

Loving Awareness Practice:

In our Loving Awareness Practice, I invite you to sit comfortably and explore sensations of the body with curiosity; with open heart-ed, non shaming and non blaming curiosity. As we gently move through the body with full presence self-awareness, stories and judgment are bound to come up. When you notice that the story teller version of yourself popped in to narrate or to pass judgment, gently acknowledge the story teller within you and then gently bring your curious observer self back into the drivers seat. The story teller version of our mind will eventually catch on as you repeatedly bring it back to the practice of full attentive awareness. As we learn to be fully present in our body and our body's sensations in a non judgmental way, we are given the opportunity to expand our horizon awareness and see things in a new light. We also learn to bring a loving awareness into the way we connect with interact with ourselves.

As we begin to find ease in sitting with ourselves, even within our feeling states of joy, sadness, anxiousness, grief, relief, ect....,in a listening and compassionate way we move away from the stuck patterns of the storyteller and gently move to expanded curious loving awareness. You may find as the story fades away so does shame and blame, for yourself and others. I think of the curious exploration as an art form. As I explore a sensation, I notice if it has a color, or a shape. Are there any apex points, are there any shadows? Maybe words pop into my head as I explore. Try not to lead the experience, but just let it happen. If there is something that needs to be examined or reflected upon, you can take note and make time later to reflect upon these insights that came up during your practice, but for now just be in full presence of your own being.

Full body awareness and emotions:

Many forms of therapy ask us to name our emotion so that we can distance ourselves a little bit from our emotions. In this way we can see them better or in a new light, and then choose how to move forward. But what if we just sit with ourselves in whatever emotion we are feeling and hold ourselves in loving and compassionate awareness without naming the emotion or placing judgment upon the feeling? All emotions are felt in the body. They are feeling states in your body. Yogi's believe that emotions are feeling sates that have been hijacked by judgment. Through Loving Awareness practice, we try to sit with the feeling state wherever and however it shows up in the body without judgment but instead with that curious and accepting awareness of what is just is. Emotion is the mind reacting to something. The 'something', or the event already happened. Now what is left is the minds reaction to the event that sits in the body as an emotion. If you can sit with the emotion in the body until the judgment passes and it becomes a feeling state that is non judgmental and accepted based, then you have provided your mind with a loving awareness that says, you are safe, you are loved, you are free from the limitations of your mind.

My Story:

Once when I was reading a letter from a friend of mine, my face started turning hot and red and my throat got really hot and kind of clogged up. I stopped reading to just notice. I said "wow, isn't that interesting, I think I just witnessed anger in my body at what I was reading from my friend." This full body awareness allowed me to witness a feeling state and just sit with it without judgment until it dissipated. My attitude softened as a wave of compassion came over me. Then after I held space for myself I read the rest of the letter. I took the time to reflect on where the source of this feeling state came from. I realized that I was being misunderstood by my friend. Instead of asking me questions, they assumed they knew how I was feeling. And this triggered a reaction of my childhood in which I was frequently told how to feel, seemingly never asked how I felt. Without holding this awareness and non judgmental space for myself to reflect, I would have immediately reacted and written back that they had no idea what they were talking about. Or I might have just not said anything and ended up resenting this friend because I did not have the ability to process my feelings and realize the root cause of the feeling state. By moving into full body awareness, and holding space for my own feelings at the throat and face, I was able to sort out my feelings and respond in a gentle way by holding them accountable and suggesting that they please ask me how I feel and what I needed instead of assuming they knew what I needed.

So, lets practice: I have included 3 different scripts:

Script 1: Moving from the head down through the legs

Namaste and welcome to your being, all the parts of you; physical, pranic, mental, emotional and spiritual. I invite you to close your eyes and settle into your seat with an effortless and open energy body. To open your energy body, just invite yourself to open to the practice and let in whatever wisdom the practice has to offer. If you wish to take a mudra, you may have your own that you would like to use or if I may I will suggest a few mudras: If you wish to invite wisdom and knowledge into your practice, with the palms of your hands up on the thighs place your first finger and thumbs together in the Om mudra. Or if you are thinking you want to bring clarity and balance into your life you might try placing the fingers and the thumb of one hand to the other and rest the arms on your lap. / Begin to become aware that you are breathing. Maybe even feeling the coolness of the breath coming in through the nostrils. Let all your worries and tensions drop down through your sit bones flowing away from you or flowing into Mother Earth's loving embrace. Allow your breath to flow naturally with the belly soft, shoulders relaxed and lower jaw relaxed. This awareness practice asks that you put your exploration hats on as I guide you through the various parts of your being. You may even want to visualize your exploration hat. Your exploration hat will help you be curious rather than judgmental and remind you to listen rather than narrate. Both these skills take time to acquire as the mind wants to label, judge and narrate, so please be patient with yourself and when the mind does start to interrupt your exploration, mentally say neti, neti, neti and then gently bring the mind back into a listening mode. The mind is sharp, it will eventually follow your cue.

