Movement lesson

Angela 2 — Week 3, Day 5, Session 3 — 68 minutes

Summary: Blindfolded, attention moves through breath, volume, and the space inside tissue, cells, and atoms. On the back and the front, the arms lengthen and lift, opening into the room. Sitting, warmheartedness is felt in the body and received as a radiance turned toward oneself, then standing rests in the simple sense of being here.

Orientation

Orient yourself. Notice what's to the left and to the right of you.

I recommend not having water bottles and excess stuff on the floor. You will be, in a moment.

Just look around you. Make sure you know where things are in your space, how far things are from you. Kind of orient a little bit, and then put on your blindfold.

Goodbye. Right, it feels like goodbye, right? It feels like goodbye.

You know, didn't you have at least a little time in your life with peekaboo? I can't see you.

And sitting here, sense your contact with the ground. Locate — I am here on this spot. Feel the weight, contact, pressures. So helpful to have that tangibility.

And feel the breath come in and go out.

Place your hands on your skull, and as you feel the breath, just think of the volume of your skull going through the hair, skin, scalp, skull, and into the inner space. Following your breath as you do that, so there's a feeling of letting the breath influence.

And then put your hands on your pelvis, and think of the volume again, letting the breath open. So the attention goes through the layers, into the interior.

Then take your hands off.

Feel the space around your body in different directions, that you're surrounded, even under you. Imagining that under the floor, you can open your attention to the space below you.

On your back

Lie on your back.

Let the sense of this vertical axis go through your skull, through your spine, through your pelvis, downward. As you inhale down through yourself and exhale up and out, a sweeping of breath.

Just take a moment to sense the volume of your pelvis as the breath sweeps through. Sensing both the boundary and the volume within the interior, and then the space around your pelvis, in all directions.

And then sensing the breath in your torso, in your chest, upper back, circulating your attention into the volume, deep to your shoulder blades, deep to your sternum, deep to your ribs, sensing the inner space.

Even where there is tissue, even within bone or soft tissue, there are cells. And between the cells, there's space. And within the cells, there's more space than matter, which is amazing.

And then even within the densest part of the cell, within the nucleus, there is more space than matter. And the matter within the nucleus is molecules. And within those molecules, there's more space than matter.

Then, within the molecules, there are different parts of the molecule, or atoms. And within the atom, there's more space than matter. Then we go to the subatomic realm, and even there, there's more space than matter.

So you are made — even the densest part of you is spacious, has room within it to be more contracted or less. And feel, letting your attention be in your skull, and feeling the inner spaces as you breathe, imagining the breath filling the skull, and even in the tissue, opening the spaces. These galaxies within the body that have all this space between the stars.

Lengthening through the arms

And bring your arms out to shoulder height. It's possible that you might have to shift a little bit. Your hands might touch each other gently, and somebody might have to go higher on their cushion or on their mat, or lower. Have the palms towards the ceiling.

So the hands are out at shoulder height, out at your sides. They're resting on the floor with the arms long, the palms towards the ceiling. So there's the sense of this long vertical axis and this wide horizontal axis.

And feel the influence on your breath, just to open your arms like that.

Enter your right arm. Extend your attention through the interior of your right arm, through your right hand, through your fingers, and as you inhale, let the fingers open and the fingernails press back towards the floor. And then pause at the top of your inhale, as if the whole interior of the arm is filled with breath, and then release the breath and release the fingers, as if the air travels up the arm and out the top of your head.

So the inhale has a slight lengthening and a pressing back of the fingers. A very slight lengthening, just inviting a little space in the shoulder joint. Pressing back, and exhaling has a feeling of releasing and following back through the arm.

And again, press the nails back of the right hand. Feel that — how far through your body you can feel that movement, the back of the fingernails. That's it. Feel the currents through your arm. Energetic currents through your arm. That's good.

And bend your left leg to standing.

Familiar movement. You're going to keep the knee vertical, roll your pelvis to the right. The right arm will lengthen just a bit and press back, and all that happens with an inhale.

Press back, pause, feeling as if you're filling that whole right arm, and then you release with the exhale and your pelvis comes back. That's it.

