Talk

Angela 2 — Week 1, Day 4, Session 3 — 34 minutes

Summary: Russell explains how a partner's listening presence deepens resource growing, and why returning to yesterday's quality instantiates the pattern more deeply. He models the process — scene, body, feeling, a short visit to the opposite, and a few words spoken back — then takes questions on present tense, amalgam memory, and the listener's role.

Listening presence

[Russell:] Let me make some comments, and then I will give you a modeling of the process.

We did the resource growing process yesterday, and often, though not always, when we do the resource growing process, we work with partners. We find that the presence of another person, even when they're not speaking, for most people deepens their process, deepens where they can go.

Having someone who is in presence, listening to them, helps the inner life go to new places. It's really fascinating that that can have such an effect.

For the majority of this process, the partner — the listener, the one who's listening — won't be speaking. You'll be really just doing your best to stay present. If your mind wanders, that's okay. Do your best to come back.

And at first, the only thing you'll say is if you're not hearing the person, you need them to speak louder, or you didn't understand something they said, because you're really listening. You're not just doing, quote, lip service to listening. You're not just there as a blob. You're there as a human consciousness receiving this other being.

And we'll be surprised, maybe, to learn how potent that presence is on another human being.

So the listener is listening. There'll be some words they'll be invited to say at the very end, and I'll tell you about those in a moment.

The same quality

So the person who is speaking — I'm going to lead you into your process. It's similar to what we did yesterday with the resource growing. I'll help you come into getting in touch with yourself, getting connected to yourself.

And then I encourage you, if you got in touch with a quality yesterday that felt like, yeah, that's an important one, that's something — it felt like, yeah, I want to work with that, which hopefully is most of you — you're going to be with that same quality again.

And if you did get a memory yesterday where you were able to construct a scene that helped you to feel that quality — do you remember we did that? If you use the same one, it won't be the same in your experience right now. It will likely get different qualities in it. It'll likely grow. Likely other things will come.

If your inner life just goes to another scene that represents that quality, okay, you're not going to fight that, right? So we don't want to set up an inner struggle. But for most of us, we'll be working with the same quality in the same scene.

If in the process yesterday you slept during it, you were not there for it, nothing came for you, then you can start with something really fresh this time, okay? But I encourage you to work with the same one.

Neural patterns

The picture here — I said this a little bit yesterday — is that resource growing is actually the growing of neural networks. This is a good way to think about it, that we're actually growing brain patterns for these states.

So when you go back to the same one, and in this situation it will be new and fresh and likely deeper, it helps that pattern get — nice word that neurologists use, you hear me use it sometimes — instantiated, more deeply grooved into a pattern. And the deeper a pattern is in your brain, the more accessible it becomes, the more spontaneously accessible it can become.

So the picture of the resource growing is that we want to take some of the life-giving qualities that we wish would happen more spontaneously, and rather than just have wishful thinking about them, actually invite our bodily memory. And we're calling in our bodily sensations, our feelings, and our symbol, our thoughts, our pictures, our images, our words, and we're putting them all together into an integrated whole.

And that's part of why it works so — right? Nice.

This will have meaning for all of us. We'll be able to be, you know, in an airport somewhere and go —

The shape of the process

Okay, so when I do these modelings, I like to do it real. If I'm going to be doing it quickly, just as an example where I'm making something up, I will let you know. But most of the time, if I'm going to take some time with it, I want it to be real, both because it communicates better and because I get value from it. To have a group of interested people helps what I'm working on to go deeper. Yeah? So I'd like to use the opportunity.

When I guide you, each person is going to have 15 minutes, and I said that the listener will be able to say something else. So let me describe how that works.

I'll be guiding a person in. At the beginning, I encourage the speaker, once you've connected to the experience that you're working with, to describe in sensory-rich detail where you are, in the moment that you're having that bodily experience. Who you're with, where you are, what you can see, hear. Add as much as you can to it.

Even if you're not sure, was the tablecloth pink or blue — if it's coming to you as blue right now, give it blue. Let it be sensory-rich as long as your body keeps going, yeah, this, I'm really in that scene. That's the important part, is that there's a feeling of, I'm really here with this moment.

