Discussion

Angela 2 — Week 2, Day 2, Session 2 — 74 minutes

Summary: Eyes closed, the group reflects on what has felt important, then shares what is alive — pelvis, clutter, belly wisdom, pace, joy, lightness, and refuge together. Russell speaks of three brains, of nothing hidden, and of a little more time, then guides one person to meet pain by making safety rather than pushing through.

Here on this spot

[Russell:] Just close your eyes for a moment. Close your eyes and drop down. Drop down.

So we begin cultivating, or we continue cultivating, this bodily habit of: I'm here on this spot.

Even before how am I, is I am here.

I am here, and that is so fundamental, it's easy to skip. On this spot. Not even anything particularly fascinating, except when it is. But I'm here on this spot. I sense it. I sense my weightedness.

I am. I am here.

And just reflect back to the morning. We've touched on a number of different subjects, both in terms of what I began speaking about — the listening, the speaking — and then as we were each bringing something from the process of just inviting what's alive. Around our sense of our path, embodied life work, and just life also.

It was a very open question, with some particularity, and seeing what came forward in a listening-speaking kind of way.

Before we go back toward the personal offering of what we'd like to offer in saying hello to the group — what has come in our investigation so far that feels like, that seems important to me? Something that touched. Could be something we spoke about. Could be something someone else said that ignited something, that you go, oh, that seems like an important direction. Or something resonates with that.

So this is called embodied thinking. We're working with embodied listening, which is the listening-speaking. This is embodied thinking. It's letting the whole body be present as a physical being, as a feeling being, as we invite reflection.

Okay. What went yes inside at certain moments? What words or pictures can I bring to that, that feels right?

And if something comes for you, something that seems like, oh, that seems like an important thing. Seems valuable. Again, it's not necessarily part of your personal process of looking. It could be something we discussed.

Let's put into the air some of the subjects that came up. This is for our own cultivating. It's good to hear these things from different voices. It's also a beautiful way of letting someone know where we were this morning, some of the things that got touched upon.

[Participant:] What I'm saying about the work that I'm doing around our center is how habitually I am there. I really want to move in there.

I think there's something culturally about that, if I'm swinging my hips, on being sexual.

[Russell:] Right, right.

[Participant:] That over the years I've learned not to do that. And just the opening of being able to move the pelvis in a freeing, swinging way. It's really helpful in stride, and being able to feel as I'm walking.

[Russell:] Yeah. Beautiful. Thank you.

Something else from what we've touched on so far that's alive in you.

[Participant:] The clutterness, the messiness, the door, the bedroom door. A sense of that not being me, but me having a relationship with it.

This afternoon's lesson gave me that experience of being with it without being it.

[Russell:] Yeah. Being with it without being it.

[Participant:] What I was resonating with, because it's something I've been exploring very consciously lately, is just this whole frame of awareness.

[Russell:] Yes.

[Participant:] For me, the exploration has been of just really listening into the wisdom in this part of me.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] So it's nice to hear you talk of this today.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] To speak about it as this other brain, the belly. It feels very much this place that, if I attend to it, I'm informed from here. This great wisdom.

[Russell:] Yeah. And this quality — how do we invite it? Because it has different requirements, we could say, for being willing to be understood, or sensed, or taken in.

Three brains

[Russell:] See if this feels right. That is actually an integration. The cortex is still alive, deciding things. Oh, wait, now there's more here. So it's a connection, here to here. This can't function on its own.

Your sensing body is not wise by itself. Your feeling body is not wise by itself. Your thinking body is not wise by itself. It's in the moments of integration where the whole —

I literally think of it, and I'll speak more about this later, as three active brains. And there's a really good physiological basis for that comment.

Years ago a neurologist wrote a book called *The Second Brain*, talking about the cluster of 40,000 neurons living in your chest, living around your heart. These are not just passively receiving messages from up here. There's an active relationship up and down. There are decisions made here that are then reported up here. It's not all top down.

The same with the enteric nervous system. The sense of there being — it's got a different kind of rationality. It's not irrational, but it has access to a kind of knowingness that, again, doesn't live by itself, but when it's all connected.

And that's the essence of our work, certainly on the soul level. How we can be living much more frequently lined up.