And then let your head turn right with that whole action. So the breath comes in, you turn right, you press back, you lengthen rightward, you turn rightward, as if you're also opening into the space to your right. So as the fingers press back, it's as if you extend your attention even further out to the right.

The pressing of the fingers gives you the location all the way through your hand, so that you think out to your right. The palms are towards the ceiling, so the nails can press into the floor on the right hand. Feel that all through you. Good.

Okay. Leave that. Pause for a moment. You can lower your arms and your legs.

And sense the influence on the space to your right, on your body.

Bring your arms out to shoulder height, palms towards the ceiling.

Extend attention through your left arm, breathing. So the arms are on the floor, shoulder height. The backs of the hands are on the floor.

And as you inhale, it's the sense of inhaling down through your skull and through your left arm, and pressing the nails into the floor, and feeling that whole current through yourself. Feel how it goes through your shoulder, through the upper back, and let your attention continue out through the fingers into space.

And then you exhale, releasing, as if there's a stream traveling up your arm to your spine and up and out your skull.

Lengthening and pressing back. The nails really come towards the floor. If you can, the thumb as well, so that you feel all five fingers, if possible. You'll feel that if you don't press the thumb, there's a difference in your arm and shoulder, and then when you press the thumb, feel the current that grows, that extends through you.

And now, please bend your right leg. Add the turning of the pelvis and the turning of your head. So you turn your pelvis, connected to the inhale, the lengthening, the pressing back, the head turns. And you follow that all through you.

[Silence 52 seconds]

Leave that. Lower down, and please find a way to get comfortable rolling onto your front.

[Silence 32 seconds]

On your front

Just take a few moments to sense yourself here on the ground, how different it is to rest on your belly, and see how you can find comfort, your peace, breathing here.

Just lightly let some images come of breathing down through your skull, through your spine, through your pelvis, and up and out.

Turn your head to the left and extend your left arm out at shoulder height, the palm downward.

Lift. Yeah. So your left arm is extended out at shoulder height, that's it, palm downward. And feel how you could lift your fingers without lifting your palm. Feel that, a number of times. Feel the different fingers, all the fingers together, and then lower down.

You'll do that a number of times, feeling your fingers lift and lower down.

And very lightly, have a sense of lengthening as you lift. It can be a fiftieth of an inch, but it's a lengthening as you lift. Connect that lifting to inhaling, pausing, letting the fingers down as you exhale, and doing it again.

And then lift your fingers, and with the fingers in the air, then lift your palm. Keep the wrist on the ground. And then lower your palm and lower your fingers. So do a progression. It's differentiating.

So the base of your hand near your wrist can stay on the floor, but the palm comes up, then the palm goes down, then the fingers go down. And the lifting up is connected to your inhaling. There's a pause. The lowering down with the exhale.

Feel where in your shoulder, your back, you begin to sense this extension. It connects importantly to your back.

And go — fingers, palm, and lift your arm into the air. And then lower the arm, bringing the base of the hand to the ground, then the palm, then the fingers. So again, it's a progression, inhaling up, exhaling down. So it's fingers, palm, arm.

Feel, how do you lift your arm? If possible, have both legs long, but if that's uncomfortable, don't. And just feel that progression.

Feel all the way down your body, what's connected to the lifting. What happens in your pelvis? Does your pelvis know your arm's lifting, or is your pelvis someplace else? That's good.

Okay, leave that for a moment. Rest comfortably. You can change the direction of your head. If being on your front is challenging, you can come off your front for a moment. There'll be just a little bit of a rest here. Just pause for a moment.

[Silence 35 seconds]

Opening to the left

Right — look to your right. I'm sorry, look to your left. Extend the left arm outward. Same position. This time, bend your left knee out to the side.

Just take a moment to sense yourself here.

Think of the space on the left side of your body, the space that you've opened your leg and your arm into. Imagine the space that's in front of your face looking leftward.

The left leg is bent out to the side. Not the foot in the air, but the knee pulled up to the side. That's it.

