

Inspired Life Formula with Nina Lockwood

Module 1 Nurture Your Body

Exercise 2 Felt Sense

The second exercise for the Inspired Life Program Module I Nurture the Body is called Felt Sense. This is a practice that's done with many variations across many different fields - psychology, spirituality, psychotherapy - and it is tremendously powerful. It's powerful because you have the opportunity to explore your body from the inside out - to appreciate and honor the parts of you that are strong and consistent and support you as you go through life but also to bring your compassion and your love to the parts of your body that need extra attention because they're in some degree of distress. The body can go to great lengths to protect us from what we've perceived as danger - whether real or imagined - and sometimes that protective mechanism stays locked on. Most of us adjust; one way or another, or we avoid that subject because we've been afraid of what we might find or we just haven't known how to go there. Here's where the nurturing part comes in: Simply by honoring and acknowledging what has been held unexpressed or hidden, or all tied up in a bundle of muscles and nerve fibers, we give ourselves the dignity and the permission to bring this hidden hurt into the light where it can be exposed to love, our love, given what it needs and then very gently and very safely and easily can let go on it's own accord.

I do want to make it clear that the intention is not to go digging around your psyche and dredging up trauma. If there are areas of your life that require the attention of a trained therapist or health care professional, it behooves you to take whatever measures will help you address them. This practice is in no way meant to treat, diagnose, or prescribe for any medical condition, or to replace any medical treatment you're now receiving. Our primary with this exercise is simply to focus is on areas within the body that are primarily energetically or physically restricted and help those parts come to a place of openness and rest. Just like a good massage. Only in this case we're doing the massage on ourselves and our massage oil is the love in our hearts.

One of the most wonderful discoveries you'll have as you do this practice is that as you move your awareness throughout your body, like a searchlight, and you find whatever wants to make itself known to you, you'll gradually become aware of what's just beneath the surface of all those tight, hurt, achey places. You'll meet up with that ground of your being which is pure love, pure peace, transcendent and boundless, that's carrying you and supporting you and is, at the same time, YOU. And it can happen in a split second: your awareness of who you are, in a body, experiencing this phantasmagorical world of ours surrounded by, penetrated by and actually not separate from that loving awareness.

This practice is pretty free form in nature, at least as we're going to be doing it here. There's no specific time of day it should be done, and no specific length of time to do it, so find the time that's right for you. And maybe one day it will be at one time and another day you can practice this later or earlier. You can do it during your day or in the morning or in the evening for as long as you're able. It's probably easier to do this with your eyes closed, but then again, if you're in a peaceful, calm environment, having your eyes softly focused as you take your attention inward is fine. Try it both ways and see which way works best for you. It may vary. So, for the time you're doing this exercise, find an environment that won't make any demands on you, or at least that you can refuse to respond to. You might think of this as an internal body scan, only with the addition of your intention and consciousness, bringing light and freedom to the parts of that beautiful musical instrument of your being that are currently in darkness, or at the least, in shade. And some days you may only be aware of one thing going on in your body or your emotions that needs your attention. That's great, too. You may find that after you're done, your body wants to move in a particular way or eat a particular food or be in a particular environment. Honor that, as best you can. And here, as with the first exercise, I highly recommend this practice every day so that you become more and more finely tuned to your instrument. Please do your best to remain open and non-judgmental of your efforts or of what you may find inside you. It's all for learning and for love and freedom. Record your observations as much as you can, you'll learn a lot about where your body stores tension or is tight and is, as a result, less able to function as effectively as it might. So let me walk you through what this process might be like:

Sit in silence for a moment, comfortably seated or lying down. PAUSE. Bring your attention down from any mental chatter in your head, down into the center of your being. Let it rest there, gaining strength and calm.....Now let your attention be drawn to any part of the body that's calling to you - tightness in the muscles of your neck or across your shoulders, for example - and just be with it. Let your loving attention make that part of your body its single focus - and listen deeply: What do you hear? What do you notice? Are you aware of any connection between the physical sensations and a person or event? Is there something this part of your body needs? Can you simply welcome this contraction, as best you can, and share with it the love that's within you? And when that feels complete, can you hold the space for this tightness or contraction to come to a state of ease, as best you can? Good.... now, where else in the body is your attention drawn? Is there another place that hurts? Maybe your heart hurts - maybe someone has said something unkind. Nurture that part of you by opening to that well of love deep within you, and let that part of you be saturated, filled, bathed in it until there is a quieting, a resting.....Now maybe your mind is going a mile a minute, trying to tell you what's right or what's wrong with this process. After all, the mind likes to be involved.... no harm done...it's just "thinking" and you can even say that word to yourself if it helps you get a little distance from that sweet little mind of yours. just gently move your attention back to the body.....maybe you find an overall sense of fatigue or exhaustion.. so you honor that, just as a loving mother would comfort her child who feels helpless and undone. Honoring that sensation, you free it to move out and away from you, as you summon or immerse yourself in love, perhaps asking: what's beneath this? What's deeper than this that can take away all the pain? all the suffering?and let yourself experience that... Maybe you are overwhelmed by a painful or insistent emotion, that demands attention, demands retribution, feels like an injustice has been done. Welcome and honor that, too. Even if that's how you spend all your time during this one exercise. Honor that feeling by giving it your full and loving attention, your acknowledgment and by giving it what it needs: love and encouragement, silently, freely, completely. And then notice, what else is here now? Is there a presence or an awareness of something greater, something all encompassing, all welcoming, all loving?...

Okay, let's stop here. That took about six minutes. Find what works for you. Let it take whatever form suits you each time you practice - and it might be

different every time. Remember, I'll be doing this practice, too, right along with you, and even though our experiences will be different, we'll be occupying a similar quantum space.