Discussion

Angela 2 — Week 2, Day 6, Session 4 — 73 minutes

Summary: On the closing morning the circle names what is living: gratitude, the dark side of God, and the limits of awareness alone. Russell speaks of commitment beyond comfort, guides a sensory rehearsal of carrying new qualities home, and offers practices, poems, and ways to stay connected.

What's living

[Russell:] So, let's close your eyes for a moment. Pause.

Dropping down, at what I think of as bodily habit of connecting to physical body.

I am. I'm here.

Sensing how I am in this moment of feeling body, what it feels like to be me and alive.

Don't skip over that first part. Just here.

And just noticing anything that might want — I'm acknowledging right now that's living there.

If there's anything that wants to be said or asked about, it's a space that's open for anything. And if there is something that comes from the experience yesterday of listening and speaking with the reflecting reminders, the pausing reminder. If there's anything from that that was a discovery or confusion, it doesn't have to be restricted to that. But just see what's living.

Keep your eyes open and come forward.

[Participant 1:] When I went in, I realized there was an incompleteness for me — just wanting to say how much I enjoyed our time last night. The whole day, actually, for me, but the evening. The flow of it, the generosity of it, the laughter and the touchingness. All of that together. And yeah. It's very special. Dark side of God.

[Russell:] It's all. Yeah. Or what lives.

[Participant 1:] Yes. Yeah, thank you.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant 2:] I really appreciate how you said the dark side of God, because that's really been coming to me — that it is part of God, that dark side, that there is something in it that is God. And also the same that Donof gave to me: what crushes us, it also brings fulfillment. In surprising ways.

[Participant 3:] I want to share, maybe it's in relation to that, the dark side feeling of envy. All my gratitudes start out with a dark layer. It's just my habit. Many of my gratitudes, which is just my habit, I believe, which I might or might not change. And I'm just so grateful, starting to really embrace that rub.

And the time is getting more simultaneous, I think, of recognition. Although the resource of love is one that really, really hits me. Like, especially the first couple of times I did that with you. I think our love was magnanimous. Up in Seattle, I think.

[Russell:] Yeah, that was the first one with unconditional love.

[Participant 3:] Memories that I had considered negative turned into these amazing resources. So similar in that way. I think that's part of that dark side.

[Russell:] Yeah. Yeah, thank you. We wake up through that. That's crushed lavender.

[Participant 4:] One gift I've been experiencing in abundance, like I experienced in the process we did together yesterday. Dawn and I practiced. And it has to do with giving — forming a relationship with a challenging formation or belief, and then giving it time. My old habit is to try to give so fast and then switch it. The effect of that has been an opening through here, and a remembering of your words to have an easy touch, a light touch. It's been very good for my heart and my shoulders.

[Russell:] Yeah, beautiful. Yeah, amazing.

[Participant 5:] Something that you said really rang true for me, especially having gone through the Feldenkrais training, about Moshe's idea that awareness — that if we are aware, then that would be, for lack of a better word, enough. And that, see, you said, like, that's not so true.

It's something that I think I've had a knowing about. I've been on that edge, pushing that a lot. It's okay if I keep doing this, 'cause I know I'm doing it. And I think that I wasn't being honest with myself. And also wanted to play with it, wanted to push that boundary. I wanted to say how that really has expanded a lot for me. It can be easy to get into that mindset.

[Russell:] Right. Right. Right. I'm just aware of it, so I'll just keep being aware of it and just not —

[Participant 5:] Right.

[Russell:] Sometimes he said it was so.

[Participant 5:] Right. Sometimes he said it was so. And I've found most of his wisdom to be so.

[Russell:] Yeah, and sometimes he said it another way. But that — thank you. I'd like to bring something with that also.

Comfort and a higher standard

[Russell:] Once we learn, in the Feldenkrais work, once we learn how to listen to our comfort — that's a big emphasis in Feldenkrais, listening to your comfort. Once you learn to be respectful in that way, that can become a limitation, if you think I'm always supposed to be comfortable.

And we see that's, in my opinion, a bit of a virus that's in the Feldenkrais work. And I've never seen people become their fullest in any activity by staying always comfortable. There's something about intelligence going to your edge, an intelligent kind of challenging of the self. And here we get finer differentiation. That doesn't mean the old, I'm bad if I do it this way. We want to step out of that.

