Practice

Angela 2 — Week 3, Day 7, Session 2 — 35 minutes

Summary: Standing with one foot forward, Russell guides a practice of shifting weight through breath and imagination — stepping into life, and resting as the larger presence that welcomes what is ready to be released. The same sensing continues in sitting, turning the light around and picturing ordinary moments held in that warmth.

Opening

Standing.

I know Sissi has a flood in her house. She's handling the weather. And Barbara Scott will be leaving early, but she should be here.

Is anyone else leaving before, like, noon today?

Who? About what time?

Oh, when we break at lunch. Oh, okay, great.

So Barbara's the only one who will not complete the morning, correct?

Okay.

Have the right foot forward, and just begin shifting weight, feeling from your middle. Acting down and up.

Inhaling up.

Sending attention as deep as you can imagine, being over this point. Being — just a moment of being.

One of the discoveries that Feldenkrais and others — Mabel Todd, Sweigard, other people in the particularly strong movements in the early 20th century and mid-20th century toward physical aspects of — saw clearly that thinking, by thinking your spine, well, has an immediate neurological, physiological, measurable influence.

And as the clarity of your image, the clarity of your thought, grows, you can really think up tall. And it's not doing it. It's internally inviting. And it's really remarkable.

I mean, I love to move, and I think yoga's great, and Feldenkrais lessons are great, and I like running and swimming, and moving is wonderful. And the great majority of the benefits can be had through your imagination. It's really interesting.

Thinking up, thinking down, having the space around you.

There's a kind of school in elite athletics, training less. People are wearing out their bodies so much. Training less physically, but using mental training a lot more. Quite interesting.

Left foot forward. This time, lifting the head. We'll stay here, feeling of connecting as far as you can imagine, including the down space.

I think your whole body has a psychophysical, spiritual effect of just reaching and looking up.

[Silence 43 seconds]

Stepping into life

Move some people forward. Stagger.

Just right foot forward, feeling yourself. And again, this picture, as you radiate out.

It's inhaling forward. It's the sense of stepping into your life, situation in your life, showing up, and then coming back as the exhale, the going in, the lowering of the head, the asking for help and acknowledging that we need support from known and unknown sources.

Inhale, fold. And state: Ready, into your entirety of life. Here, to my best. Please help.

[Silence 34 seconds]

The larger self

In case I haven't made the distinction clear enough: when the left foot is forward, it's an exhale going forward. It's the feeling that I am the ocean. I've reversed my position. I am that larger self. I'm remembering that ground of being.

From the other image we're using, I am that larger light turned around.

This is not imagination. This is not grief or joy. This is not a judging state, consolation or a sadness. Those all change. This is the presence that doesn't.

And a big part of our work is returning to that position of consciousness.

That's something that grows in you over time till it becomes spontaneous, that there is this field of unconditional warmth that you are living in, even with your sorrow, even with your sadness, even with your loss.

We're not denying all that personal aspect of life that will be with us forever. A life of loss in many ways. And there's this radiance we also live in. Not to throw out one, but —

So there's this feeling of exhaling forward, of opening towards all the situations of life. And then as we inhale back, we're not lowering the head. We're welcoming into the ocean anything that that situation or that being — that personal self, if it's you, or that situation, if it's larger — is ready to let go of.

We are offering this large, large space, not a personal space, this large space that is willing to share.

Stay. Stay forward. So you can breathe when you're there. So, to exhale.

Doing, directing your personal healing or something — you're a vehicle. Inhaling.

[Silence 51 seconds]

Facing a situation

Let's turn around. Face outward. Again, the left foot is forward.

And so now you can — before we move, actually, just take a moment. You can close your eyes if you like.

You can imagine the temporal being, the historical self, that will be in a different situation over this next week — weeks. You can actually imagine if there's a particular place where you know you can lose that sense of largeness, that sense of presence, sense of welcoming.

Probably for most of us it could be any of the places in our life, but there might be one or two or three. I recommend staying with one at a time. Just a picture of yourself, or a sense of yourself, in a particular location that you're likely to be, and place your hands on your chest. And it's like you are radiating towards that one, as an invitation into the future to remember.

Exhaling forward, staying forward with the sense of, I am with you in this kind of moment.

Coming back, welcoming anything they're ready to let go of.

