# Talk

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Angela 2 — Week 1, Day 5, Session 3 — 71 minutes

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*Summary: After a triad of sensing and passing attention through the body, the group speaks of awkwardness, resistance, and the pressure to perform. Russell teaches that widening attention loosens compulsion, that presence is a return rather than a grip, and introduces the feeling body within the wisdom body — how the body says yes, no, almost, and maybe.*

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## After the triad

*[Russell:]* Why don't you go ahead. Okay, what do you want to say?

*[Participant:]* So for me, I had a pretty interesting experience with my partners.

I was passing to him, he was passing to her. That's important for the experience.

What came through for me, whenever I was led to go to a new part, was to be with my genital area.

I had a rush of feeling. Not wanting the feelings to be awkward, especially for her. I didn't want her to feel that I was going into any perverted thoughts. And yet that was what was real for me. That's where I wanted to be in that moment.

And so instead I chose my chest.

Initially I felt an openness, a spaciousness in my chest, and then I felt, right here at the base of my throat, a tightness.

And right as I was getting ready to hand it off — which was another reason why I didn't go with the genital area, because I didn't want to put that on him and make him talk about that area. Like, all right, it's your turn.

*[Russell:]* Wait a second. That deserves it.

*[Participant:]* And so right before you rang the bell, I was noticing this real lump of tightness. And what previously felt very open and spacious in my chest, suddenly that tightness in my throat — it was like what I explained to them. Like a fish line with an anchor, and that anchor went down behind the center of my chest and was pulling down, and the string was getting real close to snapping. It was real tight.

I'm very glad that I opened up and talked about it afterwards. But yeah, I was just very present to the feelings of resistance and awkwardness around going to a place. Especially — and she said, I wonder if I was a man, if that would have made a difference. And we both said yes.

It made a big difference. But it would have also made a difference, as we talked about, had we known each other a little bit more, and known that we were all comfortable going to that place, and not feeling like I was pushing that upon them.

*[Russell:]* Yeah. Great. Well, thank you for bringing it. That opens up the space for everybody.

*[Participant:]* Look, you know, I could go to the analogous area and find something.

*[Russell:]* Yeah.

*[Participant:]* I mentioned it in humor. It must have had some bearing — the t-shirt he's wearing. Dr. Emoto's science on the power of words and water. He said, you're just so embraced with love and kisses.

*[Russell:]* Yeah. There you go.

*[Participant:]* I want to say that yes, it's that way. I appreciate this, because I encounter a lot of resistance, and I thought, immaturity in the context makes it pretty hard to suss it.

*[Russell:]* Yeah.

Just raises up some energy. I mean, we've spent the last few days building, building, so now there's a little bit of — it's good.

*[Participant:]* I appreciate that.

Yeah, I just wanted to say that it's kind of exciting too, because it's going to give me something to be aware of when I'm in sexual thoughts, or in some moment where that sexual energy comes through. Just noticing what happens in my throat and chest. Uncomfortable, you know, because it's not what should be present.

*[Russell:]* Right, right, right.

I'm curious. Were there moments when others were talking where you could sense other things as well?

*[Participant:]* Oh, absolutely.

## A larger field

*[Russell:]* Yes. So you could sense that the sexuality could be in the background, which is another really important learning, right?

That the places that are alive in us — sometimes places that have pleasure attached to them, sometimes painful places in our bodies — and every place usually, rather immediately, has a bunch of stories attached to it. About it being good and bad, about liking it or not liking it, and then fantasies and concerns, and it becomes a whole gestalt like that.

To know that one of the radically freeing capacities that grows with attention is that one could have a really strong pain in their neck, and have their bottom on their seat, and have their hands on their legs, and have the feeling of breath. And when that and is there — I'm now changing it to an example of pain, but we can apply it to any — when that and is there, the occurrence of the sensation becomes much less dominant.

And so any compulsions attached to the sensation — compulsions of thought, feeling, or behavior — in the case of pain, it can even be the compulsion to over-medicate, or the compulsion to just be lost in a worried thought about, is it going to ever end? What's going to happen? What do I have to —

The compulsions that grow out of a dominant sensation begin to lose some of their magnetism when that sensation lives in a larger field.

And how does it live in a larger field? By bringing more attention, in diverse ways, to more of the self.