It's not a special process to go to, except in certain moments when you've gotten disconnected. You're learning to be living from this, and course-correcting in minor ways. Oh, you're needing something. What is that? What did I miss? You get back in the car. You go, oh, there's some — oh, hello there. And then you feel back again.

Maybe you don't feel wonderful. Maybe there's something challenging in your life. But often what we end up is just kind of in — oh, okay.

So this is quite literal. It's not just a metaphor of these brains. I'm quite sure neurology books thirty years from now will have not only what they talk about as the triune brain — meaning the different levels of this brain — but actually three brains. And there are interesting connections between this brain and the brainstem, this brain and the limbic brain, and the thinking brain and the cortex. So it's a very interesting lineup.

A week after we meet, I'm meeting with an artist to draw out some of the pictures I have of these interconnections.

[Participant:] It seems, at least from the research I've been reading, that there's a fourth.

[Russell:] All right.

[Participant:] And the fourth is between us. The mirror neurons in the brain are communicating and relating between us, and we affect and shape each other.

[Russell:] Absolutely. I totally support that. I usually link that to the symbolizing brain, but it's worthy of another distinction. So much activity, so much learning, only happens interpersonally. Only happens in our connecting with each other.

[Participant:] Thank you.

You can't live at the rate of a lesson

[Participant:] One thing connected that hadn't happened in all the years that I'd done Feldenkrais, and all the training. I understood that when you did something, then you did it kind of quickly.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] There's that — I don't know what it came from, O'Shea or something — that you can only do fast what you already know. And then when you're learning something, it needs to —

What I'm very aware of: when my pace gets fast at home, my back starts hurting. I start trying to stabilize the chaos by structural stabilizing. Because I don't know how to move with this kind of intention, this kind of intentionality.

This morning, when lifting the leg, and then we did it quickly, I finally realized that the capacity to contain, or to stay connected with the long vertical, with the work we're studying, can happen at a fast pace.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] Fast pace, I was normally just going, just hold. Hold something really stiff, if you can.

[Russell:] Right. Beautiful. Boy, that's a real big one.

It's a really important one for all of us, because it's a real trap, a potential trap, of Feldenkrais work. You can't live at the rate of a lesson.

These are good conditions for learning. Then to bridge that into realizing: once it's integrated, we can sense it, and it's joyful. And actually the fast movement is then a further integrating of the pattern. That's why I will often introduce a fast movement once I sense that the room has a pattern that's integrating.

Even for those of you who do hands-on work — this is Feldenkrais talk — to go from discrete movements, slow, steady, mindful, to oscillatory movements. Moving from differentiation to integration. And that's how the nervous system patterns us, and experience.

[Participant:] The fun way — the listening-speaking is also something that we can actually do at a normal human —

[Russell:] Oh, thank you.

[Participant:] I was Skyping with my husband right before here, and I was trying to describe it to him, so I started sort of doing it, and he's like, yeah? And I just could feel, well, it's really cool, but in terms of —

[Russell:] Right. Real life, or everyday life.

Yeah. My experience is that interacting, there is — it's a little slower, but not nearly as slow as when I'm really taking the time to stay. So it's not like it's exactly the same.

When just moving information back and forth — do you want to have Japanese food? Let's send in an order. But it can get closer, where it's not that.

And actually what I realize is, in my life, certainly with my inner processing, and with certain other people — not every other person, but with certain other people, and with my inner life — I can function in the world and have the listening occurring much of the time. And that's not special.

It takes a development of the orientation of attention, and how to get familiar with the kinds of listening.

Suzuki Roshi would say, contrary to Sigmund Freud: nothing is hidden. Nothing is hidden. It's a whole different worldview. Nothing is hidden.

And my experience is, as I've cultivated a trusting relationship with my inner life, it's not this stuff that wants to hide, that's afraid of coming forward because something terrible's gonna — it actually wants to be perceived.

So it was a real change in my picture of psychodynamics. It's a question of creating a kind of welcoming environment for the inner life to come forward.

Saying hello

[Russell:] We're gonna pause here in our conversation. I'd like to have the time for the people who haven't yet given their name again, and something either from the process this morning — if that's alive in your unfolding — or something else you want us to know.

Love to hear from you.

[Participant:] It took me a bit to go beneath my thoughts and mind.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] When I felt spaciousness — when you, because the golden ball.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] And it felt exciting. And I stayed with it over time. It moved up into my stomach, and then up through my arms and into my chest, and it became this joyful feeling. A joyful expectation. A joyful anticipation.

