



### How this little e-book came into being

It all started with a whim of inspiration on a June morning in 2017. I was going for a walk on Wilhelminenberg hill near my home. As I was walking on my usual route and I was enjoying the blue sky, the clouds and the green hilly landscape surrounding me, little pieces of information merged into the following words: 'My Summer of Presence'. As I continued on my walk, the pieces of the puzzle came together. It would be an online program where you get an email every day with an inspiration for a moment of presence for a month. It's fun and feels light. It isn't hard work. It's a reminder of how delightful and fresh life can feel when I fully inhabit my body and move through the day exploring the nature that surrounds me with my senses open anda curious.

This project would also give me a chance to practice making illustrations, a creative outlet and new hobby of mine that I had discovered recently.

I would participate in a program like that. For me, it wasn't like one of those 30-day challenges that make you build a new habit by doing things that are challenging or hard. Where you have to face your fears and stick with it. (Those are all commendable qualities.) But this was supposed to be different. Practicing embodied presence and learning about focusing your attention is already a great skill to practice. And it is one that can be enjoyable, especially if it's the summertime and people want to have a good time.

So, I sat down and started planning, making lists of categories of practices, collecting ideas for subjects and illustrations, I started writing and collecting ideas for images. A few weeks later, to kick off the holiday month of July, My Summer of Presence went online. And because it was a summer program, it was online only for that season. I took it offline and that's where it has been sitting since then. But this program and the practices - some of them I also use in my one-to-one work and workshops - didn't let me go.

I kept coming back to it because I like it so much. And then, in the summer of 2018 I realized that idea was conceived with a summery feeling inside, but that the presence practices actually work all year round.

My Summer of Presence has since transformed into Moments of Presence. And this is the e-book version you're reading right now.

In my work, I guide and teach people about being present to have their full abilities and capacities available in the moment so they can go with the flow of life in a harmonious way. Mostly it has to do with moving out of states of stuckness and acknowledging the as-is state to be able to move out of it. It's an art to be able to deal with the challenging situations we encounter in life. An integral part of practicing and honing this art is by adding little moments of presence practice that are fun, build confidence and awareness. Having those easy moments where you consciously choose to do something for yourself and where you focus your attention on yourself and your body is what builds up self-confidence and awareness.



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Take five minutes to be barefoot and walk consciously. Feel your feet on the ground. Ideally you walk on natural terrain.

We talk a lot of being or feeling grounded. It's quite easy to get there. Feel your toes and heel as you move on the soft surface of the earth. Breathe. Let go of your thoughts. Be.

Being aware of your feet is what grounds you, literally.

### **ENJOY**

PS: If you don't have time to make it to green space or the weather doesn't allow it, anything goes. Barefoot at home, on wooden floors, the carpet, or on the street.

PPS: You have around 200,000 nerve cells in the sole of each foot. So, it's a total of 400,000 nerve cells that you're activating when you walk barefoot. Walking barefoot and feeling your feet on the ground is an easy way to be more present. It connects you to the ground and allows your mind to calm down.



Take five minutes today, or however much time you want and can for yourself, for conscious breathing while lying down.

Breathing is probably the most essential activity that keeps you alive. No matter if it's conscious or unconscious it impacts your well-being, energy level and awareness.

And breathing consciously is a simple way of reconnecting body and mind.

Today's practice has the focus on the out-breath.

Your exhale is important for how well and deeply you can relax. It happens by itself. Your lungs know at what speed they want to let the air out. The tempo can also change. Exhale with the intention of relaxing deeply.

Breathe consciously for 5 minutes with attention to your out-breath.

ENJOY YOUR RELAXED SELF.



What do you need when you get tired?

I'm convinced a cup of coffee is not the only answer. The answers will vary. You don't need the same thing all the time to rest well and recuperate.

