

A study outline for a 11-session study of:

The Unbelievable Happiness of What Is

Beyond Belief to Love, Fulfillment, & Spiritual Awakening

by Jon Bernie

Study Outline by Joyce Marshall

Outline for Session One

Foreword, Introduction, Author's Notes, Chapter 1

1. Go Round: What stood out for you in this opening section of the book?
2. Foreword: Read about spirit - traditional and modern and Jon Bernie relative to both.
Ask: What qualities described here do you most long for?

Read his suggestions for reading the book. Note we'll discuss this in Author's Note.

3. Introduction: I will spend some time here so we are clear what perspective Jon Bernie is coming from.

a) Short course page 1.

b) Read page 2 leading the group through the awareness process.

c) Short course What's in the Way? walking the group through the experience of dealing with beliefs.

d) Leaving Ideas Behind - short course and read some of this section.
Ask: How does this strike you?

e) Beyond Belief - short course and read this section.

Ask: What arises for you? Multiple choice:

- Yes! I'm ready !
- I have reservations.
- I totally am not with this!

4. How To Read This Book. Here he is saying that language is always approximate and what is dealt with here is unlimited and unknowable. He isn't describing a way, but pointers to help you discover your own way.

He suggests when you sit down to read a chapter, to take time to breathe and let your body, mind, emotions settle. And when you have reactions, whether delighted, challenged, irritated, notice what happens in your body, what emotions arise, what thoughts you have - agreeing, disagreeing, inspired?

The key is your awareness. You don't need to understand. Be gentle with yourself. I suggest that you might want to journal and note these awareness of body, emotions, thought.

Ask: How do you plan to use the book?

5. Chapter 1. Taking the First Step

a) So just relax and breathe. Maybe close your eyes while I read this process.

Read pg 10

b) Throughout this opening section Jon is dealing with our over-dependence on mind and belief, which separates us from being awake to our actual moment to moment experience.

Ask: What comes up for you as we go through these processes and concepts?

c) On page 11 he notes we believe that we are a separate self rather than what he calls the Big Self - a vast field of awareness shared with all. But he doesn't want to linger on this idea, but to facilitate a direct experience of connection - a movement orienting us in the direction of transformation.

Awareness is the key for him; he calls it the truth itself which permeates everything. The key is how to allow it to grow us, cultivate us, cook us, unfold our spirit and heart.

d) How to be available to what is happening right now? To drop out of your mind, into your body, into your heart, into your breath. If your mind tries to reassert control, be gentle with yourself. Here isn't always how you want it to be. Let your heart be soft, be vulnerable. Any moment can be a moment of freedom in which you are fully here without wanting to be somewhere else.

Go Round: What is your response to spending a quarter exploring this perspective?
This practice?

Outlines for Sessions 2 through 11

Session 2: Chapters 2-6
Session 3: Chapters 7-11
Session 4: Chapters 12-17
Session 5: Chapters 18-22
Session 6: Chapters 23-26
Session 7: Chapters 27-31
Session 8: Chapters 32-36
Session 9: Chapters 37-41
Session 10: Chapters 42-46
Session 11: Chapters 47-52

These short chapters are to be read before coming the session. In preparing to lead the discussion for these sessions, select 2 or 3 key paragraphs, sentences, or key points in each of chapters to be covering in this session. Use these topics only if not mentioned or if needed in the group discussion.

In some instances (i.e., in chapters 4 and 26) you might want to walk the group through the processes suggested in addition to the plan below.

Begin the session with a Go Round: What came up for you as you did this week's readings and practices?

Then take the chapters one by one.

1. Name the chapter.
2. Ask: What is a key sentence or concept or practice in this chapter?
3. Ask: What would it mean for you to practice this?
4. Repeat 2 and 3 at least once or maybe twice.

Keep your eye on the clock so you have some time for each chapter.

At the end do another Go Round: What has happened to you in exploring these processes and perspectives today?