Right? Yeah. I mean, if you have a big white canvas and you have a big spot of any color on it somewhere, that's going to draw your attention. If you have a lot more going on, then that might even be the biggest spot, and it might be the brightest color, but it's going to be less dominant in one's experience when they're with that painting.

You get what I mean?

This is very important for navigating our own inner life. This applies to our feeling life, our sensing life, and our thinking life, right? They're always an amalgam working together.

It also, for those of you who work with other people, is essential. Growing the field of attention grows the domain in which experience is occurring. And that is tremendously empowering.

Growing the field of attention grows the space in which the experiencing is occurring.

And we'll get into this more. We'll unpack this over the years. But we'll look at the different ways people attend. So we all have certain compulsions in the way we move our attention, and in the places we move our attention to.

And as we get freer and more diverse in how we move our attention and where we move our attention — which is part of the subtext of this kind of triad. You're with somebody else, they move their attention differently than you do, and they speak about their experience, and that, some of you I'm sure experienced, added to your experiencing capacities.

You get what I mean? So the whole field that you're living in grows. Which means any of the places that tend to get compulsive, or dominated by a certain something, now have more other things around.

*[Participant:]* Yeah, I just wanted to say that I heard your question wrong. Was I able to be with other things?

Throughout that whole exercise I was, but in that moment I wasn't. I was only with that.

And what was real was feeling the awkwardness of not wanting to bring it up. Instead of diversifying and having a wider range, I pushed that away and forced myself, with an effort, to go to a different place.

*[Russell:]* Beautiful. Thank you. And thank you for bringing that.

And that's a really good example of one strategy of moving attention: to push away. It's what a lot of people do with physical pain. It's what a lot of people do with mental states that they don't like, or emotional. Okay, I'm going to get rid of this. I'm going to ignore it. I'm going to push on it.

And we are hopefully learning strategies that are more harmonious, and more effective, for life to move forward without this feeling of inner conflict. Inner fighting.

Thank you.

## Without forcing

*[Russell:]* Just a few more observations about what came for you in that triad. Anything that came that might be a helpful learning, that we can, by articulating, get even clearer. Might be helpful for another. Or something.

Yes.

*[Participant:]* We just don't need to — be silent for a while. Just need to pause and see, when it's okay that nothing is coming.

*[Russell:]* Yeah.

*[Participant:]* Nothing comes the whole time. Maybe that's okay too.

*[Russell:]* Yeah.

*[Participant:]* But that whole expectation of being responsible — for me, for doing it right, for participating.

*[Russell:]* Yes. That was lovely.

That's really important, isn't it?

This is important to resonate, for ourselves and for those who are going to be teaching. This is not permission in order to be nice.

The inner life doesn't come forward authentically and fully when it feels under pressure to perform.

And it will get distorted by your personal history.

And we're wanting to create conditions so that our inner life — which has been generally so controlled by our concerns of other people, and our need to be a certain way — our inner life rightfully is nervous about appearing. Nervous about its wisdom.

And if we're going to learn how to honor its wisdom, how to encourage its coming, we need to learn how to be without forcing.

And that pausing is a key part of that.

Yeah. Nice. Thank you for that.

## Between self and other

*[Russell:]* Yes.

*[Participant:]* I loved it, getting to know the experience between curious — or empathy — and my experience.

So when it was handed off to me, even while I was in my experience of that area, while he was talking, I was very aware that I vacillated back and forth between his experience and what I'm feeling, and how I could be led. How part of my body could be led.

And then that moment of, what do you feel? What do you feel in part of your field? And then to take that.

So there was this moment where I was teaming with players, and moved in with my own player. And I noticed it was interesting, because in meditation this morning, that was my game that I was playing. Vacillating between a couple different states of awareness. And then, very beautifully, in this place. You know, back and forth.

*[Russell:]* I wonder, would you feel okay sharing? Yeah, thank you.

*[Participant:]* I spoke with Russell and another partner, and my experience was very different. When I was doing clinical work for twenty years, hands-on, I didn't have a problem of pouring into somebody else and losing myself.

But auditorily, hearing them describe their sensations, I found myself pulling back and noticing my part, almost to the exclusion of what they were saying. Like pushing it away, I guess, is the usual word.

And what helped me connect to both myself and you two was to bring a narrative. So I sub-vocalized: she's feeling something in her left ovary. And I could receive that and remember it.

If I didn't do that, I've just got to pay attention to myself, or I'll be in her before I know it.

