

LESS is MORE:

YOGA TEACHING FOR ME AND C.F.S.

Dedicated to my friends Sarah + Abi, my yoga campus classmates + all others with lived experience of ME/CFS

This is what it feels like to be one of the 0.25m people in the UK with ME or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS).

Imagine having flu...

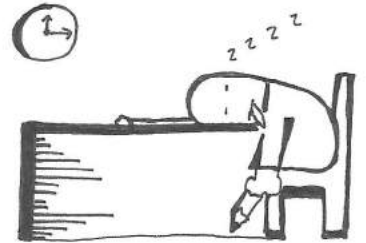


and being forced to run a marathon...

No normal marathon. A marathon through treacle where your limbs don't want to move...



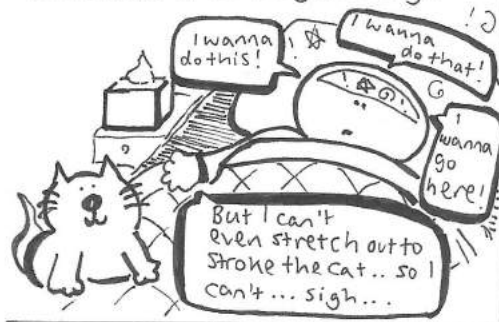
There is still a 3-hour exam to sit



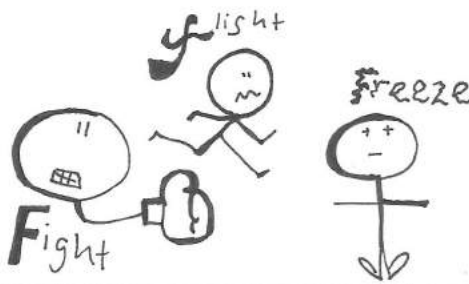
And an all-nighter to pull



The physical exhaustion is total, but the mind is fast and busy. Tired but wired. An agitated mind locked into a lethargic body.



Those with ME/CFS will have a dominant sympathetic nervous system, so will be maintaining one of these responses



The sympathetic dominant breath



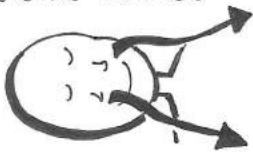
The sympathetic dominant mind



Yoga can be beneficial in many ways.

THE YOGA BREATH

① Focus on the EXHALE



② Sound can be a great way to lengthen the exhale



③ Encourage diaphragmatic breathing through letting the hands rest on the lower ribs and feel for movement



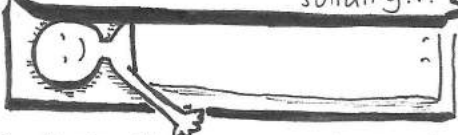
④ Introduce small movements linked to the breath to calm, soothe, relieve and to undo patterns.

GROUNDING

Trauma may be a reason why people are in their sympathetic nervous systems, so classes need to be as gentle, safe and GROUND(ED) as possible.



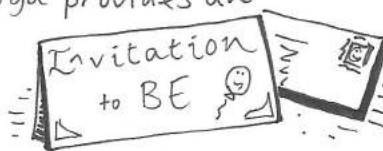
Feel the weight of the body sinking into the floor. Feel its solidity...



For those with the energy to stand, there is potential to work with the feet to ground. Growing roots. Feeling connected to the floor.

MIND CALMING

Unlike the crazy, competitive outside world with its emphasis on doing, achieving + striving, yoga provides an



A place to get away from the busyness of the mind + drop into the body.

As teachers, we create this invitation with

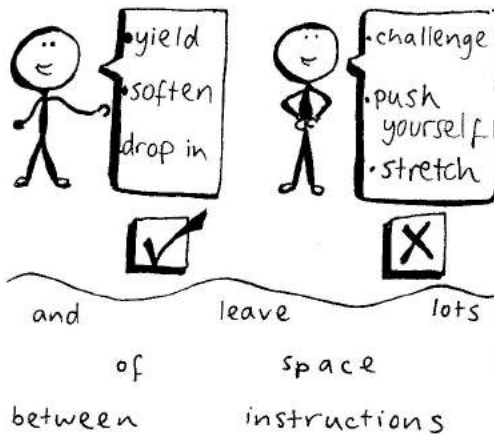
SPACE

and



SLOWNESS

Be conscious of our language

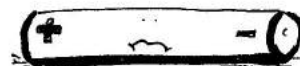


LESS IS MORE

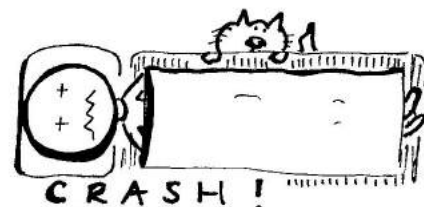
Sometimes, a little energy comes back and when it does there is a tendency to want to do everything



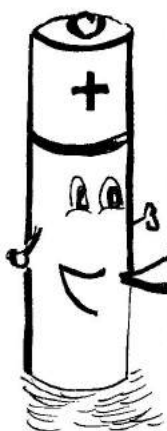
Except, the energy battery is in deficit



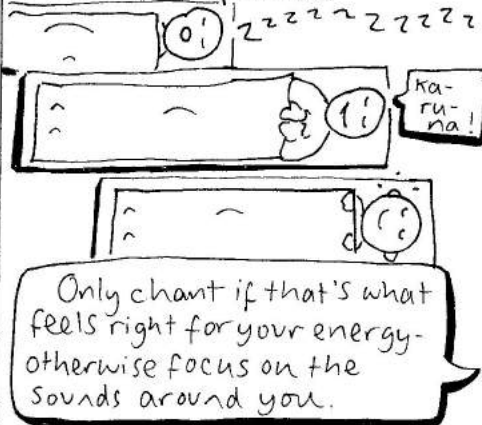
So, three days later, true to the '3-day rule'.



To keep students' energy batteries nicely topped up, remind them that if they feel like doing 20mins of practice, to do 10 mins, instead!



Give permission for everything in class to be optional



Being busy is a way not to be with the body or symptoms. Slowing down allows us to hear the body deeply when it says "no".



REFRAMING

It's easy to get caught up in the identity of an illness



Identify with the ever-present and unchanging inside ourselves as health states come and go



Detach from symptoms and observe them with witness consciousness



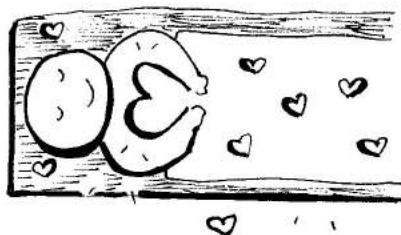
COMPASSION

Keep on coming back to the self + what's true with kindness



A nice quote:

"Peace is this moment without judgment." J. HUNT



Emphasise to students that just through being they are **ENOUGH**

A silent mantra with hand-placing to conclude with

