

BODY-PSYCHOTHERAPY MEDITATIONS

THE BODY THAT BROUGHT ME HERE

Guided Meditation: This is to discover how your body has responded to some of all the different life experiences that you have had. You carry numerous memories of all of the different life events in your body, and each of these experiences have helped to shape your body – as well as your spirit. Some of the ‘shaping’ is minor; some much more impactful. Try to allow your body to remember all these events.

Pregnancy & Birth: Inter-uterine experiences (you obviously had them, now try to allow your body to remember them) or your birth: was it natural, or in hospital, or even as a Caesarean section? Where there any cord or birth traumas? Was there any post-natal isolation, or time in an incubator? Where you breast-fed or bottle-fed? What was your welcome like (and your position) in the family? What was the emotional atmosphere & feelings in those early days

First Movement Memories: What were your first memories of movement: of being held, rocked, carried, cuddled, bounced; of being in a pram or buggy; of crawling, then walking; of any early journeys; of dancing or playing; or of traumatic movements - like being in a car crash; falling out of bed; or being in a storm at sea; etc.

Environment: What were your first memories of the environment in which you grew up; or later moved to; of being in fields; mountains; woods; by the sea; or in urban; or suburban settings; what climate; of the environment, friendly or hostile; safe or not; your first impressions of your (new) school environment?

Trainings: How did your body react to the various ‘trainings’ you have undergone: i.e. potty training; learning to swim; reading; riding a bike; horse riding; tree climbing; playing a musical instrument; doing dance/ballet; gymnastics and/or athletics; learning how to knit, or juggle; etc.

Body Image: What messages about your body did you get? They might have been: sexist ones: boys “don’t cry”; girls “are pretty”; “you are” ... clumsy, intelligent, etc; “my body is” ... nice/nasty; what messages about posture; safety; self-esteem; shame; race; class; family fears; recurrent dreams or nightmares.

Sexuality: What messages about your sexuality did you get? Especially with respect to: nakedness; physical intimacy; types of touch; etc. What about bathrooms; sensuality; what whispers of incest; what film images were influential? What about your teenage years and images or role models? What about your first sexual (or non-sexual) affair; or differences with different lovers; or different experiences of sex; or issues of impotence or infertility.

Health: What messages did your body receive about general health; about different types of food; about your weight; or strength; or flexibility? About the need for exercise, fresh air, activity? What about any illnesses, injuries, disabilities, eyesight, allergies; that might have affected you? Were there any chronic issues; hospitalizations; operations? And what health messages from the wider family did you get: particularly around deaths.

Traumas & Accidents: Was / were there any family deaths, car accidents, abuse, fractures, hospital operations, natural disasters; near misses; ecstatic experiences; traumatic incidents; falls; etc.

Maturation: What about the growth of – and changes in – your body due to the passing of time; during childhood; the menarche; puberty & adolescence; childbirth; chronic illness; family & sociological predispositions; the menopause; retirement; aging; nearing death; and parts of your body ‘not working’ so well; etc.

What is your Best Body Memory?

What is your Worst Body Memory?

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EVOLUTIONARY MEDITATION

Participants are all lying down in a darkened room. This meditation takes about 20 minutes. Each person tries to experience how their body feels (or moves) with these different various evolutionary stages. There will be a couple of minutes between the different phases, to allow you to experience these as fully as you are able.

To start with, you are a single cell amoeba, in a warm fluid, pulsing, in the dark; (let yourself experience floating, pulsing) – you pulse from your centre; you just expand and contract (*experience this pulsation, all alone*)

Millions of years pass – you have some more cells now, still pulsing, yet evolving into different forms, there is the beginning of an awareness of others; (*experience your pulsation alongside other forms – all pulsing from your centres*)

Millions of years pass – you are now made up of larger forms, more organised, still mostly in the dark, still in water, with some very different aspects or differentiation, but all still pulsing like a jellyfish; your awareness of light, heat, and movement changes; any tendrils or extensions are still organised from your centre (*now explore how the difference between you and others, how you collect sustenance, how you move*)

