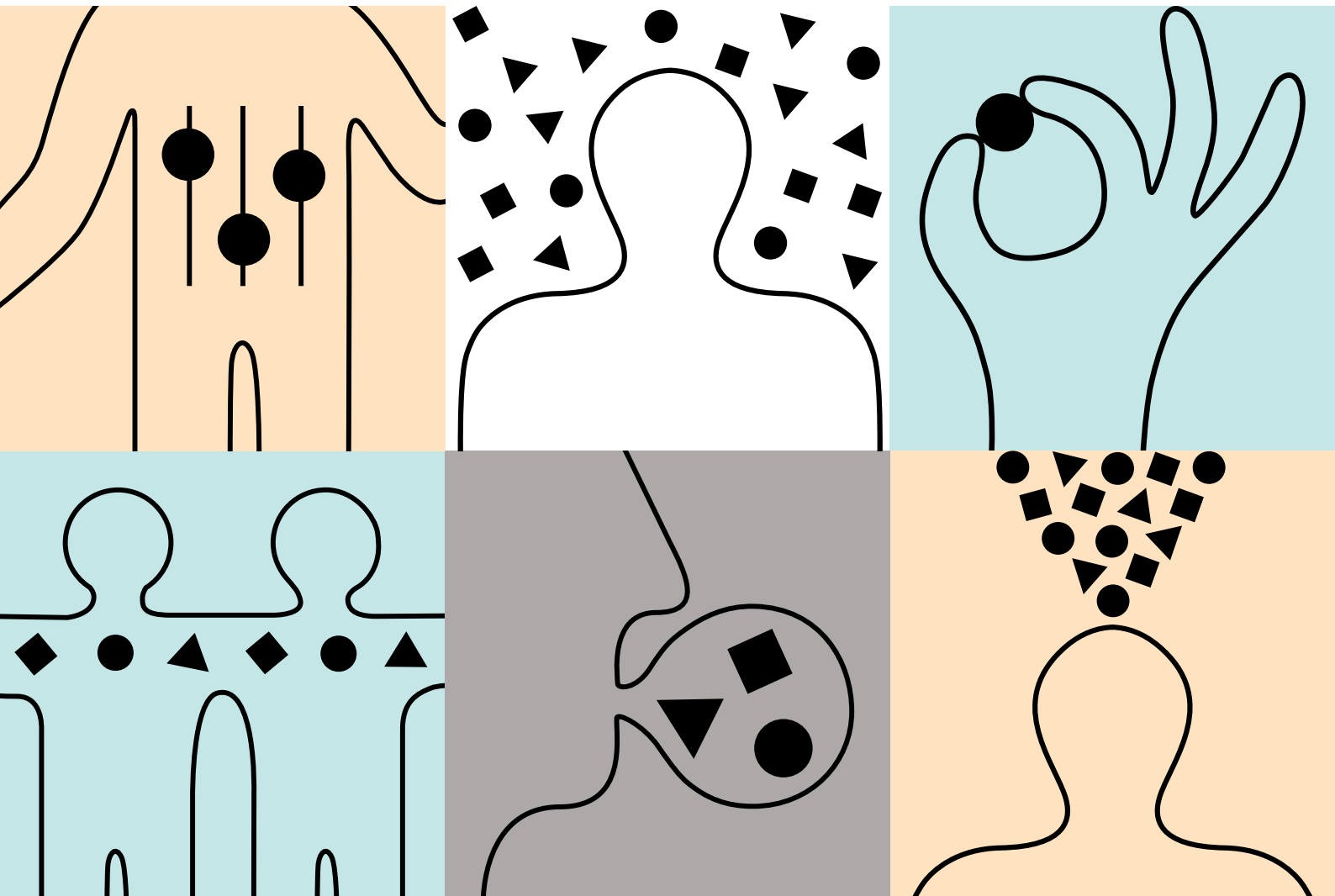


embodied soft skills training

# collection of exercises

extracted on 09-03-2021 from  
[movingintosoftskills.com](http://movingintosoftskills.com)



M—O—S—S

moving into soft skills

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## BIRD GAZING

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Creativity, Adaptability

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** think critically, make decisions, make mistakes, listen, be flexible, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, search for new solutions, slow down, be self aware, release tension, be in balance, be responsible, work with limitations, shape the process, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, freedom, precise, works online, structured, outdoors

### Intro

Focusing the eyes while focusing on other movements.

### Content

- Set yourself in a comfortable position, so that you can stay in it effortlessly.
- Set your gaze to a fixed point not too far, without focusing strongly, a relaxed and neutral fixed gaze.
- While maintaining the gaze and the eyes on the same place, slowly move your head around your eyes, so that the relaxed gaze is still neutral and to the same point.
- Move as fast or as slow as it allows you to maintain the gaze.
- Let your jaw relax and drop while you move.
- Which other movements could you add and still keep the gaze to the point and the jaw relaxed?
- Take the last few seconds to finalize in stillness.

### Supportive questions

- Take it easy and breathe.
- How can it be easier?
- How can it be softer?
- Is it possible to relax your attention?
- Is it possible to forget you are focusing your gaze?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Can be very short or last many minutes and transition into another exercise.

# BREATH YOUR ARMS UP

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, concentrate, observe, manage my energy, slow down, be self aware, release tension, be in balance, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters, structured

## Intro

Arms movement synchronized with the breath to bring awareness to breath and body.

## Content

Sit or stand, feel your feet on the ground. Pay attention to your breath without the need to change anything about it. Start lifting your arms as you breathe in and lower them as you breathe out. Continue for three cycles of breath. Notice your state after.

## Supportive questions

- How was this exercise for you?
- What did you notice about your breath?
- What changed after having paid attention to your breath for three cycles of breath?

## DANCING HANDS

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Attention and focus, Teamwork

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** share, observe, be seen, build trust, release tension, work with limitations, be aware of my body, let go

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, freedom, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

The hands are dancing solo and with the group at the same time.

### Content

Let's sit / stand in the circle. And invite our hands for a little dance! Rest of the body is resting, not blocked, keep it relaxed. And without thinking we dance with our hands. Like we want.

Maybe fast. Maybe slow.

Symmetric / asymmetric.

Big movement / small movement.

As they wish.

While dancing with our hands we can take a look at others. How are their hands dancing? What are they doing?

Slowly find an end. Maybe with some pause? Observe how others are finishing.

### Notes for the facilitator

It works as a starting or closing exercise for a session.



# GROUNDING ON YOUR SITTING BONES

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, slow down, be self aware, release tension, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, works online, calming down, older people, youngsters, outdoors

## Intro

Effortless rolling on the sitting bones.

## Content

Sit on the edge of the chair. Sense your sitting bones. Roll on the sitting bones slightly to front and back. Try out how to do it with minimum effort in the belly, hips, spine, upper body, thighs. Remember to breath freely.

## Notes for the facilitator

Helps to ground and slow down.

## Materials needed

Chair or some sitting surface.

## Author

Derived from the Alexander technique

## LOOKING FOR TEAMWORK IN YOURSELF

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, concentrate, be flexible, tolerate uncertainty, observe, search for new solutions, be aware of my body, learn

**Good for:** beginning of a session

### Intro

Using own body as an inspiration for teamwork.

### Content

Take a minute to find teamwork/ collaboration within yourself. What can you find? We are multicellular organisms!

### Notes for the facilitator

Think biologically here: for example, think about the different systems, like the respiratory system providing the rest of the body with oxygen and getting rid of CO<sub>2</sub>. Or, the circulatory system: blood is a great transporter! What about our digestive system? Without it, we wouldn't get any energy from our food! There are surely other ways of finding teamwork in ourselves as well. Collaboration between eyes or hands, etc.

## MOVEMENT ESPRESSO

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation, Creativity, Learning ability, Leadership

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** inspire and be inspired, concentrate, regulate my emotions, shape the process, let go, learn, release tension, manage my energy, develop better habits, accept differences

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, freedom, works online, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Short free movement energizer.

### Content

Let's take a break! Let's take a movement espresso! Whatever it means to you!

What kind of movement wakes you up? What your body needs to do now to wake up?

What kind of movement appears when you think of coffee?

Maybe you want to jump? Do some shaking? Stretch a bit? Do whatever comes to your body and mind.

### Supportive questions

What kind of movement supports me? How can I support myself through movement?

Can I use this exercise in daily life? Can I take care of my body, taking breaks in my

work? How does taking a break relate to atmosphere? How does taking a break relate to leadership?

## PAPER BALL

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, slow down

**Good for:** short, works online, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Squeezing a paper into a ball to open the senses. Connects sound and movement.

### Content

- Take a piece of paper. Feel the surface with your palm and fingertips. Open up the sense of touch.
- Slowly start to squeeze it in your hand.
- Listen to the sound and to the sensation in your palm.
- Notice how your body reacts to it.
- Notice what your other hand is doing.

### Materials needed

Paper

# PRACTICE OF PRESENCE

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, slow down, be aware of my body, sense the space around me

**Good for:** short, calming down, older people, youngsters, works online

## Intro

Techniques for remaining present, adapted from mindfulness disciplines focused on sounds, breathing and physical sensations.

## Content

Set a timer for one minute. Close your eyes and try to focus on one of the following three things: sounds, breathing, or the sensations in the toes:

- *Sounds:* Scan your environment for sound. Register all the sounds you hear - within your own body, in your immediate surroundings and from somewhere far away.
- *Your breath:* Focus on your breath and the sensations it creates in your nostrils or stomach as it goes in and out. Pay attention to one breath at a time, but try to notice everything about this breath - give your full attention to it, as you could give a full attention to a person.
- *Your toes:* Focus your attention on the sensations in your toes. This forces your mind to sweep through your body, helping you to get into the physical sensations of the moment.

## Materials needed

Timer.

## PULSE OF LIFE

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, be in balance, slow down, let go, be aware of my body

**Good for:** works online, older people, short, structured, outdoors, calming down, youngsters

### Intro

Contracting and releasing muscles synchronized with sound and breathing. Opening and closing.

### Content

- Continue breathing. With the next exhale make a “shshshs” sound, inhale through your nose.
- Make “shshsh” with your lips for kissing. With inhale release the lips.
- Continue this pattern all the way until the end of the exercise.
- With the next inhale squeeze your palms of your hands and feet. With exhale release.
- Repeat: inhale through nose and squeeze extremities, exhale “shshshsh” with kissing lips and releasing the extremities.

### Notes for the facilitator

The same can be done with eyes (really great for all the computer work).

### Author

It's an exercise from Paula method: <http://paula.org.il/en/about-the-method/the-principles/>

## RELAX YOUR EYES

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Adaptability, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** manage my energy, let go, observe, slow down, be self aware, release tension

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, precise, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Covering the eyes with the palms to relax them in the dark.

### Content

Relax your hands by shaking them. Warm them up a bit. Cover your eyes with the palms of your hands without compressing your eyes. The idea is to let your eyes rest in the darkness for a bit. Your fingers will rest on your forehead, probably slightly crossed. Avoid excessive tension in your hands and arms as well.

Loosen up all muscles in your eyes, let all tension go. Do not close or tighten your eyes. Just let them rest in the darkness. Keep on breathing.

It's possible that in the beginning, you will see all kinds of shapes and colours in front of your eyes. This is your optic nerve still firing! Give yourself some time for the visuals to quiet down.

Slowly take your hands out. And slowly open your eyes. Let the light enter your eyes, instead of you trying to see the world. Take your time.

### Supportive questions

- What happens to your perception and your interpretation of the surroundings when you relax your eyes?

### Notes for the facilitator

It's priceless for long days in front of computer or / and online lessons. If you are interested finding out more about the role of the eyes in self-regulation, search for

“palming the eyes”. It was introduced to the West by the Bates Method. At least the Feldenkrais Method and Alexander Technique address the importance of the eyes as well.



## RESPONDING TO SYNONYMS OF TEAMWORK

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, listen

**Good for:** outdoors, works online, beginning of a session, youngsters, older people

### Intro

Paying attention to one's own (and why not the other's) response to synonyms of "teamwork".

### Content

Gather synonyms of 'teamwork', such as 'alliance', 'cooperation', 'coalition', 'collaboration', 'pulling together', 'joint effort' and 'team play'. Say them aloud one after the other and ask the participants to pay attention to their own responses to these words. Have a short sharing afterwards.

### Supportive questions

- What kind of difference do the different words make?
- What's my response to teamwork compared to team play, for example?
- What does teamwork mean to me?

## TIGHT ASS?

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** be flexible, manage my energy, concentrate, be self aware, release tension, develop better habits, be in balance, let go, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, precise, works online, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Have a minute break from cognitive work, feel, move and release the pelvis area with 1 min releasing exercise.

### Content

- Feel your sitting bones against the chair.
- Choose one sitting bone to “stand” and place the other to a new location on the chair.
- Do this repeatedly in a way that one sitting bone is constantly changing place while the other is still.
- Notice how this relaxes and gives physical exercise to the pelvis area and refreshes the sitting posture.
- Repeat to the other side.

### Supportive questions

- Are you stiff?
- Would you like to stand up and get some more movement?
- Do you notice how you get “out of your head”?
- How does it help you to move on with your task and stay healthy at work?

## UP AND DOWN

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Learning ability, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** be flexible, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, search for new solutions, slow down, release tension, develop better habits, be in balance, be aware of my body, let go, work with limitations, sense the space around me, learn, be self aware

**Good for:** short, beginning of a session, end of a session, youngsters, calming down, structured, works online

### Intro

Changing the level from standing to laying down a few times.

### Content

Start from standing. Go down to the floor all the way on laying on your back, and then back to standing. Repeat a couple of times. Move slowly. Find the easiest possible pathway. Remember to feel and not to skip any body part. It may feel difficult to 'pass' some part of the movement. Paying attention to all details helps you to be aware of each part of your body. This refreshes you e.g. after sitting a long time. Remember to use three dimensional pathways.

### Supportive questions

- Do you remember that you can twist your body?
- How can your arms support and slow down the process?
- How can you make landing easier without touching the floor?

### Notes for the facilitator

Possible as a 5-minute exercise. A quick refreshment.

### Materials needed

Clean enough floor or ground.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED NOW?

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation, Creativity, Learning ability

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, make decisions, manage my energy, be flexible, set goals, be self aware, search for new solutions, release tension, be responsible, be in balance, let go, shape the process

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, freedom, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters

### Intro

This exercise is a short checkup of current needs.

### Content

What do you need now, in this very moment? What does your body need? Probably some of your needs are not possible to fulfil at this very moment nor in the near future. But maybe there is something you can do? Or you can find a new way to fulfil this need? Yes? So, let's do it! We have 1-5 minutes for this!

# 1-MINUTE COMPLAINING

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, manage my time, observe, manage my energy, be empathic, regulate my emotions

**Good for:** short, works online, outdoors, structured, precise

## Intro

A quick round of 1min+1min presentations in front of the group.

## Content

In the beginning you can say a few words about the structure of the exercise. Give guidelines for the person listening and encourage to have a non-judgemental attitude. Structure: - Start timer for 1 min. - One person is coming up in front of the group and is “complaining” about specific work situation or work in general. - When bell rings, the tone needs to change to positive for 1 min. It is possible to stay silent too, it is “your time, you can use it in silence or speak, move or not move at the same time”. - Next person comes up and repeats the exercise. - In the end you can offer participants to write down their experience and then share it in the group.

## Supportive questions

Questions for writing and for sharing circle: - How does the transition between complaining and positive mode changed your perspective? - How do you recognize it? - Do you feel any change on the physical level?

## Notes for the facilitator

It works well after the movement/voice warm up. You can use “Talking while moving” exercise for it.

Time of 1 min keeps it on safe level.

## 3 MINUTES RESET

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** manage my energy, regulate my emotions, release tension, let go

**Good for:** short, works online, outdoors, exciting, youngsters, homework

### Intro

It can take only 3 minutes to change how you feel! This exercise serves bringing the energy up. It comes from the legendary Contact Improvisation teacher Nancy Stark Smith.

### Content

First explain the exercise, then do it. It doesn't work if you talk it through during the activity. Find a place in a space and stretch your arms to check you have enough room around you. The whole exercise consists of 3 actions. Each action is done for the duration of 1 minute. Set your timer for one minute (3 x 1 min if possible). Go! - Move very fast with your whole body - jump high, run on the spot, skip, squat, do push-ups, etc. (1 min) - Stay completely still, no movement allowed (except for the eyeballs). - Make a sound using your voice: hold one tune, change volume, change tunes, sing a melody, gentle shout, do not stop making sound.

### Notes for the facilitator

Should be in the middle of a movement class or then it needs a warning that one should take care of oneself to not get hurt if not warmed up yet.

### Materials needed

Timer, stop-watch or alarm clock

### Author

Nancy Stark Smith

## A SHORT STORY: “WE ARE SOCIAL TO THE BONE”

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Communication

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, inspire and be inspired

**Good for:** beginning of a session, works online, youngsters, older people, short, homework, outdoors

### Intro

This is not an exercise, but a short story of how it can be read from our skeleton that we humans are social beings. The story works well as a warm-up.

### Content

The story goes along these lines: imagine being a paleontologist studying fossils. Just by looking at bones you can tell a lot about the creature they belonged to: for example, by looking at the teeth and claws you can tell apart a carnivore from an herbivore, or by looking at their extremities you can tell how they probably moved. Now, imagine looking at a human skeleton as if you had never seen one before. You might find it curious, that the species walks on two feet exposing its vulnerable belly side to the world. You could tell that using hands is very important for this creature. Using hands, manipulating objects, requires quite a lot of brainpower, so this species must be quite intelligent. It's mouth and throat enable talking, which seems to fit well together with collaborating with others. Also, the whole stature doesn't seem to be that strong, which point to the direction that this species is not a solitary one, but lives in groups and is a social one.

It's physically in our bones that we are social beings.

### Notes for the facilitator

This is not really an exercise, but the story might influence the way we perceive ourselves. You can decide yourself, whether to reflect on the story explicitly, or to let it resonate in the participants without finding words to it. The recommended anatomy source “Albinus on anatomy” is preferred because it has an artistic touch to it, instead of being a medical text book.

## **Materials needed**

Optional: human skeleton (if you have one) Recommended: Good quality pictures of the human skeleton, eg. Albinus on anatomy



## ADAPTED JUMPING JACK

**Soft Skills:** Learning ability, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, be self aware, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, exciting, youngsters, older people

### Intro

Coordination exercise jumping on the spot

### Content

The principle of the exercise is to mix two basic movement patterns. Start with the basic jumping jack (arms stretched move up on the side at the same time as legs jump open to the sides. Then reverse: arms down and legs together), but leave the arms out. Move on to crossing the feet every time they come together, every other time the left, every other time the right. When jumping is clear, add the arms: keep them in front of you and imagine you'd be milking a huge cow (move your arms up and down opposite to each other).

### Notes for the facilitator

Make sure jumping is ok for the participants! This exercise usually works as an ice-breaker.

## AIRPLANES

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Adaptability, Attention and focus, Creativity

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, make mistakes, be flexible, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, inspire and be inspired, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be empathic, search for new solutions, build trust, solve problems, be responsible, work with limitations, sense the space around me, take risks

**Good for:** short, structured, exciting, youngsters

### Intro

Walk around the space playing with the distance and space available.

### Content

- Start by walking around the space - hopefully, there isn't too much free space. If there is, you may need to reduce the available space
- Keep walking but with the arms open - there should be some challenge
- Add a restriction, such as don't bend sideways or you can't change the position of the arms
- Add a challenge, such as move faster, still taking care of each other
- Not yet, but soon it'll end, keep going
- When it ends, keep walking - good for noticing the change in atmosphere and inner state
- At some point, tell the participants to just walk

### Supportive questions

- Where are you now in the space?
- Are you still breathing?
- What possibilities do you have now?
- How could you challenge yourself more?
- How could you challenge the others more?

### Notes for the facilitator

Guide the attention to the space, for changing directions, being more playful or not, etc.

## BASIC BODY SCAN

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, regulate my emotions, be self aware, be aware of my body, slow down

**Good for:** calming down, beginning of a session, end of a session, freedom

### Intro

Checking in with the body to settle the mind and notice what sensations and emotions are present.

