

Presence, Healing and Reintegration

Intimate Presence and Pure Awareness

Carl Jung wrote in *The Undiscovered Self*, “You cannot solve a problem with the same level of consciousness that created it”. The ego is a mind-created “problem”, so it cannot be “solved” by the mind. We have to use a higher level of consciousness – the pure awareness of our soul (our Self’s primary field of consciousness). It was the absence of presence and pure awareness that resulted in parts of our consciousness being exiled and their associated ego structures being created. Our young and innocent personal consciousness simply did not have the capacity to cope with these distressed parts, so we exiled them out of conscious awareness. Being with these parts fully (i.e. giving them our full presence and awareness) is all that is required to heal the separation and reintegrate them back into our being. We are simply doing now what we couldn’t do at the time of the original distressing event. This type of healing only works if our awareness is pure (i.e. no agenda, judgement or fixing) and our presence is intimate (i.e. no resistance, avoidance or suppression).

Alice Bailey wrote in *Esoteric Healing* “cures are brought about [when] the soul pours through to the point of concentrated awareness”. This means that the healing process is activated by simply focusing our soul’s pure awareness on the appropriate area of our body. The soul’s presence has to intimately merge with the part (exile, hole or structure). Merely putting our awareness on the part is not enough because there is still separation. Healing and reintegration can only occur when there is intimate contact; when the soul and the part become one.

Exiles, holes and protective ego structures are negative thought-forms bound up in negative emotions and negative energy (note: coping ego structures are generally just thought-forms). The thought-form is the core of the “part” but that is not what holds it together or gives it life. The thing that holds a part together and brings it to life is a piece of our soul – a piece of soul that has become misidentified with the part – a piece of soul that believes it is that part and has forgotten it is soul.

The presence of the rest of our soul is absolutely vital for the healing and reintegration process because its intimate union with the part allows the misidentified piece of soul to reunite with the rest of our soul (causal body). Without the piece of soul to hold it together, the part dissolves and its constituent elements reunite with the mental body, emotional body and energy body.

Discovering and Practicing Presence

Presence is fundamental to personal development and transpersonal (spiritual) development, and it is a pre-requisite for most of the practices and techniques described in this book. Presence has a palpable feeling – it feels like a subtle energetic swelling or presence within the body (or part of the body). It has a sense of fullness; like something within us is expanding and trying to get out. This pretty much describes what our soul is doing – manifesting more fully within us and coming to the fore.

Presence requires our awareness to be present spatially (right here) and temporally (right now). Presence requires us to “be” – right here, right now. It should be easy to just “be”; it is our natural state after all, but it is far from easy. We have spent decades practising “doing” and we have forgotten how to “be”. We need to put less emphasis on “doing” and re-learn how to “be”; both of which require practise and commitment. Thankfully, they can both be achieved through one simple practice – Practicing Presence, which is described below:

- Spread your awareness throughout your entire body and sense the subtle but palpable presence of your soul.
- Watch, notice and feel whatever arises, without any agenda. You are an impartial observer.
- Don’t try to do anything or achieve anything during the practice.
- Don’t analyse, assess, judge or criticise anything, including yourself, during or after the practice.
- All you have to “do” is feel your awareness spread throughout your body and notice what arises – that is it – if you are doing anything more, you are doing too much.

The first few times you practise the exercise, you may not be able to actually feel your soul's presence in your body. But it will happen, when you relax and stop trying to feel it. You will probably notice that there are areas of your body where it is more difficult to feel presence than others. You will probably also notice that there are areas of your body that feel out of balance or feel like blockages – these are the areas where your psychological material is stored (exiles, holes and ego structures).

Presence is central to most of the practices and techniques described in the next few chapters, so practise it as much as you can. I do it while driving my car, reading, watching TV and lying in bed. With practise it can be done whilst walking or performing simple tasks. I really cannot stress how important and beneficial this simple practice is:

- It gets us out of our heads and into our bodies, which allows us to experience life more objectively and live life more fully.
- It takes us deeper into ourselves – deeper into our body, senses, emotions, desires, behaviours and beliefs.
- It helps us to become less reactive, so our relationships with other people improve.
- It helps us to develop an authentic relationship with our Self/soul.

