



WELCOME TO THE CACAO-POWERED FACILITATOR 10-WEEK COURSE!

All of you are now in the private Facebook group for the course, and that will be the primary place of engagement between classes. Please keep posts in the group related to the course and our work together. Once the group is complete I'll also send a list of email contacts so you have that way to reach each other.

THE COURSE WILL CENTER AROUND THREE PRINCIPLES:

- Philosophy
- Self-Development
- Practice

THE SOUL LIFT CACAO APPROACH TO CACAO WORK:

1. Intention
2. Medicine
3. Embodiment
4. Inter-Action
5. Integration

THE BASIC WEEKLY PLAN (subject to change):

- 1) Orientation + What is facilitation and where is it heading?
- 2) How self-responsible communication makes us better cacao facilitators
- 3) Building congruence and confidence to strengthen professional identity as a cacao worker
- 4) Visioning, marketing, and promotion for cacao experiences
- 5) How to build strong and safe containers for cacao work in the real world and online
- 6) Models of transformational experience (and how this applies to cacao journeys)
- 7) Consent and trauma awareness in the context of cacao work
- 8) Cacao in the context of holistic wellness and plant medicine work
- 9) Handling topics of ethics and cultural appropriation
- 10) Integration: putting the pieces together

EACH CLASS COULD BE:

50% teaching

25% Q&A

25% process work if someone has a blockage/stuckness

*This could change from class to class depending on what's needed

ALSO! Because there's so much to cover in this course and I know our time will pass quickly, I've decided to bonus you all with the Soul Lift Cacao PDF Guidebook and the Video Training Course (login info in the Guidebook PDF), both of which go deeply into cacao nutrition, terminology, etc. And that video course contains a virtual tour of a cacao farm. That way we don't have to spend too much time on that material in our live classes, except as it weaves into the other topics.

TO RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

- Attend every live class
 - If you miss more than two live classes, you'll need to have a meeting with me to demonstrate that you watched the recordings, in order to meet this requirement for the certificate.
- Complete all exercises within a week after the final live class
 - I suggest that you actually finish and post a class's exercises in the Facebook group before the following class, so that you don't fall behind.
 - I won't be policing this throughout the course, but I will keep track of overall posts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Week 1: What is Facilitation and Where Is it Heading?	3
Week 2: How Self-Responsible Communication Makes Us Better Cacao Facilitators	4
Week 3: Building Congruence and Confidence to Strengthen Professional Identity as a Cacao Worker	6
Week 4: Visioning, Marketing, and Promotion for Cacao Experiences, Part 1	8
Week 5: Visioning, Marketing, and Promotion for Cacao Experiences, Part 2	11
Week 6) Opening the Container for a Transformational Experience with Cacao	13
Week 7) Shadow Work and Therapeutic Discomfort in Cacao Work	15
Week 8) Transitions, Closing a Cacao Experience, and Follow-Up	18
Week 9) Bringing Ceremonial Cacao into a Modern Western Context	21

Week 1: What is Facilitation and Where Is it Heading?

- Agreements and etiquette:
 - Each class will be about 50% lecture, 25% processing any blockages, 25% Q&A
 - Keep your audio off unless asking a question
 - Ask questions immediately if it's on subject
 - Wait til last 10 minutes to ask other questions about cacao, facilitation, etc
 - Feel free to ask me questions in the Facebook group in between classes
- What is facilitation?
 - Guiding people on an experience... but for what?
 - To puff up our own ego? (No!)
- Premise: A healer doesn't "fix" people, but can only really be with them while they heal themselves.
- Contrasting with the "New Age" style of creating a metaphysical dogma and one-and-only-way.
 - Abstract, under-defined, lost in translation, stringing variables into an equation
 - Many groups tried to make a Theory of Everything.
 - Any system taken 100% as the end-all-be-all can lead to insanity.
- Nick's practical definition of spirituality.
 - On the one hand, the metaphysical beliefs about what lies beyond our sensory perception.
 - On the other hand, the more practical: how we decide to live our lives, how to find meaning in our experiences, how to cultivate a sense of purpose or mission, and how to feel connected to something bigger than ourselves.
 - The second one is literally more grounded.
- Premise: Different things work for different people at different times.
- There's not one single truth. There are infinite perspectives. Just like there's no one single way to serve or work with cacao.
- Our facilitation ideas of what could be good for people are **theories** based on the information we have in the present moment. Be humble.
- Cacao is often served in a New Age context, but this approach is dying out quickly. People are aching for something deeper and more genuine
 - To talk about the benefits of cacao requires us to be grounded in science, practical language
- The first step to a new way of facilitation is becoming more self-aware about our beliefs

EXERCISE 1:

Journal about your spiritual beliefs. What does spirituality mean to you? What do you believe about the world, culture, the universe, meaning of life/death, food/nutrition, family, sexuality, and especially... about healing/facilitation/self-development? The first step is building a more conscious awareness of it. Then notice if any judgments or “shoulds” arise. As in, “That’s dumb. I really shouldn’t look at it that way.” There might also be discernment, as in, “I don’t think that belief is serving me anymore.” Make note of those. Also note how in alignment you are with your beliefs. In other words, how much are you “practicing what you preach”?

What have been some of the important experiences that have shaped these beliefs? Maybe painful, or maybe joyous... but somehow foundational.)

Share at least one spiritual belief and an experience that shaped it in the group.