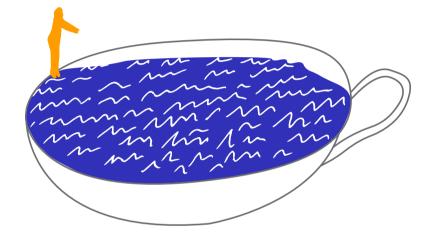
Today, take a few minutes to contemplate what you need when you get tired. Think of an average day. Is there a particular time when you feel snoozy? What do you need to recuperate energy? Here are a few ideas:

a walk, or a stretch, some alone time, to relax your low belly, being away from the computer, a few minutes of resting your eyes in the dark,...
... or a cup of coffee (I didn't rule it out entirely).

Write down what you need when you get tired.
And today, when you have a moment of tiredness, give yourself what you need.



# Checking in with your emotions



Emotions are like waves, they come and go. They emerge and put you in relation to the outside world. They tell you how you feel about something. They move you, figuratively and literally.

There is no good or bad emotions. The full spectrum of emotions is important to have a rich life. Still, we have a tendency to ignore the ones we deem bad or negative.

Today's prompt is for you to check in with your emotions.

Breathe with how you feel, no matter if your mind finds it's a good or bad emotion. There's a reason for it to be there. It's always on your side, giving you a clue about how to navigate through the situation you are in right now.

Take your current emotion or mood in and expand with it.

Do you dare to swim with your emotion? Test the waters! I'm sure there's something special waiting for you.

ENJOY. ALL OF IT IS YOU.

In our busy lives we often don't look further than our smart phone or the person standing next to us on the bus. And if you're a city dweller like me you are surrounded by buildings. It's easy to forget looking at the sky or into the far distant because we are getting lost in the short-distance or short-term goals. We're slowly becoming myopic as a default setting.

### But there's so much out there to see!

Today, I invite you to look as far as the eye can see for five full minutes.

No matter if it's while you're walking or sitting. If you're surrounded by buildings or nature.

Look into the horizon. And feel your body and how it is in connection with the big wide world.

### ENJOY THE BIG PICTURE VIEW.





### Breathing is essential.

Today's breathing practice is an opportunity to give enough space – not only to the lungs – but to all phases of breathing. In a way to give equal rights and importance to all phases of breathing:

The moment you inhale, the moment you hold, the moment you exhale and the moment you leave the air out.

A possible result of this political act? More freedom! And bigger lung capacity

### **POSITION**

sitting – relaxed and pelvis straight (sitz bones on chair)
arms behind your back – another trick where position supports (re)gaining space (and not having to do anything extra)

### **PROCEDURE**

IN-BREATH: (silently) count to five HOLD BREATH: count to five OUT-BREATH: count to five HOLD BREATH: count to five

Easy-peasy-right? Set your time to five minutes and you're ready to roll. LET'S ENGAGE IN THIS ACT OF EQUAL RIGHTS!



Any subject coming to mind after reading this quote? Today's moment is for contemplation.

What is it you usually say to yourself or think about yourself that limits you? Does it have to do with how you look, your smarts, your willpower or insecurities?

Write down what comes to your mind.

Afterwards turn one limiting thought into a possibility. Find a new phrase that opens up possibilities instead of solidifying something old that you no longer need in your life to know or think about yourself.

(I don't want to give examples so that it doesn't turn into a mathematical equation and mechanical exercise. Think how you can phrase the subject from a point of view of possibility. Anything goes. Helpful pointers: formulate it positively (no negation) and in present tense.

PS: While you rewrite, feel all of your body and wake up the sensation of possibilities that lie within you.

YOU CHOOSE THE BOX OF YOUR THINKING

### be daring

It's not always easy to pursue your goals. You know you want it, but at times there can be miles between you and the goal – a mile of tasks or a sea of emotions to go through. This practice is a simple way to get on your way when your goal seems scary or far away.

Before you start, here are some pointers for the practice to be effective:

- do the entire practice with the intention of confidence and minimum effort
- don't make the steps too big it's enough to step towards your goal. Keep your balance.
- Your hand grabs firmly and with resolve & minimum effort
- Be sure to let go again too (as you step back)
- You can do this exercise also with a specific goal in mind every step you take will be for having this one thing in your life.