[Russell:] Joyful anticipation. What?

[Participant:] Yeah. And as I opened my eyes, really, I've had this joy. It's like a baby coming to see his mother.

[Russell:] I love it.

And again, for all of us — thank you. For all of us taking this in: when you see people, I hope you're just beginning to naturally observe the way the hands just are instant communication from the inner life. This joy coming up. It has been. It has been.

I love this connecting of here, here, and then it wants to come home. It knows.

It's not hidden. It's not mysterious. It's mysterious, but it's not hidden.

Somebody else.

[Participant:] What I'd like to share about my work this morning was that I've really felt a progression, especially since our last segment, but really since I've met you, which I think was about a year and a half ago.

I have been doing Feldenkrais work for approximately three to four years, and so it's a slippery slope when it comes to sensing. But what I've been able to reflect on, anticipating this work again, is that especially recently something very bizarre and significant has been going on in my life, and I've been able to not lose it.

Even though I had this invitation to go really into some old patterns, and I did. I went every once in a while. But I didn't lose sight of change, and joy, in pretty much any way. Find some joy.

And I think the biggest thing for me has been that I feel this lightness in myself. To the degree that I could even sense light between my ribs, and that I'm not just this hard shell, and that there's movement of energy and so on.

The caveat to that is that I haven't felt that in my whole body, and that there's this hard spot right here. I have a sense of where that has come from, and I'm okay with that, because I now have a lot of past experience that this too will change. That I can be okay with that seed that was talked about. It's like, there. But if I continue to allow that spaciousness, and grow the conditions — not the optimal, but the conditions for it to move, and for whatever that is to do its thing when it's ready — I've become a lot more patient with myself.

They talk about the psychological immune system, and how it kicks in when something kind of nasty happens to you. But I think that this has been an affirmation, reframing my trust in this work.

There was a period of time where I was making career changes and that kind of thing, and I always relied on my good sense, I guess, in some sense. And I lost that a little bit, and now I'm sort of back to that. It's a really good feeling. I'm really trusting it now. I've had so much experience with that, and this work has really just allowed me to get in there and, even when times are tough, just to say that you're a lot more than this situation.

[Russell:] Beautiful. Thank you.

Someone.

A hello, and then —

[Participant:] I just look quite literally at where am I on my journey, or where is my personal journey. And my journey is a healing journey. Where I'm at with it now is, really, I'm kind of continuing that process, and seeing, trusting that I have the resources to address, or face, or be with the issues I've been carrying — like, at me, and past generations.

And to move forward with the support of all sentient beings. And the sense that I have resources to — I do have those sentient beings with me — to continue to change. Building this life towards the real.

[Russell:] I noticed, as we're listening. How much have you listened? It's really, how much have you listened?

It took me a long time, but I'm kind of a slow learner, to recognize how often my listening was happening up here. I was listening to words. And the rest — there certainly were lots of other places listening, but they were so far out of consciousness that it would only be later that I'd notice what my response was.

I find it so very helpful that my bottom is here. And so it comes through.

And that is a learnable practice, a learnable skill. What I love is being spontaneous, and then noticing if it's not there, and noticing where I'm disconnecting.

But it's good practice while we're listening. See if we, with great gentleness — if we're spacing out, or we're going elsewhere, or we're just hearing the words, that's not bad. Let's just have it. And we're learning. We're learning.

I find it truly a gift to hear what's living in people.

[Participant:] Well, talk about your slow learner. What about that? I mean, I think just hearing again.

That checking first. Not how am I — do I know where I am.

[Russell:] Yeah. Amen.

[Participant:] And additionally, to be here for the second week again. This is my third second week. But this is different, and it's especially different because it's a different place, the landscape, and the time of year.

That's really what came this morning. Just the length of the day. In the light, and the light in the evening. And something about being on a hillside. And maybe also my own readiness.

[Russell:] Sure. Could be part of it. Could be part of it.

[Participant:] But still, really a blessing. A blessing to be here, and share the grief with everyone, and getting to know people.

[Russell:] Thank you.

