

The Five Stages of Learning Hakomi

This was written by Caroline Braham for the Hakomi groups in London, Moscow and Ireland.

There are number of stages that we go through when learning Hakomi. I have divided them into five stages to simplify how I see them at the moment. Some of these stages of learning are incorporated into the basic Hakomi training and others outside of and after the basic training.

In the original, linear, basic, 45-day, training model over three years, each of the three years of training counted as a training level or stage. The First Year of training was considered to be Level 1 or the First Stage; the 2nd Year equivalent to Level 2 or Second Stage; and 3rd Year as Level 3 or the Third Stage. Nowadays most of the trainings are in a Multilevel format, which incorporates the stages of learning in a slightly different way. I will say more about it at the end. For now, here's a little about each stage.

The First Stage is learning to self-study, getting skilled in paying attention to our own present moment experience in all its forms. As well as developing our awareness of our inner experience we practice being able to share it with others and tell them what we notice.

In the Second Stage we learn to help another person to self-study and report what's happening. We do practices that teach us how to make guesses about what we see happening for another. We learn to differentiate between signs of present moment experience and those that indicate more habitual patterns. All of the elements of Hakomi are introduced separately so that we can become familiar with them.

During the Third Stage we begin to put separate elements of Hakomi together into longer places and bigger chunks. We are gradually working towards being able to assimilate all of the aspects of Hakomi into full session.

After having completed the Hakomi Training days, usually around 40-45 days over approximately three years, we can expect to have a practical feel for the Hakomi way of working. We will have an understanding of the various aspects of Hakomi and we may have touched on carrying out full Hakomi sessions.

Completing Hakomi training is not an end in itself, it is a marker along the learning path. It means we are moving into stage four of our learning.

After we complete the Hakomi training we will be ready start getting familiar with, and skilled in, taking a person from start to finish through a Hakomi style session. This is Fourth Stage, which involves deepening into, and discovering how to navigate through, a session. The staple practices from the first three stages can be seen in new light and done in different ways, we continue to deepen our understanding of the method, and, in this stage, we get clear practical sense of the shape of a Hakomi session.

Stage Four is a time when we can work towards getting Hakomi Practitioner Certification as well as time to continue being nourished by the Hakomi method's invitation for new discoveries and self-development.

We are encouraged to direct our own learning in Hakomi, so in Stage Four we can visit Multilevel Training workshops, Therapy Circles or Deepening Skills workshops as often as we feel supports our needs and learning – as often as feels good, for as long as it feels right.

Hakomi is skill-based method, and like any skill, mastery comes with lots of practice, trial and error as well as seeking guidance. There are no time limits or required attendance days in Stage Four as it is shaped according to our individual needs.

Once we get certified as Hakomi Practitioners, we still continue to learn, this is not an end point. Here we move into the fifth stage.

The Fifth Stage of learning Hakomi is a time when we meet the method as if for the first time. We re-visit the “basics” that we met in the first three stages as we endeavour to drop into, and absorb, Hakomi in new ways. We keep coming back to experience it from deeper viewpoint as we expand into method. We can continue to attend Hakomi trainings, and dip in, as and when it feels as Hakomi group could enhance our practices and lives.

Currently, most of the Hakomi trainings follow the Multilevel format which means that the training years, levels, and stages of learning are not separated. When we learn in a Multilevel group we still move through the stages of learning but in more fluid way. The Five Stages of learning are “woven” together. Each of us will come to the practices from our own starting point and will learn what we are ready to learn.

In the Multilevel Hakomi training format, we can find people who are at a different place in the five stages of learning in the same training, on one day, in one practice, getting individually relevant learning. The multilevel training groups are set up to hold a space for everyone at any Stage in our Hakomi development.

The Hakomi style of learning is spacious, open and self-directed. We can continue as long as we feel nourished by it. Whichever stage we are at there is always an invitation to learn more.