START: hip-width apart, eyes look straight ahead &



STEP 1: make a step with your right leg while grabbing with your right hand at hip level



STEP 2: step back to the basic position



STEP 3: make a step with your left leg while grabbing with your left hand at hip level



STEP 4: back to basic position

There are two variations for this practice:

You can either alternate left and right with every step.

Or you can do the practice 2 minutes stepping forward with your right foot and then switch two minutes stepping forward with your left.



With movement I mean your own movement. Not a political movement nor a food trend. Initially, this day was called 'Let's take the management out of life', because I believe we manage too much. Managing means planning, and behaving like a grown-up and overall it's something that is not fun. And management can also mean imposing your ideas on your body.

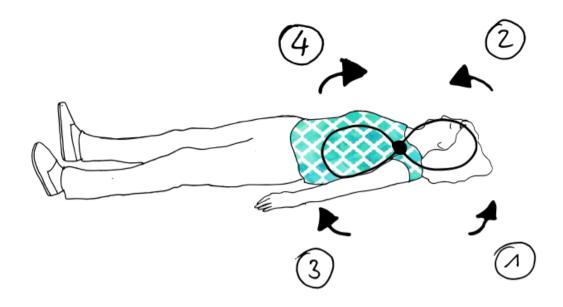
On the other hand, there is your beautiful body which is happily providing what you need in the moment. It brings a splash of stress or annoyance just in the right moment when you need this extra energy to move along with life.

In the spirit of going with the easy, natural movement of life, here is today's practice:

When you have a moment where you either realize you're over-planning or over-thinking or when you are bothered by something, listen to your body and go with its natural movement. Give space to your sensations and move out of.

### VOLIR BODY KNOWS THE WAY

PS: You don't need to plan this situation today. If you are having a great day without a cloudy moment, simply enjoy! If you do encounter a situation with a bit of stress or annoyance, you will know this is it. Listen to your body's movement. It can't be wrong. (Or can it? Not sure, but worth trying anyways.)



connecting head and heart

Today has a short breathing meditation in store for you. It's one for connecting head and heart with a simple imagined movement.

You lie down and breathe for five minutes.

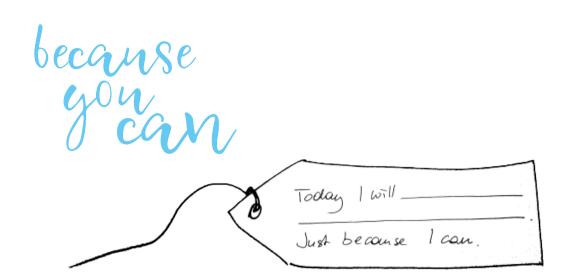
And in line with your breathing rhythm, you follow an invisible line, shaped like an eight, in your body. The line starts in the throat/neck and connects your head with your heart or chest.

IN-berath: from the neck back up the skull (backside of the head)

OUT-breath: from the top of the head back to the throat (front side of the head) IN-breath: from the neck to back down the upper back to the diaphragm

OUT-breath: from the diaphragm back up to the throat.

If the description is too complicated, have a look at the picture above. Good to go? Hope so.
ENIOY THE CONNECTION



An exciting day is waiting for you!

Your presence practice is to do something just because you can.

Your mind might want get its way trying to convince you that you can't do something because ...

- ... you don't have the time for it,
- ... you need to take another person's feelings into consideration, or
- ... because you're not good at it.

If the mind plays up, let it be.

What is it you can do?

What do you feel like doing?

What single action or activity would make this day special for you?

Doing something without agenda, without reason, without purpose, without needing to do it is powerful.

Do something just because you can.

Whatever your one action is today, e.g. greeting a stranger, taking a nap, baking a cake - do. I know you can!

If your one action doesn't fit into the five minute category, it is not a problem. (Make time or do it tomorrow or on the weekend.) But you can use your presence time for thinking about what this one thing is that will make this day special for you. Or scribble or doodle your ideas onto a piece of paper. Or feel how the idea of doing this one thing today makes you feel. (Best if you combine any of the first options with the later for full impact.)

DARE AND DO

PS: Are you as excited as me about this thought? Just because I can – gives so much more freedom to my actions. What an experience!