EXERCISE 2:

Think about a time when you could not understand a facilitator or spiritual teacher. What DO you remember from the experience? What else seemed “off” to you about it? How did you FEEL about the experience? Without naming any names, share a story about this in the group.

*These can be both in one post to the group, as text or live video.

RESOURCES:

Video: How to Make Ceremonial Cacao - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tllenbOdO8Q>

Week 2: How Self-Responsible Communication Makes Us Better Cacao Facilitators

- Here we get into the self-development path of a facilitator, moving up from the roots we planted in week 1 (philosophy), towards the fruit higher up the tree (leading cacao ceremonies!)
- This matters for our own development, and for the experiences we offer with cacao
- Korzybski: “The map is not the territory.”
 - What we assume to be the world out there... we only really know through sensory perceptions and thoughts about those perceptions.
- I don’t mean to unravel your whole reality. In fact, that can be dangerous if done too quickly or drastically. We all need this shared physical reality (aka consensus reality). Being at peace with it is the definition of sanity.
- In heavier psychedelic experiences the layers of mental constructs can be “blasted through”

- With cacao it's a gentler experience, creating an opportunity for a subtler re-evaluating of how we're framing things in our minds and expressing it with our words
 - Our goal is a gentle amplification of what's unconscious so that we can work with it, consciously release what doesn't help and bring in more of what does
- So let's look at parallel practices that fit in well with this principle, especially...
- **T-Group: (1) What am I observing? (2) What feelings arise when I perceive that? [Emotions and/or physical sensations] (3) What story or headline appears in my mind?** (Optional: What is the impact on our connection? What's my intention in sharing this?)
 - This is a practical, down-to-earth way ending the illusion that our perceptions are the one-and-only-truth, and instead taking more responsibility over our experience and interpretations
 - Note the importance of "I statements" and what I call "self-responsible communication"
 - Then we also get rid of the phrasing "You made me feel" or "It made me feel" (external locus of control)
 - "When I see this, I feel this and I make it mean" framing give us the power of interpretation, which is more empowering overall (internal locus of control)
- As facilitators, we must also evaluate our own communication and how that influences our perceptions
 - This can change your life for the better and also make you a more humble facilitator.
- For participants, this is step #4 in the Soul Lift Cacao Method: **INTER-ACTION. Create opportunities for people to use their voice and their language in a new and more productive way**
- This can be singing positive songs... but the words of a song might not be "medicine" for everyone in the room. Also, singing doesn't get into the shadow work and can potentially "bypass" the shadow.
- **AN EXERCISE YOU CAN USE: Re-writing Limiting Core Beliefs**
 - Works well in threes (triads), all seated
 - For each round, one person speaks and the other two listen/witness without responding or giving advice:
 - 1) Tell your group about an unhelpful belief you took on from your parents. "Life is pain," or "Men/women will always shit on you," or something else.
 - 2) How has this shown up in your life through repeating patterns?
 - 3) Feeling into the energy of the cacao with eyes closed, allow a more empowering affirmation to arise and share it with your group.
 - 4) Say that custom affirmation repeatedly while tapping on your body somewhere your intuition says to... your forearm, chest, face, or all of the above. Others can join in this part with you. (This is like intuitive EFT. Nick's philosophy: it creates a loop in the nervous system that can instill the new belief on an embodied level.)
 - 5) The subject says whether they're open to reflections from their group. If people reflect, use "I statements" as much as possible.

- Switch and repeat.

EXERCISE 1:

Write a paragraph describing an unpleasant experience you had in the last week or two. (Do this before reading on.) Then go back and note... did you blame others for something that was actually out of their control or was even your responsibility? Did you beat yourself up more than was necessary? See if you can re-write it this way: (a) What did you observe? (b) What did you feel? (c) What story did your mind create about the situation? (d) Could you have been off in some way? Share your insights in the group.

EXERCISE 2:

Take stock of your identifications. Gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, family role, job... but also painful experiences you've been through, victories you've accomplished, things you feel competitive or defensive about, things you feel shy or unworthy about. Note if you've ever observed someone else's words or actions and made one of your identity pieces mean there's something wrong with you. Note if you've ever gotten too much in your "ego" about one of your identity pieces. Share some of these with the group.

RESOURCES:

T-Group 2.0 Intro Video by Crystallin Dillon - <https://crystallindillon.com/training>

Week 3: Building Congruence and Confidence to Strengthen Professional Identity as a Cacao Worker

- A lot of this comes down to public speaking skills
 - Limiting "noise": um, uh, like, so
 - Speaking clearly, slower than we think we need to
 - Able to be grounded and calm – or at least to appear that way – in front of a crowd
- Why clothing and appearance matters in a practical way
 - There's no "right" way to be dress, but it sends a message
 - Make that message intentional
 - Find a balance between comfort and professionalism; If we're not comfortable, we won't be able to serve others
- Define "congruence" (matching of verbal and nonverbal signals; also, authenticity)
- Define "confidence" (being able to trust that we can handle any situation we find ourselves in)