And when I was hearing you describe that, I was doing this, but as soon as I could kind of sub-vocalize — that was her, and name that was you — then I could feel myself again. So I didn't lose it.

It's a rich experience. For me the key was, the background became something I could hear, and be with me, while not dissing, and not not experiencing.

*[Russell:]* Yeah.

*[Participant:]* And then there was a second place.

*[Russell:]* Oh, yes, so bring that, because this might be helpful for others as well.

*[Participant:]* Like I've heard Russell do it, and I found myself doing the same thing. One of them would describe what they were feeling, and I'd go — and just that little — was a way of acknowledging them, and not having to do this. Not having to keep separate.

*[Russell:]* Very often when we're listening to another, and we're really listening, and the intention is to be silent and not to be speaking much, but to be receiving them — like the practice we did yesterday, there'll be other practices like that — it's often, if you let yourself, it'll feel quite natural just to do.

It's the way we naturally show our connectedness. There's an added feature that was just named, which helped me recognize: it's acknowledging the connection. And simultaneously, there's a sense of acknowledging that this is their experience and you're sitting here.

And that's, for me, all in that. You might find something similar.

*[Participant:]* Then the last thing I wanted to throw in.

*[Russell:]* Yeah, right, we're on the same wavelength. You gotta have that. So say something about that here.

*[Participant:]* Just around this gesture coming as we were in a discussion circle. And it just felt very true to me, that this energy was going like this, from self to the other.

And it was also something I'd been working on, so it had looked more like this, and now the other. But it totally turned into this, because, especially after that kind of dialoguing from our bodies, and then when we started speaking words, that same feeling was there somehow. That same pattern of listening and checking in, listening and checking.

*[Russell:]* Yeah. A back and forth thing, yeah?

And I love this. There are two things I wanted to bring about this.

First, I love the gesture. It speaks to me. But also, as an example of — listen, and encourage your spontaneous gestures.

When you are with your inner life, if you can notice what your hands are doing, they will often be a direct expression of what's living. All the things you're looking for in words will be already occurring in your hands.

It can also happen with your whole body, gestures of your head, but particularly — listen. Listen to how you're gesturing.

Yeah, I hear you.

## Settling and returning

*[Participant:]* At the closure of my speaking yesterday with my partner, I wanted to really go slow, because I know I have a habit of popping out. It was helpful when you brought that up last year for me.

And I found it so settling, this process with my two partners today. It's just profoundly settling somehow. Even in a difference in the quality of how we were sharing with each other afterward, I was so in myself, and receptive.

*[Russell:]* Yeah. Beautiful.

And maybe an indicator from your inner life: oh, one of the ways I can really settle myself is just spending a little bit more time with embodying.

*[Participant:]* I kind of — that could've gone on until two o'clock. You know, it's really true.

*[Russell:]* Again, for most of us, the default function — remember we're talking about the in-between places before. So, you know, we're sitting on the john, or we're waiting for something to boil, or we're —

The default function for most of us is to yammy, yammy, yammy, yammy, yammy.

And some of the yammy yamma is functional, but a lot of it is just default habit mind.

And what a freeing possibility, to think, oh yeah, I noticed that's there. I'm really sensing the right foot.

Yeah, yeah, I see you there on the outside of me, and ten, twenty seconds, and it's like a magnet to the presence.

That's what I'm saying. It's a doorway. It's the key to that doorway.

Oh, I'm here again. I was just getting all this up.

Great way to get back, if you wake up at two in the morning.

*[Participant:]* Amen.

*[Russell:]* Yes, amen. It's really true.

Okay, we'll go. Yeah.

*[Participant:]* I just noticed, as you described that, a habit that mine might be would be like, oh, I'm not present. I should be. How shall I be? You know, rather than, oh, I'm really in this right now. That's nice.

*[Participant:]* I think I'm supposed to take that.

*[Russell:]* Oh, good, good, good.

And remember this. Any moment you can say you're not present, you're present.

Right? Isn't that awesome?

Let's say you meditate. You're sitting there meditating, and you just got aware that you've been on a twenty-minute storytelling. You've been inventing the universe, or correcting the universe, or doing whatever you do to your universe. Fixing all the people in your universe, figuring out how they have to be for you to be happy, and all the things that we tend to do when we're sitting here.

And so we're sitting here, and the moment of noticing is literally a moment of awakening.

