

Self-Awareness Exercise



Here is an example of a self-awareness exercise we often do in a session, which you can also do at home to help you connect with your own body. It can alleviate the feelings of anxiety and overwhelm. To access a recorded version, go to essenceoflifeaustralia.com.au/resources

1. Get into a comfortable sitting position, with the full weight of your hands resting on your thighs. Allow yourself to settle and relax. This exercise takes at least 5 to 10 minutes, so your comfort is important. Notice your breathing. Notice body sensation. Say hello to your body.
2. What do you notice under your hands? Can you get a sense of the skin, the muscles and tissues, the blood and the bones?
3. Staying in contact with the thighs, make the lightest possible contact with your hands. Does the shift to the 'butterfly touch' contact change what you can feel? Maybe you begin to get a sense of the whole leg, not just the area under your hand. Maybe differences between the legs or even the whole sides of your body begin to present.
4. Stay in physical contact but imagine your hands 30 to 50cm away from your thighs. This a perceptual trick, or shift, that will change what you receive. What do you notice now? Maybe you begin to get a sense of your whole body breathing and connecting up. Go slowly.
5. When we touch ourselves we create a dual circuit into our brain. There is the information coming from the hand and the information coming from the tissue being touched. See if you can appreciate these two circuits. Do they match up? When we try to become aware of ourselves there is a similar dual circuit: the idea of what we should feel (more external, like the touching hand) and the moment-to-moment direct experience from the inside (more internal, like being touched). Frequently our idea of the body is quite different from what we can actually feel if we pay attention.
6. Bring the exercise to a close, and try and write down what you felt and noticed.