

ESSENCE

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE DEEP TRUE YOU

Free Introduction to Full Course

By Deborah Jackson



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Requests for commercial application to be directed to Deborah Jackson

at www.djpsych.com.au or M: + 61 423 167 376

 Deborah Jackson
P S Y C H O L O G Y



ABOUT

DEBORAH JACKSON

Registered Psychologist

BA Psych Soc (Hons); PG Dip App Psych; Dip Hol Coun;
Dip Tran Life Coaching

A Registered Psychologist, I bring three decades of working with individuals, organisations and business leaders, always to help heal, reveal and express the essence of a thing.

I have lived much of my adult life with a chronic illness and through this and related factors know the places of despair, loss and loneliness the human spirit can go to. I understand how serious trauma (or simply unrelenting high stress) impacts brain structure and functioning, our nervous system, hormones, digestion, energy management and ultimately our moods, sleep, energy, life functioning, relationships and achievement, our ability to contribute who we are and what we have to life.

I also know about the essence of us that lives on through the hard times in life, that we often protect in clever ways until the time is right for it to come forward again.

I know that no amount of false starts or broken dreams can end it. It can't go anywhere, because it is you.

I know that the degree to which you come to know and embody the essence of who you are, is the degree to which you will feel you are truly living. That as you breathe and open from this place, creative energy, life force energy will rise and seek expression through you, will seek authentic connection, contribution.

I would like to use what I have learned, if it resonates, to help you tap into and create in your life from your own place of wise beauty.

Warmly, Deborah

LIVING FROM THE ESSENCE OF YOU

Living from essence is a state of feeling awake and alive in the present moment, of experiencing a deep acceptance of the events and circumstances of your life and being very aware of your connectedness with the larger world around you – your family or social group, your tribe and network, the natural world or a sense of a spiritual dimension to life, however you may conceive or experience that.

Living from essence you are deeply in tune with your body and the messages it sends you – move me, rest me, nourish me, love me. You are able to take a long slow breath and feel that breath light you from the inside. You will feel the resonance between the breath within you and the chi or life energy surrounding you and connecting you with the natural world.

The more aware you become of your breath and the life force energy that moves with it through your body, the more you are able to feel the deep and expansive pleasure our bodies are capable of feeling. Not just fit bodies and trim bodies and young bodies and healthy bodies, but any body that is being breathed with an open and connected heart and allowed to feel through all the layers of what is present, to the deep joy and acceptance underneath.

Living from essence you are able to look around at the events and people in your life and see them as reflections of aspects of you and aspects of our common humanity. Some will feel good and wholesome and supportive. Some will feel messy and unresolved. It's OK, allow space for them all. Accept the evolving nature of it all – those who are here to nurture you and those here to challenge you and those who are difficult to be around who are likely finding it difficult to truly be even with themselves. Accept the times when you are able to help and the times when you can't. Really take in and feel the gratitude when others are able to help you and here's a hard one, try to find the gratitude for whatever thread keeps you going when the help you need just isn't there.

See essence reflected back at you, in the quality of light or the expression of someone who is seeing you and really getting you, appreciating you. Hear essence in the call of a bird outside who doesn't stop to wonder if his voice sounds any good, but simply opens his throat and expresses in the moment.

Living from essence you will likely have projects and activities in your life that are a direct reflection of your soul-self, the things that matter most to you, that make you feel alive and connected to yourself.

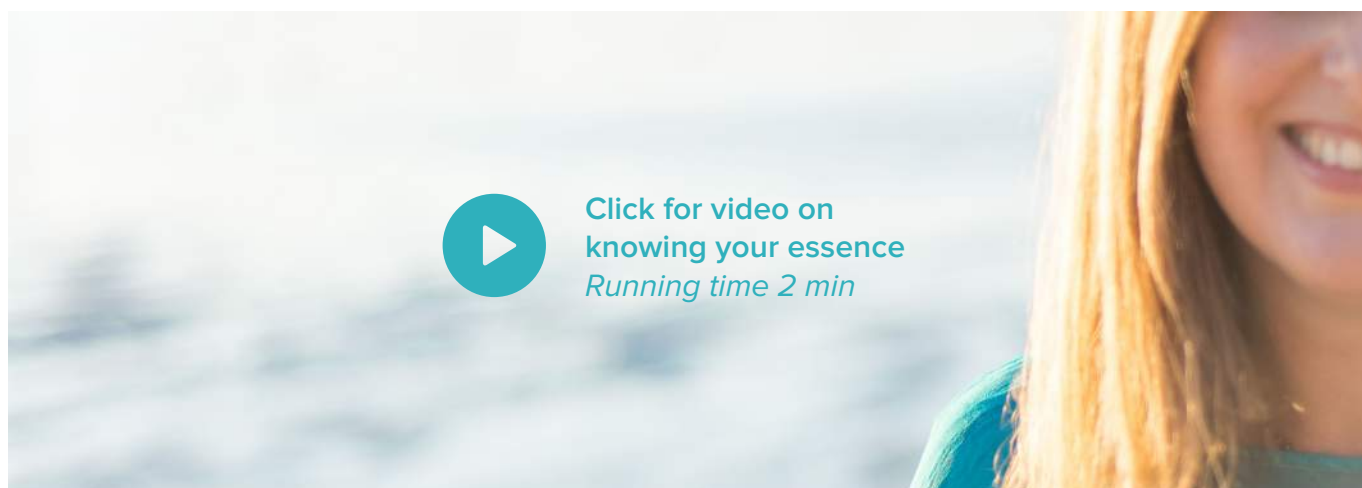
This could be as simple as time spent outdoors, being physical, being present in and with nature – trees, sunshine, water, rocks, sand.