And you're thinking of the space around your body on the left side. You're opening into that territory to the left of your ribs, so as to feel from your body out into the space.

So we have both. We have the boundary of the body, the space around the body, and the space within the body. And your breath can help you feel the spaciousness inside, as you move your attention through these spaces.

Now, inhaling, lift your fingers, palm, and arm, and feel how it's a little bit different with your leg bent like this, perhaps. So feel how the shoulder lifts. Lead with the backs of your fingers, so it's kind of like a wing. It's not that you then just let the fingers drop. You lead with the fingernails, the bent wrist.

We need that extension to actually activate something in your shoulders. Something between your shoulder blades is connected all the way through that arm. So let that come all the way up as much as is comfortable. Inhaling up, pausing.

You can imagine that you want to see your hand. You can let your head turn as if you were looking towards your hand, if that feels natural and right.

And you can put your right arm anywhere that feels helpful for the left arm to lift like this. Is there a connection? Does it matter where the right arm is for the left arm to lift as freely as possible, or is it irrelevant? You just kind of experiment and play.

And in addition to feeling your body, one of the practices here is extending attention into space. You're opening into your back space as your arm moves back there. And there's this interesting experiment of, can I sense my body and the space?

For some people the hand lifts maybe a few inches from the floor. For some people it goes beyond the ceiling, goes towards the wall behind them. But it's not like you're trying to. I'm just giving you a sense of range. For some people, a couple of inches is enough. For some people it goes where the fingers begin to point to the wall out to the right.

So feel how this moves through your body. How you can extend the attention in your body and beyond your body. That's nice. Beautiful.

Okay. Leave that, and maybe come off your front for a few moments. Come onto your back.

The room reverses

Of course, it's interesting when you come onto your back spatially, because now what was your left side — the left side of the room — is now the right side of the room. But the left side of your body is likely still the left side of your body, and so it's kind of an interesting shift to feel how you sense yourself and your space.

And bring your left arm out at shoulder height, palm towards the ceiling. So the left arm is out long at shoulder height with the palm towards the ceiling, and bend your right leg.

And just sense the breath entering. Feel the inner spaces. Just learning to sweep your mind through the interior of your body, a sense of sweeping attention through the interior, and sweeping your attention through your left arm.

And inhaling, rolling your pelvis left, lengthening the left arm as you press the fingers and turn the head leftward. And you're thinking through that left arm out into space.

And back, a number of times.

And as you feel your fingers opening out like that, pressing back, think as far out to your left as you can imagine, opening into that big space.

So we grow out from the body into the space around the body, into that larger space.

And then just the next few times, notice — is it possible to turn the light around, as if perceiving the one on the ground from out there? Sensing into the one on the ground as if a radiance from outside.

And it can be that it moves in both directions, in to out and out to in, so there's really just the sense that there's a large, generous field.

That's great. Okay, and pause with that. Lower down.

Raise the feet. I know it's getting —

Please roll onto your front, looking to the right, and if possible, start with both legs long, unless that's uncomfortable.

The right arm

Bring your right arm out to the side, long, the back of the hand towards the ceiling. And at first, you just — breathing, sensing that long vertical axis, a few breaths sweeping through.

Notice we want to learn that practice of sweeping the mind through the body. It's real easy, not a lot of detail. Sweeping through.

And then shift to letting the breath give you a sense of volume in your torso. You can sweep the mind through the volume, so now it's not just the vertical axis. It's the sense of space, of dimension, of volume around the whole torso. Space between cells.

Even the organs, right, are made of cells, which are made of molecules, which are made of atoms, which are made of subatomic particles, and there's more space in each of those than matter.

Fill these spaces with your attention and with breath.

And so the back of the hand is towards the ceiling. The palm is towards the floor.

And just feel how you can lift your fingers in the air without lifting your palm. Do that a number of times. Not the palm, just the fingers.

And then the fingers followed by the palm, and then lowering the palm — not the arm, just the palm, and then the fingers, so the base of the hand is on the floor. Feel that differentiation, and notice if you could have a sense of inhaling as you lift, pausing, exhaling as you come down. Pausing.