## Kankokaipun

Kaukokaipuu is a Finnish word that can loosely be translated as 'being homesick for a place that you haven't been to.'

It comes from: kauko - faraway kaipuu - yearning

Do you know this feeling of wanting to be far away in a special place? What's your Kaukokaipuu? How does it feel being there?

Describe how you feel being in this place? Make it real with your experience. Take your five minutes to get in touch with your very own Kaukokaipuu and write down or draw how it makes you feel.

OR JUST CONNECT WITH FEELING THIS PLACE THAT'S SOMEWHERE INSIDE OF YOU.





Water makes up a big part of your body. It is vital for your survival. There are probably many moments in your day when you touch water.

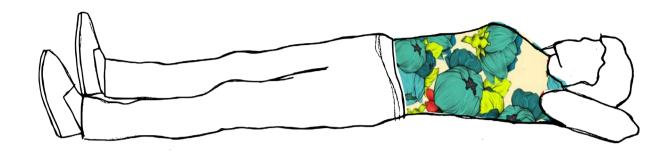
We take a shower, wash our hands or rinse the dishes.

We drink water, we water our plants

How often are you paying attention to this element while you engage with it?

This presence practice is to pay tribute to water. Take a moment today when you are in touch with water. And really be in touch with the water.

PS: A cheat day, right? You have moments in your life when you touch water anyways, no need to make extra time. Are you getting the hang of this presence thing?!



# the simplicity breathing

I love days that start with simplicity. And I treasure the moments when I am aware that just being is enough. (I don't have enough of them. Do you?)

Breathing is one of the human abilities that happen naturally. And when you are consciously breathing you immediately feel more alive and in your body.

So, today's presence practice is breathing. In one particular posture that gives extra space to your lungs. And it's super simple:

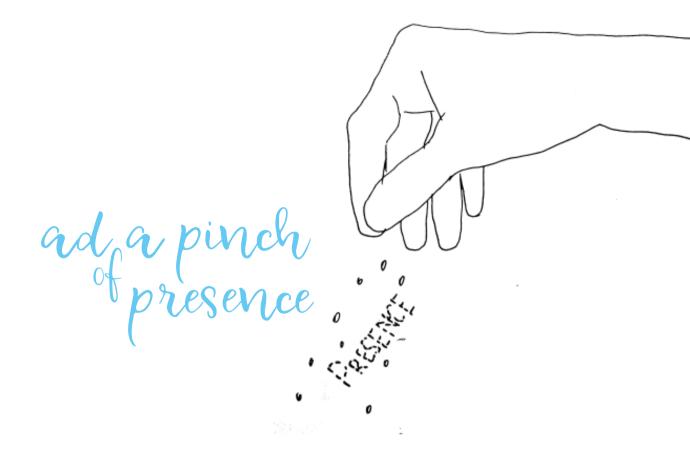
Lying down, put your hands behind your neck. This position gives extra space to the lungs in the chest. It nicely opens up your shoulders too and you don't even have to do anything.

Close your eyes and be attentive to your breathing and how you feel the chest.

Breathing in- feel the lungs expand

Breathing out- let the air out by itself

TRUST YOUR FABULOUS BODILY SELF.



There are many recipes out there for the perfect morning routine, how to exercise, how to eat well, etc. I'm always playing around with mine. And I'm sure you have your sources of inspiration. Mostly those recommendations have to do with things (e.g. what to eat), or actions (what to do first). For me, there is one magical ingredient missing.

I only recommend adding this one element to your recipe. The special ingredient called conscious presence. Choose to be present in a routine you have in your daily life.

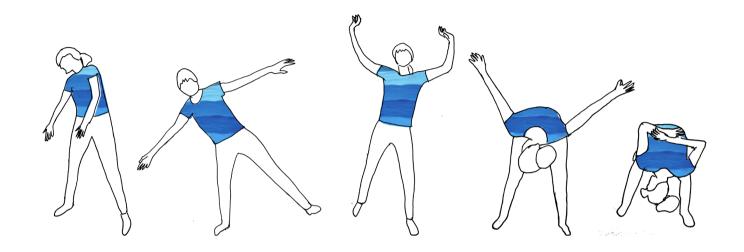
You don't need to write or plan anything. You don't need to evaluate if what you are usually doing is good or bad.