Body Awareness (Feeling and Healing with Presence)

During our childhood, the authentic aspects of our consciousness that should have been activated by positive life experiences got shutdown (and exiled) by negative life experiences. It is the ego's job to get us through life without feeling the pain and distress of these negative experiences. Personal development goes directly against this objective because it requires us to feel into our old hurts and inquire into our false beliefs. It is about reconnecting with the parts of ourselves that we have repressed and exiled from conscious awareness. It is sometimes called "shadow work" because it deals with the parts of us that live in the shadows of our consciousness (our subconscious).

Feeling and healing with presence is a relatively new approach to psychological healing and spiritual growth. Instead of focussing on the symptoms (as a regular doctor or psychologist might) we focus on the root cause. It involves tuning into our body and fully feeling the sensations, blockages and structures that make their presence felt. Because they are making themselves felt, we can infer that they are ready to be healed and reintegrated. Simply staying with the body sensations (and emotions) and feeling them fully (with loving presence) gently reintegrates the part back into the wholeness of our being.

We can identify which areas of the body hold psychological material (e.g. exiles, holes and ego structures) by the sensations we can feel in our body (e.g. pressure, tightness, blockages, magnetic repulsion, stickiness, membranes, hollowness, rigidity, pain, energetic sensations, etc.). The more "handles" (sensations, feelings, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, etc.) we can get on a part the more fully we can feel it and the easier we can heal it. Our role is simply to keep our presence and awareness on these "handles" and feel them as fully as possible, and to keep our awareness pure – i.e. not have any agenda or desire to fix or change anything. Then the healing and reintegration will occur naturally in their own time.

Feel It To Heal It

This body-centred approach is a very simple yet effective way of working with emotional parts, e.g. exiles and distracting ego structures.

- 1. Connect with Presence:** Before you begin, take a few really deep breaths and centre yourself. Connect with your soul by closing your eyes, spreading your awareness throughout your entire body and feeling your soul's presence.
- 2. Open Invitation:** Gently invite your wounded parts, conditioned behaviours, reactive emotions and distorted beliefs to show themselves. Reassure them that it is safe to come out. Let them know that you would really like to get to know them and that they don't have to be alone or afraid anymore. Invite them to tell you or show you their story.

- 3. Pure Awareness:** Pay attention to whatever arises, then move your awareness/presence into it. Really feel it and intimately merge with it so there is no separation. You and the feeling are one, but in a non-identified way; i.e. you feel it completely, but you are not overwhelmed by it. Maintaining pure awareness enables your sense of identity to remain distinct from the feeling, whilst still feeling it fully. It is a pure and intimate connection but it is still objective.
- 4. Healing with Loving Presence:** Acknowledge the part, reassure it, be with it, hold it, comfort it, accept it and love it. Loving presence really helps to heal your relationship with the part. You were too afraid to fully feel its pain all those years ago because your young and undeveloped consciousness didn't have the capacity. Now, as an adult you easily have the capacity to feel pain and distress. The only thing that might stop you from maintaining an intimate connection is if you become over-identified with the traumatised part and allow its fear to overwhelm you. Establishing a deep connection with your soul's presence before you begin reduces the chances of emotional flooding, but it does still happen sometimes.
- 5. Reintegration:** Allow your soul's presence to dissolve into the part, and allow the part to dissolve into your presence. The exiled piece of soul will reunite with the rest of your soul, and the mental, emotional and energetic components will dissolve and reunite with their respective subtle bodies. Note: Inviting in essential qualities such as love, joy and strength deepen our connection with our soul and increase its healing and reintegrative effect.

The fear, trauma, confusion and distress that are carried by an exiled part can be reactivated when doing inner work. If we focus our awareness solely on the area of emotional distress, it can sometimes feel as if the localised distress is overwhelming our entire being. This can be quite frightening, but it can easily be overcome by spreading our awareness throughout our entire body. Widening our focus in this way puts the scale of the emotion into perspective, i.e. it helps us to realise that only a small part of us is affected. Slow deep breathing is also helpful because it dissipates the build-up of emotional energy.