If we had any sense, we'd pop the champagne and we'd go, wow, far out. Because immediately, in that moment, time is nonexistent.

But the habit of mind is so attached to time and history — her story, the past — that it immediately bridges the awakening to the past through judgment.

Oh, you should. Oh, you've been so. Oh, your mind is so crazy. Oh, you'll never be able to do this. Oh, if they only knew what went on in your mind, they'd kick you out of the program.

You know, most of us are carrying some stories about what our mind does. I remember the first time I taught at Esalen, I said, who in this room thinks their mind is busier than everybody else's? And almost everybody raised their hand. They can't all, right?

So the moment of recognition, if we can learn that that is grace itself — that is grace. We don't create awakening. Awakening happens. It dawns. And that's a moment in which grace occurs.

And to actually learn how to slide into that, and let that moment — the spaciousness of that moment — that actually your whole life starts in that moment.

*[Participant:]* That's helpful. That's helpful. Whole life, yeah.

*[Russell:]* Because the meditation is the same with post-meditation. It's not about staying present. It's about returning to presence.

It's not about staying. Don't think of it as staying, or you're going to get tight inside. You're going to get trying to control your moment. That's one of the problems with mindfulness sometimes.

We start trying to control, control, control, holding on to the moment, and it feels like this inside.

And so if we get it, that it's about the commitment to returning — the subtle direction, orientation towards the return — and the commitment is, once I see, I'll do everything I can to come back here, at least for that moment.

Then we can use a few moments of intentional breath, or ground, or something, and then we want to open again, so that we're available for grace.

## The feeling body

*[Russell:]* Okay. So this is — I want to move us into the next subject that this leads us toward.

This practice that we did is obviously based in the physical body. It's based in the sense of proprioception, we spoke about yesterday, which I mentioned is, we could say, original sense of self. Original sense of location. Who I am. I'm here and not there.

That sense of pressure, contact, weight, and kinesthesia, the sense of movement.

This is kind of a ground. Think of that as the physical body.

I want to introduce a much wider sense of body.

And this wider sense includes the physical body, but it's not limited to the physical body.

And I'll be speaking about other senses of the body, collectively. Those are all part of what feeds into what I call the wisdom body.

We need all these bodies alive and functioning for the wisdom, for the intuitive knowing, for the sense of being in line with what's needed in a moment.

What I call wisdom body needs the input from the physical body, also from these other bodies.

I want to speak about this first other body. Now, when I say other bodies, it's not that they're not physical. It's that they are also more.

The language can get a little confusing, is why I say it.

This next level of experiencing I'll talk about as — I sometimes call it the feeling body. How it feels to be you. How it feels to be you in any moment.

And one of the great discoveries, by a variety of people — and this man that I'll talk more about tomorrow, Eugene Gendlin, who developed the Focusing work, really speaks very articulately about all this.

This wider sense of body is based on the physiological truth and phenomenological truth. That there's a level of our brain that responds to everything, that has a feeling response to everything. That's what it does.

In Buddha language, that means there's always — when Buddha used the word feeling, he used it very beautifully. There's either an attraction, which means you're moving towards something. That includes desire. It includes what's going to nourish your life. It's going to include a forward movement. Desire, forward.

Attraction. Repulsion, which includes everything from what's dangerous, contraction away from life, self-protection. None of these are bad. This is the energetic movement of the feeling life.

Attraction, repulsion, and a sense of neutrality, or not so important.

This is kind of the — if you look at a lizard, their life is, you know — look at an amoeba. If it's fed, it's kind of hanging out, and then something dangerous happens. It's called repulsion.

In human beings, that also becomes things like hatred. That's the biology, the biological link to the experience of hatred.

Then there is this opening experience, this movement toward. Okay?

And of course, our feeling life is much, much, much more differentiated than that, right? But those are kind of rudiments.

Well, the point right now is that if we tune into it, there's a way that our body responds to all situations. We can tune into that. It's actually a part of your brain, and that's what it's calculating for. Its first calculation is life-giving, dangerous, attraction, repulsion, and then it gets much more differentiated from there.

So part of what our work is — beautiful, beautiful work — is learning the language of the feeling body.

Which is more than our emotions. It's any way in which it feels to be you in a given moment.