### Content

Settle into a comfortable position. Take several long, deep breaths. Begin to shift your attention from outside to the inside yourself. Closing your eyes might help you to tune in to your body sensations. If you prefer to leave your eyes open, let your gaze rest. Notice that breath creates sensations in your body. Perhaps you feel the breath moving inside the nostrils, perhaps you can feel the breath in your chest or your belly. It is not important, if you can name these sensations or not. Allow yourself to feel the sensations as they happen. Let your focus rest on any sensations you notice. Start at the top of your head. Slowly travel down to your forehead. Continue towards your jaw, your chin, your neck, and your shoulders. Pause on each part, to notice what is there. Bring your awareness to your upper arms, and down to your fingertips. Track back up your arms and to your shoulders. Notice sensations in your throat, and then your heart.

Continue to your chest, your abdomen, your stomach and your hips. Notice each part of your legs, all the way down to your ankles, your heels, and your toes. Connect with the sensation of your body touching a surface. Return awareness to your breath. Be aware of your whole body at once, noticing if there are any particular places that call out for attention. Places where sensations feel most vibrant or dynamic. And places that feel different. Let your breath deepen a bit more, and when you are ready, open your eyes slowly.

## Supportive questions

- As you did your body scan, what bits of activation, tension or calm did you notice?
- What other information do you receive when checking in with your body?
- How often do you pay attention to your physiological sensations and emotions?

## Notes for the facilitator

A short body scan can be completed anytime in less than five minutes. It can be done standing, sitting, laying down or while moving.

## CHECKING YOUR PERSONAL SPACE

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, sense the space around me

**Good for:** short, beginning of a session, outdoors, youngsters, older people

### Intro

Noticing the personal space and how it's affected by objects, people, etc.

### Content

Sit or stand as you feel comfortable and take a moment to pay attention to your personal space around you, sometimes referred to as “your bubble”.

Now, describe how you perceive your personal space: what shape it is, what size it is, does it extend in every direction, how permeable it is, does it have a colour, and so on. You don't have to change anything about it, just notice how it is.

Next, take a walk and keep paying attention to your personal space. Does something happen to it? Do other people and objects that you encounter, have an influence on your personal space? If yes, which aspects of it (e.g. size, permeability)?

Find a stop and share your experience.

### Notes for the facilitator

This exercise is rather a warm-up, or a check-up every now and then. This exercise can also be given as homework: checking one's space can be done basically in every situation.

On a technical note, we all have our kinesphere. According to this source <https://thespaceintherelationship.wordpress.com/kinesphere/>:

“The notion of kinesphere was created by Rudolf Laban to define: “the sphere around the body whose periphery can be reached by easily extended limbs without stepping away from that place which is the point of support when standing on one foot” (1966, p.10).

The “personal space” meant here is not the same as kinesphere. However, it can serve a useful reference: in relation to my kinesphere, does my personal space feel smaller/larger/the same?

## COORDINATION ON ALL FOURS (BEAR FUN)

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Learning ability, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, concentrate

**Good for:** short, structured, youngsters, older people

### Intro

This is a coordination exercise on all fours. There are two basic patterns, to which the element of crossing the midline is being added to create some fun.

### Content

The basic position is on hand and feet (not knees!). Knees can be bent as much as necessary. Some space to the side is needed, since the idea is to take steps sideways. There are two basic patterns for this exercise to start from: a) One side moving simultaneously (homo-lateral): the hand and foot on the same side take the step to the side, the other side follows. Continue for several steps in the same direction and then reverse back to where you started. b) Diagonal hand and foot moving simultaneously: start with hands together and feet apart. Take a sideways step with one leg and the opposite arm (like a chameleon but sideways). Continue for several steps in the same direction to where you started.

When the basic pattern is clear, add crossing the midline when taking the step.

### Supportive questions

- In the case of (a) there are four variations - can you find them all?
- In the case of (b) the fun is that only the hands or the feet are crossed in a given moment.
- Pay attention to your preferred side of crossing: do you tend to cross front or back?

## COORDINATION: MIX OPENING AND CLOSING

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Learning ability, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, concentrate, be aware of my body, work with limitations

**Good for:** short, structured, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Coordination exercise alternating opening/closing the legs and arms.

### Content

The principle of the exercise is to mix two basic movement patterns: opening and closing. The legs and arms will do the opposite thing.

Opening the legs = feet and knees point outward + Closing the arms = elbows point outward, palms are towards the belly

Closing the legs = feet and knees point inward + Opening the arms = elbows show to the trunk, fingers point outward

Change the opening and closing of the legs with a jump. Easier: on the jump out, keep either your heel or ball of the foot as a fixed point for the feet.

### Notes for the facilitator

This exercise usually works as an ice-breaker. If jumping is not possible, or there is a need to simplify, you can do the exercise in sitting.



## FLYING GAZE

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** slow down, make mistakes, observe, be aware of my body, be self aware

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, precise, structured, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

Putting the mind's attention to different body parts and actions, so grounding the mind and embodying the thinking.

### Content

Pay attention to the breathing and remind (to the group) about it time after time. Start with the 1st point to do and add each next step when you feel you're ready: - Let your eyes wander around the space with no effort. - Mouth - opens/shuts meanwhile. - Feet - open/close when inhale/exhale.

### Notes for the facilitator

Can be used as a warm up or transition from one exercise to another.

### Author

Derived from Alexander technique and the Grinberg method.

## FOLLOW TWO ARMS OF TWO PEOPLE

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Creativity

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, listen, observe, concentrate, inspire and be inspired, be aware of my body, let go, take risks

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, works online, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

A movement mirroring exercise in trios

### Content

Ask people to form trios. Two of the people will stand tightly side to side and the third one a couple of meters away facing them. The pair will start moving their outside arms slowly and the task of the third person is to mirror these movements with her arms. After a while, change the roles so that each person gets to mirror the movement.

### Supportive questions

For reflection afterwards: - How was it to be the person mirroring the movements? - How was it to be the person moving one arm? What influenced your choice of movement?

### Notes for the facilitator

This exercise can be adapted to an online environment, if everyone has a camera at their use. It can be conducted exactly the same if it is possible to organize the same video view for everyone, or at least have the pair's videos next to each other in order to create an illusion of one person. If this is not possible, one has to agree on a different way of knowing which two arms to follow, which will be fun, too.

If the group is small, instead of working in trios you can have one pair doing the movement and several mirroring simultaneously.

## Author

Originator unknown, learned in a Feldenkrais training

## JUST DANCE

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Learning ability, Teamwork

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** let go, build trust, release tension, be seen, be inclusive, make mistakes, inspire and be inspired, tolerate uncertainty, accept differences, listen, be flexible

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, freedom, works online, exciting, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

This is an exercise where you can turn off your thinking and turn on your expression, pleasure, flow, following the music and body. Choose a song and dance as you like, in a way you like. It serves as a short way to increase the energy in the class or slow down overthinking and analyzing.

### Content

Choose a dynamic song. A song you love to dance to, which makes you forget about “how” and “why”. If you love it, it will influence the group. A song to let go!

Invite participants to just dance. To do it in a way they feel right now. Not to judge themselves or others. To not even look at each other. To let yourselves go and just flow with the music.

Have fun!

This exercise is a great sum up or start of the lesson, or even both: to start and end lesson with it.

### Notes for the facilitator

Options if people don't know each other or/and don't feel safe yet: - Dance in one spot with their eyes closed - During the song name particular body parts they can release and dance with - Start with a less dynamic song

Different versions: - Calming song, to slow down, relax, sum up the lesson in the body -  
Add a topic to dance with. For example, soft skill you will work with during this lesson,  
topic important to this group etc.

## PRACTISING LEADERSHIP

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Teamwork, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Communication

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, give and receive feedback, observe, collaborate, listen, build trust, set goals, accept differences, manage conflicts, sense the space around me

**Good for:** short, freedom, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters, exciting, homework

### Intro

Practice your communication skills in everyday life, apart from work context. This task is designed as an individual task on free time.

### Content

Practice giving instructions or asking for something in your everyday life, apart from the work context. Take one minute on a daily basis to practice this. This task is designed as an individual task on free time. It can be tried out in a safe group, too. Feel free to creatively adapt it for a group task in a studio session. • For example, go shopping, ask service politely, be clear and convincing. Let's say you want a pair of shoes that are "functional, keep your feet dry and are colourful". Say this to the shopkeeper. Then try on whatever she/he suggests to you. Do this even when you do not like the suggestion. Then say clearly a clarification of why they are/are not what you are looking for. • Notice which words allow for successful communication. Next day, go to another place and test your speaking style with another person. • Reflect on your behaviour. Do not judge yourself or the other, but observe and practice. Notice if you are getting emotional or have an attitude: "I hate fancy cafeterias", "nothing fits me anyway", "I have no time for this, who do they employ?" • Keep practicing in different environments, 5 minutes at a time. Vary the style, language, also non-verbal communication. Evaluate the results. Integrate the functional approach to your leadership style.

## Supportive questions

How practicing being clear in describing what you want, can support your leadership?  
How practicing can support you to trust other people professionally and to delegate tasks? Are there situations/tasks that you avoid, because of not liking the concept, the style of communication or maybe because you think you'll do it better by yourself?

## Notes for the facilitator

This exercise is designed as an individual task. Feel free to creatively adapt it for a group tasks in a studio session. You can in example try out as role-play or if the group is safe enough, then also with self-made work-related topics. We recommend not to practice with real work interaction related conflicts in this context. This is supporting practice for working life communication and while practising it is good to keep on topics which are relatively light and meaningless. Emotional training can follow later, this is verbal and listening practice.

## RELEASING SHOULDERS WITH CIRCLES

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** release tension, let go, observe, be aware of my body, concentrate, be self aware, manage my energy, develop better habits

**Good for:** short, beginning of a session, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

Relaxing and moving shoulders in unusual position can be surprisingly functional. Breaking the habitual movement patterns by changing the habitual mental pattern can release chronic muscle tension effectively.

### Content

Tight shoulders?

Stand and make circles with your shoulders. I bet you stand straight and symmetrical. Right? And why? Change your position to asymmetrical one, then make circles with your shoulders.

Change your position again, keep it asymmetrical, maybe twist your spine or tilt your head or pelvis. Make circles with your shoulders. Keep the tonus light.

Continue all the time changing position. Breathe and keep balance. Notice how this affects your nervous system.

### Notes for the facilitator

When we do something uncommon, our nervous system might not be able to hold on to habitual patterns of tightening muscles. Release can happen, when new, “a bit off” info takes your attention.



# RUNNING IN LINE HOLDING HANDS

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** work with limitations, collaborate, solve problems

**Good for:** beginning of a session, exciting, youngsters, older people, short

## Intro

Start at one wall, run across the room, turn around and come back.

## Content

The task is to start at one wall, run across the room, turn around and come back. In the first round, everyone does this alone. In the second round it's done in pairs. In the third round it's done with four people (two pairs come together). In the last round everyone is together.

The limitation is that when turning around the participants are not allowed to let go of the hands! Moving across the room can be something else than running, but one needs to be able to hold hands.

## Notes for the facilitator

This exercise is usually fun. A simple warm-up exercise for teamwork.

## SHAKE!

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** search for new solutions, sense the space around me, work with limitations, let go, release tension, be aware of my body, be in balance, be self aware, be seen

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, long, works online, outdoors, youngsters

### Intro

Shaking different body parts and whole body. Without and with music.

### Content

- Walk in the space.
- Find a comfortable place to stand up.
- Start by bringing your heels up in the air and letting them fall back on the floor. Receive this shake through all your bone structure and listen to the echo in your spine. Continue to lift heels up and down until you will find a rhythm. See if its slow or fast. Make changes, so you can experience all the range - from slow to fast. Feel the vibration in your muscles and fascia. How your skin is containing it.
- Continue to shake with your heels. Add pelvis, shake your tail. Then chest, arms, wrists, ribcage, sternum. Let your head join the party. \*

FOR FACILITATOR: If you have music prepared you can turn it on and let participants enjoy the free shaking. You can open it up and suggest them to continue however they want.

- For the final resolution, you can offer to slow down until finding stillness and listen to the life inside the body. People can stand up or lay down depending on if facilitator prefers to lead the group towards relaxation or active exercise.
- Give 30 seconds to write down the highlights of the experience. FOR FACILITATOR: you can say a few words about making short notes in 30 seconds - which is a skill you can practice. Link to more information is in Materials.

\*FOR FACILITATOR: If you want you can make this exercise longer, which is also recommended. You can continue without music, asking participants to explore 3 different qualities of the shaking: 1. earthquake - shaking that is directed inside the body. Less movement on the outside. Bringing attention to shaking inner organs and massaging them. 2. bone rocking - shaking of the bone structure. 3. space vibration - shaking the space around you.

## Notes for the facilitator

- For some people it can feel uncomfortable to shake in front of others. You can offer to close eyes. You can also address this issue and say few words about our expectations of being beautiful and serious in adult life and ask how we can see ourselves and others with soft eyes, without judging. It's a good place to SMILE! And let go of our bias!
- Works well after a somatic-based exercise which gives time to arrive to the body-mind.

## Materials needed

It is helpful to have a set of music with a bit for this exercise. I suggest to start without music and to add it only later, towards the second part of it.

You can read more about making notes in 30 seconds here:

<https://lifehacker.com/take-30-seconds-to-write-down-key-points-after-lectures-1526861114>

## SOFT AND GENTLE IS NOT WEAK

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Creativity, Communication, Adaptability

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, regulate my emotions, slow down, be self aware, sense the space around me, let go, be inclusive, be aware of my body, work with limitations, be in balance, accept differences, be empathic, be flexible

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, freedom, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people

### Intro

Experience of softness and gentleness. Solo work. Requires a few words of introduction on the topic by the facilitator. Can change the atmosphere, bring a different attitude to the class.

### Content

- Look around, find and grab a soft piece of fabric, a blanket, a pillow, scarf, a sweater.
- Close your eyes and let them rest in the eye sockets.
- Listen to your breathing.
- Touch the material. You can touch with it your face, your chest, other body parts. Let your senses absorb the quality it brings.
- Stay with the feeling that comes.
- For 2 minutes move in response to the feeling that arises.
- Find an ending. Write down how this quality resonates in you?
- You can have a sharing in pairs or whole group if needed.

If there are no soft objects around you can use the palm of your hand and find softness in it, and touch your chest with an open palm.

### Supportive questions

- What are your first associations with words “softness” and “gentleness”?
- How this quality can be helpful in your everyday life?
- What are the challenges to bring softness to work?

## Notes for the facilitator

“The living are soft and yielding; the dead are rigid and stiff. Living plants are flexible and tender; the dead are brittle and dry. Those who are stiff and rigid are the disciple of death. Those who are soft and yielding are the disciples of life. The rigid and stiff will be broken. The soft and yielding will overcome.” - Tao Te Ching, Chapter 76, Translated by [John H. McDonald](#), 1996,

## THREE FEET, TWO ARMS

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Creativity

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** work with limitations, be flexible, collaborate

**Good for:** beginning of a session, precise, exciting, youngsters

### Intro

Fulfilling a movement task in small groups with restricted possibilities

### Content

Depending on the size of the group, form trios or quartets. The task itself is simple: move from point A to point B, e.g. from one wall to the other. The limitation is the amount of allowed hands and feet (or other body parts) on the floor. E.g. the quartet is allowed to use only three feet and two hands. Additionally, the group members need to touch each other while they move across the space.

### Supportive questions

To reflect: How did the group find their solutions?

### Notes for the facilitator

This is a warm-up exercise, which requires people to come quite close to each other playfully. It requires a fair amount of movement coordination as well.

## TO STOP TOGETHER

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Attention and focus, Communication, Adaptability

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** sense the space around me, build trust, be inclusive, observe, tolerate uncertainty, be aware of my body, concentrate, collaborate, be seen, accept differences, let go, work with limitations, make mistakes, slow down, listen

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, precise, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

This is a “trust the group” exercise. The only (but not easy!) task here is to find a pause, a stop in slow walking, but together, as a group, without any leader or giving signs to each other, etc. The exercise is strongly connected to teamwork, trust in a group, to observing and listening to each other. It increases the sense of being part of the group. The exercise also has the potential to reveal some problems and conflicts in an already existing group or team, which makes it possible to work on them.

### Content

Take a walk. Use the whole space. Take different directions. Open your eyes. See the space around. See the people in the group. Start to walk in a way that you will see most of the group. You can see each other in the corner of your eye by using your peripheral vision. Try to feel people who are behind you. You don't have to see into each other's eyes. Just see the group/ Try to be aware of where people are. Keep on walking. Slow down a bit. And keep on walking.

In a few moments we will start to look for a pause. The task is that all of us will stop in *one moment*. But, what's the most important here, that we will make this decision *together*. There will be no leader. Ready? Let's try. Slow down a bit more. And...feel people around...and without any more communication...try to find a stop, together.

(Give time to the group and let them figure out how to maintain the task by themselves. Do not lead, do not stop first.)

(After group has found the stop):

Good! Let's try again! Go for a walk in different directions, see the whole group etc.

*Repeat at least 5 times until you see and feel that there was really no leader. That people start to feel and sense each other and that they pause, really and truly, together.*

*If you see someone stopping the group by taking the role of a leader - name it. Simply comment "let's try one more, without a leader".*

*Make them believe that they can do it. It is possible! And it feels great!*

## **Notes for the facilitator**

If the class is connected to teamwork and/or focus, it's nice to do this exercise at the beginning and at the end of the class. Or in one of the first meeting and in the last one. It's like litmus paper for the trust and openness of a group. I do not recommend doing this exercise in a freshly made group where people are not feeling safe yet or with people / group with high level of anxiety. As a facilitator, choose to what extent your participation in the group is needed. For example, in the beginning your participation can support the group and then you can gradually retreat to take a more observer role.



# TO WALK OR NOT TO WALK

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Teamwork

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, concentrate, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, sense the space around me

**Good for:** short, beginning of a session, precise, older people, youngsters

## Intro

Collaboration exercises while walking for practicing attention and focus.

## Content

- Tell the participants to walk around the room in silence.
- While walking, explain further instructions. Tell them the total number of participants in the group - this exercise will work well with maximum 20 persons. Explain that you are going to call out any number between 1 and total number of participants, for example, 6.
- Without speaking, directing each other or developing some strategy in advance, 6 people must stop walking, while others continue moving. The group cannot move on while exactly 6 people are still.
- Once the goal is achieved, tell the group to resume walking. Everyone should start walking again until you call out a new number.
- If the task is difficult to the group, pause the exercise and ask group members to share ideas what could help to increase their focus and awareness of what is going on in different corners of the room.
- You might conclude the exercise with asking participants if they are noticing some links between their performance during the exercise and what's happening at their workplace. Extract weaknesses of them as a team and ideas improving their cooperation.

## TURNING AROUND YOUR AXIS

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** manage my energy, be self aware, be aware of my body, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, older people, youngsters, works online, outdoors, homework

### Intro

Turning around your axis in standing position. A very basic exercise in the martial arts.

### Content

Stand comfortably, feet somewhat more apart than habitually. Get a sense of your vertical middle axis (imagine it, feel it, and if you have no idea where it is, don't worry - it's there anyway.) Turn yourself to left and right in a pleasant rhythm. Leave your arms swinging as you do the movement and let your whole self respond to the movement.

### Supportive questions

Notice: - What you are doing? - Can you breathe? - Do you allow your knees to bend? - Does your opposite heel lift or not? - Do your elbows bend? - Are you smiling?

### Notes for the facilitator

I always just thought of this as a warm-up movement, nothing more specific.

## UPSIDE DOWN

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Creativity, Learning ability

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** search for new solutions, slow down, observe, be self aware, manage my energy, release tension, be in balance, take risks, work with limitations, sense the space around me

**Good for:** short, freedom, works online, calming down, exciting, youngsters, beginning of a session, end of a session, homework

### Intro

Releasing weight and tension while hanging upside down. Practicing changing the muscle tone, release eyes.

### Content

- Find a place where at least half of your body can be upside down. For example, your upper body can hang towards the floor from the seat of a sofa.
- Stay there for a little while. Notice if it is comfortable or not. Let the floor carry part of your weight. Do not collapse but be softly active where it is needed. Notice which body parts are active. If you are not comfortable, make a change in your position. Continue this until you will find a relatively easy position. Then let all of your weight pour down to the floor.
- Start again from the top of the sofa. Repeat, only this time find a different way to hang. Travel progressively down to the floor. If you find this difficult recall how children do this. Use the image to make it easier. Look around - fixed eyes can make it more difficult. Each round release more and have fun.
- Stand up. Notice how you feel in the body and how the room looks like in a standing position.