And so at first, you're going to set the table. You're going to set the scene of where you are, if you're with others, and give as much sensory richness as you can about it.

Then, second part, you'll describe your physical body's positioning. You're sitting, standing, walking, holding hands, hugging, you're all alone and you're sitting by a river. You'll describe your positioning, and that might have already come in the first scene. It doesn't matter if it did, but you want to make sure you describe your physical body.

And then the third thing, which will be the most time, is what it feels like to be you in that situation.

Now, when I say what it feels like to be you, you may be repeating some of the things that you described in the first part. You may be repeating some of the physical bodily sensations, or it may be more feeling words. Okay, this will get clearer as I do it.

So you'll be with this scene, describing in as much richness as you can what it feels like to be you when this quality is manifesting.

When you have some sense of that, I invite you — and I'll be occasionally speaking, and sometimes my timing won't be right for you, but I want it in the room. I'll be inviting people to go into the bodily feeling when that is not happening. When that quality — if you're working with peace, what it feels like when you're not at peace. And so you get that more precisely known. We won't stay long there. We just need to have some references so that you can get it much more quickly in your everyday life. Oh, I'm going into that place.

And then we will end back in the resource, back in the state you're growing.

At that end point, when you're growing this state, I'll invite you to look for the two, three, or four key sensations or words or images that help you to reference this state.

When you say those, your partner will say the word back to you, so that you can hear it from somebody else. When you hear it, it might feel just right, or it might feel like, well, when I hear it, that's not just right. Like you might say, let's say I was working on something, and I might say, oh, it's very, very open in my chest, and they say back, openness in your chest. That's not just right. It's more like a bigness.

Something inside didn't say completely yes to the openness. It wanted bigness. And then I'd hear back, bigness in your chest. There's a bigness in your chest.

And then you'd give it — so there'll just be a few words at the end. If it resonates, then there's no need for that second one, right? You just say it once.

But you'll come up with two, three, or four key sensations, words, images that become a kind of reference point for this state, that your inner body can know them. It's like a filing system for that state.

Okay?

Amalgam memory

[Participant:] Yes. I think you spoke to it yesterday. If the event is not one snapshot in time, is it a sequence that's over?

[Russell:] Great. Yeah, let me comment. Thank you for bringing that, Andy.

So, with memory, some of us — but let me give you the example. It's easier in an example.

One time I'm working with a memory of feeling really connected to myself and the world. Just really connected. And what came was a moment when I was with my daughter. We were holding hands, walking in my living room, and I could describe the carpet, and there was a moment of just feeling completely connected to myself and my world. And it came like that, as one moment.

Another time, I was working with the same quality of connectedness, and what was coming was a variety of times when I was running. Running in the woods. Running — there was a place in Florida. Running on a mountain, where I just felt so connected to the ground. But it wasn't one moment. It was the same activity, connected to a number of moments. So then I could create an amalgam memory.

An amalgam memory is using that situation, but to grow something that your body will resonate with, even if it never happened exactly like that. Do you hear what I'm saying?

What's important with the amalgam memory is that you don't go, well, there's running and there's swimming and there's being with my friend. That gets too confusing to create a pattern.

So if you're going to use an amalgam memory, it could be — let's say you felt a certain way with your grandmother, but it's not one time, it was ten different times with your grandmother. You can use your grandmother memories. But don't do your grandmother, your grandfather, your uncle. You get what I mean? So it has some container.

It could be a given person a number of times, a given place a number of times, a given activity a number of times. Those are the best way, if it doesn't come as a particular moment.

Yeah?

[Participant:] Thank you for that. I wanted to clarify that.

Modeling

[Russell:] Okay, so I'm going to guide myself as I will guide you. I'm just going to take a few moments.

What would be great is — I'm concerned a little bit about time. I'm going to take 10 minutes. Do you have a watch? I'm going to take 10 minutes for my process, and I'd love it if you could tell me when there's about 2 minutes to go.

And, yeah.

I'm dropping down and letting these words go.

But I'm still out here, not quite on the cushion completely. Still a little bit with the question.

I'm feeling my bottom, hands, legs, and the contact of knees and floor, fronts of my feet.

In the breath, and I sense the dropping in.