Just take a moment to let another kind of situation form. It's helpful if it's a specific place where you would really love kind of self-remembering, witnessing, presencing from this larger place. It's unconditionally warm and clear.

Need some breath. We're gonna have some.

Breathing here. Not a doing, just being here. Letting your bodily sense work.

Inviting that temporal aspect of self — anything it's ready to, or wants help with, it's ready to let go of — welcome it back into the ocean, into the light. Back. Inhale.

Just breathe here.

Close your eyes one last time and imagine a third situation. It could be another place in your home, a place at work, a way you are interacting with a given person. It could be a whole situation that you're in, and you're able to be in this larger place and to see yourself and the other beings, if there are some.

You're in this larger quality of being that can see all that.

Exhaling forward.

There's no sense of demand that they be different, change. It's just they're not alone. And this welcoming field is radiating into that situation.

Inhaling.

Breathing comfortably here.

Stand for a moment, feeling your height and your width.

Let your arms come out to shoulder height for a moment. Feel this width from the center of your chest, through your arms and hands and out your fingers, in both right and left, including that whole horizontal dimension, as you also feel this vertical.

The arms just come down to your side.

It's all together.

Sitting

Next, part of this process, I'd like you to find a comfortable sitting. You can be sitting for about 15 minutes. I'll guide you through something. So chairs are good, cushions, whatever works for you.

Cece, could you close that door, please?

Just take some moments to feel the support of your bottom, and the seat under your bottom.

Sense your feet, and the ground under your feet, and whatever your hands are in contact with.

And follow the next three breaths from beginning to end.

Bring attention to the inner spaces, the places you tend to feel things, inside your throat, chest, your upper belly, your lower belly.

Just let this sense form of the inner meaning right now, or inner quality, of turning the light around.

That sense of extending attention from this physical body out, first in the space around your body, so you're here on this spot, and yet is more than just the boundary of your skin. There's a space right around you. And then continuing outward.

And then, when it feels right, the sense of turning the light around, sensing a radiance back towards the one who's here.

As we've said before, that could take the form of a being or beings. It could take a formless quality. It could take a form of light. It could be the ocean surrounding you. It could be whatever fits for your inner life. Listen to that.

But it's the sense that you're in a larger space.

There's you in your — could say, historical or conditioned or everyday self — and there's this larger quality of beingness.

You're letting your body have the sense of this. What it's like in here when this larger sense of being is here.

Feel what it's like in your chest.

Really get a sense. If words or images come, let them come.

You want it in as many ways as possible, how it is in your belly, what it feels like to be you when this quality of presencing or beingness is here.

If you find it's coming and going, that's fine. Don't effort.

Keep noticing what you're like, what your whole physical body is like, what your feeling state is like, listening for qualities.

Inviting your inner life, which also means your brain, to know these roots, these neural roots, these inner organizations.

Feel what your jaw is like, what your sense of space inside your body is like.

Just rest here, and if you lose contact, just invite back this, however you can sense it, not trying to have it be different.

Once again, imagine a specific situation you're likely to be in. And it could be the same ones that you worked with standing, or you're gonna pick one right now. Could be a brand new one.

Doesn't have to be a difficult situation. It can be just a regular place, sitting at your table at home, or in your favorite chair, reading, or talking on the phone. Very regular, and imagining that your interactive self and this quality of beingness can be living together.

Just let that image come, actually. And if you want to mime actions, if you wanna be holding the phone or holding a book, that's fine. But the quality is that what you sense here, this presence, is alive in your imagination of this situation.

I recommend taking three or four or five breaths with one situation and then invite another. If it feels right, letting your hands, or some kind of miming of it, can be helpful to recall it.

You driving a car?

[Silence 2 minutes]

Imagine something about your journey home. Walking through an airport or driving a car. Can you imagine that you're present in your body?

There's this — I'm on this spot, I'm here — and there's this presencing, this knowing that you're there from this larger place.

And actually step out of the particular mind state or feeling state, thought. Know that you're there, witnessing, presencing with.

Can the picture of that be completely warm-hearted?

Now let the images go for right now, and just be right on this spot, right here in this room.

And see your weight and contact, space within your body and around.

The breath, coming and going.

[Silence 30 seconds]

Letting the sounds come, and letting your eyes open.

[Silence 41 seconds]

It's about to go.