And then add the piece — fingers, palm, and arm — and feel how that goes through you. Inhaling up, feeling the space you move into, feeling how you lift the arm like that.

What do you do to free that right arm from the floor? What do you do to go fingers, palm, arm? How does that lift? Where do you press the floor in order to lift?

What would need to move for the arm to lift even freer? What would need to change? What would need to get lighter in your body for it to feel smoother, more graceful, more pleasant for that arm to lift? What would need to support it?

A good question is, what happens in your pelvis? What happens in your lower back?

And then feel, if you bend your right knee out to the side and there's that lifting in the pelvis, feel if that influences the arm coming up. And if you can then somehow let the shoulder blade move more easily.

And again, connecting the lifting to the inhale. You're free to experiment with where your left arm is.

And enter into the space that you're moving through, letting your whole body participate as much as it wants to, leading with your fingers, the backs of your fingers.

Okay, leave that. Please roll onto your back.

[Silence 46 seconds]

There we go. Yeah.

Both arms

Both arms out at shoulder height. The arms are on the floor, just the palms turned towards the ceiling. So we have this width, this length, and you inhale, and as if the breath comes through your skull to your upper back and goes both right and left.

And you're experimenting. You're playing with opening attention right and left, as if you could follow through both arms, letting both arms get slightly longer, the fingernails pressing back, all ten fingernails. Seeing how much you can track that all through you, letting the volume grow, and the space you're moving into.

So all ten nails go back with that inhale, a subtle lengthening, pausing with that breath, and releasing on the exhale.

All ten nails going back with the inhale. Feel that across your whole chest, across your shoulders.

And do the same thing, but let both legs be bent. Both legs standing, both feet on the floor. Same movement, inhaling, going out through both arms, releasing with the exhale.

Good. Okay, and pause. Keep your arms there for a moment. Just think into the space around your body. The images come of the space around you, the sense of the boundary of your skin, and the interior space.

And let the arms just come down, and slowly find your way to sitting, on your chair or on your cushion. And if you need help from me, just call me over. Go slow enough that you can feel into the space around you.

[Silence 49 seconds]

Sitting

Oh, thank you. Anybody need anything for their sitting? Yeah. That little gray, little gray. Anyone else? Okay.

Enjoy this. Of course, when I say enjoy, I don't mean it as a demand you have to enjoy. I mean, it's an invitation. If it's enjoyable, enjoy.

Just sitting and orienting and feeling, I'm here on this spot. Feel myself breathing here.

There might be some influence on your torso from the work you just did. That's the first of a series of lessons that we'll be returning to.

And notice the sense of your inner space, and the feeling of your back, the space around you. Opening attention out into that larger space, including the space out your back.

I'm going to return to a resource process that we did before. It's one that's really worth doing numerous times. The core of the resource process is one of the core processes, and we'll be adding a new dimension to it, but it will start in a familiar way.

So, begin by thinking of a being with whom, at times, it has been very easy for you to feel a sense of unconditional goodwill, love, warmth. Best wishes, however it fits for you to think of that.

Maybe all of those, maybe some don't work for you, but a sense that you may not have felt it all the time, but it was very easy for you, most of the time, to have your — and you want what's best for them.

A sense of, if you could radiate a sense of support, you would want to do that.

And just imagine this being, and you might have images of particular moments that you were with them. Might be a particular look on their face. It might come and go in different representations, but there's a feeling that you can sense.

Maybe you sense something in your chest. Maybe it's all over your torso. Maybe it's other places. A sense of how you embody this quality of warmheartedness, of loving kindness. There are many names. Unconditional warmth, maitri, metta, caring, feeling, presence. A warmth radiating towards this one.

And keep letting yourself have this being as an entry point for this quality, or these qualities.

And let yourself really notice how it is in your body when you feel this way. What are some of the key indicators that this loving kindness is alive in you? What happens in your chest, belly, or all over?

Notice what are the kind of key images that help you to feel this. Is it their face? Is it the feeling in your body of holding them? Get an image that can give you a kind of reference for it. We want both the bodily feeling and a visual image, and key words or phrases that help you to know this.