### Supportive questions

How could it be easier? How do you feel? What did you see being upside down? How do you feel in the standing position, after the exercise?

## **Materials needed**

Sofa or other relatively steady piece of furniture.

## WHO IS THE LEADER?

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Communication, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, slow down, communicate clearly, sense the space around me

**Good for:** short, outdoors, calming down, end of a session

### Intro

Work in pairs touching each other's index fingers while both have the eyes closed.

### Content

Everyone finds a partner and the facilitator asks the pair to put their index fingers of one hand together that they gently touch. Then everyone is asked to close their eyes.

The facilitator says that they will go around the room and touch one person from each pair and that person is the leader. The facilitator goes around the room, but doesn't touch anyone. The pairs stay with their eyes closed and keep their index fingers together at all times.

Now the facilitator tells the group that leaders should start moving their finger very gently and slowly, and the follower should actively listen to the leader's finger movement and follow. Both of the pair keep their eyes closed at all times. The movement continues for 2-3 min. Now change roles, the follower becomes the leader for the next 2-3 min.

The group is told to open their eyes. The facilitator asks the first leaders to raise their hands. When nobody raises the hand, the group discovers that they were equal in both scenarios. Does it surprise anyone? Did anyone suspect that?

The group can have a short discussion after the exercise. See supporting questions.

### Supportive questions

How do you recognize a leader? What qualities do they possess? How can you recognize when others consider you an informal leader? What changed in your

body/mind when you took on a leader role? How did your listening ability change after you switched the roles?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

The purpose of the exercise is to find the balance between leading and following. Can be done without the second part of changing roles. Then the supporting questions might change slightly.

## LEADING/FOLLOWING - THE BLINDS

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Teamwork, Self-regulation, Communication

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, build trust, regulate my emotions, be self aware, be responsible, communicate clearly, work with limitations, sense the space around me

**Good for:** structured, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

One puts a hand on the other's shoulder and closes the eyes, so becoming the Follower. The other becomes a Leader.

### Content

Find a partner (the task is in couples). One puts a hand on the other's shoulder and closes the eyes, so becoming the Follower. The other becomes a Leader. The Leader starts to move slowly, taking into account that the partner is with closed eyes. When you feel that the Follower is able to follow freely, you can start to play with the movements, speed, stopping and so on. Leaders: balance the security and curiosity! Followers: in case you feel too afraid or overwhelmed, just stop. It will be a sign for the Leader that it was too much. 2-5 minutes for each. No talking during the process. Time after time remind the participants to relax the shoulders, arms and whole of themselves.

### Supportive questions

What did you find out about you as a leader? As a follower/subordinate? What was helpful in leading? What was helpful in following? What didn't work? Was there anything that you wouldn't like to be repeated? If you were in stress while being with closed eyes - what helped you to self-regulate?

### Notes for the facilitator

It's a task where to explore your listening, leading and following skills. Suggested as the first in a row of advancing alike tasks.

You can give a sharing time after the task: - Only in the couples, - In couples and then - in the whole group, - Only in the whole group.

Variations: - You can ask the participants to switch the partners 2 times more - to explore this task with different people and possibly get different experience and acknowledgements. - This may be done in trios as well - with 2 Followers following at each shoulder of the Leader. Best - after doing at least 1 cycle of this task in couples.

## **Author**

Sergey Ostrenko (iugte.com)



## STREAMING TALKING MOVING

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Creativity, Communication

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, make decisions, tolerate uncertainty, take risks, shape the process, sense the space around me, work with limitations, learn, let go, be aware of my body, release tension, share

**Good for:** beginning of a session, freedom, works online, outdoors, youngsters

### Intro

Moving and talking in the same time.

### Content

For the warm-up you can use one of the “BODY SCAN” exercises to give time for the participants to arrive to their bodies. - When ready - start walking. Notice the sounds in the space - those that are created by your movement, other people and sounds outside the studio. - Notice the light in the room. It’s color and shades. Notice how shadows are created by your movement. Play with it for a minute. - Soften your eyes and first move them in the sockets without changing your directions. Check how you can modulate between focused and unfocused vision. From opening your sight to peripheries to closing up on small details (specific body parts, marks on the walls, colorful spots in the space). Look for a spherical sensation in your eyes. Draw continuous line with your eyes, use circular forms, spheres, connect up and down, left and right. Explore disorientation. - Follow your site with your head. Then connect your spine, ribs, inner organs, pelvis, knees, feet. - Once you have this movement as a motor - start telling out loud what you see, feel, think, how are you moving, where are you going, what do you want to do, everything that comes up to your mouth. Do not judge it. Do not censor it. Do not stop it. Let the words flow together with movement. With no particular sense. Let it be a free streaming. Travel in the space. Change levels. Keep your eyes soft. - Notice where your attention is going - to moving or talking. How much you can keep both of the activities spontaneous and joyful. - As a way to develop - facilitator can for example offer to move and talk next to somebody else in the space and open a group improvisation. - In the end you can share your experience in the group or lead this verbal warm-up into the next exercise and share in later on.

## **Supportive questions**

- How can you make it easier for yourself?
- Can a small change in movement bring a change in the overall feeling?
- Where in your body it feels most effortless? How can you engage from that place?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

You can use the momentum of the open throat and easy talking for the next exercise. For example: “1-MINUTE COMPLAINING”.

## **Author**

Maria Stokłosa

## (THE GOOD OLD) TRUST CIRCLE

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** concentrate, collaborate, build trust, be responsible, take risks

**Good for:** long, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

A classic trust exercise with one standing in the centre of a circle. Others must keep the person balanced and unbalanced.

### Content

Before engaging in this exercise make sure that everyone is ok with being touched around the chest area front and back. In this exercise there are two roles, both of which are equally important. One person stands in the middle of a supportive circle made up of other people. On the one hand the person in the middle needs to be able to keep herself straight “like a board” and on the other hand the people in the circle need to be able to support the middle person’s weight and bring her back to standing. The roles and the body usage they require can be practiced individually before engaging in the group version. - The role of the person in the middle: differentiate between letting yourself bend from the waist or hips when leaning forward (= not what we are looking for) and staying in “one piece” even though falling in any direction (=like a piece of board). - The role of the support circle: Use your whole self to support partners weight (stand with one foot further back and bend your knees a little bit), don’t just catch with your hands. In the group: One person is standing feet together in the middle, other people in a fairly tight circle around her. The middle person starts to lean/fall into a chosen direction and the others catch her. All directions need to be covered (unless agreed otherwise). Depending on the participants, the instructions can be a) to bring the person in the middle back to balance or b) to send her into a new direction. In option a) the person has more control over herself, as she gets to decide each time in which direction she chooses to fall the following time. In option b) the surrounding circle has more control.

The exercise could also be built up by allowing only a restricted number of directions in the beginning and then adding to that.

## **Supportive questions**

Reflection questions: - How did it feel to give up some control in the middle? - How was it to trust others? - How was it to have the responsibility of someone else's safety? - How did we work as a team?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This exercise can be a total disaster if people are not into it. Depending on the group, it's not necessarily an exercise to start with.

## 3D ONLINE EXPERIENCE

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Communication, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, manage my energy, be empathic, collaborate, search for new solutions

**Good for:** beginning of a session, structured, works online, freedom, homework

### Intro

This exercise is about embodiment during an online experience in a video call.

### Content

When on a video call pay attention to these aspects: • Pay attention to the light that you can see on each other's screens. Your own screen, and the other participants' screen. • Spend a moment in your real space, paying attention to the lights. Move around and notice how you are changing the lighting with the shadows of your movements. • Come back to the computer/phone and start imagining how the rooms/spaces that you see on your screen are in real life. Focus imagining smells, sensing the fabrics etc. Then imagine/remember if you know the people how they feel, smell, touch etc. • Feel yourself inside your skin. You can touch yourself. • Show your body - not only the face - to other participants and see them as whole people. • Sit straight on a chair, feel your sitting bones and bring your hands behind the head. Let your spine be straight and relaxed at the same time. Gently move your hands and give your spine a nice undulating wavelike movement from side to side. See other participants doing the same. Feel the release and the lengthening of all the spines. Notice how it affects to the atmosphere of your video call.

### Supportive questions

How feeling each other as a whole human being, even online.

## **Notes for the facilitator**

You can practice this exercise also solo while online meeting that you have trouble to connect. Reflecting your connection and adding more real-life sensation to it can make a difference in how you participate.

## **Materials needed**

Computer or smartphone. Exercise is done during a video call.

## **Author**

Elina Ikonen

# AIKIDO CONTACT EXERCISE

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Leadership

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** set boundaries, concentrate, manage my energy, be empathic, build trust, collaborate, communicate clearly, be in balance, accept differences

**Good for:** structured, older people, youngsters, outdoors

## Intro

A basic partner exercise for leading and following inspired by aikido.

## Content

For this exercise everyone needs a partner. Partner A will be giving and partner B receiving and guiding.

The starting position is “the half stance”: one foot showing forward and the other somewhat further back, so that one has a stable stance (kind of if you wanted to push something). This brings automatically the hand on the same side as the front foot to the fore. Both partners take the same leg and the same hand on to the front (right & right, or left & left) and cross the backside of their wrists. The back leg serves to transmit the power from the floor through the torso and into the arm - the idea is not to push only with the arm. Like this partner A creates some pressure towards partner B, who responds in the same way. This creates a contact between the partners: it is more than just a mere touch.

Having established the contact, partner A will start moving towards partner B. Partner B accepts this and moves backward. After a short while, change sides and eventually change roles. Now you have laid the basis for building up the exercise.

To make the exercise more versatile and fun, add turning and the directions up and down. Remind the partners not to forget their surroundings - they need to pay attention at least to the other partners.

In the end, you can also let go of the predetermined roles and see what happens.

## Supportive questions

- Pay attention how the redirecting is made: is it partner B listening to partner A's direction and redirecting accordingly or does partner B decide to change direction regardless of what partner A is giving?
- If you decided to let go of the predetermined roles, what happened? Was it still clear to the partners how was leading and who not? Did someone prefer the one role or the other?

## Notes for the facilitator

This exercise comes from Aikido and due to that can be quite restricted in terms of movement possibilities (e.g. don't push only with the arm, partner A always goes towards the partner B, try to keep a long spine).



## AIKIDO CONTACT LEADER AND FOLLOWER

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Communication, Adaptability, Teamwork

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, make mistakes, listen, be flexible, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be self aware, accept differences, develop better habits, communicate clearly, shape the process, work with limitations

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, structured, outdoors, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Leading and following game, being in contact wrist to wrist.

### Content

Find a partner. Get in contact wrist to wrist with one hand each. Agree which is going to be a Leader and which- Follower. - The Leader makes circles with his/her arm and the Follower follows with his/her arm. Both partners strive to stay in this wrist to wrist rolling contact. Switch roles. Switch partners. - Besides making wrist-wrist circles the Leader has 2 more tools: A) leading by pulling the partner's wrist and B) leading by pushing the partner's wrist. So, using these 3 tools of leading through movement the Leader leads his/her partners thorough the space. Remember- both partners strive to stay in this wrist-wrist rolling contact! Switch roles. Switch partners. - In couples. The same last exercise but- not agreeing who is leading and who- following. Switch roles.

### Supportive questions

What helps to stay in contact? How do you feel when the contact is lost: - When you're a leader - When you're a follower? When it is easy to lead? When is it challenging? What did you learn about listening? What did you learn about leading? What did you learn about following?

### Notes for the facilitator

It is possible to do each step [1) rolling the circles, 2) rolling, pulling, pushing, 3) not agreeing on the role] only once but for deepening the experience it is warmly

suggested switching the partners and try out the same step at least a couple of times more- with an experience of another person leading and following.

## **Materials needed**

Space to move freely (inside or outdoors)

## ARM DANCE

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Attention and focus, Creativity

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, listen, concentrate, manage my time, tolerate uncertainty, inspire and be inspired, be seen, communicate clearly, learn, work with limitations

**Good for:** beginning of a session, precise, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Arm manipulation done standing in groups of three.

### Content

Get in groups of three. Person number one stands in the middle. She or He will be passive receivers. Two and Three stand on two sides. They work separately as each elevates and manipulates an arm of person number one (e.g. person number two works with the right arm, person number three with the left arm) for a duration of one song (3-4 minutes). Instructions for the creators of the arm dance are: - after making each movement put the arm down - give a variety of rhythms - remember about details like separating fingers, wrist rotation, medium gestures and full arm movements such as lifting it above the head - be very precise - give precise experience

The first person gets a dance with each arm separately. After it is done she gets one minute to repeat the dance by herself. It is nice for the whole group (all groups of 3 together) to watch one-minute dances from each person. - Repeat what you remember in only one minute. - The order of events is not important.

### Materials needed

Timer, Music player with three songs prepared for this occasion.

### Author

Body Weather - Katarina Batasaki

## BODY SCAN

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, let go, manage my energy, slow down, release tension, regulate my emotions

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, works online, calming down, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

Relaxation and changing state through lying on the floor. This is a simple structure for guided relaxation. Participants can easily repeat this on their own (for self-guided experience).

### Content

Find a comfortable space in the room and lie down. Maybe place a blanket under your body, if the floor is not warm. - Let yourself rest comfortably on the floor. - Close your eyes. - Allow yourself to give your weight to the Earth. Let the Earth receive the weight of your body. - Allow the air to enter your body through the nose and exit through the nose. Observe the air entering and exiting. With each breath let go of carrying your weight. - Give up all unnecessary heaviness and let it fall down to the Earth. - Step by step scan the body, noticing the weight and the relationship to the gravity of your toes, your entire foot (right and left), let go of the weight of your ankles, calves and shins, knees, the weight of your right thigh and your left thigh, hips and pelvis, stomach, ribs, shoulder blades, shoulders, forearm, elbow, wrist, fingers, neck. Let the earth carry the weight of your head. - Remember that breathing helps. - Stay with your breath and relax.

Exercise can end here. It can also continue in this way:

Take a new breath of clean air and let your body be filled and cleansed with fresh air. With the exhalation all that is not necessary is removed from your body. As you allow the Earth to carry the weight of your body turn to your side. Stay here, find comfort, relax and breath. As you allow the Earth to carry the weight of your body make a

journey to standing. Feel the ground supporting your feet from underneath. Stand still for a few breaths. Open your eyes.

## **Notes for the facilitator**

The length of this exercise can vary from 5 minutes to 15 or more. Working with children would usually require shorter time. Relaxing after high intensity activity will be different from lying down on the floor after talking.

## **Materials needed**

one of the below: blanket, carper or exercise/yoga mat; optional: small pillow or folded blanket/shirt

## BODY SHOPPING LIST

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Creativity, Communication, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, make mistakes, be flexible, concentrate, collaborate, search for new solutions, negotiate, be aware of my body, work with limitations

**Good for:** freedom, exciting, youngsters, structured, outdoors

### Intro

A group is working together as a team to create a shape with the all bodies involved.

### Content

The class is divided into groups of approx 5. The facilitator creates lists of body parts. I.e., two hands, three feet, one head, one elbow, one knee, and one back, or two feet, two knees, three hands. One shoulder, two fingers etc.

Each group is given one list and the following instructions: You are to work as a group to create a shape. The parts on the list and ONLY the parts on the list can be contacting the floor as a group, and everybody in the group has to be connected to someone else in the group.

Once your group has established its shape, see if you can figure out a smooth transition to arrive at your shape and to detach from it.

### Notes for the facilitator

Not recommended for older people or people with very limited movement experience or not aware of their limitations. With a less movement experienced group the body parts on the shopping list can be made less difficult.

### Author

From a book 'Dance and Somatics' by Julie A.Brodie & Elin E.Lobel

## COMFORTABLE WITH DISCOMFORT

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Adaptability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** regulate my emotions, be self aware, manage conflicts, be aware of my body, take risks

**Good for:** youngsters, freedom

### Intro

This exercise will create an uncomfortable situation and help to practice getting comfortable there instead of avoiding it.

### Content

- Ask the participants to pair up and sit down facing each other in some comfortable spot and position. Tell them that you will set a timer for 3 minutes and ask them to look into each other's eyes without talking. Guide them through the exercise using the directions below:
- "As soon as you become aware of any discomfort, pay very close attention to it. Notice where the feelings are located in your body. Name these sensations without expressing them loud. Is there tension, tingling, hotness, shakiness, or some other sensation?"
- "Delve into each sensation as much as you can. Aim to feel its character, its texture. Describe each of them, as your gaze is still locked to your partner's. Make a mental note of as many details as you can."
- "Let the awkwardness build. How does it manifest itself physically? Do you feel tightness in your jaw? Is it tension in your stomach? What else is it?"
- "Imagine yourself as a scientist investigating this experience. Observe your sensations as objectively as you can. Avoid making judgements and conclusions. Observe and mentally describe."
- "When you feel the urge to laugh, talk, or relieve the discomfort in any way, resist it. This is your chance to practice delving into sensations, not avoiding them."

- Once the time has passed, invite the participants to share with their partners how it felt to do this exercise. Suggest them to exchange how the discomfort manifested in their bodies. For most people, keeping eye contact will cause discomfort, but not for all - it can be valuable to hear their points of view and what helps them to feel comfortable with this task.
- Use the supporting questions to deepen the discussion about our relationship with discomfort.

## Supportive questions

- What makes you feel uncomfortable?
- Can you name a time you avoided a situation because you knew it would mean facing uncomfortable emotions?
- Is there an ongoing situation in your work that you avoid because of the fear of discomfort?
- What is the result of that avoidance?
- If you ended up facing the emotion or situation you've been avoiding, what might the result be?
- What could be some techniques to grow your comfort zone that you might practice through your everyday activities?

## Notes for the facilitator

Being comfortable with discomfort might be one of the secrets of success in situations of public speaking, negotiations, or difficult conversations. When the discomfort is building, tension rises through your body, irritation takes hold of your mind. This tension serves no useful purpose, so you might try to delve into those very sensations of discomfort. Rather than trying to suppress, ignore, or power through, your goal is to give your full attention to the very sensations you would instinctively want to push away. Focusing on the sensations of your physical discomfort gives your mind something concrete to focus on other than its growing conviction that this situation is unbearable.

## Materials needed

Timer.



## CONNECT AND NAME YOURSELF

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Communication, Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, be empathic, regulate my emotions, build trust, be seen, be self aware, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, structured, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Good at the very 1st class - as the beginning of the whole process. Getting to know each other, touching physically and emotionally.

### Content

Warming up part: Walk freely in the space, go where there is more free space. - Take a look in the eyes of the persons approaching. - Say hello to each of the approaching person by slightly bending your head. - Say hello to each of the approaching person by shaking your hands and telling your name. - When you get eye contact with the approaching person, both of you come closer and touch each other shoulder to shoulder. Feel each other for a moment and move on. - When you get eye contact with the approaching person, both of you come closer and hug as good old friends that didn't meet for 100 years. Feel each other for a moment and move on. The naming part: Make a circle, standing close to each other. One by one: - Step into the circle, - Receive the attention from the group around, - Explore how is it to be there with all this attention only on you, - Call your name loud enough so that everyone hears it, - Step back into the circle so giving place to the other participant. The task for all the others left in the circle - keep the mood in the circle as supportive as possible during the whole process. Relax and explore what helps you in it.

### Supportive questions

What did you learn from your own experience and from the others during the Naming task? What helped you to step in the circle? What helped to endure/enjoy there? How did you help yourself to be supportive to the person inside all the time? What actions of

the person inside the circle kept your attention (not naming the person)? What will you take with you from this exercise?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

It's fitting for the group not much larger than 20 participants. You can skip/replace the warming up part. Don't underestimate the emotional charge of the Naming part - the participants usually must be supported, encouraged and empowered to step in. Do your best to encourage each and every participant to experience stepping into the circle (for the sake of the group process).

## **Author**

Inese Ločmele (somatika.lv)

## CONNECT TO INNER FLUIDITY

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation, Adaptability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** give and receive feedback, listen, observe, be empathic, slow down, release tension, be aware of my body

**Good for:** works online, calming down, older people, short

### Intro

Individual exploration through gentle self-touch movements to understand their fascia and find fluidity in the body.

### Content

Facilitator asks the participants to find a comfortable position, it could be either standing, sitting or lying down.