Healing and Reintegration

Effective healing and reintegration requires our soul's presence to intimately connect with the exile, hole or ego structure. Put simply, it requires taking the "healer" (the soul) to the "patient" (the exile, hole or ego structure). However, we generally avoid our psychological material because it feels painful or uncomfortable, and we generally avoid our soul because it is not our usual sense of self. So we need to practise connecting with them both if our self-healing work is to be effective:

- Our psychological wounds are always present, but we repress them and distract ourselves so that we don't have to feel them. Personal self-inquiry and body awareness (both previously described in this chapter) are effective methods of identifying and connecting with our psychological wounds.
- Our soul is also always present, but it is often obscured by the activities of the mind, emotions and body. When we stop "doing" and start "being" we will soon become our soul's presence.

It is the presence of the soul that brings about healing and reintegration. The soul doesn't have to "do" anything – its intimate presence is all that is required. Psychological healing isn't like healing a physical wound; it is more like healing a wounded relationship – the relationship between the soul and the part (exile, hole or ego structure):

- **Exiles:** Every exiled part is animated by a piece of soul that has forgotten it is soul. The piece of soul feels like it is wounded and traumatised because it is identified with the exiled part, but soul cannot actually be wounded. The soul's presence helps the piece of soul to awaken from its misidentification with the exiled part, at which point its lack of wounding is immediately apparent and it reunites with the rest of the soul. Without the piece of soul to hold it together, the mental, emotional and energetic aspects of the exiled part soon dissolve and reintegrate with their respective subtle bodies.
- **Holes:** Every hole is a piece of soul that has forgotten it even exists because it is identified with a perceived lack. The soul's presence helps the piece of soul to awaken from this misconception, at which point its wholeness immediately becomes apparent and its "lost" essential quality is immediately found.

- **Ego Structures:** Every ego structure is animated by a piece of soul that has forgotten it is soul. The piece of soul is identified with the ego structure so it is restricted by the ego structure's programming. The soul's presence helps the piece of soul to awaken from this misidentification and reunite with the rest of the soul. Without the piece of soul to hold it together, the mental, emotional and energetic aspects of the ego structure soon dissolve and reintegrate with their respective subtle bodies.

In all three cases nothing actually needed to be healed. Psychological healing is simply about helping these misidentified pieces of our soul to remember who they truly are. When they remember that they are soul, they naturally reintegrate with the rest of our soul. The more parts we reintegrate, the more we awaken to wholeness.

The Basic Healing and Reintegration Process

Important Note: It would be unwise to begin any kind of personal development work with the intention of "fixing" things that are "wrong" with us. Our intention should be focused on developing our true-Self's clear perception and clear expression, rather than fixing our ego-self. Always focus on the positive; not the negative. Because focussing on the negative brings more of the negative, and focussing on the positive brings more of the positive. It is the ego that wants things to be fixed, and starting any kind of inner work from the position of the ego is destined for failure and disappointment. Inner work must be initiated by the Self/soul, because they have the essential qualities that this work requires: patience, acceptance, compassion, love, curiosity, intuition, etc.

There are two starting points for inner work:

1. **Specific Issue:** If you have a specific issue in mind that you want to work on, recall a time when the issue arose and notice what arises within you (e.g. body sensations, emotions, thoughts, memories, beliefs). If you choose to work on a general issue such as anxiety, it helps to narrow things down and work on one aspect at a time; e.g. performance anxiety or anxiety when talking to your boss. This is because a general issue such as anxiety is actually a cluster of many inter-related exiles, holes and ego structures, so it is best to work on them one at a time.
2. **No Specific Issue:** If you don't have a specific issue in mind, simply sense into your body and notice whatever is arising in the present moment.

The "Feel It To Heal It" technique described in section 2 forms the basis of many of the healing and reintegration techniques in this book. I won't repeat the steps again because they can be found on page 133, but I will briefly describe some additional elements that can be incorporated into the process to widen its scope and increase its effectiveness. Note: The processes described in this chapter are really just to introduce you to the basic processes of self-inquiry, healing and reintegration – the full range of therapeutic techniques are described in the next chapter.

