



Core Body Practice: Centering

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We can learn centering by organizing ourselves in relation to the three dimensions possessed by all physical objects:

- *Length.* Check out your posture, and organize yourself in relation to gravity so that you are supported effortlessly. Place your feet slightly apart, knees unlocked, and pelvis rocked forward slightly to straighten the spine. Sense the bottoms of your feet, where the floor presses against them. Relax your shoulders, letting them drop. Hold your eyes open, letting your gaze be soft and your peripheral vision be available to you. Allow your jaw to relax. Imagine that the top of your head is connected to the heavens as if by a string. Drop your attention to your center of gravity, two inches below your navel.
- *Width:* Gently rock your weight from right to left. Find the neutral balanced place in the center of this dimension. Sense the equal weighting on each of your feet. And be aware of your width, of the space you take up. It can be helpful to sense what it is like to walk into a room and take up space, feeling an expansion in your chest that gives you more room.
- *Depth:* Align yourself from front to back. Again, a gentle rocking back and forth from heel to toe can help us find the balance point. We are accustomed to focusing out in front of us, but there is also space behind us. Bring awareness to this, sensing the room behind you. Imagine weight and mass behind you, as if you had a giant, massive tail extending out along the ground. Allow yourself to feel supported by this mass and to let your belly soften and open.

This is scalable. By this, I mean that you can take five minutes or more on each of the three components, or you can quickly and easily shift into the centered place. Centering is an internal state rather than a specific body position, and you will soon find that you can center yourself sitting, walking, or brushing your teeth. With practice, centering yourself will feel like a quick and effortless “coming home” and be almost an instantaneous shift in awareness.

For now, use your time to explore and sense into the experience of each of the three dimensions. Center yourself at least ten times a day. Initially do this standing up. Then practice in different circumstances, sitting down, in meetings, before conversations, and in preparation for stressful events. See how you experience yourself differently, and what happens in your relationships.

- The centering practice is adapted from Richard Strozzi-Heckler (*The Leadership Dojo*; Berkeley, CA: Frog, Ltd, 2007.) It is included with permission from the author.