

Finding Your Inner “Zone of Excellence”

The following exercise is based on a simple but profound “inner game” practice that we initially learned from our colleague John Welwood (author of *Toward a Psychology of Awakening* and *Journey of the Heart*). It was originally developed by his wife Jennifer as part of a meditation practice.

We have adapted and modified it a bit in order to include all of the elements of the COACH state. Its purpose is to access and align all three types of intelligence, moving from the somatic mind to include the cognitive mind and finally the field mind.

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable position with both feet flat on the floor and your spine erect but relaxed (i.e., “in your vertical axis”). Check that your breathing is regular and from the belly. (Short, rapid breathing from the chest would indicate that you are in a stressed mode.)
2. Bring your attention to the soles of your feet (i.e., put your “mind” into your feet.). Become aware of the universe of sensations in the bottoms of your feet. Feel the surface of your heels, toes, arches and the balls of your feet.
3. Begin to expand your awareness to include the physical volume (the 3-dimensional space) of your feet and then move your awareness up through your lower legs, knees, thighs, pelvis and hips. Become aware of your belly center, breathe deeply into it and say to yourself: “I am here.” “I am present.” “I am centered.”
4. Continuing to stay aware of your lower body, expand your awareness up through your solar plexus, spine, lungs, rib cage and chest. Bring awareness to your heart center in your upper chest, breathe into your chest and say to yourself: “I am open.” “I am opening.”
5. Now continue to expand your awareness up through your shoulders, upper arms, elbows, lower arms, wrists, hands and fingers, and up through your neck, throat and face. Be sure to include all of the senses in the head: the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and tongue. Bring your awareness to the skull, brain and the center in your head, behind your eyes. Breathe as if you are breathing into your head center, bringing oxygen and energy, and say to yourself: “I am awake.” “I am aware.” “I am alert and clear.”
6. Staying in contact with the ongoing physical sensations in your body, starting from your feet and including all three centers (belly, heart and head), become aware of all of the space below you, going into the center of the Earth; all the space above you, reaching into the sky; all of the space to your left; all of the space to your right; all of the space behind you; all of the space in front of you. Feel a deep sense of connection to your feet and the centers in your belly, heart and head, and to the environment and field around you. Be aware of the vast array of resources available to you within yourself and in the field around you and say to yourself, “I am connected.”

Practicing this COACH state of being in your “zone” will allow you to be able to “hold” more and more of your experience from a place of calm and clarity. From this state you can hold all of the resources, strength, intelligence and wisdom available to you as well as disturbing energies such as fear, anger, sadness, etc.