- How to develop confidence in a responsible way
 - Being aware that, as we do this, we have more influence over people
 - Bringing even more awareness to consent (we'll talk more later)
- Eliminating “should” from our communication toolkit, because that can repeat the double-binds that people are already scarred from
- Body language speaks 90% of our communication. **For most of us, most of the time, this is unconscious. Any amount of consciousness we can bring here will help us.**
- Posture, facial gestures, hand gestures, tone of voice, volume, etc
 - Balanced on the balls of our feet if standing. Either way, feeling rooted on the Earth.
 - In general, shoulders back in a relaxed way
 - Hands relaxed, not fidgety. Hand gestures ideally match the energy of words.
 - Speaking loudly, with enough force that you can feel the air if you hold a hand in front of your mouth
 - Masculine, ending on a lower tone. Feminine, ending on a higher tone, and speaking higher in general.
 - Not blinking too much. Making eye contact around the room. Steady gaze (think Egyptian).
 - SMILE :)
- Having our own holistic practice (affirmations, yoga, etc)
- De-arming: Doing our own trauma release work >> leads to more congruence
- Bringing awareness to the ways we can influence people
 - Congruence is used by politicians, magicians, hypnotists, etc to influence people
 - A lot of what we see in “spiritual” people is actually congruence!
- Noticing when you feel judgmental of a leader or facilitator. Usually it means some part of us feels jealous and thinks we can't do that thing ourselves.
- One round of Chakra Breathing (audio and “official” instructions here: <https://www.oshorajneesh.com/osho-chakra-breathing-meditation-download.htm>):
 - THIS IS NICK'S CONDENSED VERSION. If you lead it, I recommend just calling it Chakra Breathwork.
 - Stand with feet about shoulder-width apart. Knees and hips loose and relaxed. Arms relaxed at your sides. Eyes closed. Jaw loose and relaxed. Stretch it out if needed.
 - Following the audio, take deep, continuous breaths in and out through an open mouth. Imagining sending the breath into the root, the base of the pelvis.
 - The music will change after a chime and then send the breath through the sacral center, just below the belly button. Solar plexus = just below the diaphragm. Heart, throat, third eye, crown. It's up to you whether you want to call them “chakras” or “energy centers.”
 - Throughout give prompts about letting the mind turn off, allow emotions/yawns/tears, feel the earth even as we move higher, etc.
 - Still standing with eyes closed, return to a natural pace of breathing. Holding attention inward.

- You can lead 1-3 rounds. Be mindful that the audio track cuts off suddenly after the 3rd round (taper the sound off manually with the stereo knob).
- Then usually people lie down for total relaxation.

WEEK 3 / EXERCISE 1:

Record a video of 1-3 minutes on your phone or laptop telling a story about something you learned or realized in the past week, either in our class or somewhere else. **DO THIS BEFORE READING ON.**

Watch the video and study your posture (neck, shoulders, spine), facial expressions, tone of voice, etc. Also notice how many times you say “um,” “like,” etc. Did you say “should” in a limiting way? How many times do you look away from the camera?

Do you feel pleased? Do you have judgmental thoughts?

Post the video in the Facebook group with some of your findings. Describe at least one thing that you feel self-critical about (using T-Group format!) and one bit of praise for yourself.

EVERYONE ELSE... if you comment on someone else’s video, please only make statements of praise. And feel free to click “like” as well ;)

WEEK 3 / EXERCISE 2:

Think of a time you felt jealous of a teacher or public speaker. Write a paragraph about the story... what you noticed, what you felt, what story you created about that person. What did that imply about yourself... that you weren’t capable of doing that same thing, that you’d never find success as a public speaker... something else? Own a time when you were judging from a “little ego” place, but then immediately forgive yourself. Post something about the story and responses to these questions in the group.

Week 4: Visioning, Marketing, and Promotion for Cacao Experiences, Part 1

- Creative visioning: what kind of experience do you want people to have?
- Takes us back to the question of “What is facilitation?”
 - Guiding people to more self-awareness.
 - Showing them new skills, modalities, etc... for self-care, communication, etc.
 - Leading activities in a specifically designed container so that both healing and self-development can occur.

- Choosing location (container)
 - Indoor vs outdoor? Covered?
 - How private? How sound proof?
 - Where is it located in town? Consider mass transit, crime, etc.
 - How many people can fit: On yoga mats? (yoga mat size) In a circle? Dancing?
 - How many bathrooms?
 - In person vs. online? Zoom video benefits
- Event Title
 - Comparing “Cacao Ceremony” and other options
 - Depends on the place, season, and other factors
 - Cacao Journey, _____ with cacao, or maybe “cacao” isn’t even in the title
- Description
 - Here we need to bring in some details about cacao, but which ones?
 - I recommend finding a balance between informative and digestible
 - Give them enough of an idea of what to expect, without ruining the mystery
 - A ceremony is about stepping into the unknown and the unpredictable
 - The nervousness is a healthy part of it. And this is part of why cacao is great: because there’s not ACTUALLY much to be nervous about. :)
- Image
 - Clear letters... it becomes your branding
 - Your choice about yes/no title, time, date, city, venue, etc.
 - Upwork can help, or Canva, Photoshop
 - Flickr and Google Images have advanced search for free commercial use, <http://sxc.hu> has free stock images
- Facebook event page settings
 - Public vs. private
 - Holding strong boundaries against people who want to drain our energy (trolls)
 - Finding balance between the two, and learning to spot trolls and vampires early
- Ticket page (Eventbrite recommended)
- **AN EXERCISE YOU CAN USE: “Roving Puja” for Intentional Deepening of Connection**
 - Matched into multiple pairs (or small groups) where each person gets a turn speaking and listening
 - Everyone wanders around slowly, connecting with body and breath, their awareness balanced internal/external
 - Lead at least three rounds of people meeting and connecting over a specific prompt
 - Find someone to stand in front of without speaking. Stand close enough that you can see each other’s eyes (about arm’s length).
 - First person to speak chosen by a different criteria each time. Whoever’s taller, whoever has longer hair (or darker hair), whoever has darker eyes, etc. NOTE: DON’T PICK SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE COULD BE SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT, like weight, sexualized body parts, etc. The goal is to deepen relaxation and connection, and encourage people to feel safe.

