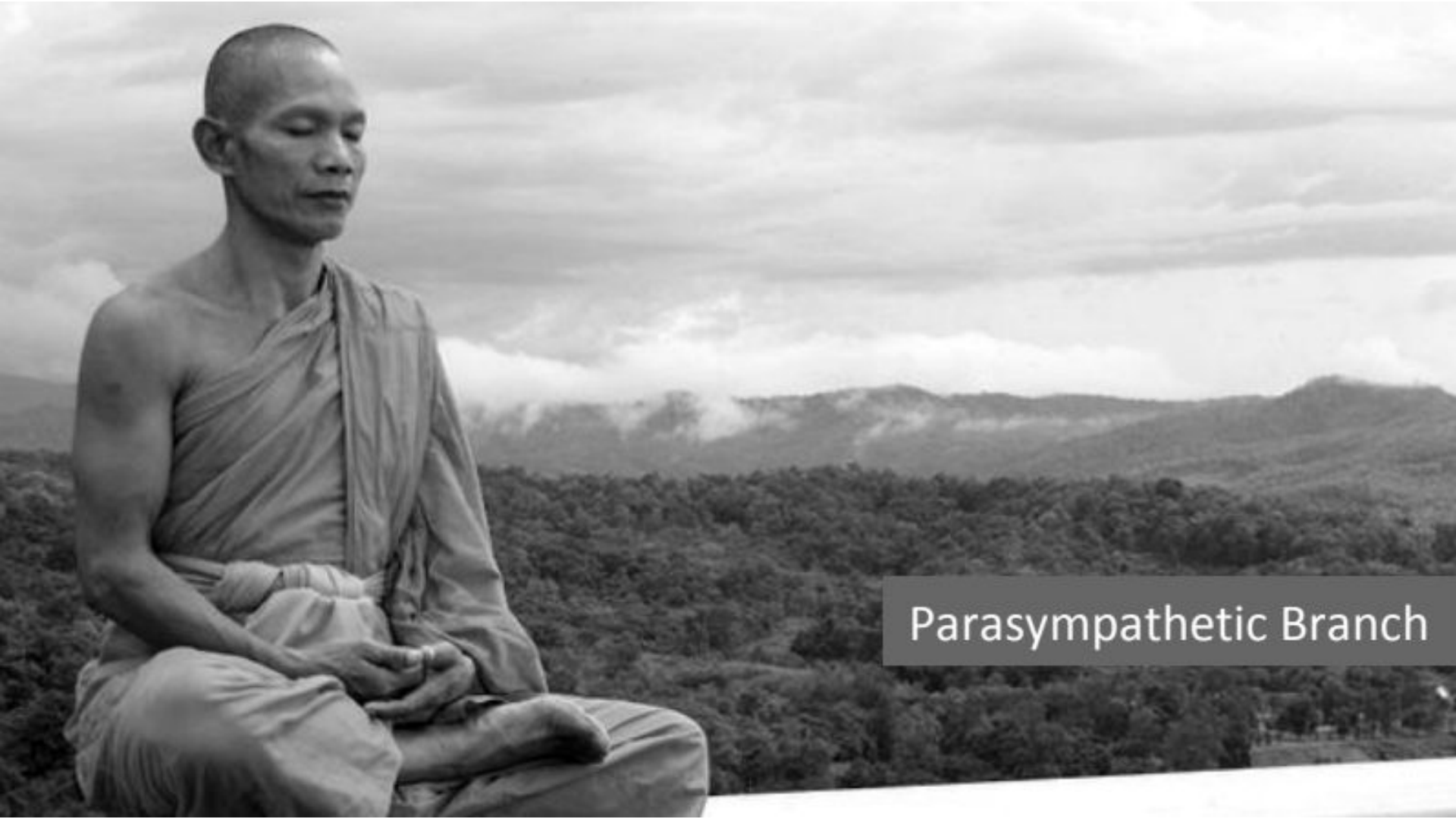
# Guided Practices

- **Review Bellows Breath**
- Bellows Breathing, 3-5 Rounds Bellows x10

# Autonomic Nervous System

- Usually automatic
- Controls heart rate, digestion, respiratory rate, pupillary response, urination, and sexual arousal
- Two branches: sympathetic & parasympathetic





Parasympathetic Branch

# Parasympathetic “Rest & Digest”

- Increase blood flow to stomach and GI tract
- Stimulation of peristalsis, urination, and salivary glands
- Decrease in heart rate
- Pupil normalization for shorter-range vision
- Sexual arousal

Sympathetic Branch





# Sympathetic “Fight or Flight” Response

- Digestion / elimination stop
- Blood goes to muscles and lungs, as much as 12x more
- Epinephrine (adrenaline) goes up
- Heart rate increases
- Pupils dilate for better long-distance vision
- Sexual orgasm

# Yin / Yang Balance

- Inhale: strength, brace, expansion, sympathetic response
- Exhale: opening, relaxation, contraction, parasympathetic response
- Inhale for length and strength
- Exhales for opening and release
- Inhale = yang/sun/day/heat
- Exhale = yin/moon/night/cool





Heart Rate Variability

# Heart Rate Variability

- Measures beat-to-beat change
- Steady rate / low variability = unhealthy
- High variability = healthy, toned nervous system
- Inhale = should trigger an increase in your heart rate
- Exhale = should reduce heart rate
- Standard heart rate monitors usually measure average
- Variability is a nervous system measurement

# Vagus Nerve

- 10th cranial nerve, longest of autonomic nervous system
- Technically a pair of nerves but referred to as singular
- “Vagabond” nerve as little branches go everywhere
- Largely responsible for the parasympathetic response
- Controls heart, lungs & digestive tract



# Breathing & Vagus Nerve

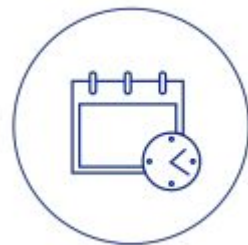
- Vagus nerve passes through the opening of the diaphragm
- Stimulated by deep breathing
- Also stimulated by humming and singing
- Breathing promotes vagal tone
- High vagal tone = responsiveness to environment, ability to adapt

# Guided Practices

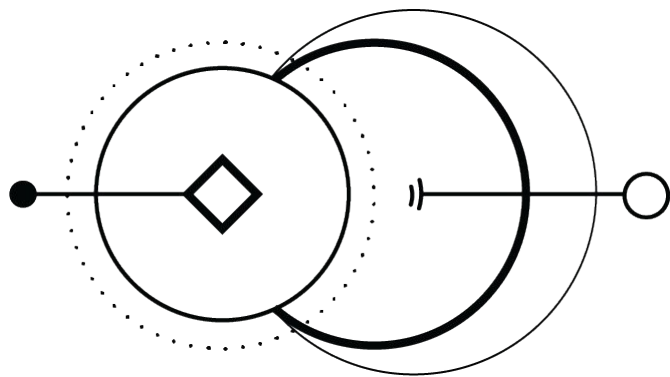
- **Review Alternate Nostril Breathing, 4:4**
- Alternate Nostril x 10 rounds, (w/ocean breath)
- **Review Box Breathing**
- 4x4x4x4 Box Breathing, x 10 rounds (sitting)

# Daily Regime

- 15 minutes, daily:
  - Morning: 5 mins Coffee Breathing
  - Midday / As Needed: 5 mins Water Breathing
  - Before Bed: 5 mins Whiskey Breathing
- Extra breathing therapeutically as needed
- Breath awareness throughout the day







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