

Coming to Your Senses • Developing Sensory Intelligence

Premise • LOCATING PRACTICE • STARTING WHERE YOU ARE • PAUSE

(These are examples of possible locating practices, Perfect to do in groups.)

Premise • Sensory Intelligence

If you have participated in a Language of Wholeness™ and Sound Music Education class or workshop you know that we often start by asking you to look around the room, listen to the sounds of the moment, note your mood and how warm or cold you feel. We call these activities “Locating”. We are essentially asking you to: *come to your senses*, awaken you to your sensory information in the context of you in the world. Sensory information is the foundation of your ability to manage your well-being and to make personal artistic choices. It is foundational of Language of Wholeness™ and Sound Music Education.

In our culture information coming to us from NPR, CBC or a research article or some external expert is given great validity. It is as if the only source of valid and true information is external to us. The exercises below are ways to explore your system’s amazing and on-going ability to give you information through your senses. As artists this is your most essential source of information. It allows you make choices. It gives you the information of what does and doesn’t serve your purpose; what does and doesn’t give you joy or power or anything you want.

This is not to say external information is less valid. This is to invite you to have access to as many sources of information as possible to navigate your life. This is about revalidating our inner-compass as the foundation of well-being.

Below is a quote from one of these external, research sources, Dr. Bud Craig, (note: better heartbeat perception is a method of measuring someone’s *interoceptive awareness* or body awareness):

“Better heartbeat perceivers function better not only on an emotional level but also cognitively. They make better decisions based on subtle environmental cues, they perform better in tasks of selective and divided attention, and they respond more quickly to intuitive choices. They also have a more accurate subjective sense of time...they expend less energy than poor heartbeat perceivers.” -- Dr. Bud Craig. *How Do You Feel? An Interoceptive Moment with Your Neurobiological Self*, p 6-7.

We are thrilled to have the essential conclusion we arrived at from doing Locating and Coming to Your Senses explorations confirmed in research. The work of neuroanatomist Dr. Bud Craig is articulated in his book is *How Do You Feel? An Interoceptive Moment with Your Neurobiological Self*. Yes, it is dense. He has put forward a whole new paradigm for understanding how we feel, literally. What he has discovered couldn’t have been mapped before because we didn’t have the instruments to see the tiny, tiny tissues he has mapped. His work is vast and more complex than can be expressed here.

In the dance world we have known that there is no mind separate from body. Movement, sensation and body is our mind. We are whole and embodied. To dancers Descartes thesis “I think, therefore I am,” has long been seen as inaccurate at best and the root of a sick, disembodied western society at worst. In his introduction Craig writes: “‘*I feel, therefore I am,*’ or more aptly, as I will explain, ‘*I feel that I am.*’ ”

An understanding of embodiment isn't revolutionary anymore. Craig makes a thrilling contribution to the field. The Language of Wholeness™ is about developing practical strategies to apply new information about our system to daily and artistic life. The goal of developing our "Sensory Intelligence" in the Locating and the Coming to Our Senses exercises is now both experientially and externally validated.

Exercises to explore developing your sensory intelligence

1. Coming to Your Senses

Take a moment and very simply and look at this room. Do you see anything you haven't noticed before.....now, gently listen to symphony of sound in this quiet room....How awake are you? How tired?Notice the sense of the earth coming up under you to support you, the feeling of the chair, the ground.....What is your state of being? Alert, bored, annoyed, interested....If you give your state of being a name like happy where do you feel the happiness? Indicate with your hands where you feel the sensation of your state of being.

Do you know what anxious feels like? Where do you feel it. Notice we have a word – anxious. This is a concept. The feeling of anxious, the experience of anxious is in your being. It is a sensation.

When we started seeing the room, listening to sounds, we were perceiving the world around us. The head is the limb for perception. It is like a periscope giving you lots of information about the world around you.

There are lots and lots of other senses. These are dispersed throughout your body. They tell you about how you, your internal balance, your hunger or temperature, your balance and also your feelings and responses to how you interpret the world around you at every moment.