Millions of years pass – you are now swimming closer to the surface, being affected by light, warmth, occasionally air; you are more organised, more complex, more differentiated; how do you catch food; avoid being caught; you have a more defined inside & outside (surface); what sort of structure & appendages (limbs, tentacles, flippers); what form of reproduction do you use; (*try feeling what sort of evolutionary form you favour*)

Millions of years pass – you now have even greater awareness, you can tell the difference between water & not water, water & land, in or out; explore these different surfaces, boundaries; try moving your body – you now move along a spine, your mouth leads your body; (*try moving from your mouth*)

Millions of years pass – major evolutionary changes are happening; you now move onto the land; how do you cope with dryness, and the temperature changes; you are coping with air (breathing); you are now crawling, coping with surface & gravity; you discover movement using your limbs; what height, weight, do you have; what type of food do you eat; (*explore all this movement, these different sensations, wriggle, crawl*)

Millions of years pass – what environment do you choose: air or land, trees or desert; what are your decisions about how to cope with moving against gravity versus getting food; what do you choose as regards size, height, weight, speed; there are other animals around; do you eat them, fight them, fuck with them; how do you reproduce, attract a mate, look after your young; (*discover this for yourself, move your body to some of these rhythms*)

Millions of years pass – major environmental changes happen: volcanoes erupt; seas rise & fall, there are millennia years of drought and there are several ice ages; how do you cope, how do you change, what different foods, different fur; do you compete or collaborate with others; do you hibernate or go south, do you use holes or caves; do you go back into the water or not; (*discover your reactions to these environmental changes*)

Millions of years pass – serious heat, serious drought, five million years of drought; trees disappear, food disappears; you go to the sea shores; you stay in the warm water; you start to eat different foods (mostly shellfish); your brain increases in size; you lose your body hair, you gain insulation (fat under the skin); you shed excess salt through tears; you begin to develop language; (*see how all these changes feel*)

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One or two millions of years pass – some of your cousins split off and disappear along rivers and across seas; they don't come back; others – bigger and stronger and more intelligent – also leave and you never see them again; you stay in the warm shallow sea, enjoying the gentle changes; others go off and don't return; you are now virtually hairless; on land, you walk more upright; you begin to explore further afield; *(see how all these changes feel)*

Expulsion from Eden: Then, suddenly, the world changes; the earth moves; the sea disappears; there are only a few of your kind left; you cannot stay here. The few of you that remain have all got to leave – you are all traumatised – and you start looking for somewhere else to live. Some of you go this way; some of you go that way. You never see them again. You meet a few of the Others, who had left earlier. They seem to have survived, but they have now found the nice caves to shelter in, and have also found nice hunting grounds. They are stronger and are more intuitive; but you are more intelligent and adaptable than they are. There are many small conflicts: you and yours tend to win: and also you are more desperate. After a while, they all seem to have died out – and you have also learnt how to kill Others in order to survive.

Thousands of years pass – you start to form small social groups; you hunt and gather; you find new caves; you discover the use of different animals, plants, and herbs; you now explore and travel widely; you adapt to different lands, foods, climates; *(see how all this feels)*

Hundreds of years pass – suddenly there are farms, villages, towns, cities; suddenly there are books, lamps, artefacts; suddenly there are crowds, wars, machines, roads, walls, houses, more wars, clocks, artificial light, factories, phones, motor cars, planes, hospitals, radio & TV, mobile phones, computers, jobs, nuclear families ... *(and see what happens to your body now)*

NOW STOP!

Each of these evolutionary stages is still in there your body; still present in your DNA; feel them now; feel them all; they are still there. You have not really left the things behind; you have not lost contact with them; the new patterns have just overlaid the old ones; you are a being of many different layers.

*How are you with all these things present? What changes have happened to you during this meditation?
Are you feeling differently about your body?*

Discuss any of these aspects now with another person, take about 5-10 minutes each. Talk as freely and openly as you can.

Then come back into the bigger group.

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INCREASED BODY AWARENESS

Take more time to experience your body - as you sit; as you move; as you meditate; particularly as you walk, and as you eat. Let all of these actions become a new form of experiential meditation. See how it feels, these can become exquisite. It can open the doorways & channels to a new level of information and awareness coming from your body – all of the time, at every moment.

