Gestures

Angela 2 — Week 5, Day 6, Session 2 — 20 minutes

Summary: Meeting outdoors in the cold, the teaching is to find comfort in discomfort and not shrink life to a narrow range. Standing and sensing the ground, the gestures open to above and below, to humility, and to radiating goodwill into the larger body.

Comfort in discomfort

You can choose, if you like.

So, there are a few different reasons I wanted to meet out here this morning, and I want to tell you the least obvious.

I wanted to meet out here this morning because it's cool. It's a little bit cold.

And it's the teaching I've given you before, but I think it's so important. I want to bring it forward again. I actually had a student a few months ago, Jandy Winely, who had a true awakening experience just around this teaching that has transformed her life.

And the teaching has to do with the deep importance of finding comfort in discomfort. That because we are uncomfortable doesn't mean we can't be fully engaged and even happy in our life.

And, of course, there are limits for all of us. There's a level of discomfort that becomes just — we need to bow and say, I can't find my way to peace in this level of intensity, or this level of demand.

But what I notice is most of us who have lived relatively comfortable lives — compared to the history of humanity — have developed a rather narrow range.

And if it's a little too hot, man, it's too hot. It's just too damn hot. Why is it so damn hot?

And if it gets too cold, we go, man, it's too cold. Why is he bringing us out here? He shouldn't bring us out here when it's so cold. But I — I can't — I want my coffee. And we can live our life in a very narrow way.

They shouldn't talk to me that way.

And we have these demands on life that if life doesn't fit into this range, we implicitly assume our dissatisfaction.

And that is such an important question to live into without turning it into, I'm bad if I'm dissatisfied. That's — we gotta be beyond that level.

But to really experiment with, can I be a little cold and be fine?

And, you know, put on jackets and move, but when I've done what I can, can I find a way toward peace in these conditions?

Whether it's in an interaction — so I'm not at all suggesting not to put on the coats and the hats and whatever we need, but to notice the assumptions that live within our moments of discomfort.

So it's one of the absolutely liberating teachings for us to take in. And work with ourselves.

And of course it's fine. Jump around, do whatever you need to do to get warmer.

Standing

What I'd like to start with is just gazing out, standing. Find a good level so you can really see out.

We don't have to be in a circle. We can be more kind of spread out, maybe in three or four different rows, or it doesn't even have to be rows. It can just be spaces where you can feel that you have some access to the visual world.

If your feet are too warm, I recommend taking off your socks and shoes. You'll feel your feet, I promise.

And just feel underneath you. There's a ground here.

Sense from the ground and from your legs and feet this upward vitality through the top of your head.

In the middle, there's this vital center. Notice if the breath can be attracted to this vital center.

Sense the space around you, through your ears, through your eyes, through your body's sense in all directions, becoming permeable to the sound, to the temperature, to the movement in the visual world.

Letting the eyes be soft, gazing, the jaw at ease, shifting your weight, letting the knees have a softness, the ankles have a softness.

Bring your right foot forward. Just moving from center, feeling the weight over that front foot, your height, your dignity, the length in your spine, yet connected downward with a sense of groundedness into the earth.

Stay forward on your right foot. The left heel is lifted. You sense the dignity, your length, also the depth of support.

Your knee has some give. Your leg, your belly has presence. If putting your hands there helps, you can do that.

And then moving back from center, lifting the front heel, letting the back knee — both knees — bend a little bit.

As you're dropping down and up, checking your shoulders. Are they lifted at all? Letting your shoulders be free.

Jaws at ease. Eyes are welcoming this incredible world into our bodies. Coming forward.

Each moment, there are gifts arising, and your body can welcome. Look at how the light changes from moment to moment.

And the morning sounds welcoming you to this moment.

Back. Take the front heel.

The gestures

Now we'll begin with the gestures, raising the arms as we go forward, inhaling, pausing here.

Connecting the great above and the great below through this gift of the human body.

Back, coming forward.

Back.

Breath can be soft and open, and we feel the support below, coming forward, and experiencing or opening to continuity of the above and the below.

You're open to the top of your head, to your fingertips, to your feet, your legs. Open.

Stand on both feet for a moment.

For a few moments, sensing your whole body, just jump up and down. Let yourself jump.

All of the rock from your heels. Up and down with your heels, going through your whole body.

Letting your left foot forward.

Now we'll exhale forward, letting the head go up, opening to the world.

Vast, blue sky. Earth, sound.

Back, forward.

[Silence 31 seconds]

One more time. I'm still following.

Anyway.

Breathe on both feet.

Please help me

Right foot forward. Put your hands on your chest, left hand first.

Inhale, and stepping forward into this world, and opening to life as it is. Its challenges and its gifts.

And coming back, exhaling, lowering the head and the chest.

The feeling of, please help me, I can't do it myself.

The humility of being a human being.

There are many challenges, yet as we go forward, the courage to step into our lives. Come forward, and open to this magnificent universe.

Back, letting your head drop, your chest fall.

The humility of how hard it is to welcome the joys of it. How to receive these gifts.

And come forward and open yourself here.

Show up in this life as much as I can, as often as I can — this grounded, centered presence and this open heart.

And please help me.

Back.

Stand on both feet.

Radiating

Ground. Height.

Left foot forward.

Now this takes as much courage. It's the willingness to be your whole self, to be this grounded, centered presence, and to not hold back, but to be the radiance that you can be, and to remember beyond your problems is this free, whole being.

And you have much to bring into this world.

And we exhale, radiating our goodwill, best wishes, our service, our care.

Now we keep the head up. We are this big space welcoming in the joys and sorrows of the world.

Come back, and it goes through your body, not staying in your physical body, but into the larger body that you are always living from.

Exhale forward, radiating.

Of course, that radiating includes radiating towards the you that forgets, towards the you that gets contracted and stuck.

And coming back.

Making that into your heart, letting it go into the larger body.

Feel that larger body behind you, above you, under you.

I am with you. I am for you. I am in you, and you are in me.

I'm with you. I am for you. I am in you, and you are in me.

Exhale and forward.

Welcoming the joy, the sound, the sight.

Knowing that out there, there are also beings that are having challenges, that are dying, in trouble.

The birds are singing, and the sun is here, and it's all here.

Grounded, centered, and open.

Come back, inhaling in.

Come to just stand.

Closing

Make a circle together.

Not too big, maybe a little smaller than usual.

Good morning.

Good morning.