Participants are invited to explore and find fascia in their bodies. Depending on the group's knowledge the educator can explain more about fascia, that it is the connecting tissue between our internal organs. Connecting to fascia is through gentle self-touch movements - below skin. With one hand a participant can gently shake different parts of their body: arms, face, stomach, lower back, legs etc.

Participants are asked to close their eyes and visualize their fascia. The facilitator puts on the music and invites everyone to move with their internal visualization, listening to inner impulses how fascia wants them to move.

At the end the group can have a sharing of their experience.

### Notes for the facilitator

This exercise would be more suitable for people with movement background and basic understanding of experiential anatomy.

## EMBODIED WORDS

**Soft Skills:** Learning ability, Creativity, Communication, Teamwork

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** learn, accept differences, search for new solutions, be aware of my body, be self aware, observe, be seen, tolerate uncertainty, inspire and be inspired, be inclusive, share, build trust

**Good for:** beginning of a session, freedom, structured, works online, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Using the body to express certain words.

### Content

Let's meet in a circle. We will do now an exercise called "embodied words". We will try to use our body as a communication tool to express some words. So, I will be saying some words and at the same time all of us will try to show this word somehow, using our body. It can be really simple. But what's important is to use the WHOLE body. Not just some parts, like hands. But to change the whole body into this word. Let me show you an example.

A CHAIR (Facilitator makes a pose which whole body as a chair) A WAVE (Whatever wave movement with the whole body)

Something like that. And one more thing: *there is no wrong or right way of doing this. Each of you can have your own answer. And all of them are right.* There is only one request - to engage the whole body. Have fun!

*Tips for the facilitator: - At the beginning you can propose words. When you feel that the group has 'caught the task' - invite participants to propose words. Whoever wants, not obligatory for everyone - It is nice to start with "simple to show" words and on the level of standing: like 'a tree', 'a lamp' etc. Then invite other levels to lay on the floor or jump, like 'carpet' or 'rabbit'. And then to go into more complex words like 'wind' or 'bicycle'. And then some abstract words, like name of colours or feelings or ideas like 'freedom', 'love', 'energy' - Take the most time on the last part, the most abstract words. In this part emphasize that THERE ARE NO MISTAKES, EACH ANSWER IS*

*CORRECT - Invite participants to see each other, to notice richness of variety - Use words with different emotional / time and space input. Inviting to fast and very slow movement, to calming down or very expressive movement*

## **Supportive questions**

REFLECTION in circle, with the whole group - Did something change in your body? How do you feel your body now? - What did you notice in yourself? And in others? - What was difficult? - What was fun? - How often did you judge yourself or others? Or maybe you didn't? - Is any of these reflections useful for your work or personal life?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This is a great exercise to invite participants to the rich language of the body. To use the body as an expression tool, in an individual and non-judgmental way. To accept variety and all possible answers for one question.

## EXPLORING LEADING AND FOLLOWING

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, concentrate, be seen, be aware of my body, be self aware, sense the space around me

**Good for:** works online, freedom, short

### Intro

An online exercise to help practice leading and following.

### Content

This exercise is aimed at online learning to practice leading and following.

It can be used on online conference platforms (i.e., Zoom) where break-out rooms are possible or where people can pin someone's screen to create the impression on working in pairs.

The facilitator leads the group movement session as a warm-up for some 5 minutes and invites everyone to move as they like, to connect with their body, with how they feel like moving. The facilitator divides the group in pairs and creates break-out rooms of two, or asks the pair to pin each other's screen. In a pair one person is asked to lead movement (move any way they like) for about 5 minutes and the observer is asked to follow the movement. After 5 minutes participants switch roles. If in breakout rooms, participants are encouraged to share their experience with each other. If in a bigger room, after exercise the group comes together in a virtual online circle and are free to share their experience.

### Supportive questions

- How did it feel to lead the movement session?
- What did you notice about the person following your lead? Did you recognize any familiar patterns of your movement?
- When following, how did it feel? Was it easy or difficult to move observing the other person's movement?

## Notes for the facilitator

This can be made adaptable for dance studio/classroom environment working in pairs. If the group is not new to movement, the class can be made longer.

Another adaptation: The first person moves for 5 minutes and the other just watches. After 5 minutes the observer moves with the memory of the first mover, influenced by their movement quality. Then switch pairs and can have a discussion at the end.

## EYE GAZES

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Creativity

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, regulate my emotions, be self aware, develop better habits, learn, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, long, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

Exploring and learning the gaze options and how they influence us physically and emotionally.

### Content

While freely walking around the space, let's try out different kinds of eye gazing: - The focused one: concentrated, so that you pay attention to each smallest detail; - The peripheral: defocus your eyes so you can see a wider space around but nothing in detail; - The newborn baby gaze: look at things as if you couldn't and wouldn't try to name them - just passively see the colors, shapes, lights and shadows; - The gaze among: see the space between/among the objects; - The closed eyes gaze: pay attention to the images, shapes, colors, patterns you see when your eyes are closed. Try out playing with these gazes on your own while walking. Find a partner to share shortly this experience (you may create as well trios or small groups). And then - let's share in the whole group. While continuing the free walk around the space, pay attention what feelings, sensations, images come up when you: - Look down; - Look up; - Look straight. Try out playing with these gazes on your own while walking. Find a partner to share shortly this experience.

Stand on your both feet. Turn your head as far as you can; try both sides for several times. Check how far you can see freely. Do the same but the initiation of the turn is from your eyes - try to look with curiosity of what's behind you. Is it easier to see further? Try out to play with turning your head, both by incorporating the curious look and just turning the head.



## Supportive questions

Which is your favorite gaze? Which is the least favourite? In which situations in your life do you use each way of looking? What did you discover about the looking options and could use in your life? How? Which of the gazes do you use often, which maybe never before? Which of the gazes could help in some specific situations (for example, when you need to relax, when you have to gather yourself to do something, when you'd like to invent something, when you need to be creative, decisive)? What conclusions or ideas came up when you were turning your head by incorporating the curious gaze and without it?

## Notes for the facilitator

The exercise results for the participants becoming much richer if you do the sharing after the experiencing. There are three parts of this exercise, and they are quite free to divide and use only part of all. First two tasks come from Andrea Olsen ([andrea-olsen.com](http://andrea-olsen.com)), but the last one is derived from the Alexander technique ([alexandertechnique.com](http://alexandertechnique.com)).

## Author

Thea Rytz ([thearytz.ch](http://thearytz.ch))

## EYES RESTING BODY SENSING

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** concentrate, slow down, let go, be self aware

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, works online, structured, calming down, older people

### Intro

A voice led exploration from resting on the floor to moving freely with eyes closed. Introducing sensing weight and shape in stillness. Taking snap-shots with short eyes opening.

### Content

Begin resting on the floor. Let your body (bodies of your students) let go of the weight. Allow the floor to support the weight of the body. Close your eyes and do nothing for a few minutes.

Let the image of soft light slowly scan your body. Staring from feet (right and left), moving up through following body parts all the way to the head. Top of the body (knees, stomach, sternum, face) etc) and the bottom (calves, bottom, shoulder blades, back of the head). This may take from 5 to 10 minutes.

See if there is any movement in the body, and wish to change position or do gentle shakes, stretch, movements of fingers or toes, etc. Follow your desire for moving. Continue having your eyes closed. After a few minutes of moving in different forms call/invite a PAUSE. In the stillness notice how the weight is being distributed in the body, where does it touch the floor, where is tension and what is resting. Keep the first pause for as long as one minute (or more). After paying attention to the weight, open eyes just for as long as one gaze - a snapshot, letting the image enter through eyes in a still head. Close eyes and gently go back to movement. Repeat calling PAUSE up to 5 times, each time inviting the sensing of weight, the form of the body and a single snapshot with eyes.

After the last pause, propose finding a way to a sitting position, and as you/everyone is sitting, allow eyes to open. Talk about individual experiences for a few minutes in pairs

or all together in a circle. If you practice alone - write down something about your own experience.

## **Supportive questions**

What surfaces of the body are touching the floor? How does the body weight is supported by the structure of your shape?

## **Materials needed**

Blanket or warm floor, pillow or jumper to fold under the head.

## **Author**

Inspired by Lisa Nelson

## FEELING OTHER PEOPLE

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Leadership, Teamwork, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** set boundaries, observe, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, regulate my emotions, build trust, be self aware, accept differences, be seen, be inclusive, be aware of my body, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, freedom, structured, outdoors, exciting, calming down, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

This exercise gives you space and time to notice how you feel around other people, in general in the group, and around each specific person.

### Content

- First, stand still with your eyes closed for a while.
- Open your eyes and notice how it affects your physical and emotional state.
- Walk around. Notice how it feels like to walk. Then bring your awareness to notice how it feels to pass by different persons.

Do you feel a difference when you pass different people? Is it easier to pass someone, look at someone, feel someone? Notice the differentiation in your emotional state and muscle tone. Sometimes one holds breath every time when passing a certain person. Sometimes one feels relief when passing another.

- Be honest to yourself. Do not judge yourself.
- You can practice with a group in the studio or alone in different public spaces and social contexts.

### Supportive questions

How do you feel? How could it be easier to stay around certain people?

## FOCUSING A BIT OFF

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Teamwork, Communication, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Learning ability, Creativity

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, set boundaries, be flexible, concentrate, listen, observe, regulate my emotions, slow down, build trust, negotiate, be self aware, accept differences, solve problems, develop better habits, be seen, release tension, be in balance, be aware of my body, let go, search for new solutions, learn

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, freedom, structured, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

With peripheral vision you sometimes see better what is there in the middle. Discover how with “focusing a bit off” you can see better.

### Content

- Choose a spot in the room. Find a nice standing position. Change your position constantly around this nice position, a bit off center. Bring your weight to the front, to the back, to the right and to the left, to all diagonals, randomly around the central axis.
- Notice how you can find the relaxed standing position by playing around it rather than fixing immediately to the middle.
- Let your eyes randomly wander around the room, if there is a window, even through it. Make sure that you see items very close and very far away. Let your head move with your eyes. Let your spine move with your eyes.
- Start walking around the room. With every step focus to step “a bit off” your normal walk. Do not take your walk for granted. Feel the difference in the body. Maybe walking “a bit off” provides you a better access to balance and more freedom in the posture.
- Remember to let your eyes wander. Keep using the same principle with more complex, continuous movement.
- Look at other people with the same principle, while keeping on moving. Remember to pulsate the eyes from close to distance.

## **Supportive questions**

How working with “a bit off” physically affects your perceiving? How being physically “a bit off” affects to your emotional and cognitive processes? Can you find/accept/offer a wider perspective?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Notice how being a bit off physically affects to your perceiving in other everyday life situations, to your emotional and cognitive processes. Can you find/accept/offer a wider/closer perspective in everyday life situations by arriving physically to “a bit off - state”?

## I LIKE...

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, be empathic, build trust, be seen, accept differences, share

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, calming down, youngsters, older people, works online

### Intro

Speaking and listening exercise in groups of 3.

### Content

In a group of 3. Chose 1 person who will speak first, one person to listen and look in the eyes of the speaker, one person to takes notes. Time is set for 3 - 5 minutes for each person to be a speaker. - Speaking person talks about what they like, starting each sentence with "I like..." She or he looks into the eyes of the listener. Speaking is continuous for the length of set time (until alarm goes on) - Listener looks into the eyes of speaker and receives the information. - Writer writes down everything that speaker says. After 3-5 minutes the writer reads (slowly) to the speaker her or his notes saying "You like..."

Change of roles - Speaker becomes writer, Listener - speaker and writer becomes listener. Another round of 3-5 minutes "I like" followed by reading of notes. Change roles for the last time. End

### Supportive questions

How does it feel to say what you like to a stranger? How does it feel to listen to someone speaking about themselves. How does it feel to hear another person telling you what you like?

### Notes for the facilitator

It may trigger emotions!

## **Materials needed**

Timer, pen and paper.

## **Author**

Robert Steijn



## IN/OUT OF BUBBLES

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Teamwork, Leadership, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Communication

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, give and receive feedback, set boundaries, listen, observe, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, build trust, slow down, accept differences, be seen, be self aware, be aware of my body, sense the space around me

**Good for:** structured, calming down, outdoors, beginning of a session, end of a session

### Intro

People come in contact either in pairs or groups, break contact and repeat.

### Content

- Transition from an individual self-aware state
- Make pairs (or groups). They could be in a circle or a line, so that it's easier to change partners
- Start from a meter or two away from each other
- Get closer, facing each other (looking in the eyes is optional)
- Notice how it affects you: is it comfortable, uncomfortable, is it too close or not close enough? Just observe
- Just imagine, what could you change to feel more comfortable?
- Let them be there for a while and say for example: Could you imagine what did this person eat for breakfast or how did they get here today? - With the purpose of realizing that the other has a life we don't know about.
- Now is the time to change position/distance
- Notice how does it feel now? How does the other person react and how does it make you feel?
- Then soon it comes the time to say goodbye, disconnect
- Talk a bit more and repeat that soon is the time, this allows developing the skill to prepare and plan or just to know in advance that there will be a shift, and they can prepare emotionally for that
- Now it's the time to disconnect and move to the next person

- Repeat. First iterations take longer time and last ones could be shorter
- There could be space here for reflecting and writing but not necessary, as this is supposed to be working with the subconscious mind.

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Guide the participants' attention all the time unless you feel like having a break. Keep their mind busy so that it's easier to notice what happens in them.

Participants could be side by side instead of facing each other. This is how it works for 2+ persons. You can have a circle and have one person joining after the circle or pair is made. Observe how the atmosphere changes. It works to do this in the beginning of a class, or at the end. How does the group adapt? The group could be touching, with arms around each other.

Pairs could also be touching hands, arms, for e.g. but not necessary. It usually makes the experience more emotionally intense when there is physical contact.

## IT'S BETTER TO...

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Self-regulation, Communication, Creativity

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, think critically, be flexible, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, inspire and be inspired, search for new solutions, communicate clearly, shape the process, be inclusive

**Good for:** long, freedom, youngsters, exciting, older people, outdoors, works online

### Intro

This group score/game is about leading and following using one simple sentence. This creative tool can be used for studying strategies for communication and leadership. Depending on the group focus and interest it can lead to a simple/fun game or to a more complex group situation. It was created by a German choreographer Thomas Lehman.

### Content

This exercise is based on finishing the sentence "It is better to...". Each member of the group is welcome to propose an action by completing this sentence. There is no limit to creative ideas, which can be walking quietly, rolling on the floor, holding hands, giving a hug to the tallest person, singing a song backwards, reading signs from T-shirts as you run around the room, pause and take 7 deep breaths, counting ears in the room blind folded, discussing the next presidential election using blinking your eyelashes instead of language, and so on. Group action lasts until someone proposes new "it is better to...". As the duration of each activity is determined by the next proposal one can last less than a minute and another for 5 minutes. Together the group is responsible for the flow of this exercise and each participant can influence change. Nothing is discussed in other form than through the sentence "it is better to...".

This score is a self regulating mechanism and the longer the game, the more possibilities to how this structure can be used reveals.

## **Supportive questions**

How can you propose change? How long does one activity last? Can you allow more time for actions to develop? Is there particular rhythm of change, that you notice? Do you like it? Do you engage in activities or rather focus on proposing changes?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This is a self navigating structure. The longer you do it - the better understanding of possible strategies and ideas. If done long enough this can bring about a whole universe of group activities and forms of being together. Taken lightly, this can be a funny way to lead warm up or lift up the group energy through play time.

## **Author**

Thomas Lehman

## LEADER

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Leadership, Learning ability, Communication, Creativity, Adaptability, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** shape the process, make decisions, sense the space around me, observe, manage my energy, inspire and be inspired, collaborate, regulate my emotions, learn, take risks, work with limitations, be aware of my body, be seen, be flexible

**Good for:** beginning of a session, long, precise, freedom, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

One person leads, moves in her own way. The others copy.

### Content

One person is moving, however they want. The rest of the group is copying this one person, the leader. You do it as well and precisely as you can. If some movement is not possible for you to perform, physically, do the closest variation of it. We will use music.

Variations / Steps: 1. I (as a facilitator) will call “next” and then whoever feels and wants to lead, starts to move and others follow. 2. When some of you want to take leadership - just start to move differently! This change has to be quite big, in order to be noticed. This also means two things: one person is leading as long as the next leader will appear. If nobody wants to take leadership the first person goes on. And this is also another task for the whole group: to follow the leader but at the same time be aware of what is going on in the whole group. In order to catch the change and see a new leader, when one appeared.

Do you have questions?

And one more, important thing: have fun!

Tips: (during exercise, if needed) - There is no bad way of moving. - You can move slow, fast, precise, chaotic. Treat it like an experiment, check different options. - It's OK when sometimes you don't know what to do. - How can you adjust your movement to the leader's movement?

## Supportive questions

Reflection: (Individual - on paper writing/drawing // in pairs // in the whole group) - How did you feel during this exercise? - How was it to lead? - How was it to follow? - Did you notice some of your patterns? In leading and following? - What kind of movement was easy to follow? What was hard? Was it some way similar to leading and being lead in your work? Do you see some similarities? - What makes you feel comfortable in following? How did you find your way of taking care of yourself if the movement was hard to follow, unclear, too complicated, too easy? What did you do to fulfil the task in your own way? Did you push yourself to fulfil it anyway? Or did you adapt the movement to yourself? - What makes you feel tension? How did you manage it? - What was fun? When is it easy for you to follow / lead? Is it connected to conditions you need to have or create to learn and develop? - How can all these reflections be used by you in working place?

## Notes for the facilitator

The duration depends on the number of participants, how they engage and how long the reflection part will take.

Through leading and following in movement we can observe and reflect ourselves in how we lead and follow in our working environment.

## Materials needed

Music!

## LEADING/FOLLOWING - THE JOYSTICK FOR THE SPINE

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Teamwork, Communication, Self-regulation, Adaptability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, listen, tolerate uncertainty, concentrate, collaborate, be empathic, regulate my emotions, slow down, build trust, be self aware, accept differences, be responsible, work with limitations, be inclusive

**Good for:** structured, outdoors, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Pair exercise standing and moving each other's spine through hands connection.

### Content

Find a partner (the task is in couples). One puts a hand on the other's hand (for example, left hand on the right hand). The one whose hand is on top is the Leader. The Follower closes the eyes. The hands should be: - Relaxed but not collapsed, - Pushed a bit to each other to stay in contact, - The Leaders - don't grab the Follower's hand/palm! The hand of the Leader becomes a joystick of the Follower's spine - if the joystick turns left, the Follower's spine turns left, if the joystick lifts, the spine is lifting and so on. Leaders: balance the security and curiosity! Followers: in case you feel too afraid or overwhelmed, just stop. It will be a sign for the Leader that it was too much. 2-5 minutes for each. No talking during the process.

You can give a sharing time after the task: - Only in the couples, - In couples and then - in the whole group, - Only in the whole group.

### Supportive questions

What helped in leading? What was hard? What helped in following? What was hard?  
How did you find a common language?

### Notes for the facilitator

You can ask the participants to switch the partners few times more - to explore this task with different people and possibly get different experience and acknowledgements.

Suggested right after the “Leading/following - The Blinds” task.

## **Author**

Sergey Ostrenko ([iugte.com](http://iugte.com))



## LOOKING FOR COMFORT

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, listen, make decisions, concentrate, manage my time, be self aware, slow down, build trust, work with limitations, learn, be aware of my body, develop better habits

**Good for:** short, long, precise, beginning of a session, works online, calming down, end of a session, older people, youngsters, outdoors, homework

### Intro

This exercise is about calming one's body and mind, shifting focus from the external world to internal experience, managing one's focus, and directing it into the body. Moving from one position to another you are making yourself sensitive to information coming from your body, increasing body- and self-awareness. This exercise can be used as a tool for self-regulation.

### Content

Find a place in a room where you want to spend some time now.

Sit down or lay down on the floor. Find the position which you like most at this very moment. Try out different positions if you wish. Give yourself time to find a comfortable position.