And I want to come to some examples right now, because learning this language is a lifelong experience. But as we get articulate with it, and can follow more or less immediately how the body is responding to situations, that becomes such an ally. For knowing what is healthy for you, what isn't. Knowing what we tend to override very often in our ideas and thoughts.

And I need to say a few more things, and this will all get clearer as we practice it.

When I say that we override with our thoughts, it's not at all that feelings are true and thoughts aren't. Right? That was a whole story that got really messed up in the seventies.

Let's get rid of thinking, because thinking's the problem, but your feelings are reliable. No.

Thoughts disconnected from the rest of your life are not reliable. Feelings disconnected from your thoughts and your body and the rest of your life are not reliable.

We're looking for that integrated experiencing, where all the bodies are feeding into the moment.

So the feeling sense that we're looking at is going to be including imagery, words. We're not going to leave the feelings by themselves to kind of run you around like a lower-level mammalian brain that is just moved by everything. Skittish horses, moved by everything.

We want to have this ability to sense what we all have been feeling our whole lives, but most of us have not given a lot of energy to help it articulate. Help to know it better.

## How the body says yes

*[Russell:]* So, close your eyes for a moment. I want to lead you through a couple of experiments. And in the experiments, I'll be inviting you to sometimes speak, but stay with your eyes closed if that's comfortable. If it's not, of course, you're a free being. You can open your eyes anytime you want.

But I want to begin with some of the primary distinctions, so that you begin to understand what I'm referring to.

So just take a few moments to let all these words drop away, and settle down onto the spot you're sitting on, resting on.

If you're uncomfortable in your current position, change it. Lean against something, a chair, do something so that you can.

And as you're settling here, let your feet come present.

Your hands come present.

Your breath come present.

And as you go inside — inside, first inside your throat and chest, your belly, and lower belly — is where your limbic brain mostly resonates. The feeling life, in your torso.

And you're listening, and you're inviting, while you're attending here, your inner life to bring forth a memory of a place in nature that you love.

Sometime in your life, it's been a place. And again, this could be an amalgam memory, or a particular one.

But some environment. Maybe there were beaches, maybe in the mountains, maybe some particular place, but see what comes. It might not even be the most beautiful for you, but it comes right now.

A place you felt really safe and good, and that brings back positive feeling.

So invite that space to be here, in a sensory rich way. What you can see. Let it be created so you're there right now.

Any smells in the air?

Sounds?

Create the memory. See what comes. Feeling of your body.

And notice, in your chest and in your belly, how your body feels when you're with this moment of a beautiful place where you feel safe.

As you get some sensations, staying inside, say it out loud. When you hear one, see if you have something similar or different.

*[Participant:]* Ease.

*[Russell:]* Let's pause and feel into — is there a sense of ease in your body? Does that resonate?

*[Participant:]* Relax.

*[Russell:]* And is there a particular place that that relaxed appears, or is it an all-over feeling?

*[Participant:]* Fresh.

*[Russell:]* Fresh. And let's pause for a moment. Feel. Does that have inner meaning for your body?

*[Participant:]* Peaceful.

*[Russell:]* Peaceful. And again, stay with it. Resonate peaceful in your body. And just tell us if there's more that you can say about the sensations that are giving you the word peaceful.

Take your time.

*[Participant:]* A widening is connected to the peaceful.

*[Russell:]* Anyone who has a peaceful something — can you say something about the actual sensations in the body that bring about the word peaceful?

*[Participant:]* Breathing is free to change. It's the freedom of the breathing to change.

*[Participant:]* My muscular system is relaxed. There's no tension.

*[Russell:]* The whole muscular system relaxes. Good.

Let's bring some new quality. What's the new one?

*[Participant:]* Connected.

*[Russell:]* Connected. Somehow your body shows you something like connected.

As you hear these words, we're listening for what's often called the direct referent. What you're actually sensing in your body that says, oh, this word is right.

Because words, feeling words, come out of your bodily experience. And we want to make that reconnection that most of us don't have so clearly.

So keep sensing, as something comes. What is it in your body that lets you know that's the right word?

*[Participant:]* Content.

*[Russell:]* Content. And what's the embodiment of content?

*[Participant:]* There's a softening.

*[Participant:]* Letting go.

*[Russell:]* Somehow a letting go.

*[Participant:]* Relaxing the eyes seems connected to this content.

*[Participant:]* Space.

*[Russell:]* Space. Do you feel that space in your body?

*[Participant:]* In the joints, in the body, there's a sense of space.