- If you sense an abstract part: Sense its location, shape, size, colour, texture, emotional tone, state of mind, etc. The more "handles" you can get on it, the deeper the connection and the deeper the healing.
- If you sense a child-like part: Sense his/her age and emotional state. Does he/she have a job to do? Is he/she friendly or hostile? Where does he/she live? Does he/she have anything to say to you? The more you get to know him/her the better your chances of healing the relationship and reintegrating the part. Note: Dialoguing with child-like parts is described more fully in the next chapter.
- If more than one part is vying for your attention, choose one and feel into it as fully as you can, with pure awareness and intimate presence (while still maintaining presence throughout your body).
- Let go of any agendas to change your experience or fix the issue. Just be with your experience fully.
- If memories or thoughts arise, contemplate them for a while to see if any further insights come, but don't get drawn into too much thinking or analysis – stay with the body sensations and emotions.
- If emotions arise, feel them as fully as you can without becoming overwhelmed by them. Maintaining presence throughout your body should reduce or prevent emotional overwhelm.

- Try dialoguing with the part – Does it have anything to say to you? Does it have a story to tell? Is there anything it wants to show you? Is there anything it needs to do to help release its pain?
- You might encounter layered parts, e.g. confusion at the surface, then anger, with fear at the core. Just stay with each one and they will shift naturally (the core emotion will probably take the longest).
- If things don't seem to be shifting, stay with it and increase your focus on the body sensations and emotions to feel them as fully as you can. Trust that the healing and reintegration will occur naturally in its own time, and remember that your (ego's) interference will block this natural process.
- You may feel a little delicate or spaced out after doing deep psychological work. This is quite normal. Just take it easy for a couple of hours to give your system time to assimilate the changes.
- Working with a partner to “hold the space” and support you while you explore and reintegrate your psyche greatly increases the depth and effectiveness of the work.

Overcoming Obstacles and Resistance

It can be difficult to get close enough to an exiled part to feel it fully and heal the relationship because protective and distracting ego structures often prevent us from doing so, because that is their job. These ego structures won't relinquish their roles until the exiled part is no longer a threat (or no longer needs protecting), but we can't help the exiled part until the ego structure backs down. At times like these, our internal system seems to be in stalemate but a useful insight I learned from Dr Richard Schwartz, the creator of Internal Family Systems (IFS), can help us to negotiate our way out of this deadlock.

Most of our protective and distracting ego structures were originally created when we were very young (at the same time that the associated exile was created). So these ego structures were created from very young consciousness and are still composed of young consciousness because they have been isolated from life and have not grown up. This has two important ramifications:

1. The ego structures are not aware that many years have passed, so they don't know that we have grown up into a capable adult. They still believe that we are young, vulnerable and incapable of facing the distress that they are protecting us from.
2. Like well-behaved children, they diligently keep doing what they were originally told (or programmed) to do, without question.

The first point contains the key to overcoming the second. Protective and distracting ego structures can often be circumvented by simply informing them that we are no longer a helpless little child and that we have grown up into a mature and capable adult. This revelation usually allows us access to the protected exile, which we can then heal and reintegrate with the presence and pure awareness of our soul. If the protector part comes onto the scene again, reassure it then kindly ask it to step aside so that you can continue helping the exiled part.

Protective and distracting ego structures were originally created to protect our young ego-self from feeling the exiled part's distress and confusion. But ego structures can be augmented later in life with older more-developed consciousness. These older ego structures sometimes develop sympathy for the exiled part and can even become protective of it. So the ego structure's role can change from protecting our young ego-self from being overwhelmed to protecting a young exiled part from the general hostility of the egoic environment. If you encounter a caring ego structure in your work, use the same basic approach (education and negotiation) but allow the protective part to keep an eye on the exile while you are with it.

Stages of Reintegration

To reintegrate an exiled part (which we would initially refer to as “it”), we first have to form a relationship with it (at which point we would refer to it as “you”), then we can welcome it back into our being (at which point we would refer to our integrated being as “I”):

- **Third Person Relationship (It):** The exiled part is totally separate from us. We don't even know the part so we refer to it in the third person; e.g. it is over there.

- **Second Person Relationship (You):** We get to know the part and form a relationship with it. If we were dialoguing with the part we would refer to it in the second person; e.g. you look very sad.
- **First Person Relationship (I):** The part no longer exists as a separate unit because it has been reintegrated into our being. We refer to our self in the first person; e.g. I feel whole again.

When the exiled part has been healed and reintegrated, the protective ego structure usually dissolves or disappears. If it doesn't, the exile may not be completely healed, or the protector may be protecting another exile. These are both avenues for further exploration.