When you have found the position - just relax your body in it. Breathe normally, or if you want to - take a deeper breath. Try to "melt" your eyes, loose tension. Now, try to listen to your body. Is some part of your body is grabbing your attention? Do you want to move? At first, don't change anything. Just see. Feel. And leave it as it is. Do you hear something more? Maybe some other part of your body is calling? Try to just listen. .... Now check: would you like to change the position of your body? If yes, please do it. As simple as you can. Change only what wants to be changed, not more. Find comfort again. .... And listen once more. Try to feel this comfort. And check (after a while) if your body invites you to move again. What body part would like to move? How? To what position? Try simply to follow those signals. Take your time. .... And check again. And follow this need of your body again .... And 3 more times, change the position .... Now,

slowly find an ending. Find the last position. Take your time. Open your eyes if they were closed. If you were lying - sit down gently. Look around, see where you are and with whom. .... Closing, few options: - Write down your reflections - Make a drawing of this experience - Find a partner and exchange your reflections and feelings (See for supportive questions below)

## **Supportive questions**

What do you feel now? Where is your focus? Do you remember where your attention was at the beginning of this exercise? Did something change or not? How do you feel your body now? Did something change? Did you find some surprises? Did you get bored? Did something interesting happen?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This exercise can also be done in 10 minutes - without going so deep into the experience and just invite participants to direct the attention to their inner world. It also can be longer, even till an hour, enriched by more tasks: - Scanning the particular body parts one by one - Developing change the position to more complex movement and to dance sequences - Making parts with self-observation, then do it in pairs with watching partner: how does he/she makes decision to change the position? How does she/he makes this change? How is the body tension changing? What images / associations appear? And then exchange your observations in pairs and in group

## MOVING BODY PARTS

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** be flexible, manage my energy, search for new solutions, work with limitations, be seen, sense the space around me, let go, be aware of my body, be in balance, release tension

**Good for:** beginning of a session, precise, short, long, structured, works online, outdoors, youngsters

### Intro

Moving body parts. First separately, later on all in the same time.

### Content

- With a breath in take your hands up.
- With a breath out take hands down. Let them fall. Repeat 15 times.
- Pull your neck inside your chest, bring shoulders to ears. Repeat 9 times.
- Bring your chin to left and right shoulder. Bring your left cheek to your left shoulder, right cheek to right shoulder. Repeat 2 times.
- Draw circles in the air with your right foot - repeat 9 times, and left foot - 9 times.
- Circulate your knees (as warming up for skiing), repeat 9 times in each direction.
- Move your pelvis, draw circles to the left 9 times and to the right 9 times.
- Continue to circle with your elbows, left and right, repeat 7 times.
- Continue with both palms.
- Open palms for touch. Touch your clothes, objects around you, walls, floor, furniture. Forget about the camera (if online), other people in the space (if in studio).
- Move your head. Do not be ambitious about it. Let it lead you. Travel, change levels. Roll it on the floor.

- Now move 2 body parts in the same time. Look for different duets. Name specific places. (for example: right foot and right cheek, head and left elbow). Choose body parts close and far from each other.
- Move 3 body parts simultaneously. Follow the guideline from above.
- Move all body parts simultaneously. Hold on a bit more! It is impossible and you are doing great!
- Slow down your movement. Stand up. Bring it to a comfortable stillness. Direct your attention to the inside. Movement can happen only inside. Outside movement dissolves. Listen to your heartbeat, breathing.

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Great for the first session.

## NUMBERS

**Soft Skills:** Learning ability, Communication, Creativity, Teamwork, Leadership

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** collaborate, search for new solutions, solve problems, listen, work with limitations, tolerate uncertainty, make mistakes, negotiate, communicate clearly, shape the process, take risks, let go, learn, manage conflicts

**Good for:** beginning of a session, precise, outdoors, exciting, youngsters, older people

### Intro

One of “impossible” tasks. Participants draw numbers on pieces of paper, starting from 1 to the number of participants. Task for the group: create a line, ordered from 1 to X, without using words and with closed eyes.

### Content

Everyone gets a piece of paper.

The task is to draw one number between 1 and [the amount of people] without showing it to anyone.

Now, your task is: As a group you need to create a line of people in a numbered order from 1 to X or from X to 1. BUT Your task is to do it **without speaking AND with your eyes closed**.

Yes, it sounds impossible. But it is possible!

So, we stop talking. Close your eyes. And start!

*(in the meantime)* - Take your time! - It's OK to make mistakes - Try different ideas, give yourself time to find solution - It is possible to fulfil the task - It's OK if you don't fulfil it!

If you have a feeling that you have found your place in a line - stop in that place. And wait for the rest of the group. Take your time.

*(After group stops)*

Now let's open your eyes and check if the group got the order right: say out loud your number from one side to the other.

....

*(sharing, writing)*

*Prompts: - How can you communicate a number without words and vision? - Maybe you can try a way that each of you communicate to the other only your own number?*

*Important: - Support atmosphere of joy and having fun, rather than tension - Duration depends on number of participants and the way how they will fulfil the task. It can take some time! - Use prompts if you noticed that the group is giving up or tension is too big. But maybe it's OK to let them "loose"? From which situation can the group learn?*

## **Supportive questions**

Let's talk about this experience! How was it? What strategies did you find? Did you feel frustrated? Did you have fun? Who lead the action, me/you/us/them?

*(Give a group time to share their experience)*

How can you use this experience in daily life? What did you learn from it? Can you use this knowledge at your work / team / group?

## **Materials needed**

- Pieces of papers, which can be rolled up in a way that the number is hidden
- Pens

## ONE IDEA

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Communication, Creativity, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, concentrate, observe, tolerate uncertainty, be seen, be aware of my body, communicate clearly

**Good for:** long, precise, structured, youngsters, older people

### Intro

This group exercise involves physically proposing an idea in the space and recognizing it by others by joining in the image. It comes from dance improvisation training designed by an American choreographer Nina Martin.

### Content

- A group gathers along one wall of the room (studio). The space is empty and everyone is invited to look at an empty space for a moment.
- The first person proposes a simple spacial idea, by entering the space and positioning their body in a specific way (for example in a particular relation to the room; lifting one hand over head, facing the window, etc). She stays in this position in stillness until the end of the round. There is no other form of communication than of doing and watching (no commenting).
- When the proposal has been clearly seen by the group, a second person is invited to join this still image. She or he places their body in the space in the most similar way to what the first person did. The task is to stay simple, not to transform the initial idea but to join the image in the most clear and obvious way possible. The second person reinforces the one idea.
- In slow pace, including pauses in between each person, four participants complete the tableau. As soon as there are 5 people in the image this round is completed.

This exercise takes time to understand. Few try out rounds will help learning the structure and rules. Allow time for explanation and mistakes. As soon as rules are clear there can be as many rounds as needed for everybody to have a go.

Remember: The goal is not to make things complex but to simply propose and respond; see and make visible. The idea of the first person is best when simple. The

response is successful when it makes the initial idea even more clear for the remaining participants. It also requires clarity in presenting an idea to the group. Simple does not mean all the same. Encourage creativity - change composition of bodies in space, different facings, use whole body, different body parts, use levels - on the floor, sitting, standing; invite expressive gestures.

## **Supportive questions**

How can you change the composition of bodies in space? Where are you facing? Are you using your whole body? Which body parts were not in use yet? Which levels - on the floor, sitting, standing? Is your proposal visible through your body in space? Are you clear about where your body is facing? Are you clear about the shape of your body? Is your idea simple? Is your idea seen/understood by the group? Are you always/never First/Second/Third/Fourth/Fifth? Do you rather choose to initiate or to follow?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

After a good amount of time playing with a still image exercise, this can be transformed into movement variation. One idea in this case can be an action, a repeating gesture or a way to travel the space. As “ideas” will show as patterns of travelling and different movements, be prepared for everything to get more complex. Enjoy it! Moving images will perhaps give more space for creativity. Decide if staying as simple as possible is still your goal. If the group finds it easy to read and embody ideas, let more complexity take place.

## **Author**

Inspired by Nina Martin



## SAY HELLO

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Creativity, Self-regulation, Teamwork, Adaptability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** search for new solutions, take risks, set boundaries, observe, regulate my emotions, listen, build trust, be self aware, be seen, accept differences, negotiate, communicate clearly, collaborate, work with limitations, shape the process, manage my energy

**Good for:** beginning of a session, structured, outdoors, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Saying 'hello' to each group members through movement, without words.

### Content

I would like to invite you to "say hello" to each other. But without words.

I will put a music on, and during one song we will take a walk through the whole space. And every time you meet, find a way to greet this person, say hello without words. It can be long, it can be short. You can search for new ways of saying hello. Let's experiment!

(After the first song)

Now I will put on another song. And we will do this task again, but this time try to not use any conventional way of saying hello. What can you do instead of shaking hands? Instead of hug? How can you say hello with a bigger distance, without touch? How can you say hello with a small movement? How can you say hello with a big movement? Let's check!

(After the second song)

Great! And now we will do this the third and last time. And now choose whatever way of communicating hello you want. You can mix conventional with non-conventional, and you can still create new possibilities. But this time, during the task, notice how you feel. What do you feel and when, how are your feelings changing (or not) when you meet another person? Maybe you want to meet with just some members of the group - that's OK, too. Do you feel anxious? Or shy? When? What is comfortable for you?

Maybe you don't want to meet with others any more, and you just want to take a walk through space - feel free to do it.

Everything is possible now.

## **Supportive questions**

Reflections: (individual - on paper writing/drawing // in pairs // in group) - How did it feel during each song? - How did you feel with limitations? - What helped you to be creative? What didn't help? - How did you negotiate, communicate with the person you've met? - How did you feel without words? Greeting someone without words was richer? Or not? - Did you approach each person with an idea how to say hello? Or did you just go and invent something by doing? Or both? - How did you react when someone moved differently than you expected? - How did you regulate emotions during this exercise? How did you feel, and what did you do with it? How did you take care of yourself? - How do you feel now? - How do you sense the group now?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This exercise supports creativity, non-verbal communication, feeling the group and building the trust and the same time develops self-awareness and self-regulation.

## SOMATIC WORD ASSOCIATION

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Learning ability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, be empathic, slow down, be self aware, accept differences, share, learn

**Good for:** beginning of a session, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters, end of a session, short

### Intro

Naming a soft skill and embodying it.

### Content

- Take a comfortable position- better standing but if it's not possible it may be sitting or laying down as well.
- Do a shaking for a minute and feel the sensations in the body right after.
- Do some stretching, following the body needs.
- And now when we're a bit more in our body- you'll hear the name of the soft skill and feel how it resonates in the body- what shape the body is taking, what associations, images, sentence, feeling come up. Take a moment for this. And then- please share in 1-3 words what came up for you.
- Repeat this for each soft skill.
- If you feel necessary, you may continue a discussion or define and/or describe each soft skill more.

### Notes for the facilitator

May be helpful in the beginning of the training program- for intro and discussion opening about each skill.

### Author

Derived from Jane Clapp (janeclapp.com)

## SPINE WITHIN 6 DIRECTIONS

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation, Learning ability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, regulate my emotions, slow down, be self aware, release tension, develop better habits, be in balance, sense the space around me, shape the process, learn, let go, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, structured, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters, homework, calming down

### Intro

Individual exploration paying attention to the 3 basic dimensions through the spine.

### Content

In a standing position: - Pay your attention to the spine- imagine it or feel it- whatever is more helpful for you. - Stretch your spine, become a bit taller - and pay attention to which body parts are involved- became more tensed to maintain this stretched up position. - Now relax the spine until you kind of collapse it while still staying straight. Feel how the tone of the body changes, which parts in your body you feel more and-how? Feel the atmosphere that possibly has changed (from the stretched position). - Slowly turn into the stretching position of the spine again. Feel the atmosphere now. Walk and play in your own pace with the stretching and relaxing/collapsing the spine. Feel the physical and emotional difference meanwhile. In a standing position again: - Put your hands on the sides of your ribs and breath to the sides- feel how you expand to the sides when you inhale. - Stretch relaxed arms to the sides and imagine your fingers becoming long enough that you can touch the walls of the space you're in. Play with this a bit and be open for the sensations in your fingers, hands, arms, the whole body. Relax the arms but keep the sensitivity, and turn into the walking. And sensing the space with your sides. - Continue walking and now pay attention to your front and back. - Use your imagination again- feel that the impulse for the walking forward comes from the imagined pushing from the backside. Feel how the walk feels, how you feel walking like this. - And now imagine that your front side is pulled forward- that's why you're walking forward. Feel how the walk feels, how you feel walking like this. -

Play with this choice of pushing from the back and pulling from the front when walking. Feel how your emotional atmosphere is changing up to the choice. Stop, close the eyes, be relaxed in your body (f. e., relax your joints but keep the standing position) and pay attention to both your spine and all 6 directions we've paid attention to- 1) up and down, 2) left and right, 3) front and back. Feel yourself centered within them.

## **Supportive questions**

Questions for sharing after the exercise: - How did/do you experience your spine? - How did you experience the changes in your body after each shift of the attention (f. e., stretched/collapsed spine)? - How did/do you perceive the 3 dimensions or 6 basic directions? - Did you experience the atmosphere changes when you shifted the attention (f. e., stretched/collapsed spine, pushing from the backside/pulling from the front)? How?

## STOP WHEN YOU HAVE AN ANSWER

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Leadership, Communication, Teamwork

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** think critically, make decisions, listen, observe, concentrate, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, manage my time, slow down, build trust, share, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, works online, outdoors

### Intro

Walking while thinking and stopping when having an answer.

### Content

- Arriving, doing what needs to be done in order to be ready to work (5 min).
- Walking around the space (4 min).
- How do you feel your walking today? How does your walking inform you about how do you feel?
- If you would like to feel differently at the moment how your walking could support that? How do you need to change your walking in order to change how you feel?
- Stopping and noticing the change.
- Find a place in the space where you want to stop. And stop there. Choose by seeing another place where you would like to arrive. And after my invitation, take the straightest path and go there. Go! (repeating several times, noticing the change in space and inner sensing) (4 min).
- Go and stop in your own timing.
- Anchoring the answers in the space.
- Next time, please, stop, when you have an answer to the question:
  - What is your relationship with the time in the aspect of planning?
  - What is your relationship with deadlines?
  - What is my strength?
  - How can I use my time most efficiently? FOR FACILITATOR: you can use your own set of questions depending on the process you are leading.

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Collecting information about yourself and others. Walking in the group while relating to time and space.

## STOPPING MOVEMENT

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation, Creativity

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, concentrate, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, be self aware, work with limitations, let go, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, precise, structured, works online, outdoors, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Moving with the music and stopping with each beat.

### Content

Prepare in advance energetic music with a strong beat. Instruction for the participants: You're invited to follow 4 main rules of the sMove exercise: - *Breath more* than in everyday life - Each movement *\_stops\_* on the beat of the music - Each movement *starts anew/different*\*\* \*\*after each stopping - Each movement *starts from the body*, not the mind (don't plan it- just let yourself move, take the task easy and trust your body to feel the rhythm). For each song I will give you a set of limitations on which to put your attention to. Variations of the further instructions: - Move your palms and feet - Move your elbows and knees - Move your spine/axis - Move your fingers and toes - Move your whole left side, try to relax the right one (and then switch the sides) - Move left arm and right leg (and then switch the sides) - Move the upper side of the body, try to be relaxed in the lower part - Move your face (suggestion to close the eyes to reduce the potential of laughter instead of the task) Feel free to create your own limitations. During the exercise remind the participants about all they need to be attentive to: breathing, taking it easy and moving in a relaxed state, to make new/different movement after each stopping (as it's quite impossible to really follow these rules each moment). After each task you can ask the participants to rest in a relaxed stance, breath fully and pay special attention to the sensations in the body parts they moved recently.



## Supportive questions

During the exercise: - How can you move with less effort? - How can you control but stay relaxed? During the sharing part: - What helped you to pay attention/divide the attention to all mentioned aspects at once? - How did you experience both- using the energy (by moving and paying attention) and gaining the energy (breathing and moving in a relaxed state) simultaneously? What can you learn from this?

## Notes for the facilitator

It is about dividing the attention to many aspects and staying (or even becoming more) physical. One of the main aims is to shift the attention from the mind to the body.

- Suggested to play better loud than soft music.
- Check if the participants have any pain in their body and suggest them to move with care so that they don't trigger it- don't make it stronger.
- Start each task/song with clapping on each beat so that participants are clear when to stop.
- The balance between the group staying curious and search beyond the comfort zone- after a couple of minutes the participants may become bored as they have tried out the usual possibilities of the movement- suggest them to pay attention to the "comfort zone" where they are in and invite them to step out of it. They may freely crib/inspire from the others!;) If you're curious about the philosophy of this method, see it's creator telling about it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJsfwuf6-Ao> (8:22')

## Materials needed

Music center, Prepared list of energetic music with clear beats

## Author

The Grinberg Method (TM) ([grinbergmethod.com](http://grinbergmethod.com))

## STUCK AND DANCING

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** inspire and be inspired, take risks, sense the space around me, work with limitations, let go, be aware of my body

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, long, freedom, works online, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Blindfolded dancing to music with both feet glued to the floor.

### Content

Divide the group into pairs. Ask pairs to decide who is going to move first. Describe the structure: One person will be moving with both feet glued to the floor and another person will be observing. - A person who moves first: Find a spot to stand up. Glue your feet to the floor. You cannot move the feet off the ground. Close your eyes. When the music comes let it flow through you without any obstacles. Surrender to it. And enjoy! - For the person who observes: Feel your body sensations while observing. Observe with non-judgemental soft eyes. - Change roles without using words. - Share your experience on your pair/or big group.

### Materials needed

Prepare a set of 6 songs beforehand. For each person there will be 3 pieces. We suggest to follow this rhythm: 1. rather slow and gentle; 2. highly energetic with bits and booms; 3. pleasant and medium speed. Choose songs that are easily recognised and popular. Something that can bring an positive and light atmosphere.

### Author

David Zambrano

## SUPPLEMENTING THE PICTURE

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Teamwork, Communication

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, make mistakes, observe, inspire and be inspired, tolerate uncertainty, be seen, accept differences, communicate clearly, sense the space around me, shape the process

**Good for:** structured, outdoors, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Composition exercise in 2 groups that keep supplementing each other.

### Content

- Divide the participants in 2 groups and the space in 2 fields/spaces- for each group. The participants are aside at the beginning.
- First one goes in the field/space, makes a simple position and freezes in it. Others one by one go in the field and supplement the composition with themselves (the position and the place to be is free).
- When both groups have made their still composition, they take a look at each other.
- Then- one by one they start to change the other group's composition by leaving the own group and supplementing the other one. A possibility- to make a sharing circle in the middle of the process and then continue (especially after the question "What would you try out differently if we'd continue after the sharing circle?")

### Supportive questions

What kind of supplementation did you use more often in the composition (complementing the existing picture, making a contra, wishing to strengthen the existing idea or changing it, etc)? What did you learn about your communication / teamwork skills? What helped you in your creativity? What didn't? What do you take from other's experience, from what you observed in others? What would you try out differently if we'd continue after the sharing circle?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This may be taken as the continuation of “ONE IDEA” exercise.

## **Author**

Sergey Ostrenko (iugte.com)

## SWEEPING. PART I

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Communication, Attention and focus, Leadership

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, concentrate, collaborate

**Good for:** long, older people, youngsters, structured

### Intro

A group exercise of walking in row from wall to wall, finding a common start and a common stop without talking

### Content

The participants form a line (not a row) at the one end of the room. The idea is to start simultaneously, walk from one side to the other without talking, stop together, turn and start again together without talking or giving any extra signs.

In the beginning, the opposite wall will help with finding the point at which to stop. Later, when the group is really sensing itself, the instructions can be given to find the stopping point at any moment. Finding a simultaneous start depends solely on the group members sensing each other.

The exercise could also be built up by doing it first with a pair, then with four people, then with eight etc., depending on the size of the group, of course.

### Supportive questions

What did you notice: a) in yourself? b) in the group? c) in the atmosphere?

- What did you take with you from this exercise?
- How does this exercise relate to teamwork?
- How does this exercise relate to communication?
- How does this exercise relate to leadership?
- How does this exercise relate to atmosphere?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This exercise leans very strongly on the sweeping score from contact improvisation. Please see “Sweeping part II” for a possible continuation. The exercise “stop together”, would work as a continuation as well.

## TENSING AND RELAXING

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, concentrate, manage my energy, be self aware, release tension, be in balance, be aware of my body, let go, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

Intensifying the feeling of the body by tensing and relaxing, so bringing the attention to the body and in this way calming the mind through grounding. One of the ways how to self-regulate, self-soothe. Most often the result is grounding and relaxation.