In our language, what is comfort in the Feldenkrais world is that warm-heartedness, that unconditional warmth. Left by itself, it can become a kind of undifferentiated permission just to keep everything the way it is.

And part of the path — this is where the light and the clarity of distinction and discrimination, that side of things, is to say, I don't have to get into the old judgmental place to hold myself to a higher standard. There are other ways to stand up for life.

And then the shift that happens in that is, we are less committed to our old story. We're carrying it, we're taking care of it, but as that becomes less of our internal structure, we say, no, I'm standing up for the evolving of humanity. I'm standing up for the highest that's living in me.

And when I'm not reaching that, it's not that I'm getting, oh, I'm a bad person, but I want to study what's happening in my life, that now I'm doing the behaviors that I know are not bringing me toward fruition of myself.

So how can I be not just, oh, okay, now I've got to dump all over myself if I'm not — that's the old style. But the new style is not just, everything is fine just the way it is. That's a real misinterpretation for me of how to deal with what is. Well, everything, just open to what is — and there's a kind of soft undertonedness for me in that. We want to stand up for. That's where integrity lives. That's where reliability lives. And sometimes it doesn't feel good, because you're not doing something that used to be pleasurable for the old self, but you're realizing that for who you're sensing yourself becoming, that's a toy that I no longer play with.

And there are these struggling moments where one is in that in-between zone, where the old is still powerful, and the new is not so strong, but it's there, and you're working with it.

But at some point, one of the greatest liberations is when you get really, really clear that your commitment is to the highest and deepest in yourself. Not as a better than, but just that's what you're — it's kind of like sitting practice.

If you have the experience of that being a central part of your path, then you commit to sit. You commit to sit. And it's like brushing your teeth. You just do it. If you miss it, it's okay. You're not a bad person or something. But if that is, as I'm recommending it for us, a central place — 'cause I know that I need help in not falling into my delusion. And that's one place where, even if you think I don't sit well, and I'm not strong, and it's not getting better, all of that — just getting on the cushion regularly, taking the posture, and having the intention is like water on stone over time.

And it's okay. I'm more committed to that than lying in bed. My old self — and still there's the place that wants to lie in bed, and I'm not bad if I lie in bed. We don't have to go into good and bad and blah, blah, blah. We've got to let that stuff come to another way of working with it. It moves beyond. It's in the field beyond right and wrong. It's not about that, but it doesn't mean we let go of any distinctions. It just gets a lot easier.

Well, those of you who've had kids, you know it gets a lot easier when — there's a while there where you're kind of convincing them to brush their teeth. First you convince them to brush their teeth, and then they don't want to. Did you brush your teeth? Oh, come on, let's go brush your teeth. And then at some point, it becomes, well, of course I brush my teeth.

[Participant 6:] Did you say there's a time it gets easier?

[Participant 7:] Your kids are only in their twenties. Wait.

[Russell:] Is it a struggle to brush your teeth? I need a new analogy, I think.

[Participant 6:] Take a shower. How about take a shower?

[Russell:] Yeah. Right.

Who is preferring

[Russell:] The only distinction for me there, Shannon, is who is the I that's preferring in that moment? Because if I'm relying on what I want to do, I'm suggesting let's not make sitting, or whatever practices you're committed to, reliant on wanting to do them.

[Participant 6:] Okay.

[Russell:] Right, there you go. Then it's a preference.

[Participant 6:] Right. Then it's a preference. Then it's a way, a tool, to get there. But it's not compulsory, exactly, that you have to do it.

[Russell:] That's right. Perfect. Yeah.

[Participant 8:] Yeah, I have to say, I can give you a really elegant way of doing this. Grow a beard. I mean, there is a little avoidance in it, I admit.

[Russell:] Do you enjoy the way the softness feels after a shave?

[Participant 8:] Yeah. That's what can make it enjoyable for me.

[Participant 9:] I was going to bring the same appreciation of your weighting about the idealization of awareness — making a choice spontaneously, because we've been exposed to the choice. And I loved your sharing about 80 percent of the time being here.