## How the body says no

*[Russell:]* Okay, let's pause here for a moment.

So we're beginning to sense this much wider sense of body. That it's the physical body, but it's a different way of thinking of the physical body. That every feeling we have originates as sensation, or lives also as sensation.

And just take a moment to be with a place that you don't like being in. A place that your memory is, oh — it might have been a place where it was ugly, or uncomfortable for you.

It could be a small thing. It could be the way the garbage area looks to you. Could be just some historical memory.

*[Participant:]* Leashed.

*[Russell:]* Your body feels leashed. Can you say more about what leashed feels like?

*[Participant:]* Something like no choice.

*[Russell:]* Leashed — is there kind of a, I'm going to guess, a kind of compressing in the body, or loss of space? Does that feel right?

*[Participant:]* Clogged. Yes, sort of clogged.

*[Russell:]* This beautiful language. When we say a word that resonates, feel how the body responds to the right word.

*[Participant:]* Rushed.

*[Russell:]* Rushed.

*[Participant:]* Anxious.

*[Russell:]* So let's take anxious and say, what are the indicators that let you know anxious is there? What are the sensations?

*[Participant:]* A narrowing.

*[Russell:]* Right?

*[Participant:]* Shortness of breath.

*[Russell:]* Let's go slow here, so we're really with how the body lets us know.

*[Participant:]* Lightness in the forehead.

*[Participant:]* A sense of claustrophobia. Restricted feeling.

*[Participant:]* No connection to the ground.

*[Russell:]* There's a sense of no connection to the ground. The anxiousness has that feeling of being disconnected from the earth.

*[Participant:]* Tension. A kind of edginess.

*[Participant:]* A busyness comes with it.

*[Russell:]* And again, busyness in your body feels like —

*[Participant:]* Like a flitting, flitting from one thing to another.

*[Participant:]* On guard.

*[Russell:]* Feel the heart, and the guardedness.

Okay, now let's see if you can neutralize from here. Feel the ground.

Feel the space around your body. There's a space behind you. Left and right.

Above you, below you, in front of you. Space around you.

So if you can find that image of the place that was beautiful, the place you love to be, see if your body can find that, even after all this is alive. Just notice if that switch is possible or not.

And just feel that you're sitting here. Feel your bottom.

## Almost

*[Russell:]* Now, let's try another, more subtle distinction.

What your body says when it's feeling something is almost right, but not exactly.

So imagine that. Imagine that you're cooking something, or that you're tasting something, and it's close to what you're looking for, but it needs something.

It's the almost experience. The close experience.

Feel how your body lets you know almost. A little more subtle. Yeah.

Listen to that. Listen, because your body will give you something like that at a moment when you're seeking something that's not clear yet, perhaps.

So we want to know that something else.

*[Participant:]* Something else.

*[Russell:]* Well, how does almost live in your body?

*[Participant:]* Looking for something else.

*[Participant:]* A furrowing. Questioning. Looking for something.

*[Russell:]* Say that again.

*[Participant:]* Inhale. It has a —

*[Participant:]* A leaning into.

*[Russell:]* A leaning. Yeah, let's listen to that.

So you're in touch with something, and you're calling it, oh, something, and it's not quite right. And there's this feeling of kind of leaning toward it.

*[Participant:]* Yeah. A sense of oscillation.

*[Participant:]* One or the other.

*[Russell:]* Yeah, yeah.

Reaching. Yeah. There's a reaching toward what is. And what I want to encourage right now is that you see that that is not just a mental process.

Even when the poet is looking for the right word, what the poet is listening to is that what they just said was almost right, maybe, but something inside said it's close but not quite it. And it's reaching, it's leaning toward, it's a little bit of tension, a little rewind.

*[Participant:]* I can feel my eyes scanning back and forth, brain and all, not breathing.

*[Russell:]* Okay, so let's separate this almost and close experience. The first part is saying, that's not just right. That's one part of it.

And then the second part is, maybe this. Maybe this is the reaching toward.

And I wonder if you have that experience, that the almost, the close, has that sense of identifying something's not just right, and a kind of inner reaching toward. Listening to. Furrowing the brows.

And we want both of those, because sometimes our body is saying something's not just right, but our mind is saying, it's fine.

And we want to know when that's true.

Not that we always are going to cater to what the body is saying, but we want to know when that's true.