Check in with your body: don't hold on to any thoughts, breathe fully, feel your feet on the ground and the space around you.

Add a pinch of presence to a routine. Only for a few minutes.

### ENJOY THE MAGIC

PS: Is this day another cheat day? You don't even have to make time for this presence practice. At least I don't think so. You just need to choose to be present. Isn't this great?!



### move to your mood

What mood are you in right now?

Take a minute and get in touch with it.

And then pick a song of your choice that is in tune with your mood.

Or pick a song that brings you in a mood that you like.

Put it on and listen to it.

If you feel like it, move your body in a way that you are dancing with the mood of the song.

### **EVERYTHING IS VIBRATION AND MOVEMENT**

PS: Curious about what song I'm putting on? Here it is. (click here)



The neck can be an area of tension. It is carrying your beautifully smart head. Unfortunately, often there's too much effort that shows in tensions, pains and lack of headspace.

Today's practice is intended to give some fresh wiggle room to your neck so your head can rest calmly on it.

This is one way to stretch your neck:

Turn your head 45 degrees to the right

And then gently stretch towards the back as if you've got water in your ear and you want to let it drip out over the backside of your shoulder.

This creates a stretch on the front left of the neck.

Take a couple of deep breaths and ease into the stretch.

Move back to the neutral starting position and repeat on the other side.

PS: Ever wondered if giraffes also need neck stretches?

breathing into the Sides the ribs

When people talk about breathing, the discussion usually centers around belly or chest breathing. I'm not taking sides.

Ideally you have both options and you can breathe in a way that fits your situation and activity.

Today, the focus is on the connecting piece: the diaphragm. It is elemental in the breathing process. This is also the area that connects the upper and the lower part of the body, or the active and the passive one. (Just imagine how great it feels when the movement in this area is fluid and free?)

Today's practice invitation is to give your full attention to this important area in the body.

Lying down, put your hands on one side of the ribs and breathe consciously. After a couple of minutes, change sides.

AWESOME, YOU'RE GOOD TO GO!





Moment #19 is dedicated to honoring non-productive time. I don't like to call it wasting time, because it's not wasted time. Not at all. We need time off of the subjects and tasks that we are working on to get new ideas and recharge our batteries.

Inventions often happen when people get together and enjoy off-time instead of working on solving a problem. I have my best ideas when I'm walking or doing some mundane task like washing dishes. In this time the brain makes connections it cannot come up with consciously or when under pressure.

Today, take your time to integrate information or an experience. Take your five minutes to digest – to make it your own, keep what nourishes you and to let go of what you no longer need. Whatever you want to use your five minutes for today, be generous with yourself and idle away.

### JUST BEING IS ENOUGH.

PS: Even if you are not doing anything, your body is still super active: It's pumping blood, digesting, moving cells and loads of other things. So in a way you could say that you're never lazy, you're just working on invisible layers of being. For your body to be healthy and work well, idle time would be on my prescription list. I know I could do with more of it. (A lot more, really.)

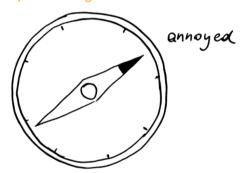


It can be fun to be bad, right!? Feeling bad usually doesn't feel good though.

Let's bring some power and clarity to this emotional subject with a super simple practice.

### But first off a few lines on the subject:

Today's prompt is a presence practice inviting you to tune your emotional compass to an emotion you probably don't appreciate very much: annoyance or anger.



When you give space to the sensations annoyance or anger evokes in your body, it transforms into energy and power. Maybe this is what this 'bad' emotion is for: to have the power to change what you don't like.

It might even brighten your mood. Who knows? But you can find out by giving it a go.