Oh, just a little message, from my conversation just now. In addition to the other ways she'll be interacting, she's willing to take like an hour at lunchtime. Not for one person, but if you want being listened to — could have three or four people, two or three people, or something like that.

Do a sign-up sheet. And you already know how powerful it is just to have a really present listener. And I'd love you to get the experience of how you don't have to be brilliant in what you say to someone for their process to unfold.

Most of you felt it this morning. Just the invitation to go in. It's not hiding when it's invited. And that social brain, that interpersonal brain, that is so activated by the presence of another. Or affirmed, confirmed, safely — finds safety.

Someone else.

[Participant:] Sharing from this morning, about what this work has brought me so far. It seems that since January — like some of you, I know someone mentioned just feeling different — there is this great lightness of my spirit and my being, in the way I actually move in the world, and feel in the world, and look at the world.

And some of my friends will say, wow, you look really different. And I'll just say thank you, because I feel different.

And I really like the hot off the press. I've been using that sense of quiet and pausing to really be — well, really, where am I? And then I say to myself, really, where are you? And it shifts, and I practice with it.

And some of my friends will say, oh, wait a minute, she has a thought. Wait a minute, she has a thought. There's a sense that they're noticing that I'm noticing that within myself.

[Participant:] Me too.

[Participant:] I just feel like I have more tools. These new tools that I've never — well, I've had, but I didn't maybe know how to use. Kind of brings tears to my eyes, because this is a gift. This work is life-changing. And I feel really different.

I didn't think I was going to cry right now.

[Russell:] Well, isn't life surprising?

[Participant:] It feels like getting ready for this trip. I've been feeling so excited to see all of you. It just feels really profound. And I'm shedding like crazy.

[Russell:] Yeah, I see it. I remember our first meeting in Breitenbush. Some years ago, and you had really shifted.

[Participant:] When I feel like speaking in a different way, I'll say, did I really say that? Using words of — you said the last time, show the light, bring the light back to yourself. And it just feels like stuff is pouring out of me. I'll be standing with myself, and I don't know if it's a poem or a story, but these things will just come to me, and I think, I need to write that down. My whole inner world is something that is becoming quite amazing.

[Russell:] Yeah. Amen.

[Participant:] And it continues, and I'm taking risks that I never thought that I would take before. And I'm just listening to myself more and more, because it feels right. And I'm stopping to say, that feels right, even though I'm scared as hell, I still am doing it.

And it's really different. It's almost like I feel like a kid, but I'm not in a kid's body. I'm in an old woman wise body, and I'm combining these ways. I bow to myself at night. I'm doing stuff that I — I don't know. I'm just gonna be in it.

[Russell:] Thank you.

[Participant:] I had something we were talking about, but what's coming into my mind now is, you're never going to complete your to-do list, or —

[Russell:] I don't need a to-do list.

[Participant:] I have lists that categorize the to-do list. And that's the sense that I have had, that's slowly evaporating — that somehow I'm gonna get it all under control.

[Russell:] Right.

[Participant:] And then I'm going to be able to.

[Russell:] Right. And that's not gonna happen.

[Participant:] Right.

[Russell:] What you can do is, if you wanna make a to-do list, just write at the bottom of it: make a new to-do list. So you know where you're going.

Beautiful. Thank you.

Can you get the connection between getting it fresh, and trusting your life? They're intimately connected.

Our confidence to get it fresh is intimately linked to trusting the unfolding of our life. Because the habit of living a little bit in the already known is that unconscious urge toward creating at least an illusion of safety.

Safety's not a bad thing. I'm not throwing safety out. But the illusion that if I know exactly what I'm gonna say ahead of time, then somehow nothing bad's gonna happen.

And even with our own inner world. I love to notice how many of the moments that I say something to myself of something that I've already known a moment ago, but I say it to myself as — oh, you're telling me that. I already knew that.

No, thank you. Good to hear it again.

Somebody. Fresh.

[Participant:] I really resonate with that sentiment that you put out in your email, or to the group. Venus in transit, or 2012. There's just a lot.

[Russell:] Right. There it is.

[Participant:] There's a lot that's moving. A lot of opportunity. A lot of old patterns that I'm bumping into.

And what's really touching me right now is this. From what was said earlier about the we, and about the group brain — the value, the refuge of this between. I've been around lots of different sanghas over the years, and there's a really different feeling that comes with how little we've been together, and how, for me, how safe I feel in the company of all of you.

