

Centering

Centering is a concept that most of us can relate to – what does it mean? I like to think of it as being synchronized between body, mind and spirit. There is a harmony here where we are able to be in the experience of this moment. We usually are in the habit of living in our heads, which uses only part of what is available to us. When centered, we experience life more directly. It is wonderfully satisfying.

A Grounding Exercise

Make yourself comfortable and simply let yourself begin to relax. Allow your eyes to close. Bring your awareness to your breath. Breathing in slowly and naturally. Breathing out easily and relaxed. Each breath is like a wave, allowing you to become even more relaxed. Let any outside sounds wash through you, letting you go deeper and deeper inside.

Imagine a cord starting at the top of your head and traveling down your spine, out your tailbone and sinking deep into the earth. Imagine this grounding cord going down to the center of the earth. Deep into the earth. Know that this cord connects you solidly to the earth. Allow yourself to feel this connection: peaceful, quiet, easy.

From this deeply relaxed, deeply grounded state of being, check in with your body. Let any tension you notice just melt and drain down the cord. Now, let any thoughts or ideas melt and drain down the cord. Everything you need at this moment is right here. Let yourself rest in this relaxed state of being. Let the earth hold you up. There is nothing you need to do. Take another breath, and just enjoy being here.

Coming to our Senses Experiment

Another form of centering is to concentrate on the senses. We experience the world through our senses. But they can atrophy from lack of use. Can we truly see it? Can we feel it? Can we know it?

Seeing: Tune in to your vision. Look at what is around you as if you were seeing it for the first time. What are the colors and textures? What are the shapes and how does the light play off it? Can you experience your seeing directly, see things as they are, instead as a series of opinions or ideas?

Hearing: Listen. Hear what is there, moment by moment, without trying to label or understand it. Notice sounds arising, passing, the silence inside and underneath sounds. Can you simply let sound come to you and meet the “ear consciousness” that arises in the bare experience of hearing?

Touch: Imagine yourself in an ocean of air. Feel the air against your skin and as it enters through your nose and travels down your throat. Feel anything that is touching you. Put your feet solidly on the ground and notice how it comes to meet your feet. You push down, the ground pushes up.

Smell/Taste: Are there fragrances in the air around you? Can you detect fragments of your last meal, of a neighbor’s barbeque, or sweet garden smells? Tune in to smell, see what is there to be noticed and what feelings it stirs within you. When you eat, notice both smell and taste. Try eating very slowly – breathing in the unique fragrance of the food before you put it in your mouth. Then hold it on your tongue and see how many different taste and texture sensations you are aware of.