Please take your full curious awareness to the space between your ears, noticing if anything comes up for you. No worries if nothing stands out. But sometimes the conscious mind or the subconscious mind communicates in colors, single words, symbols, or as a scene flashing across the screen. Or maybe you are drawn to a specific area; just be there, no right or wrong, no judgment. / Gently move your awareness to the area of the throat. Again just listening and being in full presence with yourself at the throat. No worries if nothing comes up for you as you move through your body, just being in full loving awareness with yourself can have profound effects. / Now move your awareness to your shoulders and down through your arms and hands. And if stories come up, make a mental note to explore the stories in a healing and compassionate light and time but for now we are just bringing our full awareness presence into our entire being. Do your arms feel the same as each other or maybe there are differences, no right or wrong. / Move your full listening awareness to area of the physical heart and to the pranic heart center right in the middle of the sternum. Feel what is present at the heart region. If any unworthiness comes up just move right into the middle of that feeling state and accept its presence. Just like you were listening to your good friend. Everyone has feelings of unworthiness, everyone. If stories come make a mental note to take the time to unfold the stories in a healing and compassionate light but for now just snuggle in your being with your full loving awareness. / Move your awareness to navel area. Just be present. / Move your awareness to the pelvic floor, and your sit bones. Notice if one sit bone feels heavier than the other. No right or wrong, just is. / Now gently move your awareness down through the legs and feet. Envision your energetic roots reaching down through your legs and feet into the loving support of Mother Earth. How does it feel to be fully connected and grounded in the care of Mother Earth. / Now as if to say, I accept myself as I am in this moment, form a gentle smile on your face and notice what you feel as a whole, perfect in all your imperfectness, being. / And when you are ready, slowly lower your eyes towards your lap and when you are ready open your eyes.

Namaste. And I thank you for being brave enough to just sit with yourself in acceptance and loving awareness. And if you feel there is room for improvement you are not alone. This is the practice. To become confident in something, you have to practice.

Shanti

Script 2: Moving through emotional states

Namaste. I invite you to find a comfortable position either laying down or a comfortable seated position in which you can find an effortless and open posture. The more we can make our physical body comfortable on the outside, the more we can move and explore our body from the inside. / Relax the legs and let any tension you may have move out through your sit bones or out through your legs. / Relax the belly to promote freer breathing and relax the shoulders away from the ears. / Let the face soften and if it ever feels appropriate to smile or make other facial gestures, please do so. In this practice I am asking that you explore sensations of the body with curiosity and with your listening hats on; moving away from judgment, story telling and shame. Emotions are felt in the body so we will also be exploring the feeling of emotional states in the body but more in the way of a feeling state rather than naming and blaming. The idea of the practice is to explore your being in a nonjudgmental listening mode. / Please become aware of your breathing. Notice it come in through the nostrils and then just follow it where ever it goes. You can either stay there where the breath took you or follow it back out through the nostrils. / If colors, symbols or feeling states come to you as you are exploring, just be in that space fully as if you could park yourself right in the middle of that color symbol or feeling state, just as you might lean in a bit closer to a good friend as they were sharing their story. / Except that the breath knows where to go to better serve you. / Now I want you to move to the first body sensation that comes up for you. Maybe it is the hardness of the floor beneath you or the chest expanding as you breath or maybe it is a feeling of uncomfortableness. Gently land there and bring your full nonjudgmental awareness to that feeling state. Explore its shape, size, and/or apex point but try to take yourself right into the middle of that sensation. See what happens. The thinking brain will try to come in and narrate a story line, and when you notice this has happened, mentally say neti, neti, neti and gently bring yourself back to your exploring self with your listening hat back on. If the feeling state brings up some tough stuff for you, move from the tough stuff story to the feeling state. This just means that the feeling state has been high-jacked by the judgmental thinking brain. Remember the ‘tough stuff’ already happened. There is nothing harming in the feeling state itself. Explore where you feel this in your body. Take full awareness into that area. / You might notice if the energy or feeling state changed at all as you created a safe space for it? / Now to explore emotions in the body, think of a time when you felt there was injustice in your life or in context to a worldly view. Notice how you feel and where you feel it. Again put on your listening caps and explore the feeling state while letting go of the story line. / Notice what happens. / If the story line keeps coming up, Neti, neti, neti. I am not thought. We are exploring feeling states in the body and learning to sit with ourselves without judgment but instead in loving awareness. / Now bring the feeling state of gratitude into your body. If you need to bring in the thinking brain for a moment to get the feeling state, do so but then try to drop the thoughts of the object of gratitude, and again move to bring full loving awareness into the feeling state. Notice where you feel gratitude and if any colors, words, symbols pop up for you. Hold onto the feeling state as long as you can, when the thinking brain comes around, just gently bring your awareness back to your body. / Now lets slowly and gently bring our awareness back to the floor or the chair you are resting on and start to bring your awareness back to the room you are in. / Take a moment to reflect on any insights you might have gained. / And in acceptance for yourself fully, let us place our hands in Namaste at the heart center.