A week together, and then a few hours together — there's a refuge that's very clear, and has a very different flavor than other experiences I've experienced. I think what we're cultivating, through all of these aspects of being — body, body-of-life stuff — is that aspect of refuge, and what we provide for each other.

[Russell:] Beautiful. Thank you.

[Participant:] I'm tired. I'm tired. Nervous, speaking American words.

A lot of gratitude for connecting, reconnecting, my inner life. Making life so great. Every time I work with focusing, or connecting with myself, doing it — it's so fun. And it's so interesting. And to feel the joy that comes from the connection.

And sometimes the material is a little scary, to some part of me. And I do think I hit on that this morning when we were sharing. I had a lot of sensation, and realized that was kind of not living for me. And then realizing that my bottom started coming back in.

And I'm also resonating with what was said about the work with the golden ball, and the pelvis area being such a home. It brings so much in me that's occurred in my life, that wants to come out and be heard.

It sort of came up the other day on a focusing call. I got to tap into those calls through recordings, and had like four wonderful focusing sessions in the last two weeks with people. It's also a very nice way to show up.

But that material — it's really, as you said, it's leading the way. And then in our talk this morning, I realized that I feel less cautious than the first week. I never realized I was feeling off until today. So that was nice. Kind of, wow, I'm ready. It was a ready feeling.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] I'm ready. That's how I felt right after I talked.

[Russell:] Thank you.

[Participant:] My practice is this, and other. I'm just aware I'm on the cusp of so much at the moment. And it's a wonderful challenge, because it's putting me on the line. It's something — okay. So you're on this path and you can't go back. But now there's this next bit, and that next bit, and it's pretty bloody scary. And am I actually prepared to put myself on the line and go into that next bit?

So it's really significant, and great. And confronting the parts of me that don't give myself enough time. And that includes that reference before, of trying to do focusing in daily life and going, oh, that's what it is. Okay. And then off I go. Instead of staying, giving myself that extra space.

The thing that I've become very clear about this morning, through that session, was I need some personal retreat space to make the time. And it will really enrich this next kind of step. So that's what became very apparent.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] That's a bit sobering.

[Russell:] Right. Thank you.

A little more time

[Russell:] Just to comment. Sometimes a retreat space is perfect, and listening to that is essential. And what I want to put right next to that is that little bit more time.

Not necessarily to jump to that it needs a week, or it needs three days, or that it needs a month, or that it needs a whole day. Sometimes that's what's needed. But what I also notice is that often my inner life just needs another minute. Without me making conclusions, or turning it into a solution of some sort.

And so I've gotten more and more confident, and comfortable, with just using awareness to bring light into the inner circumstance. Just that there's space there. That there's — oh, that's there. And I used to, and I still love it when it just kind of all goes, oh, right, that.

But I so enjoy — my conscious role is bringing light into the darkness and letting it sort itself out. Not my job to fix it, to make it better even, but to really bring the light.

That's why I have such confidence and encouragement in the resource-growing processes. Because that is part of creating a ground state that is so self-nourishing, implicitly, whether you're doing it over and over or not.

And then to be able to bring the quality of attention to the stuck places. And, oh, that. Oh, that too. Oh, that there too.

More want to be known?

Just a little bit more time can be a great gift.

And then maybe you also do a personal retreat. But don't wait for a personal retreat to give those places that little bit more, without conclusion and without decision. Kind of, oh, that's there, and that's there, and that's there.

[Participant:] How many retreats you need today?

[Russell:] Thank you.

Well, for now, let's stay with this, because I'm concerned about making sure everybody can speak.

[Participant:] Please.

A rocky arrival

[Russell:] A little louder. You don't need to go back there. You can stay with anything. But some of it's still happening.

[Participant:] A hard, strange transition. Part of me is still working, and my therapy's still — and wants to be. And a part of me is worried about noise. It doesn't want to have noise. Lots of space and quiet, and wonders, do I need to hear? I listen all day long.

[Russell:] Right.

[Participant:] And then through our focusing — surrounding the sun, surrounding the sun — and with that comes this nice, sensible space. Yeah, so I can be.

And then another part of me, really surprised, because I've been looking forward to coming.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] And just surprised that it was a little rocky. And so it's just going to take some time. To slowly.