- The prompts can be based on a theme, like past/present/future.
- Simple example
 - Round 1: What's something from your past you're ready to forgive and release a bit more?
 - Round 2: What's something about your present life you've worked hard to manifest?
 - Round 3: What's your most burning goal for the next year, and what's the first step to make it happen?
- After they've made eye contact, give the Round 1 prompt and invite the first person to share for a minute. Other person witnesses silently and attentively without giving feedback. Then they switch and the other person speaks on the same prompt.
- Ask them to start saying goodbye and go back into wandering around the space silently. Repeat for Rounds 2 and 3.
- This transitions nicely into a deeper embodiment practice or movement, since everyone is now on their feet. Or if you want to take people to the ground, you could first have everyone stand in a circle and ask for popcorn reflections on what they learned.

HOMEWORK:

Watch the Soul Lift Cacao Video Training Course, at least the Virtual Cacao Farm Tour (Part 2) and the Serving (Part 5, with info on the Superfood and Plant Medicine benefits).
<https://www.soulliftcacao.com/video-training-course> - pw: CACAOICITA (all caps)

WEEK 4 / EXERCISE 1:

Make a cup of cacao without any measurements. Do a private meditation or other introspective practice with it. USING NO GUIDES OR STRUCTURES. Just follow your intuition, focus on your breath. Ask the cacao for insight into your mission as a cacao worker. Describe it in the group.

WEEK 4 / EXERCISE 2:

Write a bio of about 3-5 sentences in this general skeleton:

1. Your name and titles (from highest to lowest priority or importance)
2. Your background, experience, training
3. Your mission statement (what you want to accomplish in the world)
4. Any other supplemental info about HOW you do that
5. Call to action... give them a way to connect (website and/or social media)

If you already have a bio, reflect on whether it's up to date and/or ask the group for feedback.

Either way, post your bio in the FB group!

Week 5: Visioning, Marketing, and Promotion for Cacao Experiences, Part 2

- Website and Email newsletter

- Affordable, user-friendly options: Wix and Weebly
- Good for physical product ecommerce: Squarespace (more user-friendly) and Shopify (more advanced on the design end)
- Podia: a platform that bundles digital products (courses), memberships (e.g., people pay a monthly fee for exclusive member content), email newsletter (with unlimited contacts!)
- Mailchimp: decent place to start an email newsletter. Free up to 2000 contacts. You can even send people to an email list signup page without even having a website.
- Instagram stories vs. Facebook stories
 - Each have slightly different features, and views really depend on how many friends or followers you have.
 - Long story short: FB & IG stories are a great way to reach a lot of people daily with little videos, fun snippets of life, event promos, etc... possibly with more exposure than FB wall updates.
 - FB story hint: on your Facebook cacao event page, click “Share,” then choose “My story.” This puts a clickable preview image in your story where a lot of people will see it!
- The Importance of Relationships:
 - Funnels, scalability – Instead of just one-off events forever, starting to think about things leading people to a deeper level of support with you... and continued investment in your work
 - Connection calls: Invite potential clients to a quick 10-15 minute phone call without necessarily having a sale in mind.
 - Word-of-mouth advertising and networking are some of the most powerful ways to spread your work. People know other people, and everyone talks about what they love!
- Venue relations and rentals
 - Some studios will still allow you to use their space on a percentage split (ideally not more than 30% going to the studio, so that you’d get 70% of ticket sales), especially if you explain that you’re new to this or new to the community they’re in
 - Other places you’ll have to rent by the hour. A yoga studio could be \$35-75 per hour depending on the size and popularity of the space. Other larger spaces might be \$100-200 per hour. Optimize for cost vs how many people you expect to attend.
 - Be polite to the studio managers. Treat them well and build the relationship.
- Choosing event time, price, etc. Single event vs. repeating events.
 - My favorite times to start cacao ceremony are between 11:00am and 7:00pm. I don’t recommend serving cacao after 8:00pm. (Cacao could stay active in them for up to 8 hours or more!)
 - Price could be free/donation/pay what you want, for starting out or with intention to build awareness/following

