

Compassionate News Viewing Practice

In this day and age, we are inundated with information about all of the challenges we are facing in on the planet. Many of us are getting up first thing in the morning and immersing ourselves in an overwhelming amount pain and suffering.

Overwhelming ourselves with pain and suffering is not treating ourselves kindly. Furthermore, when we are overwhelmed by pain and suffering, then we are not in a good position to be kind to others or contribute positively to the plight of humanity on this planet. For this reason, we must protect ourselves from being overwhelmed.

When we feel open and uplifted enough to attend to some of the suffering around us, then we can carefully attend to a digestible amount of negativity, bathe it in loving awareness, and transform it within ourselves.

How do we do this?

First step: get really grounded in your body.

What does this mean? Feel your body. Give it some permission to move, rest, breathe, speak, and/or make sounds. I call this embodiment practice. You can learn it through the *Embodiment Everywhere!* videos on my website. The more we feel our bodies and give them permission to live fully, the more we can navigate our lives with choice and capability.

In an electrical sense we are grounded when we are in contact with the earth and there is moist earth or water that's flowing down into the earth. If we are wearing plastic shoes, that interrupts the electrical conductivity between us and the earth. For many of us the only time and we're truly electrically grounded is when we are in the shower. The bathtub doesn't count because the water is not flowing down into the earth. This is my poor understanding of electrical grounding.

Beyond electrical grounding, we can work with increasing our experience of being connected to the earth. Imagine that you're standing in water or moist grass or mud or wet sand and feel that in your body. Feel that all of your energy can flow down into the earth, all the way into the center of the earth somehow. There's some kind of continuity between the flow of energy in this body into the surface of the earth and from the surface of the earth all the way into the powerful churning molten core that is the center of our planet. Each layer of the earth is connected to each deeper layer and somehow our bodies. The weight of our bodies, their gravity, maybe some

subtle electrical frequency can be conveyed deeper and deeper down into the core of the earth.

The churning molten core gives our earth such a powerful electromagnetic field, and it's this field that protects us from the intensity of the sun's radiation. Just to imagine this can create a vital sense of connection to the earth.

Second step: feel the expanse of the universe.

Look out at the sky if you're able. Let your mind extend as far as it can into outer space. Feel the vastness of our world. Sense your body as a center of this vastness, a part of this vastness. Know that within this vast universe so much is unfolding harmoniously, according to natural law. Only a thin crust of the earth and its atmosphere is confounded by the complications of human confusion. Let this truth permeate all your cells.

Third step: Open your heart.

What does this mean? For some of us we can just think that we want to open our hearts and it happens on its own. Physiologically, the muscle of the heart itself can relax any unnecessary tension. The vessels around the heart can release any constriction. Our breathing and our lungs which wrap so intimately around the heart can relax as well. If it doesn't happen easily the first time you try, be open to any shift that is moving in the direction of opening. Over time as you develop the neural networks to coordinate this intention with all these physiological possibilities, your ability to open your heart will grow stronger and become easier.

Fourth step: recognize some of the pain in the world.

Let the thought of it reverberate in your heart. Bathe it in love. If there is a sense of being troubled, let that transform. Feel a shift inside your heart, an opening, a release.

For as long as there have been creatures on this planet, there has been joy and suffering. For as long as we have the capacity to experience joy and suffering, they will continue. They are inseparable from each other, and intrinsic part of our capacity to feel and relate. When we can hold the truth of both in our hearts, there is equanimity. Somehow this equanimity seems to be the path toward taming and transforming the role of humanity on the planet. Can you imagine us living on this planet in harmony with each other and our environment? Perhaps even trying to imagine this is a contribution.