

THE FIRST STEP

To Acknowledge Your Feelings

MY STORY

At forty years of age I experienced a midlife crisis and realized I had lost myself. That sense of who I was in connection with others. I had just finished working for a Dance Company for five years as Rehearsal Director and had seven weeks holiday before I took up a three month contract as Acting Artistic Director. I taught training classes and choreographed and my best works had been created on the dancers of this Company.

Two weeks into my holiday just after Christmas, I lay on the sofa unable to go to my best friend's farewell party. The thought of facing all the dancers overwhelmed me. I sobbed and sobbed and rocked forward and back, feeling like a grey fog of confusion surrounded me.

"Get up and get dressed, we have to go to the party," my partner said. "We can't let Garry down; we don't know how long it will be before we see him again."

"I'm sorry," I sobbed. "I can't go, I just can't face them. My heart was racing. Pain seared through my back and my solar plexus was tight and squirming. I had never felt like this before. I was always able to push through. I didn't know what was happening to me.

Fear had taken hold of me again in a big way. The following days were terrifying. Panic attacks woke me in the middle of the night, my heart raced, I was breathless and palpitating. I couldn't sleep. I realized I needed help and was guided to a physiologist.

The first appointment was really tough. I went on my own and my panic was high. He sat me down in a chair and when he asked me to explain my situation, the effort to talk had me rocking back and forth with tears streaming down my face. I couldn't get any words out. The pain had blocked my ability to express myself. He pushed me to acknowledge the pain I was suffering. I had stuffed my pain firmly down into what is often called a shadow bag. Those aspects of myself and how I felt about some experiences that I was going through over the previous two years and hadn't been able to face. I had stuffed the *shadow bag* full and it exploded. I realized I was burnt out and the psychologist told me I was three steps away from being an agoraphobic. I was caught between my partner, my teenage son and my boss. I had stopped fighting for what I believed in and lost who I was in a sea of their opinions. I had just kept going until I couldn't any more.

This crisis was the catalyst to begin my healing journey from feeling fear and constant anxiety to finally find ways to create inner peace. Over the following years I was dedicated to heal my shadow self. I began to meditate and work with crystals and heal my inner child and my guilt of so many things.

The first step I am sharing with you here is a simple exercise the psychologist forced me to do. To define and recognize the pain and allow it to be, by acknowledging what I was feeling each step of the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TECHNIQUE

The number one key to honoring yourself is to acknowledge your feelings. My story is an example of how I lost who I was because I bottled up my feelings and kept going on with work ignoring how I was really feeling because it was too painful. This was a time before I understood how to engage in a process of healing.

To assist with this process I have created a simple technique to express what you are feeling out aloud. Then you breathe that feeling tone of acknowledgement down through all parts of your body.

Expressing your feeling aloud is important. Through sound of the spoken word, you take the feeling expression in through your ears and into the pineal gland and into the brain. This enables the fullest absorption of your feelings into your consciousness.

This technique also enables you to find what lies below the surface of any feeling that you have. The original feeling you express is rarely the core behind what is going on for you, but it is a start.

This technique is especially great to define and get to the bottom of a fear. Fear is interesting; it is an outcome but not the reason for the fear. Fear is a very broad term, which can create a lot of stress if we don't know what we are fearful about. When we find the specific of the fear, we are closer to facing it and acknowledging it. We allow it to be. The impact of the fear reduces through the use of this acknowledgement technique.

FIRST STEP—THE BREATH

As covered in the introduction the in-breath and out-breath is life. One of the simplest ways to connect with ourselves is through following the breath as it moves in through the nostrils down through the body and back up and out through the nostrils, concentrating only on the journey of the breath. This process brings your mind into focus of one simple task and harnesses the mind from its mental chatter.

From this pathway you can imagine inside your body that you have an inner tube, a cylinder. In yoga and many forms of healing this tube is called the pranic tube. Prana is understood to be the life force energy contained within the air that we breathe. This inner tube includes the breathing passages within the physical body but can also be understood to include the internal joining of our chakras (the energy centers of the body) from the crown chakra down to the root chakra at the base of the spine.

PRACTICE - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TECHNIQUE

Make yourself comfortable and start your inner breathing awareness process with the witness breath. Connect down into your belly your Hara point and very simply say out aloud what you are feeling. Keep the emotion simple and as close to one or two words as you can.

“I acknowledge that I am feeling.....”

Now slowly with each new breath in and out direct the acknowledgement of your feeling down to different parts of your body. Focus your attention into your upper body, chest, back, stomach, hips, legs, ankles and into each of your toes. I call this a feeling tone for it has energy within it.

Then go back up to your neck and direct your breath through your brain and face, then neck into your shoulders, top of the arms, forearms and then into each finger. Take your time with this and really feel and direct the breath and the acknowledgement of your feeling is being absorbed into your flesh and cells.

Once you have completed this acknowledgement of feeling through the whole of your body, follow the breath down the inner tube to your Hara point. Sit down into I call it your Shaman Centre and wait for the next word for the next feeling to pop into your head. Allow it to come from your intuition and guidance not what you might think it to be. You can be surprised by the result and the emotion. Then speak that feeling aloud once more and continue the breathing focus and acknowledgement

once again. "I acknowledge that I am feeling....."

Then repeat the process once more with this next feeling tone. This time take the acknowledgment of this feeling expression down through the bones of your body. Your bones are your physical structure, your strength and represent how you support yourself in life.

Then continue for another round and concentrate on your organs and then you can go even deeper inside your body to your cells. Continue in this manner until you get to a place where no other word for any feelings to surface. At this point you will have come to a place of feeling at peace.

FEELINGS TO ACKNOWLEDGE

- I acknowledge I am feeling Sad,
- I acknowledge I am feeling afraid, or fearful
- I acknowledge I am feeling confused
- I acknowledge I am feeling shy
- I acknowledge I am feeling exhausted
- I acknowledge I am feeling guilt
- I acknowledge I am feeling shame
- I acknowledge I am feeling rejected
- I acknowledge I am feeling distrust
- I acknowledge I am feeling heart broken
- I acknowledge I am feeling hopelessness
- I acknowledge I am feeling grief
- I acknowledge I am feeling loss
- I acknowledge I am feeling self denial
- I acknowledge I am feeling unworthy
- I acknowledge I am feeling untrusting
- I acknowledge I am feeling humiliated
- I acknowledge I am feeling abused
- I acknowledge I am feeling jealous
- I acknowledge I am feeling distrust
- I acknowledge I am feeling criticized
- I acknowledge I am feeling alone
- I acknowledge I am feeling deceitful
- I acknowledge I am feeling destitute
- I acknowledge I am feeling unaccepted
- I acknowledge I am feeling powerless
- I acknowledge I am feeling unsupported
- I acknowledge I am feeling challenged with life

These are just a few idea that may arise as you search inwards to allow and accept your feelings without judgment of the inner voice saying "I shouldn't be feeling like this." Once you accept that you do and maybe shed a few tears, the energy of those feelings will disappear almost like magic.

BE MAGICAL and love yourself enough to CHANGE.



YOUR FEELINGS WORKBOOK PAGE