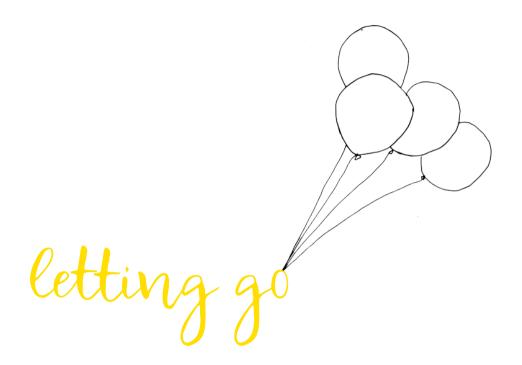
Based on this idea, I want you to experiment with your annoyance and what it brings to your body today: Use your five minutes to get in touch with how you feel when something annoys you.

Remember a situation when you recently felt like it. Then start paying attention to your diaphragm, rib cage, upper belly.

Breathe and expand with what you feel.

How does it feel giving this emotion space in your body?

BE A DAREDEVIL!



You're getting closer to the end of the 30 days. And the practices are getting simpler as you move along, no?

Today is another simple one: Choose one thing, and then let it go – physically

Can be anything: a tension

a thought

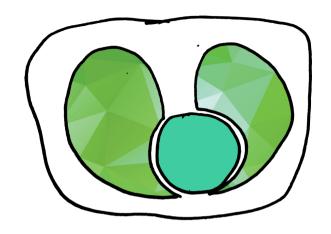
a mood.

Any experience has a physical expression. When you pay attention to your body, you'll be able to detect one body area where you are holding on to something.

Letting go doesn't have to be hard. It is just a choice.

### **ENJOY THE LIGHTNESS**

PS: It doesn't mean that the thing you choose to let go won't come knocking again along the way. It will pop up when there's something more to (re)gain or learn for you. But for the time being, you can let go. And let it be.



hugging the heart

Every time you take a breath, your lungs are hugging your heart.

Isn't this a beautiful visual for what happens in your body!?

The inspiration for this illustration came from Leila Stuart who I did an online session on embodied anatomy with.

When you look at a cross section of the lungs and heart, you see that the lungs are bracing the heart in a heart shape. And every single time you breath in, you are hugging your heart.

I like this image as it also gives me a sense of the dimensions of my lungs and my body.

I know many people feel constricted in their breathing and there is often this idea in our heads that the chest needs to expand greatly to breathe freely.

When you become aware of the lungs moving in all directions – also inwards – maybe it becomes easier. Want to give it a try?

If you want to experience what it's like hugging your heart while breathing, you can <u>listen to a guided</u> practice here or on Soundcloud.

FEEL WARMLY EMBRACED.



Are you somebody who enjoys play? Playing silly games or dressing up?

I couldn't say I am, but I love the attitude of playfulness. And having this curious feeling and enjoyment of the moment in my belly, my fingers and my chest makes me happy.

Approaching a situation or task with an adventurous spirit, not knowing what will happen, what ideas I might have and how I will get to the final result, is fun.

This is play.

Whenever you have this quality in you body, work seems easy and fluent.

Today, I invite you to get in touch with the playful side of yourself.

Wake up this feeling when you're utterly enjoying what you are doing.

Being curious with your hands, feet and your senses.

Pick an activity that is utterly enjoyable like being on a swing. Or pick a situation and bring this attitude of play into it.

Spend your five minutes doing something just for the fun of it.

HAVE FUN, GO PLAY.

## gour emotional compass

Emotions are energy that allows you to move in the world. An emotion tells you how you relate to who or what surrounds you.

Today, the invitation to you is to experiment with an emotion and let yourself be moved by it.

Pick a situation where you felt angry, joyful, sad, or tired.

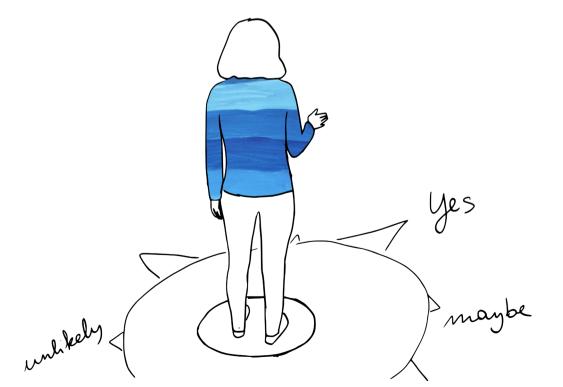
Stand up and remember the situation. Where were you? Who was around?