Allow this increased volume of information about all the different sensations within your body – that is always there – to impact much more on your consciousness. Feel the weight of your body on the seat; the clothes against your skin; how your feet really feel; the little noises, flutters or quiverings from inside your body; the taste in your mouth; the different smells in the room; the distance or closeness of other people; the noises outside the window. All of these are there all of the time. Experience them now.

Become more aware of all the different emotions that you have – not just the basic angry, sad, happy, calm, etc. – but also all the finer levels of feeling, as well; the differing emotions, the small inner conflicts, the variety of emotional perspectives, the ones that are unique to you; the both “this” and “that” not just “either ... or”.

Savour all these feelings: like the complex tastes in your mouth when drinking a good wine or having an excellent meal; or as in an abstract painting with many different shapes and colours; or in an excellent piece of poetry or prose with many levels of meaning; or a piece of classic music for many instruments.

Make all this a very here-and-now experience; here – now – and, in this moment only; and then allow it to change to the next moment, with the different inputs, different sensations, and the passing of time and experience. Don't get fixated on any 'old' scripts or 'ways' of being. These 'old' feelings are often as transitory as clouds, or as the shape of water in a stream.

Begin to experience an opening up of a wonderful, new, enlarged channel of communication from your body to you; a greater flow of information about you; from the whole of your body; from every nerve and muscle, tendon and organ; and the ways in which you experience, feel, respond, and exist in the world.

How you 'are' differently now more of yourself, more in yourself, and how more of you 'is' yourself in the world and the environment around you.

This is the first real stage to acquiring a constant consciousness (continuum of awareness) of your present level of “Being”. Practice this level of awareness at any and every moment possible throughout the next few days – and feeling as much as possible. Become this new level of awareness, live it, experience it, - over the course of this workshop – at least – and then you can decide whether you can, or whether you want to, maintain this increased level of awareness afterwards.

Also allow yourself moments of “time off” - shutting the door to this awareness - so that you can experience the contrast; and so that you don't get flooded. Then open the door again. Savour the different states and levels of awareness.

Guard against becoming too elated or ungrounded. If this happens, get some help to close down some of your energy levels and to ground yourself. Do some hard physical work or exercise. Do simple practical and mundane things.

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BODY SCAN

This is a form of guided meditation to encourage you to get further in contact with all aspects of your body. You need to decide upon the level of awareness that is suitable for you. Try not to judge any part of your body, just be aware of this is how it is – at this moment in time. “That is interesting!”

First: become aware of your breathing. How you are breathing; notice the rise and fall of your chest or belly. Do you breathe in and out through your nose, or your mouth, or does it vary? How deep, or long, you are breathing; what pauses; what sounds do you make? Is there a balance between the in-breath and the out-breath, or not? Just follow your breathing. Observe it. Become more aware of it. Awareness of your breathing is the gateway to your unconscious.

Next, become aware of your heart-beat. You may not actually feel it in your heart; there may be a beat or a pulse somewhere else in your body. There is a rhythm to this beat. It continues throughout the whole of your life. Your life depends on this beat. Feel it in your body. Notice the different rhythms: ... of your breathing and ... of your pulse. These two rhythms carry on throughout your life. Become more aware of them.

Your heart is in the chest area. Your breathing is centred in your torso. There is another pulsation in your body: - that is of your digestive system. There is a flexible tube that runs the length of your body, from your throat to your bottom, and this organ is alive, pulsating rhythmically with its own rhythm, almost all of the time. See if you can sense this rhythm, or pulsation, now. You may become aware of little gurgles, or settlings: visceral movements. You may now feel full, or empty; acidic, or clogged up. Try to include the awareness of your digestive system into your awareness of your whole body as well; along with your breathing rhythm and the rhythm of your heart beat.

Behind and around these three systems, in your torso, there is another set of organs: your liver, kidneys, bladder, adrenals, spleen, and all the various glands, etc. Try to include these other organs into your awareness. They make a functioning whole. They are contained within the whole of your body, from the shoulders and ribcage, to the bowl of the pelvis. They are held together, and separated, by membranes and connective tissue; served by blood vessels, nerves and ducts. It is a wonderful complicated system that goes on working quietly, gently, all the time, automatically, throughout your whole life – below your normal level of awareness. Become aware of this whole interconnected, inter-related system.