### Content

- Stand on both legs, feel the feet on the ground, close your eyes. • Pay attention to the breathing as it is - where, how it happens. • Breathe deeper than in everyday life.
- Shake the body by bending and straightening the knees, relax all the body and breathe a bit more than usually (1-2 minutes). • Breathe deep and feel the body sensations after the shaking (1 minute). • Tense your feet (for 3 seconds) and let go. Breathe and sense them afterwards. • Tense your knees (for 3 seconds) and let go. Breathe and sense them afterwards. • Continue like this further: tense your pelvis, belly, lower back, upper back, chest, shoulder line, arms, palms, neck, face, eyes, whole head. Choose the direction by yourself: from the feet up or from the head down. • Tense your whole body (for 3 seconds) and let go.
- Breathe deep, relax and sense all the body afterwards (3 minutes). • Feel the space around you.

*If applicable:* • Share your physical experience: A) in one word, B) in one sentence, C) freely and/or D) the experience of the space.

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Very short variation is to tense the whole body and let go for several times. Take time (at least 3 minutes) afterwards to stand relaxed, breathe wide and pay attention to the sensations of the body.

It is possible to make it even more detailed, for example, tense the feet, lower leg, knees, upper leg, etc.

## **Author**

Derived from the Grinberg Method.



# THE AIKIDO SWORD TEST

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, set boundaries, observe, regulate my emotions, search for new solutions, be in balance, manage conflicts

**Good for:** precise, exciting, older people, youngsters

## Intro

Cutting with an aikido sword to create a stress response and resolving the situation.

## Content

This exercise needs two rounds: first the test and then the resolution. The participants sit on the floor. Make sure they leave enough space for the “stage” where the exercise takes place. Each participant comes to the front one after the other to face the sword. 1st round: The instructions are: “I will make a straight cut from up to down so that I would hit you in the middle of your head. I’m interested in seeing how you deal with the situation. Are you ready? OK.”

When everybody is through, discuss the different responses you saw. What happened there? And, what would be a harmonious (aikido) solution? The answer is to stay with yourself, catch the moment when the sword is going up and move next to the swordsman, coming very close - at this distance the sword is no longer useful! Then, grab the handle between the hands of the swordsman and sit down, bringing the sword to the floor. The swordsman will follow.

2nd round: Let everyone practice the “harmonious” solution. Make sure everyone gets a feeling of success and leaves the stage feeling empowered.

## Notes for the facilitator

- The duration of the exercise depends on the amount of participants, since only one person at a time can be active.
- The person using the sword needs to have enough experience in handling the weapon: she needs to be able to aim properly and to stop the cut at any given moment.

- Even with adults in a safe atmosphere, standing in front of a sword can evoke strong feelings. Make sure the atmosphere is safe and supportive.
- The most usual reactions are running away, collapsing (becoming small), freezing, and trying to block the sword, which are basically stress responses.

## **Materials needed**

A wooden aikido sword (bokken). Or you can also use some other wooden object that creates a natural reaction to escape.

## TIMING AND SPATIAL AWARENESS

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Teamwork, Communication, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Leadership, Learning ability

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, make mistakes, give and receive feedback, set boundaries, listen, be flexible, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, set goals, inspire and be inspired, manage my time, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be empathic, search for new solutions, build trust, be self aware, be seen, negotiate, be in balance, release tension, develop better habits, solve problems, communicate clearly, manage conflicts, be aware of my body, sense the space around me, take risks, share

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, long, precise, freedom, outdoors, calming down, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Composition scores in space and time with a group.

### Content

1. In a group, practice making a standing circles in different spots in the space. Individually go to the sides of the room and return to the circle with the same timing. You can return to your own place or to any order. Pay attention to be evenly placed.
2. Do the same exercise with lines.
3. Practice filling the room evenly with walking people. Try to predict empty space, after someone walks there. This tasks guides us to read the body language of each team member.

### Supportive questions

Do you have habitual timing, are you always/never the first/last in the circle/line? Can you take the lead/let others take it? Does someone need to take the lead, could it happen simultaneously? Is your awareness mostly in yourself/others? Can you try to vary and oscillate your awareness from oneself to the group/to individuals of the group?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

It is good to repeat this exercise many times in different classes. Timing and reading body language is a skill, that can be practiced regularly.

## USING OTHER PEOPLE TO MOVE IN SPACE

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, observe, inspire and be inspired, be aware of my body, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, short, older people, youngsters

### Intro

This exercise gets the group moving in space by paying attention to the relations to each other. This playful exercise leads to situations with stillness and lots of movement.

### Content

Everyone is walking freely in space. Tell them to secretly choose two persons and - Stay away from them; - Stay in a line with them; - Stay between them. In the end, leave the task and just move freely in space again. Pay attention to how you perceive the space.

### Supportive questions

- How does the group organize itself during the tasks? E.g. does everyone start to walk in a circle, or what happens to the speed of moving? Bring the participants' attention to it: ask them to pay attention to their task and to the whole group.
- How does it feel if I don't manage to fulfill my task? How does it feel when I manage to fulfill my task?

### Notes for the facilitator

If choosing freely doesn't seem like a good option (e.g. someone might be left out), you can think of another way.

### Materials needed

Choosing big space to move in this exercise can be useful.

## WALK OF NO SURPRISES

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Attention and focus, Communication

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, inspire and be inspired, concentrate, be aware of my body, communicate clearly

**Good for:** precise, structured, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Short blind walk and making of still poses exercise in pairs. Silent, gentle and creative way to focus on sensations in the body. A way to connect body sensations with imagination.

### Content

In pairs: Two people stand facing each other. One person places open hands (facing ceiling) underneath the second person's hands (facing the floor) and supports their weight. The person whose hands are on the bottom will lead, the other closes her/his eyes. The leader walks backwards, "blind" partner always walks forward. The leader takes 3 - 5 slow steps, taking the partner for a short walk and then stops. Once they both arrive to a pause the leader puts the "blind" partners arms in a shape only using the hand touch they already share through their open hands. Their hands don't separate until the shape is created. The rest of the body can support and follow the shape of arms in a way chosen by the manipulated person. Once the shape is established the leader pauses to communicate the end of posture making and detaches her/his hands. As the "blind" person remains in a still pose the leader walks slowly one circle around her/his body to see it. After a full circle, the leader places her/his hands back to touch partners hands, where they were left, and gently places her/his body to neutral. They are now ready for the second walk.

One leader takes her/his partner for 5 such walks - 5 times changing the spot in the room and creating 5 shapes with the arms of the "blind" partner. This takes about 5 minutes after which participants change roles.

Exercise can be repeated twice. First time focusing on sensations in the body created by blind walk, touch of hands - leading and forming shape with arms, and by being left

alone in a specific pose, and looked at. Second time, attention can be drawn to images, that occur while in stillness. Participants imagination might be activated in creating visions on their bodies and surroundings (where are they, what is around, in what situation?).

After the second round a sharing of this experience can be proposed in a form of “poetic rapport” - calling words related to sensations and images.

## **Supportive questions**

Questions for the participant, when in the leading role: What are different ways to put someone’s arms in a shape? What is the pathway to achieving this goal? Can it be done by a short and direct movement, slow hesitant figuring out? How many movements does it take to create this shape? Questions for the participant, when in the following role: What are my body sensations, when my arms are being placed in a shape? How does it make me feel to stand still in this specific pose? Second time being in this role: What images come to me, when I am keeping this shape of my body? Where does my attention go? Does this shape and image bring any feelings or thoughts?

## **Author**

Andrew Morrish

## WALKING, SENSING, FEELING

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, observe, be empathic, be self aware, be aware of my body, sense the space around me

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, freedom, outdoors, calming down, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

All the exercise is experienced by walking in the space. It's about paying attention to the atmosphere as well as: - How it is connected to our bodily experience, - How we're able to change it. Up to your/group's wishes and creativity this exercise can be prolonged to 1h or even more.

### Content

All the exercise is happening while walking. Walk freely in the space. Go where there is more free space. - Sense physically how you're walking - how the feet, the ankles, knees, pelvis, shoulders are moving, how you feel every moment changing tension and relaxation in your leg muscles and in the whole body. - Take a look in the eyes of each person that's approaching. Feel the atmosphere in the space. - Continue to walk around the space but *avoid looking* on anyone. Feel the atmosphere changing. - Continue to walk and raise your *\_chin\_* slightly (not more than 2 cm up). Pay attention to the others, to the whole group. How do you sense the atmosphere in the space? (You can ask the participants to name it while walking.) - And now - *\_lower your chin\_* slightly. What changes - in the way you look at people, the way they look at you, in your own mood, in the common mood in the space? Release the chin, walk freely. - Feel how your *\_heels\_* are touching the ground, and let them touch the ground stronger. What has changed in the atmosphere? Relax, walk freely. - Pay attention to your *face*. We usually keep some tension in there. Let's drop it as much as possible - relax your face on your maximum. Feel how the other areas of your body want to relax, let it happen. And pay attention to the people in the space - how do you feel the emotional atmosphere now? - Put a *\_smile\_* on your face as you're happy to meet everyone approaching. Don't relax it. See how it changes the mood in the space. Relax



the face, walk freely. - While walking, remember or imagine the situation where you were *excited*, full of energy, very goal oriented and eager to make things happen. Feel how this changed your pace, the tone of your body, how only the memory or image shapes the character and changes the energy level. Pay attention to the level of the energy and mood in the whole space. Relax, walk freely. - Let yourself walk *as relaxed as possible* - as in the park, at the seaside, in the woods in a very pleasant weather and lots of free time to enjoy with no hurry. Feel how the atmosphere in the space is changing, how your own tone level of the body and your pace is different. Up to what you plan to continue with, feel free to swap: if you'd like the group to be more passive, let the sequence stay as it is, if you'd like to activate the group, swap the 2 last tasks - finish with the active one.

## Supportive questions

What is changing: - In the way you see and feel people? - In the way you perceive them looking at you? - In your own mood? - In the common mood and atmosphere in the whole space?

## Notes for the facilitator

Feel free to shorten or expand the exercise by taking some tasks out or playing by inventing more tasks. You can switch on the walking feet counter for your own fun to measure how much you've walked during this exercise;)

## Author

Inese Ločmele (somatika.lv)

## 3 CHANNELS

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Attention and focus, Learning ability, Teamwork, Leadership, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** give and receive feedback, make mistakes, set boundaries, listen, concentrate, observe, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be empathic, build trust, be seen, be self aware, accept differences, share, develop better habits, be aware of my body, be inclusive, learn, work with limitations

**Good for:** long, structured, older people, youngsters

### Intro

This exercise is an exploration of 3 channels of expression: moving, drawing and talking. It consists of 3 types of working: by myself, with a partner and with the whole group. It can increase understanding of how to use these 3 channels as tools for learning and self-regulation.

### Content

This exercise will have 4 parts. I will explain them one by one, before each part. But first - find a partner. Decide who is person "A" and who is person "B" in your pair. Part 1) Person A takes a place in the middle of the room. Person B places herself on the site so that s/he sees person A. The task for person A: dance for 5 minutes. The task for person B: witness the dance of your partner for 5 minutes. Observe what you see. What do you feel in your body? What else appears? Some emotions? Any associations, images? For everyone: try not to judge, to not use any evaluation, like good or bad, nice, etc. Just dance or see, and that's it. Part 2) Make a drawing. Try to pour your experience on the paper. Person A - you draw your experience of dancing, person B - you draw your experience of witnessing. The good news is - you don't have to know how to draw! It can be abstract, non-literal, intuitive. It can be a few lines or coloring the paper. It can be expression as it is. There is no wrong way to do it. You have 5 minutes for this. Part 3) Meet in pairs and talk about your experiences. You can show each other your drawings, but you don't have to. Did you find something interesting in this exercise? Did something surprise you? Did you get bored? Frustrated? What did you learn about yourself in this task?

Now - change the roles in pairs. Person B goes inside, person A is becoming a witness. Repeat parts 1-3.

Part 4) Now let's meet in the circle with everyone. We have 10 minutes to share our experience. (Depending on the number of participants, duration of the class and group need for verbal sharing, this part can be much longer or shorter.)

Part 5 (optional) You can make a big group drawing at the end, on one big piece of paper.

*DANCE: If this exercise is part of a class connected to the topic of Learning Ability, you can leave the dancing task open. If not, or if you wish, you can add a topic for dance. For example: - Learning - How do I learn new things easily? - Discovering a new planet Etc., depending on your aim in this task.*

*Important: - Give participants freedom in deciding what they want to share and what they don't - If you see that someone is struggling with the task - help her/him. Maybe they need more tips, your attention, or just to hear that their way of fulfilling this task - is ok.*

## Supportive questions

- *What did you learn about yourself?*
- *Which way of expression is the easiest for you: movement / drawing / conversation?*
- *Which way is the most challenging for you?*
- *What kind of challenge it is?*
- *Do you see connection from this experience to the way that you learn new things?*

## Materials needed

Materials for drawing: piece of paper for each participant and crayons or pastels or paint. Also, for additional part 5) - big piece of paper

## 4 POSITIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Learning ability

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** think critically, give and receive feedback, set boundaries, observe, inspire and be inspired, tolerate uncertainty, search for new solutions, be self aware, slow down, solve problems, develop better habits, be in balance, shape the process, learn, be aware of my body

**Good for:** works online, precise, structured, outdoors, older people, youngsters, beginning of a session, end of a session

### Intro

4 both physical and mental positions to try out when you're in front of the challenge, decision-making or a goal.

### Content

This exercise gives the possibility to meet the challenge/goal/decision from 4 main angles and may help to cultivate the qualities of each of them. - Take a moment to contemplate- which challenge, decision or a goal is active for you to choose to work with now. You will work on it by yourself, and you may share or not to share it at the end. - After a light warming up by moving and listening to the body, everybody stands on both feet.

Let's call challenge/goal/decision a "challenge" to generalize and be clear.

Let's take the 1st of 4 positions to contemplate your challenge: stand in a "Warrior" position- legs wide open, turn to one side (left or right), weight is on the front leg that is lightly bent, the arm of the same side stretched forward as there would be a sword in it and look at the top of the imagined sword. - Feel how is it to be in this position. - Is it more comfortable and habitual for you, or opposite? - What qualities does this position bring up to you? Now, thinking about your challenge to find the answers from within, from your body to these questions: - How do I want to continue? - What movement I want to take next? - What I commit to? - What is really necessary to focus on? - What is meaningful enough to fight for, to be courageous for? Now move in the space still embodying the qualities this position gave you and letting to still contemplate the

questions if you like. (Now is the possibility for a sharing circle that could enrich and encourage continuing. If you do it online- for making it more smoothly- the participants may write the answers as 1-5 words and the facilitator reads them aloud.)

Let's take the 2nd of 4 positions to contemplate your challenge: Take a "King" position- stand with feet not wider than your hips, your front side is relaxed, your vertical axis is both striving upwards and feeling the ground holding you- feel how both of these forces support you. Help yourself to recall the dignity while being in this position- as standing with a crown on your head. And connect to a grounded responsibility. - Feel how is it to be in this position. - Is it more comfortable and habitual for you, or opposite? - What qualities does this position bring up to you? Now, thinking about your challenge to find the answers from within, from your body to these questions: - Where is my responsibility in this? - Can I give some part of my responsibility to others for letting them to grow, mature and flourish? - How can I flourish and thrive in this situation? - How can others flourish and thrive in this situation? Feel your vertical axis that is both supported and uplifted by Earth's forces (the gravity and centrifuge) meanwhile. Take a walk in the space still embodying the qualities this position gave you and letting to still contemplate the questions if you like. (A possibility for a sharing circle about this 2/4 experience)

Let's take the 3rd of 4 positions to contemplate your challenge: Take a "Magician" position- take off your fingertips as high as it is comfortable, raise your arms, tilt your head as if you're looking to the sky, open up your chest and move your fingers. This is a bit unstable and shaking position- research what it brings up for you. Now, thinking about your challenge to find the answers from within, from your body to these questions: - What can I create during or through this challenge? - What inspiration am I open to? - What broader perspective can I open up in this situation? Take a walk in the space still embodying the qualities this position gave you and letting to still contemplate the questions if you like. (A possibility for a sharing circle about this 3/4 experience)

Let's take the last of 4 positions to contemplate your challenge: Take a "Lover" position- stand with both feet on the ground, the weight is more on the back of the feet/heels, the spine is relaxed, the arms almost at the height of your shoulders like if you were holding a big balloon (or- a ballet position of the arms, if this comparison helps better) and you look in the space between your arms. - Feel how is it to be in this position. - What do you imagine there in this space between your arms? - What qualities does this position bring up to you? Turn your palms to the inside of the space you hold: - What should I take care of in this situation? - What should I bring my attention to while I'm

looking into this space between my arms? Now turn your palms to the outside: - What do I need to exclude, avoid, refuse? - To whom should I say “no” so that I can say “yes” to what is inside (my arms, what I care about)? Take a walk in the space still embodying the qualities this position gave you and letting to still contemplate the questions if you like. (A possibility for a sharing circle about this 4/4 experience)

It may be useful to do \_at least \_1 round of these 4 positions once again- to let the participants go through contemplations of each quality and so- to embody and ground it even deeper.

Common sharing is strongly suggested- it helps to ground and embody the ideas as well as to enrich each other with the possibilities of the experience.

## **Supportive questions**

For the common sharing: - What did you learn from these 4 perspectives on yourself as a person? As a leader? As a part of the team? - What did you recognize as your common quality? Which was the most uncomfortable one? What can you learn from it? - What ideas came up to you about balancing these qualities? - Which qualities you can continue to observe and learn/develop from your team members or people around in your daily life?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This exercise is derived from the martial arts meeting life coaching

## **Author**

Mark Walsh

## BASIC AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT PRACTICE

**Soft Skills:** Attention and focus

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, concentrate, slow down, build trust, be seen

**Good for:** beginning of a session, precise, calming down, youngsters, older people, outdoors, works online

### Intro

**Authentic Movement** is a simple form of self-directed **movement** done with eyes closed and attention directed inward, in the presence of at least one witness.

### Content

Working in pairs. Roles will change after full circle of moving-reflecting-sharing.

One person moves with eyes closed. The second person is a witness. The mover follows impulses from the body (from within). It is not important how a movement looks like, it comes from the internal motivation to move. Sound and stillness are welcome. The timing of the movement part may vary 7 - 15 - 20 minutes. For beginners, who are doing this kind of practice for the first time, a shorter duration would be most beneficial.

After moving with eyes closed, the mover gets 5 minutes to reflect on their experience (by thinking or writing down).

After reflection the mover meets with her/his witness to talk for 5-7 min. The goal is to describe both moving and witnessing experience. The mover speaks first. It is recommended to go through the experience in the present tense (e.g. I am sitting on the floor, I am touching the floor with my left elbow). Then the witness takes her/his turn to describe what they saw.

### Author

It is a variation on movement practice initiated by Mary Starks Whitehouse

## BEING ONE

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Leadership, Creativity

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, be flexible, inspire and be inspired, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be empathic, let go

**Good for:** long, outdoors, youngsters, exciting, structured

### Intro

Movement exercise in quartets with a discussion about leadership.

### Content

- Divide the participants in tribes of four and ask them to stand in the shape of a diamond - one person should be in front, two in the second line and one more behind. All of them should face the same direction, and it should be clear who is standing in the front.
- The person who is standing in the front is now a leader of the group of four. The three other group members should repeat whatever the leader is doing - movements and sounds. All four of them should act as an organic whole, as one tribe.
- If the leader changed the direction he or she is facing - for example, turned to the left or right - there would be another person standing in the front of the tribe. At the moment of turning this another person becomes a leader of the group, and the remaining three members are following the actions of the one standing in front of them. There are no rules how often or in what sequence the leader should change - whenever the direction that the team is facing changes, there is a new leader.
- Suggest the tribes to start with random simple and quite slow movements - their ultimate goal is to act all as one. Once the group have succeeded with simple movements, challenge them to create a story together - whenever the leadership changes, the new leader continues what the previous person has started in a way that it makes sense.



- Let each group practice building a story together, and then encourage to interact with other tribes.
- Entire movement practice should last at least 8 minutes. Then call the groups together and give them 5 minutes time to share and exchange feedback with each other - how was it to lead, and how was it to follow each other?
- Invite all the tribes to continue again with the movement, but this time all of them are facing each other, thus it is not known who is the leader. Emphasize that the goal is to act as one and encourage them to follow whatever comes up.
- After 8 minutes, give groups another 5 minutes to share and compare how was their collaboration and group atmosphere in the first movement round and how was it in the second round. Suggest them to focus on differences and challenges in each movement round.
- Conclude the exercise with a guided reflection in the entire group or smaller groups using supporting questions.

