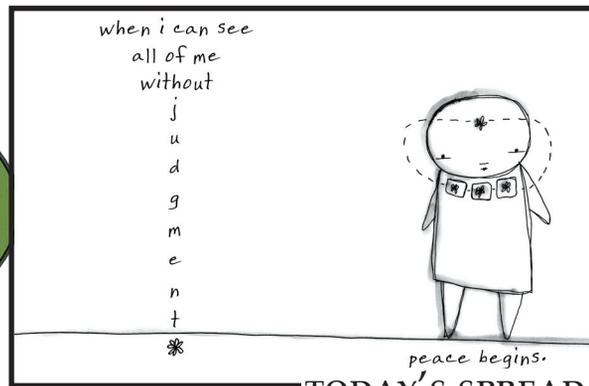
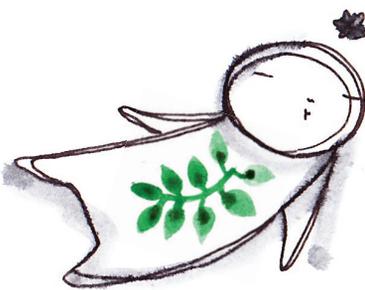


Paying Attention to the Body as a First Step



TODAY'S SPREAD
from *i See peace*



Many of our beliefs are frozen in place by repressed feelings. This means that as we begin looking at beliefs long held rigid and firm, we may feel like we're "coming apart." It could be disorienting. This is actually a good sign, especially if you know how to support yourself to allow feelings to move through.

Repressed feelings when first approached could feel overwhelming, as if they might obliterate us. We may feel like "I can't do this." Or like the world doesn't make sense. You just want to go back to a predictable feeling that everything's familiar and step away from the unknown.

In cases like this, one of the most important things you can pay attention to is your body. Do this first and foremost. Don't try to calm your thoughts or stop having emotions. You don't even have to slow down to do this. Begin as soon as you can. Just notice everything. Notice if your thoughts are racing. Notice if your chest is pounding, your hands feel cold and clammy or you feel tight in the stomach or chest.

While the Western style of thought is physically focused, it is not focused on the physical experience of being in your body. The focus is directed to the external world and the body is more or less dissociated from except for how it looks on the outside. So for some people this may take practice, especially if you tend to be very mental.

Good ways to begin using the power of your body's presence is to feel your weight. If you're standing notice your feet on the ground. If you're sitting feel your bottom on the chair. If you're lying down feel the whole of your back. If you do not have feeling in these areas, be aware of the weight of your head or hands. Notice the temperature of different parts of your body. Are there any sensations, tingly, thick, heavy, butterflies in different parts of your body?

Do a brief inventory, checking in with your feet and legs, full torso, arms and hands, shoulders and neck, face and head. What is the feeling in each of these areas? Over time you may notice that energy moves through your body in relatively predictable ways. But noticing the energy and how it moves will change it. Pay attention to that too. Notice when things change.



If we attend to the body first, thoughts and feelings will have a more stable container. Since all of the systems are connected, having a stable physical container will help stabilize thoughts and feelings. As these stabilize they will in turn strengthen the body.

So even though we're working with thoughts and feelings, attending to the body first matters most when the going gets rough.



Make sure of course that you're warm and safe, fed and watered. Trust that when big energy in the form of emotions moves through, you will become more and more stable. Feelings are meant to be mobile. Creating an open channel for them to flow through is our goal. It's not that you won't have hard feelings sometimes. Hard things happen. There are feelings. But they won't get stuck inside of you. They will move through you, leaving you free.

How do you know a feeling is moving?

When you pay attention to your body, you will notice the sensations change. You may feel warm in different areas. You may even feel tingly, almost like you can feel the blocked energy loosening up, moving around and moving out to bigger parts of your body until you can't feel the tingling anymore.

Not only will your body sensations change, but as your body relaxes down again, notice your emotions and your thoughts. It may seem subtle at first, but over time you will find your thoughts more organized and your emotions more simple, fluid and stable. When you make a long term practice of this, it becomes your natural default and you become an open channel for feelings to move through you no matter what happens. *In this, there is peace.*

