

GROUNDING

By
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Looking into the eyes of a new-born baby there is a profound sense of the child “not-yet-being-here”, of having not come into the full realization that they are in a place different from where they have come. In the first few weeks of a baby's life there is the feeling that they seem to be still coming in to “land”, that they don't actually see the world in a purely physical way, but see the colors around you. It is as if there is an acclimatization process taking place.

If trauma occurs at an early age before the child can walk, talk, and begin the process of taking care of their own needs, and they have no other way of protecting themselves from the effects of the trauma, the child will make attempts to return to Spirit from whence he came. In so doing the child will lose his grounding in an attempt to leave his body, and return to the place where “this” didn't happen; - to “what was.” In the attempt to return to the past, they are unable to be in the present. By not being in the present they are attempting to avoid the trauma and its full impact.

Leaving the body is the first unconscious attempt to cope. It is numbing, distracting and disorienting. There can even be a sense of ecstasy from being out of the body, similar to the exhilaration experienced from drug and alcohol use. Most addictions are up-dated attempts to leave the body, and the ecstatic state of the “high” is often a mirroring of the childhood attempt to escape through out-of-the-body experience. If this pattern of coping is successful - meaning that it lessens or temporarily dulls the effects of the trauma – it often becomes *the* choice of coping, and will be used and re-used in later years as the first reaction throughout the person's life. It is a reaction, or an automatic choice of coping that works similarly to the sympathetic nervous system response which stimulates a fight/flight response if danger approaches.

So losing grounding is an energetic “let's-get-out-of-here” response which is an automatic behavior, one that we will most likely use in

crisis as people tend to respond in ways that are habitual rather than conscious.

Many wise sages of ancient times have stated in their own vernacular “if you need change do the opposite to what you are doing.” In this case, the opposite to losing your grounding would be to stand your ground. Most often as adults we would cope very well with the same traumas we suffered in childhood. We have more experience, greater self-reliance and other developed resources available to us that children don't have in their early years. If we were to somehow go beyond this first “let's-get-out-of-here” reaction and consciously choose a second response to **stand our ground**, we may, to our surprise, discover we are now bigger and stronger than the trauma.

To be grounded is to have full awareness of all that is occurring in the present. When someone is grounded, it means that they are present to you and to the situation at hand. Having this level of awareness allows relevant choices to be made for the current time and situation. Being grounded and in the moment, can be an experience of ecstasy. A feeling of time standing still. Of being aware of everything there is and being conscious of your connection and relationship to all there is, of emanating from one and the same Source.

To be ungrounded then is being somewhere other than the present. When not present it is difficult to make choices for the current situation.

In reality we all lose our grounding many times every day. There are many situations that occur in our day that can remind us of events that took place in our past without us ever realizing it. The person walking towards you may remind you of someone who scared you when you were a child. Even though he is not that person he may resemble the scary man. He has the same black moustache, he combs his hair in a similar fashion and happens to wear a suit like the person from the past. Thus the extent of the similarities, but enough to cause a temporary internal confusion which stimulates the nervous system for flight, causing an energetic loss of grounding so that you are no longer present.

If we don't become aware of losing our grounding, it will continue occurring for us as the first reaction. Becoming aware of this leads to conscious behavior, which entails conscious

choices to be enacted rather than reactive coping behaviors. The key to this is coming to know yourself. What do you experience when you stand your ground and are grounded? You may feel solid, a tree-like sense of your feet being firmly rooted to the ground, a feeling of connection and balance inside.

It is strongly recommended that you come to intimately know what balance is for you. To know this allows you to be able to identify when you are not in balance. To be ungrounded is to experience being too much in your head, of having mind-chatter, of disorientation, of being to preoccupied with the outside world, of having little body awareness, even of bumping into things.

There are as many examples of ungrounding as there are ungrounded people. As it is important to know our own personal balance, it is equally important to come to recognize what ungroundedness feels like for us. With this comparative knowledge there is the opportunity to address it.

How do we address our ungroundedness? This is very individual. It is important to find ways that work for you personally. Becoming aware of your body in that moment is key. Awareness may be achieved through moving your body; dancing, touching yourself, stamping your feet – any means to remind you of your physicality. You could come into remembrance of your breathing and do breathing exercises. Meditation might work for you.

You could also address the source of the problem and locate the area within you that is traumatized and chooses to escape from the situation. This comes down to helping this part of yourself to feel safe. If you detect unsafety in the stomach, maybe rubbing the stomach can help calm that part of yourself, giving verbal self-assurance, saying to that part, “right now, I’m in charge and all is well, and if we ever need help we can call on all of the resources we know to help you feel safe.” The real question is; if you knew a child who was traumatized how would you help him or her feel safe? Now apply that to yourself, and watch as you begin to re-gain your grounding.

Prevention is worth more than the cure. Becoming intimate with yourself is the key. To know your sense of balance and to consistently check that within yourself gives us less potential

of being triggered and greater possibility of retaining ourselves. In doing so, we become in-tune with ourselves, self-observant and therefore present to our needs and the needs of others. If there are times that you notice yourself “losing it”, so to speak, rather than being present, you can make the necessary choice to do something alternative to the first reaction, and that may be to stand your ground, rather than “choosing” to lose your grounding.

When you learn to be present for yourself in this way you are creating a place of safety, for both yourself and for others too. In so doing you are demonstrating an alternative means of coping. Others will feel the safety of being in your presence. So the grounded person becomes the model for safety, functional ways of coping, and an example for others to emulate