So now I have a question about the pelvic floor. Can you give any hints about spontaneous, like the nudge of intention, around how that affects the heart?

[Russell:] Yeah. Well, almost every time that I meditate, there are some moments, intentionally in the first few minutes, where I'm doing a few seconds of pelvic floor lifting, just to bring a greater magnetism of my bottom.

I don't stay just with the pelvic floor, but I've got that whole bottom of my pelvis. It feels like this — the sit bones, pelvic floor, and down into the cushion. So if that arises spontaneously, if not, then I want to do a little bit, just so that I've got more vitality ignited there.

And for me, it would be similar during the day. If I feel, in the sitting position, I'm losing my ground, one of the ways I bring vitality downward is just two, three, pop, pop. That helps me vitalize my sitting, connection to the earth and what's underneath.

[Participant 9:] That's right. Okay.

The wave receding

[Participant 10:] What comes to me now is, that is the wave, when you have stood at the ocean, or movies. And I think it comes because there's a lot of newness and freshness for me in the wave

receding. That I'm used to the wave. I've lived a lot of my life with the wave crashing on the shore. And now I'm in a time, or moving into a time, of solitude, innerness, where the wave is receding.

And there's what I found in sitting this morning particularly — this pulling towards. And a lot of the way that I have in the past mortified myself is by pushing myself to sit, pushing myself to work, pushing. But one of the gifts from this time of being here has been pulling. Noticing the pull forward, rather than the pushing away from what I'm afraid of.

And when you talked about how you bring yourself to the cushion, the question that came for me is, so what would it be like to pull myself towards that which is life sustained.

And a lot of the learning, and being here the way I've had to be here, is to connect as wholly as I could with what was here, and to allow myself to — what is this? What seemed like avoiding contagion. To follow my body's pulling into solitude. And when I'm here, to be fully in connection, and when I needed to. That way was just so exquisite. And it's not away from anything.

So I have volumes of appreciation for this space to do that, and particularly now at this time in my life. And appreciation and gratitude for everyone. It's very unusual for me to be in a circle where there's no pull or suck, so I can feel the pull of that current of my own life.

[Russell:] You're very full and grateful.

[Participant 10:] I don't want to — express appreciation, apprehension. Appreciation for those who are here as couples, because I feel it adds to the richness of our situation, our mix, and I feel some — sometimes you might call it envy, other times relief.

[Participant 11:] I just wanted to add one short thing to what Peter was just saying, and that is, although he's not here with us all the time, to have Mesa with us.

[Russell:] Yeah.

Carrying it home

[Russell:] Close your eyes for a moment. Back to this shortly. If you haven't said what you want to say, you'll have a chance, but close your eyes. And drop down.

Fresh. Just, I am here on this spot. Feet, bottom, weight of your hands touching something, breath dropping down, going into the inner spaces.

Just let an image come of a place you're likely to be in the next days. Imagining most people will be either with their loved ones or in their home environment. And just let some images come of some of your usual places, as if you're moving through them, with the image of embodying some of the qualities that have been growing in you, that have touched you here.

Just really letting yourself be in there. Give it a strong sensory-rich environment. If you're meeting a loved one, if you're in a space by yourself — some of the ways you'd like to be in your physical body, how you'd like to be carrying yourself, moving, and some of the qualities you'd like to be inviting to radiate spontaneously from you.

Just let that come.

Keep moving yourself into specific moments of interaction. Just letting your body show you how it would like to be, if it can be, how it will be when it can be, how it would be if it could be.

As it forms, let yourself be conscious of some of the real sensory-motor cues in your body, to let you know, oh yeah, that's a — oh no, I've forgotten it. Oh, what was that again? So you have access to invite it.

There might be different qualities that want to emerge in different interactions. Let that happen.

[Silence 47 seconds]

Another couple of minutes. It's really helpful if you can have an image of yourself in the situation, and some key feeling-sensing words that help you to kind of file it, to know, oh, that's that quality that I would love to arise spontaneously in this kind of moment.

A gesture helps you — add a gesture form for it.

[Silence 2 minutes]

Begin to complete itself. If there's more that's wanted, let your body know you'll come back. You can do this anytime.

Cultivating and inviting

[Russell:] Yeah, let your intention come out.