You perceive the world, interpret it and then get sensations of your response to the world. These sensations are your feelings. This ability to perceive, interpret and respond is an ancient and foundational ability. It is in every cell in your body and every living cell everywhere. It is are fundamental information source.

As you receive the information of your sensations explore finding descriptive words for these sensations beyond easy and tense. How about: bubbly, light, dark, rigid, fluid, tingly, grinding....

This develops your sensory vocabulary. This is a first step in gaining dexterity with your sensory intelligence.

2. Anchoring in Yourself in the world as you are, as it is.

The video of the following is here: <http://www.lightnermethod.com/well-being.html>

There are 3 aspects to this sequence:

M - A gestural movement, W- words and F-focus for your attention.

Everyone stands up either in a circle or where they are in the room. You can lead and they follow one gesture/phrase at a time.

1. M. Lightly stamp right foot while doing gesture of putting down a staff and say first phrase.

Repeat movement with left saying second phrase.

W. "Here I am, as I am."

F. Feel your presence on the ground in the moment with each movement and the words.

2. M. Open horizontal circle with 1st right then left arm saying 1st phrase with right and 2nd with left.

W. "In the world, as it is"

F. See/ feel/hear the world around you.

3. M. Hands together in prayer like position.

W. "Supported by the planet."

F. Sense the same pressure between your hands as you do the pressure between you and the earth under your feet.

4. M. Prayer hands move up over your head.

W. "Floating in the multiverse".

F. See your self from the perspective of the moon, standing on the earth, under the earth.

5. M. Prayer hands to level of forehead.

W. "Awake"

F. Sense an alert glow between your eyes.

6. M. Prayer hands to heart level.

W. "to my state of being."

F. Feel your current state of being, sensations of your being.

7. MWF - woosh exhale any movement feels good.

3. Thinking • Perceiving Meditation

Remind yourself:

"This is my time. There is nobody to please or satisfy other than myself.

Here I am as I am; here is the world as it is."

Let yourself get comfortable, make any adjustments you need. Gently let yourself BE.

If it feels appropriate to you: observe where your attention wanders when you aren't directing it in any way. Let your attention roam freely.

- Notice when your attention is drawn to thoughts, imagination, ideas?
- Notice when your attention is drawn to sounds, sensations in your body or any other perception?

For a few moments gently be with this meandering of your awareness. No right or wrong attention. Linger in this field of non-judgemental awareness.

Identify when you are in thoughts and when you are in perception by saying 'thinking' or describing the perception.

Neither attention is better or worse, each is an essential ability of your amazing being.

"Thinking, thinking, buzz sound, heat, thinking, belly grip, thinking..."

Gently invite your attention to your perceptions.

"Here I am perceiving the symphony of sound, sensations that surround me in this moment. I am Coming to My Senses, literally."

There are the family of senses telling you about the world around you (sounds/sight/smell/taste/touch) and senses telling you about your inner milieu (tension/ease/belly gurgles/sensations of emotional states/buzzy/heavy/chilled/spacious)

You might notice how easy it is to be drawn back to thoughts. That's perfect. When you are aware of attending to your ideas simply ask yourself to attend to perceptions again.

"Oh I'm thinking again. Thinking. Thinking. I feel the chair under me. I feel my belly expand."

4. Being With What Is.

Here I am as I am

having had the morning I've had

the night sleep or lack of it

the life I've had up to this moment.

Here I am being with myself as I am, pleasant, unpleasant; relaxed or stresses.

I'm feeling the sensations I'm experiencing at this moment that tell me I am energized or Fatigued

no right or wrong in this moment.

Here is what is, is as it is.

Here is the earth supporting me.

Here is the ocean of air surrounding me.

I feel the gentle rhythm of expansion and gathering in my body, like a cell breathing through the pores, expanding into earth and air; earth and air coming with me as I gather in again.

In this moment no coming or going

simply being with the gentle rhythm of the breath and movement like waves rising and receding on the beach.

here I am

as I am

here is the world

as it is

Nothing to improve

Nothing to change.