## Supportive questions

- What did you notice about yourself as a leader and as a follower during this exercise?
- What did you do to help your tribe to succeed?
- How did you develop a connection within the group? Was there something that blocked the connection?
- What do you notice about the ways in which people talk about leadership in your professional context? What might this suggest in relation to their assumptions about the nature and purposes of leadership?
- What have been the most significant factors that have influenced your own approach to leadership?
- Do you and those with whom you work see yourselves as part of a community, and to what extent do members of that community actively engage in leadership?
- What opportunities exist in your workplace for people, other than those in formal management positions, to demonstrate leadership?
- Are there any groups or individuals who are excluded or have withdrawn from the leadership process? How might things be different if they were more actively involved?

- Which are the main barriers to implementing a shared leadership approach in your context? How could these be addressed?
- What helps to manage teamwork well in situations of ambiguity and change?
- How could a team or community function without a leader? What are the risks and benefits of having no leader?

## Notes for the facilitator

It can also be used as a team building task for practising creative thinking, presence, listening and going with each other's ideas.

If your context requires you to provide participants also with more theoretical knowledge, you might include an introduction to concepts of shared, distributed and collective leadership as alternatives to those of the industrial model where power and control are centralized into the hands of the few.

A shared leadership perspective shifts the focus on leadership from person and position to process and is now widely advocated across different sectors. However, many people still struggle to manage the work and decision-making processes in a shared manner or are afraid of being in the role of a leader, therefore it can be helpful to build skills of sharing leadership and understanding what individuals and institutions can do to help develop and sustain more inclusive and shared leadership cultures and practices in their work places.

Learning to share the leadership in the workplace can boost also active citizenship and participation, thus basing on the experience of this exercise a discussion can be developed also around how much we expect from public authorities to solve the issues within some society and how much we are ready to take initiative and feel responsible for shaping environment in which we work and live. The distribution of leadership requires, among other things, a shift in thinking about the allocation of responsibility, resources, power and influence that brings into question common assumptions about how groups, institutions and societies function.

## Materials needed

The bigger space you have for this exercise the better it is. Best done outdoors. Get in advance a Tibetan singing bowl or some other instrument that can be heard from a large distance in order to be able to call the participants back. If you stay inside, you might use a few markers and a flipchart board to make notes from the discussion and reflection.

## BRAINSTORM ON SOFT SKILLS

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Communication

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** take risks, shape the process, make decisions, be flexible, collaborate, search for new solutions, accept differences, manage conflicts, be inclusive, let go

**Good for:** long, beginning of a session, end of a session, freedom, works online, outdoors, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Independent work in small groups. Brainstorming on the soft skills. Practicing decision-making in the group. Practicing formulating definitions by asking questions.

### Content

Divide a group into smaller units (3-4 ppl). Explain the structure. 20min - In your small unit choose soft skills you want to work with. It can be one or more, the decision belongs to you. - Once you decide on the soft skill/s, discuss what does it mean to you and formulate questions that can describe this soft skill/s. - You can add an image or movement to your soft skill description. Feel how does it feel in your body, what kind of movement can it represent? - Prepare to present your work to the rest of the group. Choose how you do it.

15-30 min - depending on the amount of people Give 5-7 min for presentations of soft skills of each group.

15min Leave time to share your experience.

### Supportive questions

- What did you learn about decision-making in this process?
- What did you learn about your strategies in decision-making process?
- What would you like to change? Or amplify?
- How does asking questions change the process of defining soft skills? Was it helpful?
- What was challenging/beneficial for you in this process?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

Works better after a longer movement exercise. After the brainstorm leave time to come back to the body. You can use any of 1-min short exercises for this purpose.

## CONNECTIONS

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Teamwork

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** collaborate, be inclusive, work with limitations

**Good for:** long, precise, structured, exciting, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Fun exercise in groups of 7-10 that requires a lot of cooperation and allows to experience one of the main principles of creative thinking - making connections.

### Content

- Divide the participants in smaller groups of 7 to 10 people each. Ask each group to stand in the circle and face each other.
- Ask each person to take one pose of their choice and freeze in it. Suggest participants to choose poses in which it is possible to spend some time without getting exhausted or suffering from pain and which are accessible to different types of bodies.
- Invite each person to create a short transition from their own pose to the pose of the person which is standing on their right side. Thus using both poses as a starting and finish points, a short movement will be created. Ask each person to memorize the movement that he or she created. To make sure that participants understand the task, it is the best, if people create and demonstrate movements one by one, in the sequence as they are standing in the circle.
- After the first demonstration of movements, keeping the sequence as people are standing in the circle, ask each person to teach others the movement that they just created by transitioning from one pose to another. The group should practice each movement until they have learnt it, before starting to learn the next movement.
- When participants have learnt all the movements, suggest them to choose music and put all the movements together in a one short dance choreography - without changing their sequence. They can experiment with different types of

music, as well as adapt the movements a little, if something is not really working for the group.

- Depending on the number of people in each circle, explaining the exercise and learning the movements and creating a dance can take up to 40 minutes, and it can feel rushed. Make sure there is enough time for each group to succeed. When the groups are ready, invite them to perform for each other.
- Conclude the exercise with reflection and discussion in the entire group. Start with giving them a space to express their emotions and impressions and to describe what happened in each circle during the exercise. Continue with exploring how this exercise illustrates the important principles of the creative thinking and what helps us to be more creative, selecting the supporting questions.

## Supportive questions

- What helped you to produce a more creative outcome during this exercise? Was the given structure of creating choreography helpful or disturbing? Why?
- When are you the most creative, and why do you think that is? What do you do to get into your creative mode?
- Do you think creativity is innate or learned?
- Is it easier to be creative when you work alone or in the group? During this exercise did you notice something in the work of your group that helped to boost your creativity or reduced and blocked it? What was it?
- How do you deal with creativity blocks?
- What are your personal strategies to break your assumptions and thinking patterns?
- What can be done in order to nurture creativity of groups and teams?

## Notes for the facilitator

After the exercise and discussion you might introduce the participants to “Making Novel Combinations” and “Connecting the Unconnected” as important creative thinking strategies. Michael Michalko offers a great review of both of them in his book “Cracking Creativity”, describing creativity as the ability to generate associations and connections between dissimilar subjects and sharing various creative thinking methods to force you to come up with different thinking patterns that would result in new, unconventional, and novel ideas.

In order to further illustrate how making connections can help us to achieve a more creative outcome, conclude the session with a writing or brainstorming exercise that would be based on the same principle, for example, give the group members a pack of old magazines and ask them to find and cut out 10 random words that attract their attention. It should be done in less than 5 minutes. Then invite them to write a short text about some topic including all of these 10 random words - it might be a brief reflection of what helps them be more creative or what can we do to create a group atmosphere that boosts creativity and imagination - choose a topic that is relevant for the professional context of the participants.

You can also use the experience of the exercise to introduce another helpful principle of creative thinking, often called as “Yes, and...”. It is a rule-of-thumb in improvisational theater that suggests that a participant should accept what another participant has stated and then expand on that line of thinking. This rule is also used in business and other organizations as a principle that improves the effectiveness of the brainstorming process, fosters effective communication, and encourages the free sharing of ideas, especially by preventing immediate judgement, evaluation and rejection of ideas. The particular dance exercise requires participants to follow the same principle and develop a movement by accepting what the other person has offered.

## **Materials needed**

Large space and a sound system.

## FAVOURITE MUSIC RESONANCE IN THE BODY

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Adaptability, Attention and focus, Learning ability, Creativity

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** develop better habits, observe, let go, listen, inspire and be inspired, be aware of my body

**Good for:** long, precise, freedom, structured, works online, calming down, exciting, outdoors, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

This exercise shows how your body has adapted to your favorite music. You can use this adaptation to support your movement training and/or other activities. Also, it gives an embodied viewpoint to your personal history.

### Content

- Make a playlist with your favourite music from your past. Altogether 30 min. Include only pieces that you have listened repeatedly. Why? Because this means that the sound, rhythm etc is deep in your memory.
- Do not use more than 10min for choosing the music. If choosing seems difficult, make it easy. This is supposed to be done intuitively. Remember, later in your life you can listen to whatever music again. This list will be used only for this exercise.
- Play your music and dance, walk or run inside or outside. Do not think - feel when your body starts resonating with the music. Let this guide you to movement. You can stay with only one piece, repeat it - or dance through the whole playlist.
- Maybe you recognise that you move exactly to the rhythm of certain music, maybe it fits to your typical tempo or invites you to change the one you want to be in. Some other music might make you happy for no obvious reason. Or give you extra self-esteem.
- Do not expect, analyse or think much cognitively. Do not focus on emotions but body sensations and movement. Let the body tell by sensing - how this exact music was/is your all-time favourite. Notice how you can develop your dance/movement with these body sensations.

### Supportive questions

Please do not analyse but use intuition both when making the playlist and when noticing its effects to your movement. What do you sense? How/where do you feel the



movement initiation? What are the physical effects of the music? How the music plays your body?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

When working with a group you can collect pieces of music from each person.

## **Materials needed**

Access to make a playlist and listen to it while moving.

## LOOKALIKE IN A SUPERMARKET

**Soft Skills:** Leadership, Adaptability, Teamwork, Communication, Self-regulation, Attention and focus, Learning ability, Creativity

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, set boundaries, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, inspire and be inspired, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, manage my time, be empathic, search for new solutions, regulate my emotions, slow down, build trust, be self aware, be seen, solve problems, be flexible, negotiate, accept differences, share, release tension, be in balance, develop better habits, be responsible, communicate clearly, be aware of my body, manage conflicts, let go, set goals, learn, make mistakes, work with limitations, shape the process, sense the space around me, make decisions, think critically, be inclusive

**Good for:** long, freedom, works online, outdoors, calming down, exciting, precise, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

This practice starts small by finding your lookalike in a supermarket or in another public space. It develops into a lifelong practice of body language, rapport, and the ability to collaborate with a wider variety of people. Listening to body language – our own and others – is the vital core of working life soft skills.

### Content

- Go to a relatively large supermarket.
- Look at other people without staring. Let your eyes wander around. Keep doing your groceries meanwhile.
- Find people that on some levels are your lookalikes. Do this in sections, by focusing at one thing at a time: walking style, rhythm of movements, clothing, expressions, interaction with other people, how the person connects to the surrounding.
- Reflect what is it in your behaviour and movement patterns, that makes them your lookalikes. Do you like what you see?
- Please do not judge yourself since this is a characteristic of the human species. People tend to like people who remind themselves because they feel familiar.
- How can you use this knowledge to improve your soft skills? See the adaptations of this exercise.

## Supportive questions

Can you use this information about yourself to be more familiar to others? Does this feel pretentious or unethical? How can you differentiate a skill and a purpose you use it for? How can this practice improve your working life soft skills?

## Notes for the facilitator

You can adopt this practice to any situation. It helps you to bond and to make yourself available to others.

Human beings are social animals. Social norms require certain type of behavior. There is a phenomenon called rapport in body language. Human beings investigate and bond to each other by adopting their body language. Rapport takes place especially in the beginning of the relationship. After bonding less rapport is needed since we can read each other better. Still, it affects a lot to our relationships and behaviour. We tend to categorise people to “my kind”, “my type”, “miss fit chemistry” etc.

It may first feel pretentious to practice rapport on purpose, since we mainly do it unconsciously. Still, if your rapport skills are limited, other people among collaborators may misread your level of motivation, skills or commitment. By practicing you can develop your rapport skills and make collaboration easier.

If rapport comes easily you may take it as granted. By practicing you can read your environment better and stop judging people based on their rapport skills. It widens your possibilities to collaborate with wide variety of people and relieves struggling “with chemistry”.

## METAPHORS OF CHANGE

**Soft Skills:** Learning ability, Self-regulation, Adaptability

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** be flexible, search for new solutions, tolerate uncertainty, let go, learn, take risks

**Good for:** long, freedom, works online, older people, youngsters, outdoors

### Intro

The exercise allows exploring how group members relate and respond to change.

### Content

Ask the group members to list all the words they associate with change. Do not let individuals think too much before giving a response. List their ideas on a flip-chart sheet.

When the ideas are exhausted spend time reviewing the list. - Are the words mainly positive or negative? - Is change generally something the group embraces or generally worries about?

Ask them to take photographs that reflect change in some way. *It might be their home task*, as looking for images might be too time-consuming to fit it within one session. They might look for images around or work with their own bodies or bodies of other participants to represent change.

In the subsequent meeting invite the group to share and reflect on their images. - What do their images say about their response to change? - What lessons can group members learn from looking at these images? - What are the ideal conditions required to make change lasting? - What about situations where the decision to change is forced on them and isn't a choice? - What helps or hinders the process of change?

After exploring the photos, you might deepen the discussion using the supportive questions and look closer at the change processes in the workplace of the group members.

## Supportive questions

- Is change seen as something positive, or is it something viewed with suspicion?
- Is change understood as a painful process, either difficult or challenging, or as a source of stimulation, an antidote to boredom and routine?
- How is change perceived in your organization?
- How do you feel when there is a change happening in your organization?
- How can you improve the process of change so that it will be smoother?
- Must there be a change? Why?
- Can people be taught or learn to enjoy change?

## Notes for the facilitator

This exercise may consist of 2 parts and home task in between them

## Materials needed

Flipchart paper, pens, photographic equipment or phone, projector, a printer to print photos or a screen.

## MIMICS AND EMOTIONS

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Teamwork, Communication, Attention and focus, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, give and receive feedback, listen, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, be empathic, regulate my emotions, be self aware, be seen, share, be aware of my body

**Good for:** long, structured, exciting

### Intro

Helps to raise awareness of the physicality of the emotions and their suppression. It's also about being seen and being allowed to observe. It may vary from emotionally demanding to excitingly delighting task for the group.

### Content

Divide the participants into 2 groups. Each group makes a row and then - sits row to row in front of each other. Each participant then has a partner sitting in front.

One row is going to have a task. The other row's task is to observe the partner in front, keep calm and pay attention to how one is regulating the emotions that possibly appear, asking this kind of questions: - What do you do to not react to what you see? - What do you do with your breathing? What happens if you relax it and breathe more freely? - What do you do with your shoulders, jaw, other body parts? - Which are most tensed body parts? What happens if you relax them? - What helps to not react? - Other observations. Partners are keeping the eye contact.

1. One row is exploring the muscles of the face, slowly tensing and releasing them. The other group - observers - try the best to not react to what they see and explore their strategies of how they do this. Both partners are keeping the eye contact. 1 minute to each group. Change the partners (tested as the fastest: when one row stays where they sit and the other - moves one place forward and the first person in a row moves at the back of the row).

2. The same once again (for going deeper in exploration). Change the partners.

3. The same - one row explores the muscles of the face, slowly tensing and releasing them. Participants should also: - Check what emotions come while they are playing with their mimics, - Stop for a couple of seconds when they catch an emotion, name it for themselves (in silence), and then move on. The observing row is continuing to explore in their body-mind their tries not to react to what they observe. Change the partners.
4. Repeat the same plus try out the mimics that the participants didn't do yet (suggest remembering from recently seen from the partners around).
5. Repeat the same, but exaggerate the intensity of the face muscle work to 150% (do it very expressive).
6. Repeat the same, but reduce the intensity of the face muscle work to 5-20% (do it very slightly).
7. Do the opposite - you (the facilitator) name 4 emotions within 2 minutes and the participants try out to sense them and keep in their face till the next comes.

Here are some tested variations but feel free to use your own choices. - anger, laziness, despair, enthusiasm; - resentment, joy, shame, peacefulness; - disappointment, inspiration, irritation, care; - longing, satisfaction, guilt, courage; - clarity, interest, concern, merriment.

At the end of this class, it is very recommended having a sharing about the experience of exploration, as well as about the experience of observation. Refer to Supporting Questions for discussion ideas.

## Supportive questions

During the process ask the participants this kind of questions, mainly for the observer's row: What do you do to not react to what you see? What do you do with your breathing? What happens if you relax it and breathe more freely? What do you do with your shoulders, jaw, other body parts? Which are most tensed body parts? What happens if you relax them? What helps to not react? Other observations.

At the end, in the sharing time: How was it to be seen? How was it to be allowed to watch the other for such a long time? How the atmosphere changed when half of the group is actively keeping/experiencing one emotion? What helped to keep your emotions with you (by body/by mind)? How did you do this? What happened/changed when you relaxed the tensions? How was it to be in front of the person that is connected to her/his feelings and is expressing them?

## Notes for the facilitator

The exercise may be both extended and shortened depending on the aim of the class and the timing: - You can extend the suggested 1 minute timing, but keep it equal for both sides and keep in mind that this is quite hard work in all body-mind levels (body-mind-feelings), so suggested maximum length of one round per one row is 2 minutes. - You can take out some steps (1. - 7.). - The sharing may happen after each round or time after time.

Sharing is strongly suggested at the end of the whole exercise as the emotions that arise during it must be digested and sharing is one good option to provide it.

## Materials needed

As the exercise requires sitting for a longer time, provide some pillows or mats to sit on, if the floor is cold.

## Author

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## MOTIVATION TO BEGIN THE BREAK DURING WORK WITH COMPUTER

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Self-regulation, Learning ability, Attention and focus, Adaptability

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** manage my energy, concentrate, regulate my emotions, manage my time, search for new solutions, release tension, be self aware, develop better habits, be aware of my body, work with limitations

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, precise, structured, works online, outdoors, freedom, exciting, calming down, older people, youngsters, homework

### Intro

Using a timer, music and movement to insert breaks in your work. Works only if you are loyal to yourself. Just obey without thinking. An easy way to motivate yourself.

### Content

- Notice that you have no motivation to continue working neither initiation to have a break.
- Set a timer for 5 min. Get music ready, either something you love or hate, not neutral.
- Stand up, stay standing for a little while. Stand on one leg and then on another one. Support balancing with your arms. Notice the level of frustration.
- Turn music on. Repeat the previous, standing on one leg, etc. Then start moving your pelvis, change the standing leg from time to time. Give in, let go, dance until the timer sets off.
- Notice your state.
- Get yourself out of the dance floor. Set the timer. Get back to work. Repeat after 25 minutes.

You just have to do this. React right after the timer sets off. Do not analyse. You have a 5 sec time window, do not lose it. Motivation often happens after the action. When you're already dancing, the motivation follows. That changes your physical state. Use that motivated state to inspire your work. It is about chemistry.

### Supportive questions

Where are you? Still writing? Did you hear the timer? Did you set the timer? Have you considered other kind of music?

## MY BODY IS...

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** observe, slow down, be aware of my body, listen

**Good for:** structured, works online, older people, youngsters, long

### Intro

A self awareness exercise that involves drawing.

### Content

- Invite the participants to find a comfortable position and to close their eyes if possible. Encourage them to take several deep breaths.
- Guide the participants to tune in to their body and then connect to each part. Tell them the following: "Take a couple of minutes to tune into your body. Imagine you could check around inside your body, and see what is there, what you can discover. Begin with checking inside your head, and move your awareness gradually from your head down through your body to your toes."
- After around 5 minutes ask them to take a sheet of paper and draw their body outline.
- Give a further instruction: "The next step is to see if you can imagine moving your awareness through your body and look for the different feelings I am going to mention. If you find them, draw them within your body outline. It will be like creating a map of what's happening in your body. Choose colors and patterns that best describe what you find."
- "Then relax and wait for the next thing to look for. If you don't find anything just keep on moving your awareness from your head down through your body to your toes, as in the beginning of the exercise. And wait for the next thing that I mention."
- "Look for the things I mention in your entire body, in your head, your shoulders, your arms and hands, your chest, belly, hips, legs and feet. Sometimes you might find a feeling in one part of your body, sometimes in several places."

- Ask them to search for six to eight of these: cool and cold, warm and hot, pain and pleasure, sadness and happiness, anger and loving, weakness and strength, fear and courage, tight, tense and relaxed, soft and free areas, parts you don't like and favorite parts, upset or worried areas and peaceful parts. After each element give at least 1 minute to look for it and draw.
- Encourage them to add to the drawing anything else they have found inside that has not been mentioned.
- Ask them to create a legend of the map beside the outline, showing what was found.
- Create a space where participants could share the drawings with each other in pairs or small groups. Encourage them to describe what was found and how they felt during the exercise. Invite them to draw out connections between what was found in the body and what is happening in their life.