Key words here for me, in terms of this kind of practice: cultivating and inviting. It's different than I've got to be, or I'm trying to make this happen in my body. You're not controlling your body from up here. You're bringing yourself, sensory-rich, with an invitation.

Much of the time, most of us will find that our body knows how it would be if it could be in that situation. It knows what we're like when we're in connection in this kind of moment. Even if we're knocked off nine times out of ten, we know one in ten how we are when we're connected. And that lives in us.

And cultivating means watering the seeds of that neural network. And inviting, to see if your body's ready, willing, at a certain moment, to manifest that.

If we never experienced what it's like to be connected, or if our brain couldn't make any new patterns, we would be stuck. And as stuck as we can feel sometimes, it's really remarkable what Feldenkrais saw, what other great teachers have seen, that in certain environments it can —

Not only can it grow new possibilities, but it actually knows how to, and wants to. Even when it feels there's a lot fighting against it, a lot of old identities and patterns. So we don't fight those. We also want —

Shari, and staying connected

[Participant 12:] I'd like to acknowledge Shari's presence.

[Russell:] Oh, yes. Thank you.

[Participant 12:] It's been a real blessing to have you here, and to have you support our learning, learners, and listening. And so I've just appreciated your comments to the group. I wanted that to be said in the group.

And for me, I've heard about this revisiting our body, but I have to tell my inner, I haven't done it. But I intentionally chose to do that this week, and I am so grateful that I made that commitment,

because it's certainly a very much richer process than I could ever imagine it would be, to return and discover more.

[Participant 13:] Thank you. Yeah, and I would love to say how much I have enjoyed being here. It's just been great. I've learned so much. I have learned so much. And so any bit that I've been able to give back, I'm really glad, because I got so much out of it, and loved meeting people.

And I didn't bring any cards, I didn't bring any information, and I noticed my contact information isn't even on the — although you can always find me through Valerie. But I also thought what I might do is just send out a letter to you with my brochure in it, that has focusing information in it. It's sort of a little capsule of focusing. And to let you know that later on there'll probably be a class that'll extend a little bit from where we were. But I think everyone could do it, because we're really still learning to be focusers, and it'll include a little bit more about us, and practice with reflection. And we'll talk before, and then — so, yeah.

And then I have a question, or perhaps it's a question. I just checked my mail on my iPod, and man, I am getting just so many requests to sign this petition, and do this, and do this. And so for one thing I realize I just can decide which ones to delete, but it is kind of overwhelming when you want to stay conversant with the political currents and all of that, not to get —

[Russell:] Yeah, you're right.

Well, that's a kind of subset of that larger category that I point to in the current newsletter, that most of you probably haven't read yet, but it'll be waiting for you when you get to your email. I point to it a little bit, but the main brief thing I'd like to say about it is that we really become conscious. Make conscious choices.

Because if we are in our unconsciousness, those forces are so huge — the mechanizing forces, the amount of electricity moving through us, the amount of information moving through us — that if we're unconscious, I think most of us either get really swept away or turn off to it all.

And my attempt in my own life, sometimes successful, I think mostly successful, sometimes not, is to really listen, and place a real significance on: is this throwing me out of myself? Throwing me out of my real capacity to feel? And I'm just going horizontal, where I'm getting wider, wider, there's more and more stuff I'm trying to wrap my arms around, but actually the horizontal is taking me away from my depth. It's not really touching me anymore. I'm just going wider, wider, wider, and kind of feeling inadequate, and more inadequate, to deal with it.

And so then I go, oh, right, I'm not really contributing the essence of what I have to contribute if I've gotten that far disconnected. I need connection here to have meaningful connection here.

And the seduction of the electronics — we all need to find our own relationship to it, but it is scary to me what's happening to human brains. I think we really have no idea. It's kind of like how people had no idea with some of the early pesticides, and even with some of the things that — people had no idea what was happening if you got exposed to that a lot, because it didn't happen right away. It's like that with all this stuff.

And so to really — I'm so concerned about kids getting addicted to the dings and the lights and the stuff, and us kids. And so nature, walking, seeing these bodies. We have great adaptability, and thank goodness we have great adaptability, but this question of how to be effectively connected is

not a simple one, but one that I just want to so much encourage us to be conscious of our decisions there.