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Script 3: Starting at the root chakra and moving up through the chakras

Namaste, welcome to a loving awareness practice exploring your energy body. / Allow yourself to sit in an effortless position with the spine long and vertical. Letting the pelvis tilt slightly forward or feeling your weight on the front edge of your sit bones will enhance the effortless and natural curvatures of the spine and bring you to a place of ease. Relax the belly, the shoulders down away from the ears, and relax the face. Let the breath release tension in the body and relax the mind, allow the exhalations to clear away mental stress and mind chatter, releasing downward through the sit bones and legs. Surrender your physical body to the Mother Earth's gravitational pull. / Bring your awareness to your breath and the space that the breath occupies in your body. / In this Loving Awareness Practice we are going to explore the areas of the chakras. In some meditations of the chakras, I ask you to reign them with an intention of balancing them, but for this exploration, I want you to move into that space where the chakras are just allow. / We will begin at the base of the spine with the root chakra. Please gently move your awareness to the pelvic floor and slightly above and slightly below. You need not know this is a chakra, just explore this space in your body. / When thoughts pop into your mind, *neti, neti, neti*, and come back to just being and listening. / If insights come into being or colors, move deeper into the space the insight or color came from. If the insight is important it will be there when you get done with the practice. If you grasp onto something, then you will just fear losing it, so let go of the insight and just explore the space. / Move your awareness up to the 2nd chakra which is in the space right in front of the sacrum. The lower ab to the sacrum. The sacrum is between the tailbone and the lumbar spine. / Allow your full loving awareness to rest in this space, nothing to do-no where to go. / Now move upward to the space of the navel center, the third chakra. That space from the belly button to the small of the back area and slightly below and slightly above. If an emotion or a story comes up, that is ok, just keep exploring the space that the emotion or story came from. The story is past tense, the space in your being that we are exploring is the present moment, the Now. / Move your full awareness up to the area of the heart center. So the area of the sternum and behind it to the thoracic spine. The entire chest cavity. Let your loving awareness rest in that space. Let yourself feel total acceptance in the moment. Let yourself feel freedom in this very moment. / Let the stories fade away, just enjoy the blessings of Now. / Move your full loving awareness up to the throat area. Bask in the space where silence originates. / If thoughts negate the silence, *neti, neti, neti*. Move back to full presence awareness, move back to the Now. / Now move your full presence in the area of the 6th chakra, the intuitive center. / Expand outward a bit into the entire brain area. / Enjoy this moment of divine goodness and openness. Explore the space in which consciousness resides. Do not name it, do not judge it, just be in this space with full loving accepting awareness. / Open up the crown center, share this moment with Universal consciousness. /

Slowly bring your awareness back your physical body. Begin to wiggle your toes, your fingers. / Take three deep breaths, 6-3-6. / Then lower your head towards your lap and when you are ready open your eyes.

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