[Russell:] Yeah. Great to have the consciousness of all that. Thank you.

When learning meets discomfort

[Participant:] This morning was a journey to a familiar place, where I came to realize I was feeling trapped here. Instead of out there doing all the — probably the same things I did yesterday, I'll do more. Once I realized that, that was good. It was a nice feeling. A wave washed over me. And I was content to stay right where I am.

But at the risk of throwing out a discord — this last session was, for me, bringing up something that was frustrating. Very familiar. Taking this body and, in this case, putting it on its front side.

No matter how little I tried to do, there were very few parts that weren't talking to me, and they were very nice.

So I run into a wall this way, and I'd like to hear from you on this. And I know you've been helping me with this. And I need another application. Pain, where the desire to learn runs into — let's just call it discomfort.

[Russell:] Right.

[Participant:] And no degree of reduction.

[Russell:] Right.

[Participant:] It's just already — yeah. You can't work.

[Russell:] Right. Great, thank you for bringing it in.

I love discordant. I'm not against discordant. Discordant just means something else for us to learn. So please, always feel free.

Let me know when such is happening, that the position, or any movement in that position, is already lighting you up. It's already unpleasant.

If we're doing something on our bellies, usually you can do much of the same pattern on your side. And for most people, that will feel better. What we're looking for is not that you have to do the movement exactly like we're doing, but that the neurological pattern is close.

Go ahead.

[Participant:] So you want to know how to work with the frustration of that? I guess there's a twofold question. Yes, dealing with the frustration, that is part of it. The other is how to define that connection that would lead you to the work.

[Russell:] Great. Beautiful.

So let's take what I just said, about first creating conditions where you're not already struggling. That's essential. That's not kind of being soft, or even being nice. It's being smart.

It's creating conditions where your nervous system is safe enough that you could begin to activate a little bit of the pattern without it already being lit up. Do you get that picture? What happens when you consider that?

[Participant:] Sorry. Don't quit.

[Russell:] Yeah, I know. I know. These are very old, and this is the edge that we need to work at.

And I know that a part of you has the story that, well, the only way out is through that. And I'm saying, on many levels — neurologically, learning theory — create a condition where you're not struggling, or at least the struggle is minimized enough that your system is not on that alert place, on that hypersensitive place. So that you can have an experience of something in the direction of the pattern we're working with, and have your body feel safe there.

Safe is a really important word here.

When you stay with the old strategy — I know that old strategy could be helpful in some other circumstance, if you're at war. But this is not war.

[Participant:] I know it does.

[Russell:] Part of your conditioning is that a situation that's an obstacle needs to be approached from that kind of — you stay with it until it's done, and you don't back away.

And I want to really emphasize a quality: creating safe conditions. Not psychologically — I mean, it's also psychologically — but I'm saying creating physiological conditions for your system to grow a new pattern.

Can you follow that?

[Participant:] Yeah, it does. I don't want to drag this on, but it's kind of compounded for me, because yesterday there were two soldiers that were injured, today there's three. Instead of dealing with the problems that were challenging me, let's say last year — this is getting long.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] Last year I was dealing with, let's say, just one problem. I would work around, through Russell, with Russell — physical, physical, physical. Right now, the last six months, I've managed to add to that list considerably. Frustration. There's a desire to figure it out.

[Russell:] Right. Okay, so let's go to another level.

The information I gave you now was predominantly about working with a movement pattern that was challenging. There are similar but slightly altered suggestions around — you know very well how these constrictions in your body, as you already said, are connected to what's lit up in your inner life.

So, how to create the safe conditions for that to unwind itself.

And what I want to say is, stay with the work this week, and emphasize getting yourself into comfortable enough positions. Even when we're sitting and processing, that you're getting supports if you need them. What will feel to some part of you like, well, I don't wanna baby myself — do a little extra care.

In order to go to the level inside, what you're trying to find out is, how does what's going on in here relate to what's happening down there. It needs a safe environment first.

How does that land? Say more.

[Participant:] On an intellectual level, yeah, it's an answer. And I believe what you're saying is anger. Frustration.

[Russell:] Right. Okay, so frustration.

Can you sense the places that are carrying all that frustration?

[Participant:] Right.

[Russell:] We need to turn right toward it. You got it, right there. Right toward how all that is living in there.