Stretching down from the pelvis are your legs and feet. These are primarily muscle and bone, with numerous nerves and blood vessels, as well. Become aware of your legs and feet. How do they feel? There are possibly aches, pains, twitches, tingles, rippling sensations, stretches, etc. in these. You may want to make little movements or wriggles to increase your awareness of these. Allow all the movements and sensations from your legs and feet and add these in to the symphony of your body.

Now, include your arms and hands. Again, become aware of all the sensations that come from these. You may want to make little movements or wriggles to increase your awareness of these. Add your awareness of these into the music, the rhythms of your body. Now, include your neck and your head as well.

This is the whole of your body. This is You. You are ‘this’, and you are also more than just this. But this body is basic, and essential to you: without this body, you cease to exist in this form. How do you like your body? How comfortable are you in it? How well do you treat it? What does it want from you? What does it want you to do? What wisdom has it? Let it speak to you. What can you do with all this awareness?

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INTO THE MOVING BODY

Go inside, as you did before, and get in touch with your breathing. Become aware, as you did before, of all the energy that flows within the body. Imagine that you can see, feel, sense these energy flows. In a moment you are going to move. As you do so, be aware that these systems will move with you.

Be aware that these energetic systems also stretch outside your body: your body has an energy field. You are radiating energy. There is an 'aura' of energy around you. It has various swirls or vortexes that we call 'chakras', these act as a focus, or a vortex, for various types of energy. You take all your energy in and give out specific kinds of energy at these centres, as well as radiating and absorbing energy on a general level. Become aware of the energy, your energy, that shifts and flows around you and surrounds you.

Now, try moving slowly from a sitting-up to a standing position: and then pause when you are standing. Nothing much should change. You still have all these energy flows within you and around you: the pulsations, the breathing, the rhythms and flows. You still have all these energy flows in and around you. Feel them around you, inside of you, whilst you are standing. Continue to breathe. Feel your heart beat. Feel as much as you can of your energy flowing around you.

Now, try taking a step. Feel the changes within you that are involved in taking a step. Feel how your energy changes, whenever you take a step. Take another step. And another. Feel the shifts and the changes in your energetic flows, both inside and out, as you move. Move gently round the room, feeling your energy inside and your energy outside, as you do this. You may want to half open your eyes.

There are possibly other people in the room. They will also have their energy fields, both inside and outside of them. Become aware of their energy fields, and their energetic bodies, as you move gently around the room. Continue to move gently around the room. Stay aware of your breathing. Stay aware of your inner energy; stay aware of your outer energy; stay aware of other people's energy fields.

Come to a halt facing someone. Stay aware of yourself. Become aware of the other person. They have an energy field; they have an internal energy system. Notice what changes within your system, when you become aware of another person. After a few moments, move on. Continue to move gently around the room. Then, come to a halt facing someone else, try to choose someone different each time. Stay aware of yourself and your own energetic systems. Become aware of the other person and their different energy systems. Notice what changes in your energy when you become aware of another person's energy. After a few moments, move on.

Come to a halt in front of a third person. You are going to stay here for a little while longer. Find the right distance for you as you stand in front of this person. Move back a little, move forward a little, until the distance between the two of you is comfortable. It may be comfortable for you and they may want to move a little forward and back until it is comfortable for them. Find a distance that you can both be reasonably happy with.

Become aware of your own energy field. Become aware of theirs. Look at them in their eyes. See what changes to your energy field. Say a simple phrase: "*Hi! My name is ...*", or "*I am*"; "*What's your name?*" See what changes in your energy field. Now, say "*Goodbye,*" and separate. Move on around the room: try to notice what has changed and what hasn't. Stay aware of your energy field.

Now sit down with one or two other people and discuss this exercise, what happened during it and how it was for you.

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THE DANCE OF ENERGY

You can do this exercise standing, sitting or lying down:

Please go inside', as you did previously, and connect your awareness with your breathing. This connection with your breathing is the "Gateway" to your Unconscious. You will be using it a lot. Get used to doing this regularly: either for exercises like this, or for meditation work, or to connect with your emotions and feelings, or to contact any particular part of your body (that might be giving you problems), or for listening to your body, boosting your energy, healing, or for any other intent. This is the easiest way to get in touch with your body.