I notice the sounds, and I'm bringing attention into my inner body, inside. Throat, chest, my belly, lower belly, and inviting.

A quality that I discovered New Year's Day I wanted to be working with.

And — you don't have to share the quality. You can work with it if you don't want the other to know.

And I'm going to tell you what I'm working with. It's a quality of gracefulness and lightness when feeling overwhelmed by the demands upon me.

I've been noticing, as I have more and more students, with more and more people dying and having cancer and calling for support and emailing, that something is getting a little heavy at times.

I so love the light feeling in my body when I'm doing my tasks, but without this added something. So I wanted to linger with that.

So, the scene I'm in. I'm in my office. Computer's here. Work table is here. And someone just left who was working with some pain, and I'm feeling really connected to myself. I was moved by the session, and there's a lightness.

Okay, let me start with the scene. So I'm in my office. There's a white carpet and a blue table over here. The door glass — I can see outside, it's sunny. The sun's coming in through the windows.

The sound of Linda doing something out there. I can hear her tapping on her computer. And here I am, this moment between tasks, standing, walking toward my desk, and feeling this uprightness that's natural, and a length through my spine.

Oh, and it's important. My feet are coming lightly to the ground, present. I can feel the ground. But there's a sense of lightness.

I feel the warmth in here of being touched by the one who left. And even — yeah, so this is important. Even though they're challenged by a number of things, I don't feel weighed down by their challenge. There's something — oh, that was good. We had a good interaction, and it's light and open in here. Yeah, this is hope.

And this length upward is really important.

And I go to my desk and open the computer, and there's a number of requests for guidance.

Just noticing, when I see the inbox, it's easy to go past the things from Wells Fargo, but it's the things from the students where a kind of excitement comes, and a little bit heavy.

So let me just remember that, because I know what it's like to sit in this chair, really light, curious, and I'm bringing that back. Now I'm in the chair. Light is still there.

What is that? Feet are on the floor. Oh. The lightness in my pelvis. The way I'm reaching forward, and then coming back and reflecting and reaching forward — there's something important about that, about this.

Yeah, if I think of the opposite, when I get heavy, I get kind of pulled down, and the chest gets heavy, and this gets less mobile.

[Participant:] It's two minutes. Two minutes.

[Russell:] I'm going to need a little bit more. Give me five more minutes. So tell me when there's two minutes again.

So, this lightness — actually, I probably don't need that. Just a few more minutes.

So there's the lightness here. And I want to just take a moment to remind myself. What happens when I lose that is this density. The thoughts come of, oh, there's so much to do, and a feeling of something like this, weighed down, like it's falling on me.

I know that.

And I know this other. And this I'd like to hear back: lightness in my pelvis.

[Participant:] There's a lightness in your pelvis?

[Russell:] A mobility in —

[Participant:] Mobility in your pelvis.

[Russell:] Yeah. And this length through the spine.

[Participant:] And a length through your spine.

[Russell:] The feeling, as I look at all these things I need to respond to, is one of being touched and curious about responding. So let me just stay for a few moments with the touch.

Oh, this is — especially when it's a question or something, a sharing that's coming from a deep place — it resonates here.

Okay, so this is the last thing I want to focus in on, because this is important. I need to get this, because the difference, when I'm feeling burdened — the touchedness is in the background, and in the front is, oh, I have so many things to answer. But as soon as I am connected, it's touched and grateful.

And let me hear that: touched and grateful.

[Participant:] There's a feeling of being touched and gratitude, grateful.

[Russell:] Opens right. Opens in my chest.

[Participant:] It opens in your chest.

[Russell:] Oh, yeah. I'm just finishing now, just resonating with the lightness in the pelvis, the length in my back, open, warm feeling of gratitude. Gratitude and touchedness.

Just going to take a few more moments to let my body have all that.

Coming back

Okay, so I'm just going to — I don't want to pop out. This transition is important.

So I'm still — I'm talking to you, but I'm still at least half in here, easing my way. First by thanking my body and my inner life that it has all this capacity.

Then, beginning to bring my attention back to this moment in the room. So feeling my legs again, and my hands, the sounds, the creaking chairs, some movement, and something downstairs.