Just even take a few moments now, just to be with it.

And as you sense what you're calling frustration, alive in there — if you have some contact with something, if words come, bring it forth. If not, just stay with it.

[Participant:] It's like there's a battle.

[Russell:] There's a battle. Stay in that, so it feels, and keep checking if the words are just right.

[Participant:] It feels like a battle.

[Russell:] Like a battle is going on in there. And something in you feels like it's losing that battle. If that feels right.

And how do you sense the battle?

And let it know you're with it. Feel your hand there.

Really be right there.

[Participant:] It feels like a black column of discontent.

[Russell:] See if that feels just right, or wants to be known more, or in other ways. A black column of discontent.

Yeah. Okay, so we've got that, and there's other things in there. Just take a few minutes to follow your process here.

[Participant:] It's like a kid clamoring for attention.

[Russell:] It's like a kid. Bring the attention to it.

[Participant:] It's like a kid clamoring for attention.

[Russell:] See if that feels okay. Just say, oh, I'm with you. I'm with you.

Feel how it receives your presence. What happens there?

[Participant:] There's another place. Sit down and shut up.

[Russell:] Right. And also say hello to that. That's probably a different bodily feeling.

[Participant:] Yeah, that's over there.

[Russell:] So you're with all of this. You have space for the kid clamoring for attention, and for the sit-down-and-shut-up place.

And you might need to kind of situate your presence between those, so the sit-down-and-shut-up doesn't overwhelm the other. You can kind of turn back and forth. It's like you have these two kids, and they both need your attention.

[Participant:] The kid got quiet.

[Russell:] Let him know you're with him. He's not alone. That you're not gonna let the other guy beat him up.

You're gonna be between the sit-down-and-shut-up place and this. It needs some confidence in your caring.

If you're willing to be in between them, not discounting the other one either, you'll turn toward that one also.

The practice is situating yourself between the one and the other.

Yeah, and can you be between them? Can you find a way to situate?

You see, the kid needs a protector, and your presence — that's part of its function. It's pretty innocent and vulnerable, and the other one's like the big brother.

[Participant:] It's easy to identify with the big brother.

[Russell:] I know it is. I know you. It's very easy to call that I. I know it.

And just see if it can feel authentic to recognize that it has a lot of concerns.

[Participant:] Yeah, you can see them all.

[Russell:] You're not discounting that either, but you're just in that in-between. You have a presence for both.

What's happening there?

[Participant:] It's the weak place.

[Russell:] Say again?

[Participant:] It's the weak place. It's the — the soft side is the place where he'll spend his lifetime trying to stay the hell away from.

[Russell:] Okay. So it's weak, it's soft. It's vulnerable.

Can you get in between?

Right now, that's the way that other guy who says sit down and shut up — that's the way he speaks. But he's got you again, and that's okay. We want to see that.

I know. We're right here. You often, or sometimes, identify there.

Can it feel — no is a good answer, if that's true — can it feel authentic to acknowledge it and not be in it? Not be in that voice? Can you be a little bit away from it, and actually hold space for both of those?

[Participant:] Yes.

[Russell:] Okay, so just pause right there. That yes — I want you to feel that all the way through. What does it feel like?

It takes strength. It takes courage, it's true, to be in that in-between. To hold space for all of that.

Feel the yes that came in that moment, and see if you can just have a few more seconds of letting that inner capacity be here.

That's the edge. That's the edge, right there.

[Participant:] Right, that's the edge.

[Russell:] So great.

Just take a moment, first, to thank your inner life, that it's so clearly showing itself. The attacking voice, and the one who's still vulnerable — both there, revealing themselves.

And the suggestion here is that you can find — subtle right now, but you can find — a way of not being in them, and being with them. And at times I'd even say, positioning consciousness between them.

And this is an edge. This is the edge. And I invite you, encourage you, welcome you, to be cultivating. There's more living in each of those places.

[Participant:] Thanks.

They're waiting on us

[Russell:] So I know some of us have not gotten to speak. A few of you haven't spoken. We're pretty late for our dinner. We eat at 5:30. It's 5:30, so they're waiting on us.

What we'll do is, I want to complete this tonight. We will set up for meditation, so that you know where you'll be, and then we're gonna come in close and just hear from the last people who haven't spoken.

Thank you so much.