Practice

Angela 2 — Week 2, Day 5, Session 1 — 13 minutes

Summary: Russell sets up a five-minute partner practice of revisiting a moment of gratitude from the day, first setting the scene, then staying with the bodily feel. He models it while a partner reflects key sensory words, answers questions about reflection, and sends the group to begin.

The practice

[Russell:] So, the first practice we're going to do is with a partner. This is going to be five minutes each. And it's going to be — I'm going to model it, and my partner's going to be Sherry — connecting. And please don't plan this out now. See what comes. I don't know what I'm going to say. Connecting to a moment of gratitude from this day.

And we're going to spend the first part, maybe a minute, setting the scene. Where are you? What's happening?

And then the next few minutes with what it feels like inside. And then if you lose contact, you go back, create the scene, so we get this practice of feeding our brains something about this pattern. The bodily feel. Going back to the physical sensations.

Then the partner, your main job, like yesterday, is presence.

Now we're going to add the next step in partnering, which is just giving back, reflecting back some of the key sensory feeling expressions that they have.

Now, as you know, the way we do this is not just to give the word. So if someone says lightness — there is a lot of lightness in here — the response could be something like, you're noticing a lot of lightness in there, or you're sensing lightness in there. You got it?

So you have that. You're giving them back the same word with that kind of comment.

So, let's just get this clear. Come on, come on over, Sherry.

[Participant:] Do I have to sit on the floor?

[Russell:] No. Sit. Actually you can sit right there. I don't need you right — you can just kinda lean toward me. So, just to get it clear what we're doing.

And just someone tell me when four minutes is up.

Demonstration

[Russell:] Okay, so I'm gonna drop down.

Really take your time. Before you go to any scene, before you even invite a scene, just drop down. Free from any demand.

Dropping into my bottom, to my hands.

Sense knees, legs, breath.

Going inside, into the inner places. Just putting a gentle invitation in there for what's happened in the last hour today that I feel grateful for, that there's gratitude in here for.

So, the first thing that comes is, I'm sitting just outside, the outer door near the weight room, on a bench, and sun is very, very warm. And it just feels — going from the dark room to the sun, very — it's like I'm drinking it in.

And I've got my shakuhachi. Yeah, it's like the scent in that warm sun.

[Participant:] It's like you're drinking it in.

[Russell:] Yeah, so I'm taking a little more time to feel the drink.

Playing shakuhachi.

And what is that?

I'm so grateful for a sense of timelessness. Something — it's like, I know there'll be meetings coming soon, and I know, but for right now, there's no demands. It's that. It's like —

Sense of space.

[Participant:] Sensing something there, like sense of space.

[Russell:] Yes. It's also some — it's like the warmth and space. There's something. Yeah, there's a word. It's like freedom. There's a freedom inside.

Freedom, and that freedom — see my hands.

Uplift that freedom, yeah.

So, sensing that freedom, you can even feel them if you lift your hands and everything.

Seems to us — gonna appreciate that right now. Uplifted. Warm.

I notice as I'm sitting like this, I feel like my head drops back. It's like a rapture.

It's certainly coming even more now than it did then, as I'm appreciating it.

Nourishing. It is just to sit here for a few minutes.

And now, I'm going to say, let's not have reflection, because I just want to sit here and not hear any.

That's good.

It's a — little reluctance of coming out.

And now I'm experiencing gratitude for the gratitude. It's like — it's really so true what we're looking at here. I just got it. So I had it before, wonderful moments, but it is so much more penetrating to take five minutes with that.

Questions

[Russell:] Okay. Any questions about what we're doing?

Really, yes, please, Carl.

Yeah. Now, don't do each one. It gets to be too much.

And by the way, you may find as a focuser, once you get more into your way of — that you don't like reflection. That's okay.

My wife — soon, quickest way to get her out of herself is to reflect back what she said. I already know you heard it. What, do you think I'm stupid? You don't have to tell me what I already heard. I know what I said. And yeah, so for her, it just is not what she — so.

So you'll listen to your style. For this practice, you know. Just see. Give it some time. But certainly not everyone. Give space, and then in terms of the timing, after they say, if there's space for it, maybe like there's a breath, and you're noticing.

I just want you to get a little bit of practice at what it feels like to hear it back. And when you hear it back, really hear it, because that, as happened for me with Sherry, can vivify what you're experiencing.

So that it's not just repetitious, but you're taking it in and seeing if your body resonates with it. And it's also practice for the companion to be able to offer — get comfortable offering a sentence like —

[Participant:] If I think I am using it, one point — I don't want any reflection now. I just want to sit.

[Russell:] Correct. You can do that.

Yeah, that's another point here, maybe. Good to pick up on Linda's observation there, that when you are in a process, this kind of listening process, this kind of focusing process, I very much want you to always feel like it is yours, beyond any rules. Beyond any — that if you don't want to hear anything from a person, that's fine. That it has to feel like it's yours, right?

I recommend, while we're learning like this, that you experiment. Don't come to quick conclusions about what's good for you and what's not. But over time, to know that that is the intention, that you will find your way of self-listening, and what you might like from somebody who is with you.

And I have a big range. Sometimes I like nothing, and sometimes I like quite a bit of input. And someone partnering with me knows that.

Well, let's say I maybe reflected one more time than I would have ordinarily, you know, so people would hear the words.

Beginning

[Russell:] Okay, we feel ready?

Let's decide at the beginning who's gonna speak first.

What I recommend is, the person going in, speak out loud your process of self-connect, okay? As if you're guiding yourself inward. I'm sensing my weight, I'm sensing my bottom, I'm coming — so you're guiding yourself, but you're saying that out loud, and you're hearing your own voice as an instruction to yourself.

And then you go into the inner body, and then you wait, see what comes as a moment of gratitude. Again, remember, like from this morning, it can be a very small feeling of gratitude. Don't worry about size here.

Finally, size doesn't matter.

Okay, so find your partner.

Yeah, I think so.