Practice

Angela 2 — Week 6, Day 3, Session 4 — 16 minutes

Summary: Russell invites a practice in new groups of three. One person chooses what to learn — something already alive, something still fuzzy, or a situation from life — and the others take it up as it lives in them. He says why situation is a favorite word, and how listening, writing, and a last return can open a felt sense.

Groups of three

[Russell:] The practice that I'd like to invite for this next piece.

So, you've got these yellow sheets, in which I wrote down some of the thematic pictures. It's certainly not all-inclusive, but it's got some of what we touched on that resonates with me, and some of it might resonate with you. And you also have your own ways of looking at what resonates and what's alive.

What I would like to spend some time with is to go back to the model we used last time, of groups of three. But they won't stay the same three each day. You're going to be with a variety of people. Last time, you were with people and they stayed the same. So this time, each day, we'll form a new threesome.

You get together in a threesome, and one person will get to choose the subject that they would like to learn more about.

Now, this is my suggestion of your options.

One is, you can take something that you're excited about in the work. Maybe something you've gotten a lot from, but you want more about that.

Or maybe there's something that you have a sense is important, but it's really fuzzy. It's confusing for you. You're not sure about it, but you'd like to learn — what is it about that that's fuzzy, and could that give me something? I don't get it yet.

So you can pick something you're already feeling juicy about, or something that you have a sense is important, but you don't quite get it.

And you have the third option of taking anything in your life that you would rather spend some time with, and learn about. You can take any situation in your life.

Situation

[Russell:] Now, since I have a board here, I might as well write one of my favorite words.

Did you know that situation is one of my favorite words?

What do I love about situations?

Who loves the word situation? There we go. That's it. Thank you.

What I love about the word situation is, I have a strong resonance with the picture. And I think I probably started using this word a lot through talking to Gene, but I'm not sure that he emphasizes it as much as I do.

A lot of people, when they go to look in themselves, or work on themselves, or work on an issue — it's very important to look at the language. I've got an issue. I've got a problem. I've got a feeling. Right?

You get stuck in a feeling. You want to work on your relationship.

For me, all of these things — they can all be good, they can all be entryways, they can all be fine. But for me, there's a certain — well, each one has a different feel.

If I go to work on a feeling, I've already narrowed my investigation.

If I try to work on my relationship, it feels too big.

But everything I might want to learn about lives in a situation. I don't have as much attached to the term, and it's a way of approaching anything.

The situation of — instead of my whole relationship — that type of place where Linda and I get gnarly. That situation where that happens. And I can use that situation as an entry point.

Or it could be anything. Give me a subject there. Offer one. Give me one of those. Huh?

[Participant:] Two gravities.

[Russell:] Okay. So there's this whole — again, for me, a very general word. This whole, what is this? I would call it — we can say a notion of two gravities.

How — what is that? And when I approach what is that, I'm thinking of — in what way, how do I sense it? In what situations does that come alive? Well, I know the sense of the weightiness, the ground, the feeling, and so I'm putting myself in a situation where I'm in touch with it.

And it begins to come alive. It's not abstract anymore, because it's living in a situation.

And so if that fits for you, you can think of any situation of your life that you'd like to learn about. It could be a communication thing with a child. It could be something about your — anything.

So if that helps, you can think of it as a situation. If that doesn't help, throw it out and just approach it in whatever language works for you.

So, you have those choices.

Listening and writing

[Russell:] One person will be your partner, who will give you back whatever you want in terms of their listening.

You can say, you can give me anything, and I'll let you know if it's too much.

We want the one who is listening to themselves — the one who is going inside.

And remember, our way is that when you are in connection with the various levels of yourself, and it's connected to the world, there's a wholeness there.

Okay, I'll go more into that tomorrow. You've heard me talk about it before.

And in that wholeness, I suggest there's a knowing of more than you consciously know now, and that more is quite helpful.

So how to find that?

So it's bringing to your inner life — settling in, going to a different state of consciousness by dropping down. Not just talking, but dropping in, pausing, and bringing this gentle invitation in there.

What is it about this — whatever it is, whatever the topic or situation is?

And then you do what you do. You start resonating with it. You speak it.

Now, if you don't want any words back from your partner, you can let them know: I just want you to be in presence with me.

If you want to receive back only some words that you've already said, and have them give those back — so are you noticing, so are you sensing — those standard ways that we do.

Or if you're wanting some reminders, like if you're going off into a story, to maybe come back to your body.

