Practice

Angela 2 — Week 5, Day 4, Session 6 — 25 minutes

Summary: Russell invites offerings, and a participant recites a passage from Kafka. He demonstrates a partner practice of entering an inner resource figure in the present tense, letting bodily resonance arise while a listener reflects key phrases. He distinguishes sensing from feeling, answers questions, and sets two ten-minute rounds.

Opening

[Russell:] So for those who know me and my love of sports, and the fact that I'm a 49ers fan and that they're playing right now, please don't tell me anything that you hear. I would like not to know. Yeah.

[Participant:] Hell yeah. So keep it going. Our team is playing in the crucial—

[Russell:] Okay, so before we go into our next practice, I just wanna open the space. I haven't done it very much. If there's anything that you're wanting to offer, or to ask about this, we could have some space.

[Participant:] Yeah.

You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting and listen. Do not even listen. Simply wait. Silent, still, and serene.

The world will freely offer itself to be unmasked. It has no choice. It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

[Russell:] Francis Kafka. Give it to us again, Pete, would you?

[Participant:] You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting, and just listen. Don't even listen. Simply wait. Silent, still, and serene.

The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked. It has no choice. It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

[Russell:] Beautiful. Thank you.

Yeah, that's good. Thank you, Britt. It'll take a few minutes, I think, to go. Just leave it on the current setting. It'll just take a few minutes to go off. Yeah.

Anything else you'd like to comment?

Setting up the practice

[Russell:] Okay, let's do this. Let's find partners, and I'd like to have a partner, and I'd like to demo this next practice.

So my partner will be listening to me, and it's not quite a focusing process, but you'll be listening to me. You'll also be giving me back some of my words, and so you need to be willing to do that. So find a partner, and somebody show up here, please.

Before lunch, I introduced this idea of finding a resource from your imagination, from your personal contact with life, from your movies, from books — something that resonates with you.

And we're going to do a process where you can connect with some of the qualities of that being and feel how they resonate in your body.

I also asked you to reflect on an instance when you have had something at least mildly challenging. It doesn't have to be a huge thing, but a challenging situation where at least once you've had the experience of feeling what we could call grounded. Centered, present, in your overall way of being in that situation.

And we're going to use that as a reference also. So we're cultivating two resources.

And the way we're gonna do that, which I will model — my way of doing it — and then you'll do your own, is something that you're familiar with, where we use present tense language to come into a moment. That moment could have been an actual moment that happened in your history, or a could-have-been moment. If it's an imaginary character, it's something that could have happened in the imaginary scene that you're creating. And you're talking in present tense.

For some people, as you're with your model, it may get unclear whether you are them, or you are seeing them, or you are feeling what happens in you around them. When I've done this with people, there can be a merging, and that's fine. Don't try to stop that.

Your body models on others. That's part of how we learn, this modeling that goes on, and now we're gonna use that consciously. So just let it come as it comes. We're looking for a bodily resonance, a feeling resonance, kind of imagery, and to have that all together.

So I will model this, and then you can ask any questions. And what I'm gonna ask Bruno to do is, when I come to some places where there's a strong sensory or feeling language, and if it feels right and there's a pause in there, you might give it back to me. Like, so you're sensing, or so you're noticing, whatever that quality is.

If I don't want it at that time, I might say, no, no, no — don't take it personally, hopefully. And if I want more, I might say, could you give me that again? Because I know hearing the other voice can help the resonance sometimes, and sometimes for me it doesn't. Sometimes I need more quiet, and I think we all have our own navigation of that, yeah?

So we want to be listening.

Demonstration

[Russell:] Okay, so. I'm gonna take a few moments to drop in.

And settling into my bottom, and feeling my hands and legs, and I'm going inside into this inner space.

And I'm inviting in there the image. It's one of my frequent inner images that came to me years ago, that I go back to. And it's a Native American warrior, or chief, or something like that.

And I'm — feels like it wants to be — I am him. So I'm standing on a cliff, a big plain in front of me, and I feel there's a tone in my body that feels very vital. I feel very vital as I'm standing here.

Actually, I want to hear back.

[Participant:] You're noticing something. You're sensing something very vital in your body.

[Russell:] Yeah. My whole body has this.

And it's interesting. I'm both in it and I'm seeing him, so I'm both. There's a bronze color in my skin. Tall and toned, but mostly there's this vitality, and this at-one-ment with the earth, and with the air, with the elements all around me. The sense of, I am at one here, standing on this cliff.

[Participant:] You're sensing you're one here on the cliff.

[Russell:] And I'm gazing, and there's an ease in my movement. A real quietness inside. And there's something about that ease and quietness that's also important.

[Participant:] You're feeling ease and quietness.

[Russell:] I want to hear that more like you're sensing a quality of ease and quietness.

[Participant:] No. Sensing a quality of ease and quietness.

[Russell:] And now the scene shifts, and he — I keep not sure if it's he or I, but he's running through these woods. And his pace and his flow, his long hair blowing, jumping over stumps, and there's a sense of freedom, and this length in the spine is so present, and elegant, something like that.

I don't want to hear that, you know. I just want to be in that motion.