- Paid cacao ceremonies can be \$30-70 depending on a lot of factors like city, how private, what activities, how well known the facilitator is, etc
- Repeating events build demand in the community. Weekly and monthly both have advantages. For smaller events, weekly will build demand faster.
- What activities are we including? How do we explain those to people? How do they fit together before we even get to the space?
- How much cacao do we need? Other equipment?
 - *HINT: See the Soul Lift Cacao Guidebook PDF for equipment lists.
 - General event ratio: 1lb of cacao to 1 gallon of water, makes 16 servings with about 1oz of cacao per cup
 - Strongest advisable dose = 1.5 oz per serving
- Getting to the venue and setting up
 - Account for the realities, like traffic!
 - Allow enough time to carry in equipment, prepare the cacao, and decorate
 - Try to take a private 5 minutes (at least) to ground before the event starts. Having a volunteer to check people in can help you get away.
- Plan for how you'll make and distribute the cacao.
 - Passing cups around the circle (watch out for spills!) vs having people come up to a table (where they could do their own cayenne, coconut sugar, etc)
 - As long as you keep it vegan and don't use a ton of sugar or cayenne, mixing it in the pot is usually fine and helps things move faster.
- **EVERYONE READ THEIR BIOS OUT LOUD**
 - Five sentence structure is flexible. But usually this will be used in third person on event pages (e.g., "Nick is a cacao worker...")
 - Backup: "I am a cacao worker. I believe in the power of cacao to bring..."
- **EMBODIMENT EXERCISE: Shaking Meditation and Slow Energetic Movement**
 - Shaking meditation comes from Bioenergetics (Alexander Lowen), Tantra (*The Art of Sexual Ecstasy* by Margot Anand), also shows up in Osho Active Meditations ("Kundalini Meditation" - <https://www.oshorajneesh.com/osho-kundalini-meditation-music-download.htm>)
 - The slow energetic movement can be introduced as "A spontaneous Tai Chi or Qi Gong," and is the third phase in the Gourishankar Meditation from Osho Active Meditations (<https://www.oshorajneesh.com/osho-gourishankar-meditation-download.htm>)
 - These combine very well to help people get out of their head and into subtle energy, *especially if they already drank cacao*.
- After shaking meditation, dropping in and speaking with eyes closed: "I am _____ and I came here to _____."
 - Notice the difference when we're speaking from our heart, or even deeper.
 - This grounding into "flow state" will be one of the most helpful facilitation skills in your toolbelt.

WEEK 5 / HOMEWORK:

Watch any parts of the Soul Lift Cacao Video Training Course that you haven't
<https://www.soulliftcacao.com/video-training-course> - pw: CACAO CITA (all caps)

Come to Class 6 with a basic understanding of cacao farming, cacao benefits (superfood + plant medicine aspects)

WEEK 5 / EXERCISE 1:

Find a place to stand barefoot on the earth (with proper social distancing!) for at least 5 minutes (ideally 10 or 15, closing your eyes as much as possible, but taking deep breaths and really feeling into your connection with the earth. See what it tells you. Share something about it in the group.

WEEK 5 / EXERCISE 2:

Come up with a logistical plan for a cacao gathering. Considerations for physical container, promotional plan, etc. Don't describe your offering (the actual ceremony) in depth. Keep that to yourself for now. But in the group, describe the logistical plans: what kind of space, your target "client," time of day, day of week, how many people you'd aim for, etc. Also describe a basic marketing plan.

Week 6) Opening the Container for a Transformational Experience with Cacao

- From the start, model how to hold oneself... posture, tone of voice, etc.
 - If you take the ceremony seriously, they'll take it seriously.
 - It takes respect, but also a sense of humor in the right places.
 - When starting time comes, take a deep breath and START!
- Basic principle moving forward: Someone needs to be in the facilitator role at all times!
- Opening the circle:
 - Introduce yourself ("elevator pitch" version of bio)
 - Go over "housekeeping"/logistical items (especially bathrooms and water)
 - Explain about cacao (superfood + plant medicine aspects, history, ethics)
 - Define a cacao ceremony (or explain whatever your offering is)
 - Give a brief overview of the plan (e.g., intention circle, practices, closing circle)
 - Pass out cacao, asking people to wait for the opening circle to drink it (a sip is okay)
- Describe the symbolic container (agreements)
 - *Nothing is required, but more clarity translates into a safer container.
 - Confidentiality = Take out only your own experience in "I statement" form. If it's not a confidential space, tell them.

- Consent = Everything is an invitation. “You know you best.” People don’t have to take on your beliefs, etc.
 - Also, will there be photo or video? Get consent in advance or work out an agreement for case-by-case.
 - Online: Will there be any screenshots or recordings?
- Closed container = People have to arrive by a certain time. If you do this, I recommend closing entry before or after the intention circle, before people drink cacao.
- Online recommendation: Everyone keeps video on as much as possible, and stay muted unless speaking
- Then explain that you’ll start with an Intention Circle.
 - Invite everyone to share their name and 1-2 sentences about:
 - What called them to the experience
 - What they’re bringing in with them
 - What they’re seeking
 - Start with someone who’s next to you and direct the shares around the circle.
 - Be mindful of time if it’s a huge group. If more than 30 people, just invite single words of intention, “popcorn” style (where people around the circle can just jump in when they feel called)
- Cacao Toast:
 - Ask people to make sure they’re sitting in a comfortable way, hold their cacao near their heart, and allow their eyes to close
 - Guide them to connect with their breath, feel the ground beneath them, feel the warmth of the cacao and smell the aroma
 - Ask them to reflect on their own intention and the other intentions that were spoken in the circle
 - When they feel tuned into the felt sense of their intention, they can take a sip of their cacao as a toast to that.
 - Say that they can remain with eyes closed, focused on the breath, drinking their cacao at whatever pace feels good to them, following their intuition
- **INTER-ACTION EXERCISE: Present Moment Noting**
 - Everyone sits in a circle with eyes closed.
 - Go around the circle and everyone takes a breath before saying one emotion or physical sensation word
 - You start and end it. Let it go on for at least 10 minutes... or even as long as 30 minutes.
 - When you introduce it, you could describe it as “deceptively simple” because it can really open people’s minds and surprise them with new awareness.
 - If you need to jump in with guidance, try to wait til your turn. For example, to remind people to name an emotion or sensation.
 - When it’s time to end, say “We’ll do one more round.”
 - Then guide people in some deep breaths before bringing them back for a sharing circle.