Connect with your breathing: the waves of your breath: up and down, washing in and out. Become aware of your body, as if you were sitting on a rock, right by the sea on a relatively calm day. There is a gentle swell that moves the water up and down; in and out of all the rock crevices. Let this constant flow of breath, of energy, of life, wash all over you. Become more aware of the moving water, rather than the person on the rock. Rock to and fro a little as you sit there. Gently stand up and become more like a long strand of seaweed, in deeper water, being washed to and fro by the waves passing overhead. Your breathing is washing through you, to & fro, up & down, in & out.

Connect again with the beating of your heart. This is a different rhythm. Your body is being washed to & fro; you are being washed back & forth; **and** there is also a beating and a pulsation running up and down throughout your whole body. There is a pulsation of blood, of pressure, of energy, from each beat of your heart, throughout the whole of your body, even to the surface of your skin. This pulse of energy even extends beyond the surface of your skin - as in an infra-red photo that shows different colours for the temperature of your body; you might see the whole energy field of your body, pulsing with light, radiating and glowing both within your body and extending outside of your body. Your body is glowing, with heat, with energy, with light. Let it glow! Become aware of your radiance, as a pulsing and glowing source.

There are also swirls of different colours and different patterns of energy. You can imagine each of the seven 'chakras' of your body as a vortex, absorbing energy in and giving energy out: these vortexes are at your genitals, belly, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye, and crown of the head. There are also several chakras down your back: the occiput; the back of your neck; between your shoulder blades; in the pit of your back, and at the sacrum. There is also one in each palm of your hand and on each sole of your foot.

You are a complex energetic system and your energy flows, all the time. It moves and shifts; it coalesces and flows; it swirls in and out. Become aware of this moving, flowing, shifting, pulsing, waving energy flow. Become this energy flow. Let the energy move you. Let your energetic Self flow. Move gently around the room, as your energy shifts and flow. You may become aware of other bodies of energy, beings of light, as you move. Move around them; flow around them; you are with them; they are with you. All these energy flows interconnect. You may become aware of other energies; the pulsation up from the ground that supports you and counteracts the pull and flow of gravity; the pulsation from above that is from the sun and moon and stars and that draws you up into the universe; the protective energies of the house; the beauty of trees and plants; the endless flow of water in rivers and streams (some below the surface of the earth, some of them invisible); and the background wash of the sea, in and out, ever changing. There are other energies, sometimes a little less attractive, but powerful for all that: the buzz of electricity in wires and in high voltage cables; the muted roar of traffic; the activity of a town or city. All these energies influence you. All these are currents, flows, forces, that attract and repel, that shift and change us. Be aware of these influences.

Become like a mote of dust, in this sunlight, supported and moved by these difference flows and forces. Let yourself move and dance with these forces, see them as currents or breezes that move you, this tiny speck of pulsing light. Become part of the dance of energy and move in the dance of light, a speck of light in the Great Dance. Explore this with someone else, and then move on.

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WHAT DOES YOUR BODY NEED

Lie down, go inside, as you did before, and get in touch with your breathing. Raise your knees and put the soles of your feet on the ground. As you breathe, allow the neck and head to move slightly, up and down, going up and back with the in-breath, down with the out-breath. What are the feelings? What happens if you allow your lips to move slightly? Allow your mouth and jaw to relax a little. Almost as if your lips are searching for something, perhaps just out of reach: a taste or something. What is that something?

Continue breathing. Allow your chest to expand and rise and fall with your breathing. Perhaps put your hands either side of the sternum on your chest, this can help increase the feeling, the sensation or awareness. Allow your hands to move slightly with the breathing; up and away from the chest as you breathe in; down and against the chest as you breathe out.

What does it feel like inside your chest? Is it throbbing, pulsing, and moving – alive? Is it glowing, radiant and happy? Is it tender and gentle, and at peace? Or is it dark or empty? What are the feelings inside of your chest?

Continue breathing. Now focus your attention on the area of your belly. Allow this to rise and fall with your breathing. How does it feel there? Does it feel comfortable, swollen, empty, dark, heavy, flaccid, trim, or what? What feelings are there in this area? Are there feelings of being centred, or of sickness, insecurity, anxiety, power, or what? What images come to mind? – *Pause* – What might this area of your body need?