And then this second movement toward what would make it feel more so. More whole, more complete, more.

## Ground and sound

*[Russell:]* Okay, let's neutralize once again, meaning just come to your ground. Find your bottom.

Find your feet. Find your hands.

Just feel the next three breaths from beginning to end, all the way through the end of the exhale.

Drop out of thought. Come into the three breaths.

Stay inside. Once again feel the ground.

Hear the sounds that are around you. Let the sounds help you to feel the space around you.

Just resonate. Ground and sound, ground and sound. Let that be on the foreground of your experience. Ground and sound.

Notice if you can let your body open toward the sounds. So you're not just here in your physical body, but you're in this space. If that feels possible, and like a good thing to do.

Feel the breath once again. Three breaths from beginning to end.

Keep your eyes open. Let light come in, and connect the space around you.

*[Silence 38 seconds]*

## Language and the body

*[Russell:]* I'm curious about anything you want to bring about all this.

The most essential point for me is what is so obvious that it's amazing it needs time for reflection and discovery. That our language, our interacting, our ways of responding in life can be sensed. Always is living in bodily experience.

If you think of an infant — you know, think of us as infants. You were probably an infant at some time. I'm making a guess here. But I'm guessing you were probably an infant at some time.

And can you imagine that experience. You're being fed. You're enjoying either nursing or — you're getting these warm sensations. A sense of going from wanting to some satisfaction. And if you're lucky, maybe you're being held, and it's feeling very — if not, you're at least getting this nourishment that feels good.

And imagine that the phone rings, or somebody comes to the door, and imagine that you're left before you're satisfied.

Imagine the way that feels in your body. I don't really have words for it yet, but there's a kind of —

Yeah, there could be a bunch of different things.

*[Participant:]* Mom.

*[Russell:]* Luckily, maybe somebody comes back.

Now, later in life, you may have an experience you call frustration.

I'm not saying that everybody would use the word frustration for that experience, but I'm trying to use an example of how our language grows out of what we have felt.

And that language is actually referenced to something that's alive in us.

And that's the way, all of us, in the areas of life where we are fluid and feel some sense of expertise, or some sense of capacity. We like to make music, or we're a therapist and we feel fairly comfortable in that, or a massage therapist when we're working, or it could be a carpenter when he's working, or a poet. Any place where one feels — we all have some bodily sense that goes, that's right. I feel the rightness of something.

And then you can have lots of ideas that tell you why it's right. Oh, it's right because it fits in with this.

But everybody — even people who say, you know, I don't have any intuition, I don't get any gut feelings — I see it in everybody that I get to work with. The business people are responding to hunches. Something feels right, and then they can look at the evidence.

They're often ignoring those hunches. And in fact, it's quite helpful often when one learns how to connect their hunches to their thinking. Not just go with every hunch, but connect that gut sense to the rest of the self. Which is what we all do in certain places in life, but very few of us generalize that to our living.

And I'm so interested in the availability of this source that's living in us. This feeling body.

That is a key component of this larger thing I make up, called the wisdom — meaning access to wisdom.

No, let me not say more about that right now. That's the point I want to get across.

That is both obvious and quite profound, if we really get what I'm talking about here.

That I'm talking about this as not something that happens at an extraordinary moment, but moment to moment.

And as we get articulate with that, and respectful of that, there's a transformation in how we're experiencing each other.

Simple. It's a richness that comes.

So, anything you'd like to share about all — that?

Please.

*[Participant:]* Yeah. Well, you know, it's close.

*[Russell:]* In my experience, there's a lot of back and forthing.

It's not that my feelings are functioning separate from my knowledge. You know, like Feldenkrais used to say, no one ever had a great intuition about solving a difficult mathematical theorem without a lot of knowledge of mathematics.

So these things are interacting in the organism, right?

We don't want to get the picture that that's living by itself.

So it's an interacting. But the main thrust of what you're saying, yes. That there is this something that's often ignored. Listening to it, and then bringing our inquiry to it.

Oh, I love it when my mind is saying something — not exactly the right word. How did I know it wasn't the right word? Because something inside went, not quite, not quite, not quite.

So my not-quite thing went, right? So that's close, almost. It's the not-quite place. So I had to stop.

And now I find it really important — and fascinating. That's very different. Really important, and fascinating — when my thought tells me, I really want to communicate this to my daughter, and I get something different in here.

