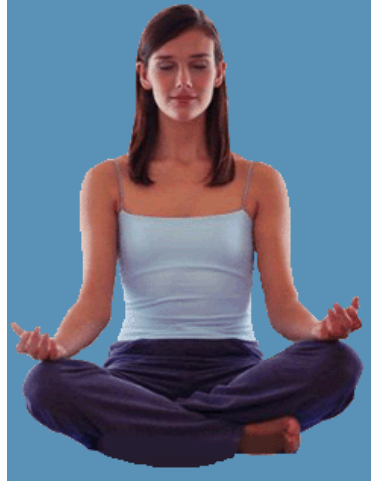


Centering Exercise

The Eight Senses

When strong feelings emerge, and you want to react, take a few moments to do the following centering exercise:

Sit down in a quiet safe place and take three deep breaths.....



Now take two more breaths more slowly.....more deeply.....down into your diaphragm... Notice where you are sitting.....on a chair.....a couch.....a cushion on the floor.....

Touch the chair, couch, cushion....is it soft or firm.....supportive or you need to balance? Feel the chair, couch, cushion.....is it rough or smooth?.....warm or cool?...notice.....

Breathe deeply.....what can you **smell**?....coffee?....trees?.....your perfumes?...notice....

Listen.....what can you **hear**?....a clock ticking?.....music?.....wind in the trees?...notice..

Look around you....what can you **see**?.....a colour?.....a shape?.....an object?...notice....

Focus on your mouth....are there any flavours lingering?...can you **taste** coffee?...toothpaste?...notice...

Notice your thoughts.....how fast you **think**....how if you don't react they are replaced by another thought...and then another....just notice them....don't react....don't make a story in your mind about them....just notice.....

Breathe deeper.....and again.....notice your **emotions**.....how they feel in your body.....where in your body you feel them.....don't react to them....**just simply notice**.....don't make a story in your mind about them....like waves on the beach....they wash in.....and they wash back out.....don't judge them...just allow them to be..... Stretch slowly now and rejoin the day.....what choices can you make now?.....

Like any other skill, centering takes practice, not just when things are tense but also when things are calm. Chose a time and place to practice this exercise every day, it only takes 10 minutes, perhaps have your friend, partner, or child read it to you!

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