Might be words like loving kindness or warmheartedness. It might be something else. It might be very personal, poetic language.

We'll keep letting it come, so we're referencing it as one, two, or three dominant physical sensations, a kind of image, key words, and just let yourself have that.

And then let the image go, and just sit here with the kind of afterglow. You're not trying to do anything. You're just sitting here with yourself, sensing how that is, after you've spent a little time with that being, with the influence of that being on you.

Sense into just feeling the interior of your body. The boundaries where you touch the ground, where you touch your seat. Any other ways you can feel the boundaries of your body?

Space around your body, a more immediate space. And then opening out into that much larger space.

If it helps you, you could point an arm. You could point a finger out. For some people, that's easier, to contact the larger space. If they can project a finger and project their mind along where they're pointing to, that helps them project into space. See if that might be good.

And then just as you're sitting here, I invite you to go into your inner world, into your imagination. Everything that your inner life has contact with — everything you've ever been exposed to — lives in somehow.

And invite your inner life to cultivate an image of an unconditionally caring — could be an energy, could be a being. From everything you've ever experienced, in your dream world, in your human world of interacting, what kind of image comes?

If there was a being outside of you, or an energy around you, that radiated unconditional care, warmth — if there were such a thing, what's the image of that? Do you have it as an angel? Do you have it as a golden light? Just see what comes when you go in there and invite your inner life to show you.

What's the image for an unconditional goodwill? Warmheartedness. Could be the same image that you just had. It could be something other. But imagine it's radiating towards you.

Imagine, from out beyond your body, the light turns around, and there's a radiance towards you.

And what feels right in terms of the image of that? Is it the sun? Is it someone you know? Is it an imaginary being? A Buddha, a Christ, a friend? What would feel right?

You are living in a field, as the sun shines on all of us. An encouragement of light towards your being.

Let's see if something comes.

Trust what comes. It might be a surprise, or well known. Might be a few different images, qualities.

Feel what it's like to let yourself have this radiance, the light turned around towards you.

[Silence 58 seconds]

In those last few moments, noticing if both these images are accessible — the being that you find it easy to radiate toward, and this sense of a similar energy coming towards you.

All of that, without needing to be anything. You can just breathe that air, and be in that feeling. Notice how that is. If anything inside has an objection, notice if it can also receive the light, the warmth.

And we'll be a few moments taking off our blindfolds and reconnecting. Not quite — not too quickly. Just take a moment to let your body have what it has right now.

Feel the space behind you, around you, above you, below you, the space within you.

And then you can begin to take off your blindfold and take your time connecting to the visual world.

[Silence 36 seconds]

I encourage an absolute freedom from having to be anything. Welcoming what is here. Nothing is pushed away.

Standing

And then let's come to standing.

Sensing the ground, and you're standing here. From, I'm right here on this spot, and I can feel around myself. Just be open so you're connected to this space. A little bit more.

You can notice, how am I — how am I, that lives in the I am here. And that subtle sense of just knowing that you know you're here. That I am. I'm here.

Shift your weight. Your knees soften, your ankles soften.

We can have all that's living in us somehow be able to be here. Nothing is pushed away.

The space around you, above you, behind you.

Would life be any different if you knew, unconditionally, you were welcome here?

That lives in us somehow, cause we know that in a deep place — beneath our conditioning, before our conditioning, within our conditioning. We just are. And I am. Deeper than anything.

And I've got another reading for you. This is something that you've probably seen before. I don't think I've handed it out before, but it's been on my website, and it kind of fits for what we're working with.

And before lunch, we've got our friend Pete letting us know. Regrettably, it's time for me to say goodbye. Sorry. South America, with a piece of art. That means he's flying a plane to South America. Just the translation.

Pete sells planes, and he needs to get this plane to Libya.

Carol Welby, I miss you.

Yeah, so, you know, I've flown with Pete, and so you're up there, you know, and everything we're working with — that's his best reference for all this stuff. A sense of, there's a location, and there's spaciousness, and yeah. It's beautiful.

Travel well, dear.