



BLISSOLOGY SOMATICS + SEQUENCING 2021 GUIDE TO COURSE VIDEOS

Timeline: 8th Feb - 12th March

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1. Welcome to this course.

Here's how this course fits in with other modules.

What Blissology is about.

Eoin's background and why sequencing and teaching with feeling matters

What I'm thinking about when I'm making sequences?

These elements are in your **Blissology Yoga Sequencing Planner**

2. Vinyasa Yoga as Playlists.

Yoga poses are like Notes.

Sequences are like Songs.

The whole class is like a Playlist.

There is an "Energy Arch" to Playlists and Yoga Classes.

Your job is to master this energy.

3. Lower the Bar: Remove the Pressure to Create Great Sequences.

OK, I'm willing to bet that we all love being in a class with great sequencing. We all want to create great sequences. But where do we start?

What if I told you the first step to any creative process is this: **Relax.**

"Relax, how can I relax? There are so many teachers in my studio who have amazing sequences. My instagram is flooded with time lapses of funky flows made by people with hundreds of thousands of followers. How do I not get left behind when everyone else is so damn creative?"

However, the starting place is to not get caught in those thought loops. This pressure to be creative only makes you less creative.

So, relax.

The first trick to creating great sequences is to remove the pressure on yourself to create great sequences!

How do I not get into Negative Thought Loops?

Remember one of our Key Blissology Mantras: **"Nothing to Prove, Everything to Share."**

You have to step out of the field of "greater than and less than" that most people get stuck in. Step out of the realm of comparison.

As you will hear me say over and over again, stay connected to the "tether of feeling." Just explore movement through the lens of what feels good **TO YOU**. Don't worry about how it feels to others initially. And definitely don't feel like it has to be a creative masterpiece right from the start.

Remember Simple is Good:

Someone (Sarah) wrote in the comments for this course: "I just fall back on Warrior 2 to triangle." Don't stress about that. You don't always have to reinvent the wheel. Most of us have familiarity with the Yoga Honey Routine which is a basic, straight forward routine. It's not the most creative flow of all time.

But it feels good to people. 90 percent of what matters is how you share your class. **Be in your delight.** Even if poses are simple, we will soon share more tools to make sure that they are **sensual and simple, not dry and simple.** Sometimes the way we connect to the breath or move our hands makes the difference, not the degree of our creativity.

Share recipes you love with others.

Approach designing sequences like you would approach hosting a dinner party

When you are hosting a dinner party, do you feel pressure to have people like your food?

This is the head and heart space we need to occupy

I need to design sequences that feel good to me **and simply share them**

Lower your pressure. You don't have to make the most creative sequences.

We will help you get embodied to open up to your intuition more

Don't worry, we won't leave the conversation here, in that you just need to do simple poses with feeling and to lower your pressure. A large part of Somatics and Sequencing is about the process of getting in touch with feeling. From connection to feeling emerges increased intuition. From intuition comes creativity.

Especially towards the last weeks of this course, we will shift our emphasis here. In the meanwhile, know that when I am creating sequences, I start by relaxing and not forcing the creative process. Sometimes it comes and sometimes it doesn't.

Stick with these key takeaways for now:

When teaching I commit to relaxing into my greatness. I will do it with Love and the right intention. I don't have to teach anything... **I GET TO share something that I Love!**

Lower the bar. Remove the Pressure to create great sequences

4. Intention and Feeling

Every class needs to start with one question: What feeling do you want to share?

We always need to start with Intention. Too many yoga teachers aren't aware of this so their classes tend to lack direction.

The sequences that you build need to be grounded in intention.

Make a commitment to always know what the feeling you want people to have at the end of this practice is.

How to work with feelings in a class:

Simply, name three adjectives that you want people to feel in your class. Keep checking in with people often. Are you leading towards this intention or drifting further away.

As we say often in Blissology, **"Yoga is a Feeling and not just a Shape."** In the same way, "yoga sequences are about sharing a feeling and not just a bunch of poses strung together."

Knowing the feeling you are guiding your practice towards is the rudder that will help steer you in the right direction. It will shape what poses you chose to include as well as the way you teach.

Another way of looking at this question is the opposite of what do you want people to feel: What do you NOT want people to feel?

What needs to be released?

Eg: I don't want to feel tension, but I want to feel open and expanded.

I don't want to feel so scattered, I need grounding, etc.

5. How Much Exercise vs Relaxation

I believe that the Main factor that shapes modern yoga is this this question: How much exercise in the practice vs relaxation do I want this class to be?

These approaches seem to be more and more polarized every year. In modern yoga, a practice tends to be either all Exercise or it's all Relaxation. Classes seem to be either Yin, fold over and stretch right from the first moment with no standing poses or hot, sweaty Vinyasa that seem more focused on your yoga butt than Capital "Y" Yoga.

Getting exercise in yoga isn't bad. It is possible to have balanced classes that have a degree of both. It is also possible to have classes that are chill the whole way through. What's concerning to me is when so many classes are all about exercise without devoting the proper amount of skill or time to restoring calm. This calmness is essential to yoga and can't be missed.