For many of you, there will be a calling to express something from deep inside, either creatively and/or through your work. You will have a sense of something

you are here to do; something you are good at, that others turn to you for, something that energises you, where you feel in your zone, offering your gifts in ways that others need and appreciate.

It could be anything from helping the company you work for better understand its customers, to noticing and championing what children most need from their community, to starting a business that calls from your heart or making time for your music or developing a skill you've always been drawn to.

Living from essence requires a deep level of acceptance of how life is – the mess getting you, appreciating you. Hear essence in the call of a bird outside who doesn't stop to wonder if his voice sounds any good, but simply opens his throat and expresses in the moment.



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Living from essence requires a deep level of acceptance of how life is – the mess of it, the heartache of it, the evolving nature of it. It asks us to see the bigger picture, to hold a bigger space, to let things play out while staying connected to our own heart, truth, feelings needs and desires, as well as those of the people who matter to us.

WHAT STOPS YOU?

In my experience as a therapist, these are common issues that get in the way of people living from their true self. Which ones do you relate to? Remember, be kind and gentle with yourself as you reflect. It's OK, we will all relate to some of this stuff.





Tick the ones that best relate to you

- Being too focused “out there” and not listening to your inner voice or signals
- living for other people
- living from unconscious habits and coping styles that were adaptive when you were a child
- never having given yourself time or permission to explore your true nature
- self esteem issues; not liking yourself or finding it hard to accept some parts of yourself
- being in relationship dynamics that suppress or control you
- too much stress or anxiety
- lacking the personal skills or social support necessary to process and heal through difficult emotion
- living in the future or the past
- being too busy to smell any roses
- shutting down to your true needs and feelings
- allowing fear of change to stop you from seeing the truth
- over identifying with a role you play, with how others see you or with just one aspect of you
- poor health and lacking the necessary conditions or resources for healing
- depleted bodies and out of balance hormones
- preoccupation with survival concerns
- addictions and other “negative” coping behaviours
- having your masculine and feminine energy out of balance or inhibited
- hurt or suppressed inner child
- mental health challenges
- playing “nice” and not honest
- Other (specify)

When these sorts of issues prevent us living fully from our true self, they can begin to steamroll and create negative spirals that make it even harder to come into a place of ease and joy and acceptance.

For example, too much stress and anxiety can deplete your physical health, which in turn can make it difficult to access your full brain and creative power. Trying too hard to be who others want you to be can lead to a cycle of never quite making the grade (this was never your true path) and feeling less and less worthy and confident as a human being. Being overly focused on the next external achievement can see you constantly responding to demands on your time without checking in as to what matters most in your life now. And now. You can end up spending your most valuable personal resources on things that ultimately don't matter to you.

ESSENCE: WHAT STOPS YOU?

WHAT DOES DISCONNECTED FEEL LIKE?

Being disconnected from your essential nature and life force energy can leave you feeling anything from tired and depleted to lost, lonely or angry as you go about your day, doing your best to achieve what your environment or your “ideal self” seems to be asking of you and shutting down any emotions or needs that could get in the way of this.

“I’ll get to it later” and “I know I need to but”

And realistically speaking sometimes we’ve just got to do what we’ve just got to do in the moment to survive, to complete, to care or to achieve. The important thing is to stay connected with your true feelings and needs even as you make difficult choices and sometimes put energy into commitments, rather than carefree.

Which of these on the list come up for you when you continue to ignore or shut down your true needs and feelings?

And yeah, sometimes lonely or angry is exactly what you are feeling, so stay with it, accept it and see what the next layer is, the true need that has gone unnoticed or unmet.

Often these unhappy states arise as an outcome of splitting off from, ignoring or suppressing your true and deeper needs, desires and feelings.