- At the end it can help to bring in perspective about how this shows our ability to influence our own experience, and the way heavy or crunchy feelings can actually be fleeting or without substance.
- *This works well if you have an odd number of people that can't be broken into pairs or equal groups of 3 or 4 (e.g., if you have 7 participants)

WEEK 6 / EXERCISE 1:

Create a list of empowering affirmations (at least 10) that feel meaningful in your core and relevant to where you're at in this time. The most effective ones address negative inner critics or limiting self-beliefs. E.g., "I am unstoppable," "I can handle anything life puts in my path," etc. Record these on your phone with about 10 seconds of space in between. Put on headphones and move to a place where you can walk freely either down your street or a walking path (in fresh air is ideal) or around a room in your house if necessary. Listen to the recording and repeat each affirmation OUT LOUD after you hear the recorded version. While you speak, lightly tap your primary hand's fingertips onto your secondary forearm (i.e., if you're right-handed, tap with your right fingers on your left forearm). Take deep breaths in between speaking, feeling the ground with each step. Imagine the affirmations sinking into your muscle memory, getting lodged in your cells. Repeat if desired. :)

Post some reflections about the experience in the Facebook group (without sharing all your affirmations right now; keep some of them private, like sacred magic spells).

WEEK 6 / EXERCISE 2:

Make a social media post (either video, or text with a photo) on your own wall (on FB and/or IG) describing how the course is going for you and what you're learning, and tag Soul Lift Cacao!

Week 7) Shadow Work and Therapeutic Discomfort in Cacao Work

- Defining shadow work
 - Looking at, owning, or re-experiencing parts of ourselves or our past experiences that we have repressed or actively tried to hide from ourselves and/or others.
 - In order to release the energy being held there so that it can be put to better use.
- Defining therapeutic discomfort:
 - Nervousness, fear, tension, or similar feelings that can arise in embodied or interactive self-development practices
 - Commonly understood in yoga practice, but it can have literal or metaphorical meaning in other contexts.
 - DISCOMFORT is okay and sometimes helpful. PAIN is not.
 - Discomfort does not guarantee or equate to healing, evolution, or enlightenment.

- Look out for “intensity junkies” who become addicted to long-term, severe strain or discomfort, thinking that that’s the only way to heal or make progress
- Non-verbal Embodiment practices:
 - Various types of meditation, breathwork, energetic movement, dancing, etc.
- Verbal Inter-Action practices:
 - Communication, connection, verbal intimacy, role play, T-Group, etc.
- Explaining why we’re leading something, while leaving enough spaciousness for people to have their own experience.
 - It means being authentic about our beliefs and owning them as subjective
 - Creates safety if they knows there’s a reason for the activity
- Value of different arrangements, numbers and shapes
 - In pairs: The most intimate and private
 - In triads/threesomes: Private but not as intimidating as pairs.
 - Whole circle: The most exposing, which is good for intention/integration circles, and certain empowerment exercises (speaking in front of the group)
- Also, shapes of a group
 - Circle: Equal playing field. Everyone sees everyone
 - U-shape: Focus on one person, creating a power dynamic.
 - Everyone spread out: No hierarchy. No collected focus. Everyone has a slightly different experience.
- Body positions as bioenergetic metaphors
 - Standing: adult (or divinity)
 - Sitting: child
 - Lying down: infant (or corpse)
- Defining trauma:
 - Anything the nervous system registers as life-threatening, even if it wasn’t
 - The same events can have a different effect on different people. It’s subject to personal interpretation, background, etc.
 - The effects tend to be less severe if a person was able to take action to help themselves
- Defining trauma healing:
 - De-armor the nervous system and release energetic gunk stored up by those painful or scary experiences
 - Bring resolution to the painful stories on the level of communication, beliefs, and identity
 - Give people more skills and sovereignty around touch, boundaries, and psychological self-defense
- The value of consent:
 - We were all mostly raised without the ability to choose much about our lives
 - So allowing people to choose and approve what and how they participate in ceremonies will be healing in itself.
 - Get consent around touch! If it’s a non-verbal activity, get consent in advance.
- Don’t call people out in class or ceremony.

- Feel free to praise people by name if it's relevant and balanced.
- If it's constructive criticism, de-personalize it (e.g., "Everyone please remember to keep quiet during this part.").
- **EMBODIMENT EXERCISE: Trauma Release Exercises (TRE)**
 - Lie down on your back and bring the knees up with the heels about 12 inches from the pelvis.
 - Close the eyes and allow the arms to rest at your sides
 - Bring the soles of the feet to touch (as much as possible) and let the knees rest out to the sides
 - After about 30 seconds, slowly (inch by inch) bring the knees up closer together until the muscles of the inner thighs start to quiver, and **STAY THERE**
 - Allow the quiver to expand as much as possible, maybe even up through the pelvis and the torso. Keep breathing.
 - If you lose the quiver, change the distance between the knees and find it again. If you still can't find it, move the feet a little further from or closer to the pelvis.
 - All the quivering to continue for at least 10 minutes (up to 20 minutes, but it's not a hard limit), allowing any yawns, sighs, or tears that want to come.
 - When you're ready for the quivering to end, bring the legs straight out in front of you on the ground. Keep eyes closed and breath normally for a few minutes.
 - *Then gradually bring people back to sitting. This is a great time for a reflection circle.
 - *SAFETY NOTE: It can be very vulnerable for people to lie down with their legs open, especially if they have any trauma connected with their lower body. Remind people that everyone's eyes are closed and that it's all an invitation.
 - It's not necessary for people to recall the actual story of trauma... but in a cacao ceremony that might have already come to mind as part of their intention or other exercises, and TRE could promote healing on that specific thing.