Thank you. That was the perfect segue I needed, Aaron. So, you've got a reading list. I encourage you to be with those books. There are two main meditation books on your list. One is Suzuki Roshi's — Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind — and the other, Opening the Hand of Thought.

And I'm not a real well-read person, but the ones that I've been with, I've gone deep with. And those I've read at least ten times each, and there is so much in them. So I really encourage you, if you resonate with them, to get them, reread them, use them as part of your sitting practice even. A couple of pages. It's not like reading a regular book. Just a paragraph can remind you. As you're getting touched by our work together, just reading some sentences can — the memory comes in there. So we want that support.

Those who are wanting any other sources — you know, wanting more about neurology, more about child development — I've got some knowledge of different fields, and I can give you a few recommendations, some directions to go in.

[Participant 14:] And can I say, I really struggled initially with Opening, and just thought, oh, that's just way too Zen, way too Buddhist. And then I went back to Russell's encouragement, and it's a precious book. But it wasn't easy for me to relate to. So I would encourage people to give it a real good try.

[Russell:] Yeah. His name is Uchiyama, who wrote that book, a Japanese teacher. I never met him. I've known his students, but somehow what I have realized on the cushion, he speaks to more directly. That's why I have confidence in his words. And he says it better than I do, or not differently, in a way that is really —

[Participant 15:] There was another one that was sent out.

[Russell:] Yes, we've received a whole thing for four years.

[Participant 15:] Three years.

[Russell:] Yes. There was a three-year list and a two-year. Yeah, what I'm recommending — I then sent out the list for all of the — Valerie? If not —

[Participant 16:] Yeah, it is on the board.

[Russell:] Okay. Thank you, Valerie. Valerie will clarify.

[Participant 16:] Yes. Put them on the board and let you know that they're on the board. If they're on the board in general, put them in your — if they're in the everybody category, we'll also put it in the Angela 2 category.

[Russell:] So there's that kind of support.

A couple of things are kind of in the works that I want to suggest, or offering, for your consideration. One, I said last night, about taking up something new. Another that I've mentioned before, but I don't know that I've emphasized, that I would like to strongly encourage — and last night was a good instance of it.

Find poems, or a writing, or something that really touches you, that you resonate with, and work with it to learn it by heart. The power of that is really remarkable. We always have something going through our mind, so why — it's like, what kind of food do you want to eat?

And if you have it in your pocket, and you're working on one line: clear bead at the center changes everything. There are no edges to my loving now. That's a line from Rumi.

I have bunches. I've been doing this for years, so I've got lots of poems that are sitting here. So imagine having that go, and you're working on it. Take it out — oh. There are no edges to my loving. I mean, you could be thinking about why you didn't do that. You'll remember all the important thoughts, and you'll have those, but why not be feeding yourself something that is really good food?

And without a kind of, I have to learn this. It's just with you. If it takes a week, if it takes a month, if it takes you to learn one poem, let it be something that touches you. And then let it be a project. So you're feeding yourself that kind of food.

[Participant 17:] Would you send it on the board? Would you be willing?

[Russell:] And I'd like to invite us all to send our poems. Let's create a category of poems and send it in. That would be great, to have those. Okay, great. Go ahead.

[Participant 13:] Think about this and let Valerie know, but I would love to be added to your board list so I could be reading your poems and your comments too, and I'm not on it. Anyway, just think about it, if you wouldn't want it.

[Russell:] Yeah, let Valerie know if there's an objection to including Shari on the board list. Will you be here in future sessions?

[Participant 13:] Probably not. Truthfully, I'm down to you. But not necessarily. Not necessarily, but I'm not sure.

[Participant 18:] I just wanted to mention that I have listened to two of the sessions that Shari had on audio. Very, very helpful. And I especially enjoy hearing some of you in the sessions. It was like being met in the world. It's definitely worth getting.

[Participant 13:] Thank you.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant 19:] Speaking to that, is it possible — I would love to put out the suggestion that if anybody would like, between now and January, we have six or seven people, or four or five people, do some focusing on a monthly basis, on a regular basis. I wanted to put your name up on the air.