- lonely
- tired
- lack-lustre
- lost
- anxious
- not enough
- alienated
- playing a role
- depleted
- angry
- over-thinking, stuck in your head
- shut down to pleasure
- depressed
- lacking sweetness



Like most of us, I imagine you have good reasons why you sometimes (*often?*) end up in these spaces. What you will have the chance to do, through the program, is to:

- » Connect into and nurture you essential self, *isn't it time?*
- » Tap into a range of tools to move through the challenges that are standing in the way of that for you just now (often this will begin with a deep acceptance of how things are, and loving yourself inside of that, through all that)
- » Begin to activate and create new moments, connections and projects from this connected space.

ESSENCE: WHAT DOES DISCONNECTED FEEL LIKE?

SO WHAT HELPS?

In the “Essence of You” full online program I create lots of experiences to know and express your true self and to work through the various barriers that may be in the way of that right now.

There are videos, a self-reflection workbook, meditations, what we call “psycho-education”; little flashes of information about the brain and psychological processes that can help you better understand yourself, there are tools to reduce stress and enhance your connection to the moment. Most importantly, the program is based around present moment experiencing and acting, as well as learning and reflecting.

Over the eight weeks of the full “Essence of You” course we cover:

1. Experiencing the essence of you
2. Working through what you are not
3. The world within and the world out there
4. Tuning in, moving with and acting from your personal creative energy
5. Taking care of your Essential Self

You will feel more whole, more resourced, more vital and more true. Tapped into universal energy and allowing it to guide you, move you, nourish you. More in touch with your true worth and value and purpose here on the planet.

In this introduction, I'd like to give you a taste of this program. If it speaks to you, if you feel supported and a little more connected into your true self, purpose and something that moves you from within, I hope you will register for the full “Essence of You” program when it is released later this year.



EXPERIENCING ESSENCE

The essence of a thing is the true nature,
the distilled form of a thing; everything it is,
nothing it's not.

We can work with this on different levels. Initially it's important to be able to distinguish self from other, to have boundaries, to assert personal needs that may be in conflict with the needs of others and to know they matter all the same. We gain a sense of self and identity by knowing how we operate, what we are good at, how we impact others, what we bring uniquely to the table.

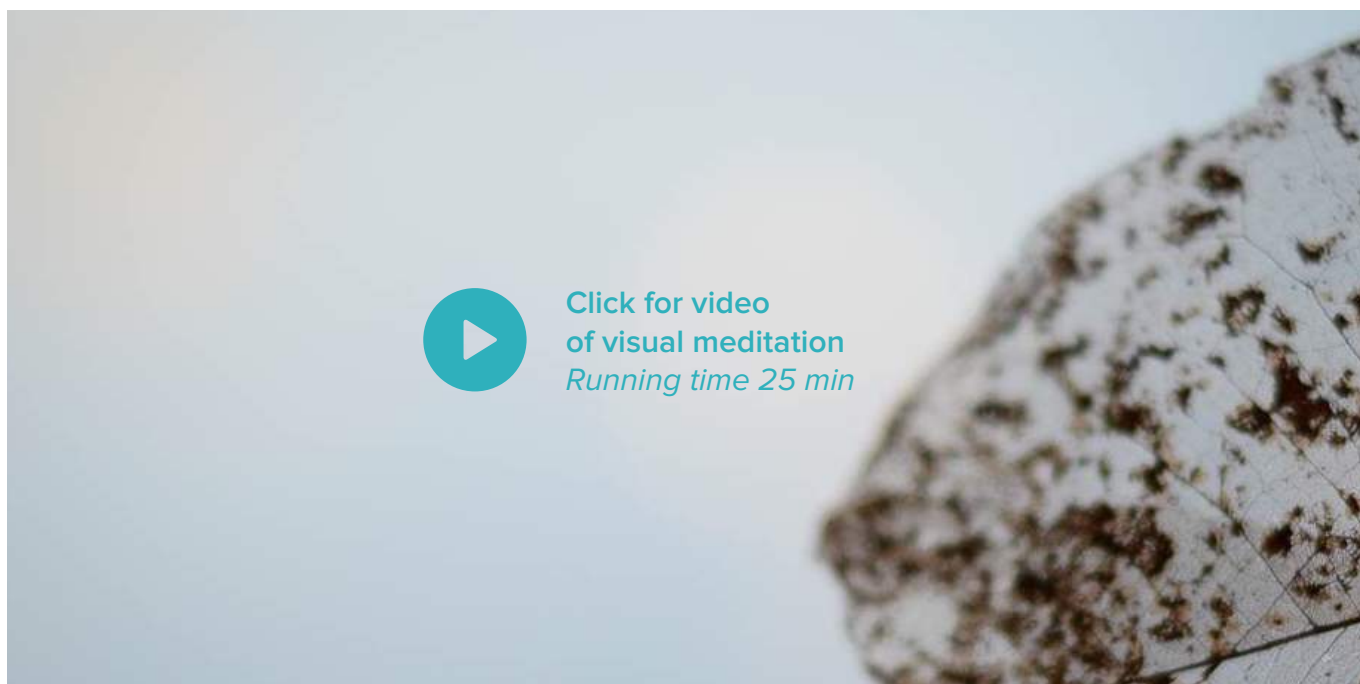
In time, as we come to a place of deep acceptance of ourselves and the myriad refractions and reflections of humanity we encounter in those around us, our sense of self and the essential nature of things will tend to shift, to expand, to take in and allow more of life in all the various stories and guises it presents. [More on that here].