RESOURCES

- Somatic Experiencing, the work of Peter Levine
- *The Body Keeps the Score*, book by Bessel van der Kolk
- Trauma Release Exercises (TRE)

WEEK 7 / EXERCISE 1

Go at least 4 days this week without consuming cacao. Notice if you have trouble with this, and if you've been using cacao habitually or without mindfulness.

On one of the days without cacao, create a ritual for yourself where you experience cacao in other ways. Spend time smelling the paste deeply with eyes closed. Put a small piece of paste in your mouth, let it melt and sit there, but then spit it out. Melt some paste on the stove (with coconut oil or a double boiler; don't let it get too hot!) and rub it on your face or other part of your skin, feeling deeply into the sensation of it. Make a small cup and just feel the energy and the

effect of the aroma. Pour this cup on the earth, imagining it as a blessing to whatever you understand to be “the divine.” Share something about your experience in the group. (Optional: Include a picture of cacao on your skin!)

WEEK 7 / EXERCISE 2

On a day you will have cacao, make a little ritual for yourself with cacao before doing a round of TRE solo. With the cacao, reflect on a painful memory of the past (think: 5-7 on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is the most painful... since you'll be alone). Drink with the intention of finding some healing and release. Set a timer in the range of 10-20 minutes before you begin the TRE. Flow into any other embodied practice that feels right (yoga, shaking, sitting meditation, etc.). Close the practice in a way that feels good to you. Share about your experience in the group.

Week 8) Transitions, Closing a Cacao Experience, and Follow-Up

- Hosting in a virtual environment
 - You could lead something through Facebook live or Instagram live, but with less interactivity
 - A video conferencing software such as Zoom is the way to offer the most interactive, experiential cacao journey online
 - Sharing your screen: to show notes, a poem, a video
 - Sharing computer sound: to play music from Spotify or somewhere else
 - Managing breakout rooms: for partner or small group exercises
- Awareness of power dynamics
 - This is a HUGE topic.
 - But basically, hold awareness of gender, race, age, privilege, etc.
 - And if someone needs support like a hand on the back, let THEM choose how and from whom they receive it.
- More about non-verbal tracking of people in the container
- When to intervene in verbal practices (and when not to)
 - Find a balance between checking in on groups to let them know you're present and available... and not taking them out of the experience too much.
 - If people look like they're dropped in and flowing along, then let them do their thing
 - This can be a chance to take a breath as a facilitator, just don't get too distracted, go on social media, or anything like that.
- Going more in-depth into the “flow state” of leading any kind of experience, especially the embodied ones
 - All the more embodied, shamanic practices in this course have prepared you for this

- Follow the practice outline and also prompt them around breath, felt sense, grounding, relaxing the mind, releasing tension, etc
- Again, finding a balance >> not interrupting so much that you take them out of their experience, but not abandoning them
- Leading them to sensory-grounded information. People attuned to “felt sense” have been shown to respond more positively to psychotherapy.
- Transitions between practices and the “Tetris” game of fitting practices together
 - Be mindful of body positioning and where you hope to get them to
 - Allow the most time and gentleness from lying down to standing up
 - Think about an overall flow to the experience and piece things together that way, instead of UP / DOWN / UP / DOWN repeatedly
- How to lead a mid-way check-in circle
 - This can be useful after either an embodied or interactive exercise (especially embodied, to make sure everyone’s okay)
 - “Popcorn” style works well. Whoever feels called to share can jump in.
 - Presence and compassion with heavy shares. You don’t have to fix it, but you can ask them if they’d like a certain type of support.
 - If you see someone processing but they don’t speak up, it’s usually better to just ask the whole group if anyone needs extra support than to call on that one person. They might not want the whole group focused on them.
- How to lead a closing circle
 - Invite people to share what they’re taking out with them.
 - No one HAS TO share. They can bring hands to heart center if they want to pass.
 - In person, go around the circle (it’s the most time efficient). Online, call on people one at a time.
 - Especially in the closing circle, if there’s a heavy share, make sure to take a deep breath and slow down.
 - At the end if there’s still something dense, you could circle back and give someone a bit more space.
 - Ask them to drink some water and focus on integration (a bite to eat, or in the days to come they could do yoga, meditation, journaling, walk in nature, etc)
 - Define integration for them: working the insights and felt sense into their ordinary identity and day-to-day life.
 - Ask people to reach out if they need support.
- Synchronized sound can be a good way to close the container. Options:
 - Doing a round of applause
 - Everyone says 3-2-1 and then brings hands to the floor.
- Gathering contact information
 - Have people sign your newsletter. Better yet, get their phone numbers and follow up by text.
 - Some kind of contact list is the best way to convert them into regular clients.
 - Then you could also set up a connection call and ask them if they want to hear about your more advanced offerings.

