



Josefin Wikstrom & James Fox: Prison Yoga Project - Freedom From The Inside



Josefin Wikström and James Fox M.A are the program directors and founders of the Prison Yoga Project (PYP). Josefin is a licensed Mindful Yoga therapist, with extensive training in trauma therapy and has co-created Krimyoga: an evidence-based prison yoga program. James is a practitioner and teacher of yoga and mindfulness meditation, who's been trained in restorative justice principles and practices. Join us to amplify your vision of our justice system and the efforts being made with Yoga towards a better society.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: Stay in your body, stay with your breath and that will always bring you back home.

The Role of the Facilitator: Horizontality For a Learning-Teaching Process

- **Facilitator:** A person who facilitates a process (of healing in this case) where everyone meets each other where they are. Everybody teaches and learns.
- This is a way to meet others on an equal level, as human beings, with dignity and empathy.

Foundational Training:

- **Prison systems today are the most ill-equipped mental health institutions in the world.**
- An incarcerated environment concentrates diverse factors of inequality and inequity: economic, social, racial, etc.
- **Restorative justice:** In contrast to a retributive or punitive justice, whose goal is to punish, restorative justice aims to highlight that harm has been caused in both victim and perpetrator (*hurt people hurt people*).
- **Transformative justice:** This kind of justice tries to consolidate a sense of responsibility, for the harm that the perpetrator caused (developing more empathy), and the harm caused by society and its institutions by setting the conditions that brought up those harmful behaviors.
- **Trauma:** It can be said that prisons work with the most trauma-exposed populations in the world: 99% of incarcerated people have an adverse childhood background. Looking at epigenetics and socio-cultural phenomena can also help to explain their vulnerability.
- **Trauma on simmer:** There is multilayered trauma in each individual that can be exacerbated in a confined environment where stress can't be discharged in a healthy manner or in a safe community.
- **Trauma is held inside the body. For trauma rehabilitation, embodiment is crucial.**
- Doing yoga has shown improvement in trauma signs/symptoms with anxiety and depression reduction and improvement in a sense of belonging and empathy.

Resources

- ❖ **Books:** *Yoga: a path for healing and recovery (2010); Freedom from the inside (in process of being published)*
- ❖ **Website:** prisonyoga.org
- ❖ **References:** Study: Yoga in correctional settings (largest randomized research study in the world for prison environments)



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