And he jumps on a horse, and he's riding bareback. And there's this feeling that he can do anything physically — he could, you know, the horse is jumping into a stream and going across the water, and he's just holding — I'm just holding — I'm now holding the mane of the horse.

The biggest thing is, I'm at home in my whole body, in this whole space. That I'd like to hear.

[Participant:] You're at home in this whole body. And this whole space.

[Russell:] Yeah.

There's a feeling I could look anybody in the eye and be unruffled. I belong here.

[Participant:] You belong here.

[Russell:] And I just want to soak that in right now.

All that physicality, the running, the horse, that felt great, but it's really this — I belong here.

[Participant:] You belong here.

[Russell:] The very full feeling in my belly, long feeling, strength and vitality.

[Participant:] You feel strength and vitality in your body.

[Russell:] And that's all in here, and appreciating all of that, especially the sense of at home. Fullness here, and this vitality all over, just letting that resonate for a bit longer.

I'm getting ready to switch into my next scene, which is my personal life, but I want there to be just a little time of letting this resonate. So we can just sit here together.

[Participant:] How's that?

[Russell:] Yeah, it's like my intention is to shift, but it's not shifting it.

And yeah, I don't want to force the shifts. I'm not going to do it. I'm not listening to you.

In fact, I'm going to change the instruction. Yeah, you always have that. You are always in charge of your—

But I just want this, just a bit more, and not rush into another something. Just a few more moments of bathing in these key sensations and feelings.

I really do feel this kind of grounded, centered presence that has — the new things are this real vitality, this ease, and this unbelievable at-one-ment, at-homeness. That language feels important. I haven't used that.

I'm just having that. And now I'm going to begin to come back.

Thank you, Bruno.

Sensing and feeling

[Russell:] Okay, so stay here for a moment. So the new process is, we're gonna separate these.

I thought they worked. When I've done it before, I had them together, and it felt — but it feels better to have them as separate meals, so to speak. So we will do both. We're gonna have them separate.

One sec. So it'll be — we're gonna call it a 10-minute process. Is that about 10 minutes? I think that's about 10 minutes. It'll be about a 10-minute process.

I'll recommend. Some of this is French, English. Some of this is general for everybody. The use of the word feeling and the use of the word sensing.

We can often use them interchangeably. And they're both good words, but I tend, in the focusing work, in the inner work, to use sensing more. Feeling tends to, for a lot of people, point them towards the emotional quality. I don't necessarily want to go there. I want to grow from the body towards that.

So it's fine to use feeling, but I will tend to say, so you're sensing a quality of at-homeness, rather than you're feeling. It's a subtle point, and I'm not saying that's right. I'm just saying it's a different nuance.

[Participant:] Yeah, it's a different feeling.

[Russell:] Exactly. Perfect. So.

Clarifying

[Participant:] I still have a query on what we're supposed to be doing. Yes, because you personified yourself as this mythical figure that I have. Let me ask you — correct? But you also asked us if

there was a person, part of it, an actual person. Are we supposed to personify ourselves in that person's role, or just describe the experience?

[Russell:] Yeah, so what I tried to get clear at the beginning — and it's not clear, it is a confusing message, because of how I've observed in myself and others doing the process. So let me describe.

And I was actually a good example of it. Sometimes I was observing this other, and it might stay like that for you, and then what you're noticing is the influence — how it feels to be in their presence. What your felt sense is of being in their presence.

It might also be, as happened to me this time — didn't happen to me the last time I did this, happened to me this time — that you actually feel yourself in them. Let it become I. Let it become that you're now feeling how it is to embody them.

You're not trying to do one or the other. You will get a good result. Being in their presence will evoke in your body a lot of what's resonant for you. Okay, so you don't have to become them for that to happen.

It's, again, like how, when I was watching this video of Martin Luther King, I could feel myself feeling stronger and more dignified in my own body, observing him. I wasn't becoming him, but that was the effect of this particular seeing.

So we're inviting some image of a being who has that kind of quality of — I call it grounded, centered presence. You could call it dignity, something in that direction. Something that would — you could either, in the scene you're seeing them in, or you could imagine that they would encounter a difficulty with a sense of presence. That's what we're wanting to invite into our bodies.

Yeah? And you don't have to control that. It will take you. The image will likely feed you.

[Participant:] So the piece about a challenging situation in our life — something we're deferring to, right?

[Russell:] That's right. You're not trying to put this one into your life. That's right.

But you know, it's so interesting the way symbols in our inner life work. It's like, Peter, yesterday, your fountain.

It's possible. I'm not saying this will be true, but it is possible that for the rest of your life, this will be a resource. Resources are not necessarily people or animals. That this image — why could it be important? Because it's resonant with your inner life. It came through your inner life.

And it's like some people who work with dreams know this, and have certain dream images that become central for many years. But it doesn't have to be only dreams. It's the resonating. Something in you is connecting with — and it goes, yeah.

And so we're nurturing that as a resource for our inner world.

Yeah. Let's see what happens.

The rounds

[Russell:] So what we're going to do is 10 minutes, and then, you know, stretch or something, take a two-minute pause, and then 10 more minutes, and then we'll come back together. So this whole process — 10 plus 10 plus 5 — should be a half hour. Yeah.

We'll do 10 and then switch with the same person. You switch roles.