Continue breathing. Focus your attention lower – into the area of your pelvis, hips and genital area. Breathe into this area. Imagine the breath energy flowing in and out of this area. As you breathe in, move your knees slightly together. As you breathe out, move your knees slightly apart. Keep this rhythm of movement in time with your breathing. In, together; out, apart: in, together; out, apart. Try to imagine that your knees and legs are like the handles of a bellows; it is they that are causing the breathing, causing all this air to flow in and out.

Your whole body is expanding and contracting with the breathing. What is your body feeling? What images are there? What does your body need?

As you lie there breathing, become aware of any long-felt needs: loneliness, abandonment, emptiness, grief, pain, fear, depression or anxiety. As you lie there breathing, imagine your warm breath beginning to soften and fill these needs. The breathing in and the breathing out can warm and fill your body; can help it come alive and heal. Imagine this happening. What might it feel like to heal this old wound; this old pain? What emotional deficits can be filled this way?

Just let whatever happen, happen. Keep on breathing. There will be some changes, however minor. Just notice these changes. Keep on breathing gently. Keep on noticing the images; the changes.

Pause for a few moments.

When you are ready, rest your legs down on the mat; turn on your side and now take a few moments rest to absorb and assimilate the experience. When you are ready, look around, make contact with a partner or another person and discuss your experience(s) softly for a few moments.

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RE-BUILDING YOUR BOUNDARIES

(Auric Boundary)

This is an excellent meditation for people who have been ill or traumatized. They should try to do this exercise three times within 24 hours. The first time, the only person who should be present is the therapist: the other two times you do it by yourself. You can do all three times by yourself if you wish. Be very careful of your boundaries immediately after you do it. Spend some time getting used to having this 'new' boundary. 'Feel' your way into it, with it, having it around you.

The exercise goes like this:- Imagine that you are going to build a glass dome around yourself at about arms length away from your body; all around; up and over; down to the ground; all around; like a glass dome over Victorian stuffed birds. You are going to do this from the inside the 'dome', using your breath ('prana' energy). You can also put whatever qualities you like into this energy field: colours, healing, peace, safety, sparkly bits, whatever. It is your energy field, protecting you.

Take a deep breath in, expanding your chest area. Scoop the 'prana' energy from your chest as if you are scooping up wet clay. Paint or plaster this energy with your hand on to the inside surface of the 'dome' as you are breathing out. Notice the size and shape of the area that you have just 'painted'. Breathe in again and repeat the motion, covering a slightly different area. Make sure there are no 'gaps'.

Carry on doing this and extending the 'painted' area all the way around; up and over; round the back and down to the ground. It will take at least 20 minutes. Maybe 30 minutes the first time, or if there are a lot of emotions. If there are emotions, feel them, allow them, breathe through them, let them flow and change, and then carry on.

Once you have completed the whole exercise; take some time to notice the difference – if any. Have you just been breathing and waving your arms around; or is there a qualitative difference in how you feel about yourself and the rest of the world? What is this difference? Feel it, don't try to describe it – there are often not good words. It may be beyond language.

Once you have a feeling for this energy field, imagine that you can change it. It is your energy field, so it is under your control. You can make it like carbon 12-point steel so that nothing and no-one can get in. You can make it like a glorious castle, or a sacred temple. It can stop negative 'darts' or 'arrows' coming towards you; or it can act as a filter and only let in the 'good' things that you want – if you wish. You can make it obscure so no-one can see you. Or you can make it dissolve and welcome in a loved one or a child. You can give it qualities like healing, or peace; just by thinking about it. It is your energy, at your control. Just breathe in and it is solid, clear and present there; just breathe out and it expands, softens or dissipates.

For people who have been severely traumatized, shocked, ill or abused, it is likely their 'auric' boundaries are very depleted or have holes in them. This exercise should be repeated regularly for a while as part of their self-healing process. It is difficult to work therapeutically with someone if they have no sense of themselves or if they cannot feel that there is a safe space for themselves. This exercise can provide that. Try it out. It is only an exercise, isn't it?