[Russell:] That was actually going to be the next thing I was going to say. An idea actually came through Barbara, that I'm proposing, which is kind of randomly — not through, this is a person I necessarily know, or can I — randomly create, say, seven groups of four people, and you have the idea of having at least one phone session with each person. Just to widen the field that you're interacting with. You tell them what kind of listening you want, and you just have a time of listening.

Now, I'm not going to just do that. I'm going to give you an opportunity to say that doesn't really fit for me, and all the people who say, yeah, I'd like to try that. Just what I want is that we diversify who we're connecting with, and that we realize, oh, it doesn't need to be someone I'm close with to have a good listening. I don't need to say anything I don't want to say. It's not like that. But the suggestion was given that I could do more to encourage interacting in between. I've always kind of just said, well, you're adults, figure it out. But maybe my —

No. There's an awkwardness, I think, after two weeks of being home. You go, oh, I feel funny calling them up. What if they don't want to do it? Maybe it helps to have some structure to it. And then, as long as you have the freedom to opt out of it, that you're not forced into it. That's very important to me, because that doesn't work.

Okay, so you'll be getting an email about that.

I'm also wanting to try something new, which is to offer conference calls for the whole ELMP community, and see what that's like, because I'm wanting more interacting between groups.

Right now I'm thinking of both, all together. Well, the number of people who end up on a call — the number of potential people would be about 190. This is an experiment. I'll turn off the dings. This is an experiment.

I've had some requests. The Europeans are really interested in meeting the Americans. I hear that a lot. And now I've had some graduates interacting. And maybe I'll divide it up, graduates and current. I'm not sure. I just want to give it a try. It's an experiment.

A second experiment I'm recommending is what it might be like for each of the different groups — and here I'm talking to you — to have the possibility of a free conference call that I'm not leading, that I'm not the center of, but somehow, whether you're going to take a subject to discuss. Whoever calls the conference call can call the topic of discussion. You can keep it open. You can have it be a reading. I'm wondering if that can work, if it can be self-organizing. And if there's interest.

This is again part of my hope that there's more happening horizontally in the community. What I think would be good would be, there's a company called freeconferencing.com, and somebody in the group could get an access code, rather than all the groups using my access code. It would be good if each group had another access code. So somebody would kind of be holding the home, although you wouldn't be responsible for conducting all the calls. You'd be the reference point for, oh, I'm thinking of having a call on Monday at this date. Has anyone else called in? No, no, you can have it. And then you have the proper numbers, and then you can announce it to the group, that you're having a call and you want to look at this chapter of Suzuki Roshi, or you want to go over this writing by Russell, or that thing we didn't discuss. There's lots of really great information that we don't discuss. I really want to discuss not biting the hook. What came up for me in that?

And then I'm going to recommend that you have a listening-speaking kind of conversation, where you're practicing your embodied listening as you're with each other. And then you see what gets difficult, what gets wonderful, what you need to learn.

So that's a new impulse. And I see at least some people are interested in it. I see some people going, wow, I don't know about that.

So again, we're going to do this via email, and we'll talk together about organizing this. And if there's somebody who wants to volunteer to be the kind of holder of it, let Valerie know. Okay, and we will organize something around it.

Some people asked me, do I think it's helpful to do the focusing courses? To take the four-level focusing. I think it's wonderful. If you're drawn to that, it's great. Congruent with what we're doing. I emphasize different things. There are some minor places where I approach things differently, but the overall gift of that way of paying attention can be nothing but helpful.

[Participant 13:] Please. When we were talking about creativity, Laurie Ruffier teaches focusing and creative expression, art therapy, and so do I. And Glenn Fleisch teaches focusing, body focusing, standing up, moving. So there are other kinds of focusing that you might want to explore.

And the people who want to travel, or are willing to travel — the Focusing Institute has a summer institute every year, which is a wonderful opportunity to spend a week with several different teachers, immersed in focusing. Every teacher has a slightly different approach. Every teacher offers something a little different. I don't think any two people really presented exactly the same. But summer school is usually in Garrison, New York. It's a very nice place. In August — August this year is the next one, and as far as I know, there's space, still sending out to the applicants. And you can just go to the focusing.org website for information. And that would include the different strands that you were talking about.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant 20:] His work also. The Focusing Institute website.