- Long-term confidentiality
 - Ask people before bringing something up from a past ceremony, even in private conversation.
 - Don't out them in a new group without their permission.
 - Basically, focus on "I statements" and get consent about anything personal.
- **INTER-ACTION EXERCISE: Coming up with your own!**
 - Could be in pairs, small groups, or large group.
 - Guiding people to more awareness, support, etc.
 - Remember the T-Group ingredients: observations, feelings, stories (meaning-making).
 - We can affect feeling states by changing stories (affirmations, re-patterning, etc), and we can affect stories by changing feeling states (posture, breathwork, etc).
 - **Being witnessed in a safe container (no judgment, advice without consent, etc) can be healing in itself.**
 - It takes a lot of energy to hide (especially if shame or regret are involved). So ending the hiding can mean freeing up a lot of energy.
 - If it's a short ceremony (1-3 hours), when prompting people to recall something with a charge (scary, traumatic, etc), you can invite them to choose something that's a 5-7 on a scale of 1-10 where 10 is the most charged.

RESOURCES

Zoom Host controls -

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-Host-and-co-host-controls-in-a-meeting>

Sharing your screen - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-Sharing-your-screen>

Sharing computer sound (to play music) -

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362643-Sharing-Computer-Sound-During-Screen-Sharing>

Managing breakout rooms -

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-breakout-rooms>

WEEK 8 / EXERCISE 1

**You have two weeks to work on this one*

Prepare a 5-minute presentation for Class 10, where you'll "role play" opening your own ceremonial cacao experience (one you want to host on your own in the future).

Introduce yourself (your bio in first-person “I statements”), go over container logistics (talk about the space like we’re in it and tell us how to navigate it), agreements (whichever ones are important to you), an overview of your event outline (just the basics), and introduce one practice or exercise as if you’re going to lead it (briefly describing the steps it will involve, what you want us to get out of it. And if it would help us understand, do a little demo.).

The group will offer reflections, and I’ll offer coaching.

Week 9) Bringing Ceremonial Cacao into a Modern Western Context

- This is an integration session for us... time for putting the pieces together
- More about power dynamics, especially the power of a facilitator to influence people’s identity, beliefs, and perception of reality
 - Find a balance between owning what’s a belief/opinion, and still leading confidently
 - Be open to adjust perceptions, but not so open that people cross your boundaries or take your power at every event
- Cacao in the context of other plant medicines and psychedelics... knowing what we know now.
 - Insights and embodied connection with “the universe” with very gentle integration.
 - Other psychedelics are in some cases getting decriminalized or legalized. But the stronger the effect, the more need for a tight container.
- Cacao’s role in holistic wellness and mental health... knowing what we know now.
 - Chronic illness (physical + mental) could be due to piling up of little traumas.
 - Cacao can help de-armor and clear out trauma, plus give the strength and stamina to find a better way to live.
 - Plus all the benefits to the cardiovascular and nervous system.
 - Heart disease kills 650k Americans per year (1 in 4 deaths). Stroke kills 140k per year (1 in 20 deaths).
 - With this holistic package, maybe terminal illnesses will go down as cacao spreads.
- General test for reaching beyond “the choir”: Being able to talk about it in a way that Grandma would understand.
 - Emphasize the measured effects on heart and brain.
 - Even the practical definition of spirituality (insights, clearer sense of purpose, etc) could be too “woo woo” for mainstream folks.
 - Think: how to get them the direct experience without them needing to adopt too many new beliefs.
- How to deal with claims of cultural appropriation

- If someone “calls you out,” consider letting them know how important it is to you to be ethical and responsible in your work.
- Use “I statements” and T-Group languaging (observations, feelings, stories)
- Say that you only source cacao with a clear, sustainable chain from farm to consumer.
 - Talking points: organic farm, farmers paid higher than average, cacao prepared in small batches, prioritizing collectives with profit-sharing models, getting their approval and consent on packaging and labeling, usually not more than 5 contacts in the whole chain, etc.
- The indigenous cacao workers get credit for their role, and they set their own prices or benefit from profit-sharing models.
- No specific cultural or religious practices are used without approval or consent.
- **EMBODIMENT EXERCISE: Coming up with your own!**
 - Types of embodiment/bioenergetic practices: containment, expression, catharsis
 - Containment: fast nasal breathing
 - Expression: exhaling with a sigh
 - Catharsis: yelling, screaming
 - They’re all about getting out of the mind and into embodied awareness.
 - For dancing, be clear about the container!
 - If it’s a dance-focused event, address consent and boundaries verbally at the beginning, and have “angels” looking over the space who are also available to provide support if something comes up.
 - Standard signal to avoid or end a dance is to hold prayer hands near the heart. 🙏
 - If it’s just an exercise in a ceremony, consider calling it something other than “dancing,” since that can get people into their heads. You could call it “free movement,” “flowing with energy,” etc.
 - Good “punctuation” experience between other things: Deep breath in through the nose, and release through the mouth with a sigh.
 - You could work in bits of other systems like yoga, Feldenkrais, tantra, trauma release... with proper contextualization/framing.
 - You could help them connect with their inner child through animal movement, crawling around like “creatures,” etc.
 - Again, taking consent into consideration. People could double-tap on a shoulder to end an interaction.
 - “Mirroring movement” is fun, and could be a stage in the Roving Puja where people wander around and then find a buddy. Especially if you’ve already done a couple of verbal rounds. Gently ask them to do it without words, but making sound could be okay (it’s up to you)

WEEK 9 / EXERCISE 1

Go back and look at the first post you made in the group before we started the course. (Using the group search box for your name can help!)

Make a new post in the group (video, or photo w/ text) reflecting on how you've changed.