For me, it's important to open my eyes slowly. I am not ready to look directly at a person. I need to let light in, and color, and be guided by what my inner life is able to still stay present with, and not feel pulled out.

Thank you.

[Participant:] Thank you so much.

Questions

[Russell:] Okay, so now I can be here. Any questions? Anything you need to know in order to feel like you can participate here?

Please, Laurie.

[Participant:] Is it important to stay present in the moment of the situation and talk about it after?

[Russell:] Yeah. Oh, thank you. Yes.

So, yeah, I didn't emphasize this in my version. I did it a little bit, but not completely.

What I encourage you to do, what Laurie's reminding me of, is it's really helpful to speak in present tense when you are here. So, I'm in my office. I did it at least half the time. Maybe even all the time. I can't remember, but I'm in my office, because I don't — it's not a practice that I — but it happens spontaneously. So, I'm in my office, seeing the white, seeing the — so make it present tense language. Your brain can get it much deeper if you do it present tense than if you did it as a past tense experience.

Thank you for that. You get what I mean? So it'll feel awkward sometimes, maybe, saying, I'm sitting with, you know, my husband and we're at the dinner table, but keep coming back to present tense when you remember to.

[Participant:] Wait. Say that through my process, that I'm very grounded and I'm present with it, that I'm okay, it's just part of this moment.

[Russell:] Yes, that's fine.

[Participant:] Yes, thank you.

[Russell:] Okay, okay, okay.

Let me remind you, as I did from yesterday, that if your inner life is working, what comes for you — like let's say when I was working with this quality of lightness, grace, when dealing with lots of demanding, lots of demands — let's say what was coming was how overwhelmed I feel in my life. Let's say that's what came.

And so the first thing you do is acknowledge that place. Oh, something inside, there's a place that feels really overwhelmed. I'll bring attention to you a little later. I want to remember a sense of lightness that I have, a place of lightness in myself.

I was using the fact that I'm often in my office feeling light and free. So I was using that memory, but bringing it into the situation of feeling that there was a lot being demanded.

Now, let me just say this, because this could be confusing. I could have chosen walking in nature, feeling light and free, and then brought that bodily quality to my office. You get what I mean? Or

to the situation of feeling heavy. I didn't have to do it in my office, but that's where my inner life went. It wanted it directly connected.

Did you have a question?

[Participant:] No. I answered.

[Russell:] Great. Please, yeah.

[Participant:] Do you want us to follow you, or stay in our body and check where that is in me?

[Russell:] Yes. I would recommend just letting your attention be in your groundedness and your breathing, and in listening. Really, that's where the energy is.

And at the end — again, you're probably not saying anything during the time, and at the end you'll just say a few words maybe. If your partner doesn't want you to say the words, that's okay too. You can say, yeah, I don't need to hear them back.

[Participant:] No, I'm doing that. So is there a time — I thought I heard you mention before that we describe —

[Russell:] Right. Yeah, I went there for about a minute towards the end, where what it feels like — and I get heavy in here and my pelvis gets frozen — and you want to spend a little bit of time getting the references for what happens when you're not in that state. But we're going to spend most of the time cultivating the state.

[Participant:] The words, when we're offering the words, is it important that we use the same word? That was gratitude and grateful.

[Russell:] Yes, use the same word. Use the same word as much as it can roll off your tongue. And if you don't, it's okay, but it'll speak more closely to their experience.

[Participant:] Are we saving, as a listener — are we saving those words toward the end, or can that begin at any point?

[Russell:] No. We're going to wait till the end, when I give the instruction, which I will speak out. The instruction: okay, find the two, three, or four most important sensations or images for this inner state. And then those words that they say, you'll repeat back.

And repeat them slowly, and the person hearing them back, take at least a few seconds to let your body have those words and feel them. And either they'll be very confirming — yes, that's just right, let me feel into that — and you'll feel it perhaps deeper, hearing them from somebody else, because your auditory cortex is now getting involved in the creation of the memory, in the creation of the state. Yeah, we're bringing that in.

Or it could be that it doesn't sound just right to you, and then it becomes something you want to change a little bit.

Yeah.

[Participant:] Cool.

[Russell:] Let's see how it goes. This is something that, over the three years, we're going to grow our capacity to work with all this.

I'm going to shut off the recording.