I don't assume that this is wrong, but I know that it's more complex, and there's more that, if I give it attention, will really help our interaction.

So there's more information in here than I've paid attention to. And if I give it that little bit more time to let this come in, then something shifts in what I want to say, how I want to say it, the timing of saying it, whatever.

Yeah? Does that make sense?

*[Participant:]* It sounds like part of the process is building confidence to follow that distance.

*[Russell:]* Yeah. In the business world, maybe you're spending many dollars on something. Everybody's saying you should. See, I feel confident that you're reading correctly what the distance is.

*[Participant:]* Right, right.

That's where that comment I made yesterday comes from. The greatest gift I gave to this company was the permission to say, something doesn't feel right, and I don't know what it is. And then there would be a pause, and let's look further.

*[Participant:]* Just on a personal note, I do quite a bit of painting. So if a painting I've done — let's say it's done — I'll walk past it. It's not right.

It's great. It's perfect. It's not right. And sometimes it can take up to two months to figure out what's not right, and I cannot articulate what's not right. But when I fix it, it's right.

*[Russell:]* Yeah, and that's a perfect example.

*[Participant:]* It's funny. Some people will look at it and say, oh, it's done, and I'll say, I just can't live with it like that.

## Yes, no, almost, maybe

*[Russell:]* And that not-rightness is part of what I'm talking about, of a whole inner body sense. That includes perception, includes ideas, but that's what I'm talking about in terms of feeling body.

And do you get how, usually if we use the word body, we're usually talking about something like this? That's why we need to take this time to grow what we mean by body. Otherwise we'll start narrowing things.

But that's such a perfect example of both sides. Of something's not right, and then when the rightness occurs, that breath, or that — and the body gets totally different.

So just in shorthand language, when I gave you that positive memory, I call that how the body says yes.

When I went to the other one, it's what I call how the body says no.

Just in shorthand. We can get much more differentiated, but it's really good to have the yeses, the nos, the almosts, the close.

One that we didn't do, but you can do on your own, is the maybes. I'm not quite sure. And this you can do on your own.

So maybe for some of you, I'm not quite sure about this mudra. Some of you have meditation experience. Or I'm not quite sure about leaving the eyes open. Yeah, I'm going to try it, but some of you got a yes, this is right for me.

Maybe someone got a real no. But for a number of people, with both, there's a, well, I'm not sure. It could be good, but I need more evidence. It's kind of a maybe place. And how the body lives in maybe is another very good one to know, in terms of broad categories of articulating experience.

*[Participant:]* When you overwork this — you nailed it, and then a week later I can hear the canvas being ripped. But I can relate that to a sensation I'm feeling right now. Can I overwork this, over-refine it? When can I say, okay, let's just leave that. You're there enough.

*[Russell:]* Yeah. Sure. Very important, very important to know.

You know, we're all right now learning a kind of vocabulary, an inner vocabulary, and yeah, we can go off in many directions. And that's a great example.

One can have a pattern of it never being good enough. And then the body can't speak. You get how that's a clamping down of the inner body sense that we're talking about. And that pattern can dominate.

Now, one of the great things is, if somebody's got a pattern like that — if we do learn some of the stuff we're learning about differentiating attention. Moving, like we did at the very end of that practice, moving from a feeling state, grounding into a bodily state, right? We were practicing shifting tracks there. Did you feel that?

There was a lot of feeling in the room. There was a lot of feeling around going to this place you didn't like being, and there was anxiousness, and there was this, and we spent a little bit going back to the other. But then I just — can we find the ground? Can we find the sound? Can we find the breath?

We were practicing changing tracks, and we want to get our nervous system so good at doing that. So that in real life experience, we are able to go from intensely being available for intense feeling experience, and not living overwhelmed. Being able to shift. And our bodily sense is such an important part of that.

Physical body sense grounds the feeling body.

Physical body sense — that stuff we worked with in the first part of the morning — grounds the feeling body.

Okay.

You're shaking your head. What are you shaking your head about? I'm looking at you.

Does it seem like too much? Do you know what that shake was?

*[Participant:]* Not specifically. I think it's time for lunch.

*[Russell:]* Okay. No.

*[Participant:]* Oh, so great.

*[Russell:]* Great.

*[Participant:]* Thank you so much.

*[Russell:]* Good. This is really where I wanted to get to this morning. It's really helpful. Thanks.