Or you can say: you're free to say anything, but I want you to know, sometimes I might say, no, not now, or I don't want that. It's not personal.

So it's completely for the person who is going inside. And you are of service to them.

The third person is writing — writing down the transitions, mostly.

Some of us are good at writing a lot. Or you can write enough that you can at least give back the main movements of the session.

And the first person will have 25 minutes. Okay?

Then you'll have a little pause. Take a stretch, go to the bathroom, come back.

The second person — either one, we don't know who it is, we'll choose, it's not set — will then work with the same subject.

What comes — either the same subject that's already written out, or if you brought your own situation, your own something that you're working on: what came up for you? What's living in you around that subject?

Not around your version of that subject, but how it lives in you. Right?

How it lives in us

[Russell:] So the first person's situation — maybe we can take an example. Use any example.

[Participant:] How it is, being in your new apartment and moving.

[Russell:] Okay. How it is, changing where you're living and being in a new situation like that. Right.

The second person — no, no, no. Not how it is for you, but how new situations are for them right now. So, something.

You don't get that? Okay.

So if she was dealing with the new situation of her living situation, a second person would take this general idea of something that's new in your life — some new situation — or could take your living situation.

Right, but not what she was saying about it. How it lives in you.

No, you're not commenting on her.

How new situations are. Right — or your living situation, or whatever.

It's the idea that we are all connected, and that whatever is living in one, in some way lives in another, in a different form.

And then the third, and that person will have 15 minutes. The third person will have 15 minutes.

And we end with the first person going again.

Another spin

[Russell:] Remember this? I don't — it wasn't even there, and I remember it. Okay, so the first person goes again after.

[Participant:] We haven't done that.

[Russell:] Really?

[Participant:] We have not done that.

[Russell:] We could have done something similar to that in a resource growing, listening to our body, right? Something similar to that, when someone says — maybe this is from the graduate retreat.

We didn't do this. We did threes, but you didn't do this part. Okay, so this is the next step. We did do an exercise. And this is what we've done in the graduate retreats lately, and it's really potent.

The first person takes another spin. Another spin — not trying to connect, not doing anything of trying to connect. But what most people find is, what has lived in the group mind now comes into your felt sense. It may not. It may.

You're not trying to make that connection, but you're listening freshly to the same issue after this process.

So don't try to predict it. Take pauses as you need, but not too long a pause, because I want to be able to come back and look a little bit together.

So it's 25, 15, 15, 15.

And the only session that's recorded is the first one. The other ones aren't written down.

And you change over who's writing. Well, you're only recording the first one. I'm sorry — you change over who's responding, who's partnering.

And — right. No. Who is your companion, right? Each person gets a companion. Who's your listener? Who's your listener?

Oh, I felt some people were listening.

One person is writing the first time, and one person is your responder.

The second time, nobody is writing, but one of those people is your responder.

And then the third time the same, and the fourth time the same.

Okay? Let's see how it goes.

Questions

[Russell:] Yeah, it could be something on the yellow sheet, or anything that you have that's been alive for you in your learning here, that you want to learn more about.

It feels like it's an important subject, either because it's really alive in you, or because it's obscure for you, but you sense there's something important about it.

[Participant:] And then, if somebody chose that, the next person would choose the same subject? The same kind of subject?

[Russell:] Correct. Then everybody — if it was the two gravities — everybody would be working with the two gravities. And working with the two, what comes to you? Trust what happens.

Yes.

[Participant:] If you can, just very briefly — but it's important to me. You said that this was one of your favorite words.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Participant:] I didn't quite understand why. Could you say a couple of words as to why situation is one of your favorite words?

[Russell:] For me, it eliminates a lot of confusion.

[Participant:] How does that happen?

[Russell:] Well — the situation I'm in right now is responding to a question. I'm always in a situation.

There's something about seeing what is that situation, and I'll try to give you some examples as we go along.

It comes up a lot for me that people frame what they're focusing on in a way that constricts what might happen. And so I look for language that allows unpredictable possibility.

Okay?

So — fine, yeah, please.

[Participant:] Sorry. The group decides who goes first?

[Russell:] Yes.

[Participant:] Is the group deciding the topic, or is it the person?

[Russell:] No, no. The first person. They just pick it. First person picks it.

Everyone else is then joining in. And again, you'll see what you experience.

In the graduate retreat so far, almost everybody has discovered that what somebody was working with was important for them.

And then when it gets back to the first person, it's like bells and whistles go off. Sometimes.

We'll see.

Okay.