## Supportive questions

- What do you notice when you look at your body outline?
- Are there any new connections or new understandings?
- What might need to happen in the future?

## Notes for the facilitator

A great starter exercise for refining the connection to the body. It might reveal individual, personal and professional challenges that can be addressed in further sessions. Using body outline drawing to map emotions and sensations is also useful to develop awareness of the connection between body sensations and emotions.

This exercise is suitable as one of the first exercises in order to practice listening to the body's signals and wisdom. It might help learners to connect to their inner world and bodily life, in case they have lost this connection. As the character of the exercise is very personal, you can help to transfer this experience to the professional life of the participants by asking to describe bodily sensations that they often notice while being at work and what these sensations might suggest and mean. You can also develop a more general discussion around the importance and role of the body at work, in learning, and how noticing signals from the body and being more connected to our bodies can help us to navigate better through different professional challenges.

Depending on their experience and comfort with the movement, the first part of tuning into one's body might also be done in a movement.

## **Materials needed**

A3 or larger format drawing paper for each person, drawing materials, pens and paper for making notes.

## NAVIGATING AMBIGUITY

**Soft Skills:** Creativity, Learning ability, Adaptability

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** be flexible, tolerate uncertainty, let go, take risks

**Good for:** long, structured, youngsters, older people

### Intro

A series of short movement activities and reflection questions for exploring the relationship with ambiguity and change. Minimum 1h 10min are necessary.

### Content

Explain to the group members that: - the purpose of the session is to explore their relationship with ambiguity, uncertainty, change and control, - and that it will consist of several short movement exercises and questions for reflection.

*Taking risks (~20min)* - Ask participants to find a partner and stand facing each other. - Tell them that you are going to put on music and for around 3 minutes one of them should be moving and the other one should be mirroring the movement of the partner. - Instruct that the person who is leading the movement should try to do something that feels a bit risky to this person. - After 3 minutes ask them to switch the roles and repeat the instruction. - Give pairs around 2 minutes time to chat about their experience during the moving and mirroring. - Then offer 8 minutes to share their answers to the following questions: What is risky for you? What do you need to face risks? When do you run away from risks?

*Dealing with uncertainty (~15min)* - Invite the participants to create new pairs and repeat the same movement exercise as before for another 3 minutes. - This time there is no agreement who is leading the movement and who is mirroring. - Give them 2 minutes to share their experience and 8 minutes to discuss their answers to the following questions. How do you deal with uncertainty? How is it for you to take decisions or to act when the situation is unclear? What helps you to navigate through uncertain situations?

*Living through change (~15min)* - Tell the participants that the next task is individual and that you are going to put around 3 minutes long piece of music again. - During the

music they are invited to dance, but in as different way as possible in comparison to how they usually dance. - After the dance, invite them to create groups of 3 persons. - Give them 12 minutes time to tell each other about the last major change in their professional life. Was this change difficult? What benefits did it bring? What is needed to start and sustain the process of a personal change?

*Letting go of control* (~20min) - Next movement exercise is done in the entire group. - Ask the group members to stand relatively close together and touch some part of someone else using both hands. Participants can fully embrace someone or simply touch them with the tip of their fingers. - Ask them to start to move in any direction - as one entity, an organic whole. - Encourage them to do whatever they want but remind them to maintain contact with the other group members at all times. - After around 6 minutes of moving together, ask them to split in groups of 4 and give them 12 minutes time to discuss the following questions: How controlling are you? What causes you to be controlling? What does being controlling cost you and people around you? What are the expectations, feelings or thoughts that you could let go of?

## Notes for the facilitator

We live in a world where change is ongoing, and it becomes more and more difficult to find simple answers and solutions that would work for all. Sometimes our ideas and expectations just don't work. At the same time there are huge amounts of opportunities and many choices can be made which can lead to confusion, uncertainty and ambiguity. As a tool for organizing our life, control is a useful thing, but it can also block efficient teamwork and our own growth. Learning to deal with ambiguity helps us to become not only more creative and resilient.

If you wish to explore the topic further and empower group members to let go of certain things that cause a lot of stress and anxiety and that they don't have any control over, look up a tool called Circle of Influence and Control, created by Stephen Covey. Working with this tool might also help to realize that you have more power than you think.

## Materials needed

Sound system, handouts with the questions for each stage of the exercise - at least one copy per pair or small group.

## PANIC AND HOW TO RESPOND TO IT

**Soft Skills:** Self-regulation, Teamwork, Communication, Creativity, Leadership

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, be self aware, set boundaries, give and receive feedback, make decisions, manage my energy, observe, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be empathic, manage my time, be seen, regulate my emotions, search for new solutions, build trust, share, solve problems, accept differences, release tension, listen, be aware of my body, develop better habits, be in balance, communicate clearly, be inclusive, learn, let go, take risks, sense the space around me

**Good for:** long, precise, calming down, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Sharing what creates panic at work. Practice responding to each other's panic moments in a peaceful situation.

### Content

Sometimes you just panic at work. It can be caused e.g. because of too busy schedules, strong emotions (by oneself or someone else) or too difficult task. With this exercise you can prepare for it as a team. • Have a conversation about the reasons for panic reactions. If you feel comfortable, you can hold breath for a while and recall or even act, how it feels like physically. You can skip this part if it feels uncomfortable or ridiculous. If you prefer you can do it in imagination. • After this, each group member can share, how they would like to be responded to, if something like this happens in real situation. E.g. someone prefers to be able to be alone for a moment. Someone else would be happy to be hugged or reminded to take a breath. • Notice that in a real situation the reaction and the request of a response can vary from imagined situation. Practicing acting in this difficult situation beforehand, makes it easier to respond in case of a real panic. \_ Hiding emotions, holding back and not knowing how to react takes a lot of energy. \_Have a talk about boundaries of professional behaviour. It is easier to balance boundaries after this exercise. Even better if you can laugh at yourself a bit. Many conflicts at work can be handled simply by offering a bite of food to a person with low blood sugar. • If team members know possible reactions before the conflict situation it is quicker to find the way back to a fluent work flow in actual

crisis. And it is easier to accept panic behaviour, if informed about it in a peaceful situation. This can be a beginning point to a less panicking work environment.

### **Supportive questions**

What can you see in other people that you do not see in yourself? Am I able to ask/receive feedback about my panic behavior? Is this hassle really needed?



## SPEAKING MASSAGE

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Self-regulation, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make mistakes, set boundaries, observe, manage my energy, be flexible, search for new solutions, slow down, build trust, be seen, work with limitations, let go

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, short, freedom, calming down

### Intro

In this exercise, you receive bodywork while telling about yourself. You mix receiving touch with speaking. It is an “impossible task” of combining activities from the far ends of the focus-release spectrum.

### Content

Depending on the size of the group split into small groups of 2-5. In turns each of you once receives bodywork / presents themselves for a duration of 5 minutes, and “gives massage” according to the number of people in the group. - One person lies on the floor in a resting position. As you lie on the floor, tell the group about yourself. - All the others give gentle bodywork to the person lying in the middle. This can include brushing the surface of the body from centre to the periphery, squeezing muscles towards bones, lifting and moving limbs, lifting the head off the floor, pushing the body gently towards the earth/floor, foot massage, hand massage, calf massage, face massage, etc.

Many people are touching one body simultaneously. Make sure they are treating it with care. When working with beginners give examples of how to provide a nice bodywork experience: - lift and put back on the ground all limbs/body-parts with care. - hold firm to avoid sudden dropping - do one thing at a time - make sure you check your spine - if you are not comfortable, the touch you are providing might also feel uncomfortable - remember to breath, watch for holding your breath as you focus on “giving”

*Before you start:* each group checks with the person lying in the middle whether she or he has preferences regarding the touch, including tips on the strength of touch (prefers

light touch to firm, or other way around) and sensitive areas or areas they don't want to be touched in.

## **Supportive questions**

Can I allow myself to let go of control? Can I allow myself not to make sense, when I speak? How do I feel doing an "impossible task"? Do I find pleasure in letting go or does it stress me?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

This exercise can be done also with other speaking tasks. Person who receives bodywork could be brain-storming on a given subject, answer a specific question and much more. Also talking about yourself can be interpreted in many ways - it can be about you as a person, but for some telling what you did today so far can be enough to handle while receiving touch.

## STAYING GROUNDED MEANWHILE...

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Communication, Self-regulation, Learning ability

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** listen, concentrate, tolerate uncertainty, be empathic, regulate my emotions, be self aware, share, be seen, develop better habits, be aware of my body

**Good for:** long, structured, works online, outdoors, older people, youngsters

### Intro

Staying grounded in your body while being active mentally and emotionally in connection with the outside world. The exercise involves non-judgemental communication as well.

### Content

Take a look in the mirror at yourself very respectfully - as on your very good friend. Imagine telling to someone about this person's face *in a descriptive, non-judgmental way* - the shape of the face, cheeks, eyes' colour, the length of the mascara, shape and thickness of the eyebrows, the different qualities of the skin, the ears. Find a partner and describe the face of that respected person - *in a descriptive, non-judgmental way*. (If it fits - you can take 5 minutes to write it down and only after to share with another person.) Share the experience in the couple and then - in the whole group. (After sharing and possibly highlighting and clarifying the non-judgmental approach, you can repeat the same task with a different partner.)

Find another partner to create a couple for some minutes. Stay on your feet in a comfortable distance from each other. Tell to your partner about your grandma, dad, daughter, teacher or any other person you love - describe her/him and tell about some short experience with her/him. Meanwhile, the telling and listening process, remember to feel both of your feet on the ground and other physical sensations in your body. 2 minutes for each speaker. Share the experience in these couples and then - in the whole group. (You can repeat the same task in different couples). Find another partner again. Sit in a comfortable distance from each other and relax. After my signal keep an eye contact with each other for the next 1-2 minutes (the facilitator decides the suitable duration) and stay with your attention both to the partner and on yourself: breath,

sense, feel, pay attention to the flow of your thoughts. Share the experience in these couples and then - in the whole group. (You can repeat the same task in different couples).

## **Supportive questions**

What helped you to stay in contact with yourself when being (telling/listening/watching) with the other? What is the hardest in describing non-judgmental? What was easy, and how do you think - why? What did you learn from this experience?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

You may expand the exercises (and deepen the experience of them) by giving to do the same tasks with different partners. Sharing is strongly suggested as it helps to unwind and digest the experience after each of these emotionally charged tasks.

## **Materials needed**

Mirror. Paper and pen- if you choose the option the participants to write.

## **Author**

Thea Rytz (theorytz.ch)

## SWEEPING. PART II

**Soft Skills:** Teamwork, Attention and focus

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** make decisions, listen, tolerate uncertainty, collaborate, be self aware, be seen, accept differences, share, sense the space around me

**Good for:** outdoors, older people, youngsters, structured

### Intro

Moving with the group in a row. Feeling both - as an individual and as a group member at the same time. Works best when the group is already collaborating and feeling free - not at the very beginning of the learning process. This could be a continuation of: - "TO STOP TOGETHER" exercise. - "SWEEPING. PART I".

### Content

1st part (skip reading this if you have read the "SWEEPING. PART I"). Stand in one row at the wall, close shoulder to shoulder but not touching each other. Feel with all of your body (shoulders, sides, peripheral vision, etc.) each other as one row. Feel the togetherness as one organism. Start to go towards the wall in front of you altogether as one row - without communicating, without giving signs, without any leader, making the decision together. Turn around and try it one or several times more.

2nd part Go as one row until the wall in front of you, but now in any moment you have a choice: - To stop (meaning - to not go together with a row in any moment); - To flow in with a group whenever the row goes by; - To do your own dance when you stay on your spot alone (this is extra - only if it fits). When you stop, stay only on your own spot. Flowing back in the group is possible only when the row is passing by.

Do this at least 5 times, but the suggestion is to repeat even more, as the group exploration develops through time. Let yourself feel how much the group is enjoying the process and how much curiosity is there for learning and awareness. Sharing may be helpful in some moment of the process, and then - continuing. Sharing at the end of the process is strongly suggested.

## Supportive questions

- How did you experience making the decision to stay?
- How was it to flow back again with the group?
- How did you feel in these moments? Maybe some images came up?
- How was it to do for the first time? How was it to do it later, with more experience?
- What did you like more, and why?
- How is it to feel both - as a group member and individual in the same moment?

## Materials needed

Enough large and empty space which provides the possibility of the whole group to stand in one row, shoulder close to shoulder but not touching.

## Author

Nancy Stark Smith, one of the founders of Contact Improvisation. She called it “Sweeping”.

## TEENAGE BODY WISDOM

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Teamwork, Leadership, Communication, Attention and focus, Self-regulation, Learning ability, Creativity

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** think critically, make mistakes, make decisions, give and receive feedback, listen, be flexible, set boundaries, observe, concentrate, manage my energy, set goals, inspire and be inspired, manage my time, collaborate, search for new solutions, be empathic, regulate my emotions, build trust, be self aware, be seen, tolerate uncertainty

**Good for:** beginning of a session, end of a session, freedom, works online, outdoors, calming down, exciting, older people, long, homework

### Intro

Recalling and analyzing your intuitive choices as a teenager can reveal a lot of your *self-created up-bringing*. People tend to love music or movies from the time when they were young. What qualities you were looking for in your idols? How did you manage to adopt these qualities in your teenage years? How about now? Time to recall.

### Content

- Remind yourself of your teenage idols, movie stars and musicians. How did they look like and how did they move?
- How did they support your being back then? What were the qualities in the character, physical, behavioral, etc that appealed to you. Recall the physical sensations and emotions you felt. Look at videos of your idols, if available.
- Try moving like your idol. What qualities of movement you can adopt. How does this make you feel?
- Use this information to reflect your being as a physical creature/team worker/leader, etc. *Do not pretend and imitate. Instead, own the qualities.* Do it your way. Trust the wisdom you had as a teenager. For some reason you let these people be an important part of your up-bringing.
- You can do this exercise first as a 40 min self-study alone or with earphones with a group in the studio. Then it can be recalled on a daily basis for a week, as long as it

feels good. Then you can use the image and recalling body memory when ever you need it.

## **Supportive questions**

How did you raise yourself with your teenage idols? Did it support your identity, boundaries, social skills, etc.? How can you use this wisdom of your teenage self in the current life/work situation?

## **Notes for the facilitator**

You can focus on this exercise anywhere. Make sure you do not imitate or pretend to be someone else. Use the recalled sensations to improve your skills to be present.

You can do this also with a group in a dance space. Then you will need earphones and own music.

## **Author**

This exercise is applied based on a random comment by Miska Käppi, yogateacher and the host of a Finnish Yoga podcast Maailmanpuu.



## THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF LISTENING

**Soft Skills:** Adaptability, Attention and focus, Communication, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** give and receive feedback, listen, concentrate, manage my energy, tolerate uncertainty, be empathic, regulate my emotions, be self aware, be seen, accept differences, be aware of my body, develop better habits

**Good for:** short, beginning of a session

### Intro

- To reflect “listening” (in communication)
- To establish awareness on possible anxiety around listening (self or others)
- To explore new avenues of listening Around 1,5h long.

### Content

Pre-stage (homework): Observe situations when some annoyance comes up for you while you have to listen to someone telling you something. Write them down.

20 minutes: Warm-up (experiencing of listening): - Close your eyes. Observe the sounds around. How many different sources? Any sounds in your body? Turn a bit. What has changed? - Start moving, very slowly, arms stretched out, try to avoid running into people. Keep attention on listening. (15 min) - Stop. Now try to find someone. When you find someone, open your eyes. The first person you find is your partner.

20 minutes: “Deep listening” partner exercise: A: tells about the last time they really laughed from all their heart / and go a bit into reflection in their relations to laughing. B: be still and receive (no interruption or non-verbal encouraging). After 5-7 minutes: change. After 5-7 minutes - share the experience of listener and talker.

20 minutes: Reflection (individual): journaling props: - Why is it sometimes hard for me to listen? - The “hard to listen” sensation: where do I feel it and how? *If the group is ready for that: express this sensation in movement* - One situation when I had no problems listening. Why?

*If the group is ready for that: express this sensation in movement*

15 minutes: - Group discussion: The Facilitator's questions: what is the purpose of conversation? Why are we having conversations at all? Why is it sometimes important to listen? - Rules for the group discussion: You can invent rules or structures, such as, organize it in the form of "traditional talking circle" with talking stick passed around, or inviting those who listen to try to fully receive, feel with their bodies, what is ACTUALLY being said, listening deeper than words.

- Important to bring up a connection to work/professional situations at some point.

15 minutes: Journaling: what lessons will I take away from the whole session?

## Supportive questions

Why is it sometimes hard to listen? Why is it sometimes easy to listen?

Why do I need the other person when I talk?

## Notes for the facilitator

Notes for the teacher: - Safety during the eyes closed exercise! - For group discussion: conversation can be seen from a perspective of a more general relationship or partner dance. Why do we have conversations = why do we like to dance with each other? The purpose of the group conversation is to bring people back to WHY YES rather than all the WHY IT IS HARD. Navigate the conversation towards a more horizontal / playful perception of the conversation, and be aware there can be a lot of power issues/ trauma around it (not being heard, being overwhelmed by others who try to manipulate, feeling question as attack, feeling obliged to react, etc.)

- The deep listening practice can get emotional: it can be somebodies first time of truly being heard, or experience of listening without trying to already compose an answer in the head. You may need to give people time to process the emotions if they come up. -

Be aware of Non-violent communication, "deep listening" and "active listening" principles before you teach this class (even if it's quickly studying those things on the internet). - The next session after this one can go deeper in listening and conversation

tools, learning things from non-violent conversation or boundaries. Such as: test the sensation from how it feels when someone just starts talking to you and when someone asks "do you have time?". - The next session: alternatively you can also go deeper into the non-verbal aspects of listening, movement/group/partner/listening touch. In the end, you can ask a connecting question: what principles from non-verbal listening would be useful also in conversations?

## **Materials needed**

Journal, pen.

## TWO BODIES

**Soft Skills:** Communication, Self-regulation

**Duration:** 40+ minutes

**Related skills and abilities:** be self aware, communicate clearly, be aware of my body, set boundaries, take risks

**Good for:** long, freedom, works online, older people, youngsters

### Intro

This exercise provides an opportunity for group members to explore the difference between images they project compared with how they feel, exploring authenticity.

### Content

- Ask group members to think individually of situations where they would like to express how they really feel, but are not able to do so.
- Then invite each person to take two photographs. The first should be an image that reflects how the rest of the world sees them, the persona they project to the rest of the world. The second image should represent how they feel inside. Participants may approach this in a number of ways. For example, they could choose to express feelings through particular facial expressions, gestures or posture, inviting others in the group to photograph themselves. They could also use visual metaphors and capture landscapes, objects, patterns or colours.
- Spend time discussing these contrasting images and what might happen if they were reversed and the inner becomes the outer.
- Select some supporting questions in order to deepen the discussion.
- To conclude the session and integrate learning outcomes, invite the group members to think of qualities and emotions that they would like to communicate more to the outside world and move around the room, exploring possible ways how these qualities might be embodied - expressed through their face, voice, gestures, posture and movements. You might choose some background music for this, depending on the group and atmosphere you wish to create.

## Supportive questions

- What would authenticity look like for you?
- In what situations do you find it difficult to be authentic? Why is that so? What would happen if you tried to show a bit more of how you really feel in those situations?
- How willing and able are you to stand apart from the crowd? When was the last time that you put yourself out there? Took a risk? Was vulnerable?
- What is one thing that you can do to invite greater authenticity in others?
- What kind of support do you need from your peers to bring more of yourself into the workplace?
- How common is authenticity in your place of work?
- How is authenticity rewarded in your workplace? What makes being authentic hard?
- How often are you a part of teams or discussions that suffer from conformism?
- What needs to be present in order to nurture authentic relationships with colleagues or other stakeholders at your work?
- What are the costs to your organization, your community and yourself if you are not engaged in and committed to an authentic relationship with those different from yourself?

## Notes for the facilitator

The face we present to the world can be very different from the inner self. Sometimes the gap between those two can become too deep and lead to personal anguish.

## Materials needed

Photographic and music equipment, pens and paper for making individual notes.