[Russell:] Yeah. Anybody. It's also — yeah, that's great. Thank you for bringing that. It's also a great opportunity to meet other people, some people from around the world. I know from the Embodied Life community, so far it's been more Europeans who showed up in New York than the Americans, but that's great, and there are wonderful other people to meet. And Gene might get there for one hour this year. Maybe.

[Participant 13:] Yeah. And Garrison's a beautiful place.

[Russell:] Yeah, it's about 45 minutes upstate. That's where my winter retreat's going to be this year, in December, the beginning of December. I'll do a retreat there.

Yeah, the other thing is, on the focusing.org website, there are so many articles by Gene that are brilliant. There's so much you can get exposed to there. But there are two main focusing websites that I know of. Focusing.org, which is the center located in New York, that's kind of the international community's base, and then Ann Cornell's FocusingResources.com. And her newsletter is interesting. Lots of good resources there as well. So that's something you can follow up with.

Practices to take home

[Russell:] Again, back to — and I know we need to finish shortly. I so encourage you to commit to sit, to get on the floor, whether you do a whole lesson, a Feldenkrais lesson, or a whole movement experiment, in whatever way, but that you get on the floor and be conscious. Something shifts. Just five or ten minutes. Five or ten minutes of not going to sleep and lying there, and listening to what wants to move, how it is in there, what the breath is, is surprisingly powerful as a regular practice.

Okay, so to sit regularly, to get on the floor. Probably once a week to do a whole lesson is great, but then to get on the floor regularly.

And then the recommendation — it's a similar kind of recommendation around our embodied listening, where on a daily basis there's the pause, the dropping down, physical body, I am, the turning towards the feeling body. How is it? How are you in that? Hello in. And for myself, it's integrated into my life. There isn't a half hour that goes by without — unless I'm just in such connection that it's just there and it doesn't need any particular acknowledgement. But if I'm on the computer a lot, hello. And I can't — so I so encourage it becoming that part of you, that much a part of you, that the light is shining.

And then once a week, there's the longer period, just like with the Feldenkrais lessons. You have maybe one long full lesson and then a daily visiting. It's the same with the embodied listening.

[Participant 21:] Will this week be available?

[Russell:] What do you think, Valerie? A week?

[Participant 16:] Within a week.

[Russell:] Okay. Yes. That's powerful, yeah.

So, gratitude as a practice becomes spontaneous, but to practice it regularly — greatest. When you're sitting regularly, as I know you are, as you have the moments which arise of just, nothing is needed to feel whole, to feel complete. Those kinds of moments, let yourself kind of water that seed and revisit that. Just, oh, I'm just here, in between clients, you're seeing a bunch of people, you pause, and you step out of time by dropping down and letting — I'm here, I'm alive. That's fundamental.

Now, in terms of cultivating some of the other resources, I recommend developing that unconditional warmth as a ground state. And so, to have two or three key images that help you with that, two or three key relationships that help you with that, two or three key places, situations that help you bring it. And then short periods, many times, inviting it. It won't always come, but once you get it, it can be there, and then right now, talking to you, I can call one in, and it can come. And then you might also find, as I do, that they start appearing spontaneously.

So I don't recommend doing — that's a different one. Gratitude as a regular, present moment as a regular, and then one other, like for now, that loving kindness. Then we'll be growing others as we go on.

Okay? Let's stand up together.

Standing

[Russell:] And let's put one foot forward. Imagine you're at slumber yesterday, under that water, and you have that image and that feeling of glistening water.

Now, we're going to be on the shore, inhaling. Like we're sending out our gratitude to the ocean, and we're whole, and we're here in the radiance of the sun, and then welcoming, surrendering to this life's gift. Letting our bodies soften, the heel lift, head can drop, and then feeling is there.

The only thing the universe can really need from us is our gratitude, our presence. So showing up for yourself, all the way through that foot, out the fingertips, up through the crown of your head. Showing up for the moment, and —

You're the ocean. You're that larger self. That's you.

So now, as you go forward, you're exhaling and sending your gift towards the world. These waters going away from you, so it's radiating it out. You're inhaling. Now our heads are up and we're looking. We are full readiness to give the next.

Yeah. Our forces.

[Silence 37 seconds]

Travel well.