

Grounding and Presence



This first stage is a deliberate exploration of the qualities of your own sense of Ground and Presence, separate from anything else that is there in your body that may need your attention. It is an invitation to your body wisdom to show you how it feels to be grounded and to be present to yourself.

When we ground and anchor ourselves and bring what Ed McMahon calls a “Caring Feeling presence” we are saying to our “lonely and confused places: ‘you are not alone. I am here and I care’”. Mc Mahon goes on to say “those scary places inside us need to have this presence communicated to them by our own body.....Sooner or later they will start to tell us their story like a friend would. With this comes the processing and the change in feeling. This is focusing” (1993, pp. 114-115).

A caring presence enables a relationship to develop between the places/somethings in us that are scared and us (our I).

Tolle tells us: “the body then becomes a doorway, so to speak, into a deeper sense of aliveness underneath the fluctuating emotions and underneath your thinking” (2003 p. 21)

Grounding is a very simple procedure by which you take time to deliberately focus your attention on the feet (and sitting bones if you are sitting) to allow a felt sense to emerge of your body being supported by the ground (and chair if sitting). Grounding allows the body to let go of a lot of tension in a considerably short time span and can therefore also be used as part of an effective “mini emergency stop” when it all gets too much during stressful times.

See the next page for McEvenue’s Grounding exercise.

(McEvenue – Focusing with the whole body, 2006, p. 10 -13)

The Grounding exercise (McEvenue, 2006, p.10)

- Close your eyes and gently take your attention into your body. Feel the shift from the thinking world into the physical sense of yourself and begin to be open to the sensations inside.
- Begin by noticing your feet in contact with the floor. Feel that connection with the texture of the ground and how that stimulates and awakens more inside you
- From the ground up and from the inside out, you slowly begin to notice your body. Feel the support from the ground up through your feet, calves, knees, thighs and pelvic girdle.
- (If you are sitting) Become aware of your sitting bones in contact with the chair. Slowly move your attention further upwards to the belly, diaphragm, ribcage and lungs. Notice the upper chest, shoulders and arms. At the same time keep feeling that support from the floor and the chair
- From the ground up, gradually become aware of yourself and how you are being supported by your environment (floor/chair). Take a moment to really let go into that support. See if you can just let that sense of being supported be in your consciousness so that your body begins to know that it is being held and supported by the environment.
- When the body realizes that it can let go to this support, shifts may begin to happen. Once it knows it is being supported, it can let go of a lot. If the habitual tightness and tension of holding itself up. This gives the internal parts of you more breathing room. For instance, your breathing may deepen. Just enjoy this sensation. If nothing is happening, that's fine too.
- If you lose the thread, always go back to the sense of your feet in contact with the floor (or sitting bones in contact with the chair if you are sitting) and then move your attention upward again
- Now notice how your head and how it is anchored in the neck and the neck anchored into the shoulders. Also notice the throat. Again there may be some adjustments happening as the head and neck begin to let go of the habitual tightness with which they hold themselves.
- Now scan the whole body and notice the sense of your whole self present in this moment, separate from all the things that want your attention. You can say “hello” to them and let them know they can have your attention later. But for now, just stay with the sense of yourself as it is felt from inside your body as you continue to let go to the support of your environment.
- Welcome any shifts in the sense of yourself and in the body. There may be some adjustments or movements beginning to happen as you relax and let go more into that support.
- LONG PAUSE. Give yourself another minute or two to enjoy and receive what has come and then invite your body to come to a resting point and allow your eyes to open when you feel ready.