Pay attention to your body for a few moments.

Feel in what direction your body is moving or wants to move. Forward, backwards? Inside? To the left?

Give in to this motion. Let your emotion move you until you find a position that feels well.

### LET YOUR EMOTION BE YOUR GUIDE



### essentials



We live in a world of excess. Too much stuff, but also too much noise, physical efforts, too many thoughts.

What are the bare essentials you need to feel well?

Write them down. Anything goes. Take five minutes and jot down everything that comes to your mind. At the end, see if you want to keep everything you put down. If not: cross out what you can do without.

Whenever you feel overwhelmed, you can come back to this list and bring one essential back into your life. If you feel like it, take another five minutes today and spend them on one of your essentials. In whatever shape or form this may be.

Your bare essentials are important not because you should be modest or suffer or give things up. They are pointers as to what you need to experience the richness of life. You can resort to your essentials when something feels overwhelming or you feel off course.

### SIMPLICITY IS KEY

PS: When I did my bare essentials list, I used only one or two words per item. The only adjective that came up was good. Not super, the best, state-of-the-art, brilliant, or another superlative. How about yours? What's good for you? Maybe good is really good enough.



Excitement is a nice feeling, don't you think? It's this warm and fuzzy nervousness in the upper belly that something new is going to happen. This feeling smells of freshness and new adventure.

Is there anything going on in your life that calls for some excitement?

Today's invitation to you is to think of a situation that you are excited about.

Pay attention to your upper belly.
Breathe into the excitement, give it space.
And allow this energy to move up into the chest, the arms, and into the head.
Let it shower you with freshness.

PS: Excitement is a member of the fear family. The energy of this family usually moves in the same way: from the belly up in order to make you awake to what's going on outside. Practicing to allow excitement to bubble up and spread in your body also prepares you for a more intense experience from other varieties of this kind.



Do you know those moments when life is hectic and stressful and you don't know what to do next? You might operate on this buzzy energy that makes you move with haste.

This embodied practice is one that can bring groundedness and a sense of stability whenever you need it. It is so simple and you don't need anything but your own two feet on the ground. It's easy to do anywhere and anytime.

Feel like trying it? Here's how to do it

You start standing hip-width apart
You move your heels up a bit and let your body drop on the ground
Do this for 1-5 minutes.

This practice supports grounding and (re)gaining headspace as it allows the energy in the body to distribute with minimum effort

TIME TO GET GROUNDED



Connecting with nature is to connect with yourself.

Clouds are always in movement. They are alive. They change shape – just like we do.

How much time are you giving to clouds? I discovered my love for clouds when I was living on a hill and the sky was my morning companion. Walking to work, I could overlook the city with the best-est view from the top.

Today, take five minutes of being aware of your body in a place where you can see the sky. Make time for cloud spotting.

You can also play with clouds. If you figure out how to swing on a cloud or dance with it, let me know! I'd love to try it.

### LIVE WITH YOUR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS AND YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND

PS: The practice today was inspired the founder of the Cloud Appreciation Society. He also gave a TED talk 'Cloudy with a chance of joy.'



Daniela is a body-based coach and bodyworker and supports people in finding their way to full-body presence so they have all their skills and abilities available when they need them.

With a background is in translation studies and many years of professional experience in communication and language teaching, she embarked on a new and more holistic journey into the subject of being human and how humans interact, learn and grow together in 2011. She trained as a Qualified Practitioner of the Grinberg Method and has since her diploma used her eclectic taste to integrate various tools and approaches into an effective and practical presence model that she shares in one-to-one coachings and teaches in group settings.

She is the co-creator of the Embodied Inquiry process and a founding member of The Holding Space Vienna.

You can find out more about Daniela's work on her website. www.bodies-at-work.com