With this in mind let us break down a few Pros and Cons to classes that become imbalanced on the side of Exercise or Relaxation.

The Shadow side of an Exercise focus

We live in a culture where our nervous system is over-stimulated. Our eye, ears and other senses are overloaded. Our phones keep us switched on and we are like cyborgs - part human, part google.

Our Nervous systems were not made for this much stimulation. This is why we should always include deep relaxation in every class.

When we are too focused on exercise only, people in the class tend to be too concerned about "achieving" the perfect pose. Too many people are stuck wondering, "how does this look?"

Too much focus on exercise vs calming pulls us away from the big Blissology Question: "How does this FEEL?" We make shapes with no feeling.

We need to feel more as a culture... We are too caught up with how things look. We need to bring our culture back so that health starts with how we feel and not how we look in the mirror. This will make the practice more nourishing and healing.

The bottom line is, it's hard to heal when you can't feel.

The shadow side of only calming yoga with no exercise

The shadow side of doing only calming yoga is that, well, we miss exercise. Physical exercise, putting your body under beneficial stress (*Eustress*) is essential to health. Poses that make us resist gravity help to maintain the muscle tone and bone density that age strips away from us.

To get unstuck from negative thoughts sometimes we need to move our bodies. Have you ever tried to meditate after an argument or before a big presentation at work? It hard as heck. You can try to still your mind and relax your body all you want, but those waves of *chitta-vritti* chatter keep coming. Sometimes, the movement of even something as simple as a sun salutation shifts our focus. Unlike starting class slouched over in butterfly pose, it's physically demanding so we don't have time to focus on our problems. It's what my friend Erich Schiffman calls, a "beneficial distraction."

There is a Middle Ground

There is a great way to include both the possibility of classes that balance the benefits of exercise with calmness. There is a skill to this and we will present these tools more as the course progresses.

6. Tools for Heating and Calming in Vinyasa Yoga

Heating poses aren't bad.

The question is: **Are the poses I choose taken me towards or away from the feeling I want to leave?**

It is important to make sure we don't get overtaken with the focus on exercise thought.

It's important to not lose the tether of feeling in our class.

Let's explore the techniques for creating either heating or calming in a yoga practice.

Essentially the two main tools we work with are **Tempo and Resisting Gravity**.

As a refresher, In our Blissology Alignment system we have a system of **"Yoga Taxonomy."**

We categorize poses into "Families" according the part of the body we want to open up. Then, again like in taxonomy, we have a genus.

A genus means a change in our shape relative to gravity. For example, standing pose genus, seated or kneeling genus, hand balancing genus, and so on (see the Align Your Yoga course for more).

What is important relative to creating more heat or calmness is that within one family of poses changing the genus will change the effect.

For example, Firefly (*Titibhasana*) and Seated Wide Leg Forward Fold (*Upavista Konasana*) are the same pose as far as what part of the body they stretch. However, one requires more energy to resist gravity so it's more heating.

The simple sequencing skill we can extrapolate from this is: **If you want to create more heat, make people resist gravity.**

The reverse holds true, as well: If you want to calm people down, don't use so many "gravity-resisting" poses.

For me, for a Quiet Mind class, I don't want many "gravity-resisting" poses.

The Second Factor is Tempo

Tempo is the next tool that guides the degree of calming or heating in our practice.

If I increase the speed (tempo) at which the poses arrive in the sequence, I may make the practice more "aerobic" and physically strenuous. However, it will never be as calming. You need to set the dial for what you are trying to achieve. This is why Intention and Feeling matter, by the way. It will shape these types of decisions.

Injuries:

On a side note. Injured people always need a slower tempo. They need to place their bones more carefully into poses

Also, in Blissology. We require 2-3 breaths to set up for each pose in order to get the DUO Lines working properly. We will address this later in the course but I wanted to introduce this idea now.

In conclusion:

Think of the Feeling you want to leave as a "Spell" you are putting on people (including yourself.) Use tempo and resistance to gravity to shape that magical "Spell" of the feeling you want to leave.

7. The Gunas and Sequencing

In Blissology, we like to explore the **Three Gunas** through the Lens of Your Nervous System

The three gunas are *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*.

1. Rajas is Stimulating

In Modern Culture, we have a lot of Stimulation; phones, technology, travel, meetings, busy-ness, coffee and even our exercise is driven by fitbits that make sure we are receiving our marching orders.

This is Rajasic Energy and it is Addictive

We associate the High Alert State of Rajas with Bliss

A lot of Sequencing is about managing Rajasic Energy

Letting people experience some Rajas is good.

But it's a skill to bring them back down

2. The next Guna is Tamas which is Burn-Out, often from too much stimulation. We disconnect from our inner source of light.

3. Sattva is calm, peaceful, introverted energy. It refills our energy reserves and plugs us back in to a power greater than us.

Contrasting Sattva and Rajas from a Blissology Perspective

Rajas is Sympathetic "Fight or Flight" Tone

Sattva is Parasympathetic Nervous System Tone

The goal is always to bring people to Sattva.

The beginning and the end start with Sattva.

Without Sattva, Yoga is just calisthenics.