So how do we come to know our personal essence, the true nature of who we are?

In part by noticing the ways we continue to show up in life, not through a plan or strategy, not out of defence or fear, but because this is who and how we are – we would do it if we were rich or poor, we brought this to the sandpit as children, we bring it to the boardroom, the school canteen and we will bring it to the lounge room of the old folks home.

Feel into it.

But before you start that exploration, let's get anchored into your right brained feeling self. Experiencing the essence of you is not the result of a maths equation or purely left-brained analysis, it's a felt sense thing. Meditation calms your nervous system and brings you into the present moment. Beauty opens your heart so it can reveal its truth.



This meditation is worth choosing. Choose it by closing the door, turning off the phone, perhaps preparing with a shower to cleanse you or a herbal tea to soothe you. Choose to discover the aliveness, acceptance, wellness and inspiration at your core.

Choose it now.

ESSENCE: 1. EXPERIENCING ESSENCE

FIND YOUR ESSENCE THROUGH YOUR STRENGTHS.

The essence of you.

Underneath all the worries, stress and busyness, is the essence of you; the living, breathing uniqueness of you. The essence that is most needed by those around you and in your work and for your own health and fulfillment in life.

Following are some questions that can get you pointed into your true and essential self. It's not a thing to analyse, but a thing to experience. So allow yourself to slow down, remember, visualise and imagine as you answer these questions. Let them work on you.



Picture yourself as a child, doing something you loved to do, something that was fun or that you could do for hours and get lost in. And while some childhoods can have some pretty unhappy memories attached, just now is about noticing the moments when you were content and at ease in your zone. What were you doing? Who was with you? Was it outdoors or indoors? How do you feel doing it?

What do people turn to you for? Tell you you're good at? *(Think about things like listening, caring, problem solving, organising, connecting people, creating fun.)*

How do you make a difference in their lives by doing this? How do they feel different afterwards? What does this make possible for them?



What's fun and joyful for you now? What personal characteristics are at play during these times? And if it feels like you've forgotten what play is or joy, then slow down and let your mind, in its own time, recover the last memory of that, even a fragment of that. Whatever you find is a pointer in to your essential self.

What would you most like to be acknowledged for in your life so far? It's probably something that took a lot of work or courage or commitment. Or it might be something that's part of your character and easy to give, but still a choice you continue to make.

What could you do now to nurture and consciously develop these strengths? It could be about making time for something or appreciating it when you see it at play, noticing how it affects others. It might be about getting some training to further develop a skill you love to do.

YOUR BODY, BREATH AND FIVE SENSES HOLD THE KEY

Modern life sees us often stuck inside our own head – worrying, planning, dreaming of other times, trying to solve problems we are not in a good place to solve or rerunning scenarios over and over that we wish we could change.

Is it just me or does anyone else get sick of being stuck inside their own head?

It's a good thing to trust your own mind and know it's available to you as a tool to use in service of your important goals in life.

However, life happens in the body through our five senses and awareness of subtle energy. We experience life through our bodies. We feel and have the in the moment experience of living through our bodies and five senses. I can't say it enough.

Our minds can catalogue and analyse and imagine and plan and all sorts of useful things. But the in the moment experience of living is a visceral thing.

In contemporary society, we tend to get ahead in life and be rewarded for how cleverly we can apply our minds to certain scenarios. Well paid and esteemed careers often require a high level of intellect or mental activity. I think that somehow through this we have under-valued the importance of in the moment felt sense experience through our bodies and our five senses.

So I'm going to invite you into an experience now to drop down, to slow down to get right down deep into your sensory experience and through that to have a felt sense of the essence of you. Be warmed, it's a bit sensual and deeply evocative. Take your time ...



[Click for video
of visual meditation](#)
Running time 7 min





WORKING THROUGH WHAT YOU ARE NOT

Worries and busyness can
keep you disconnected from
your essence

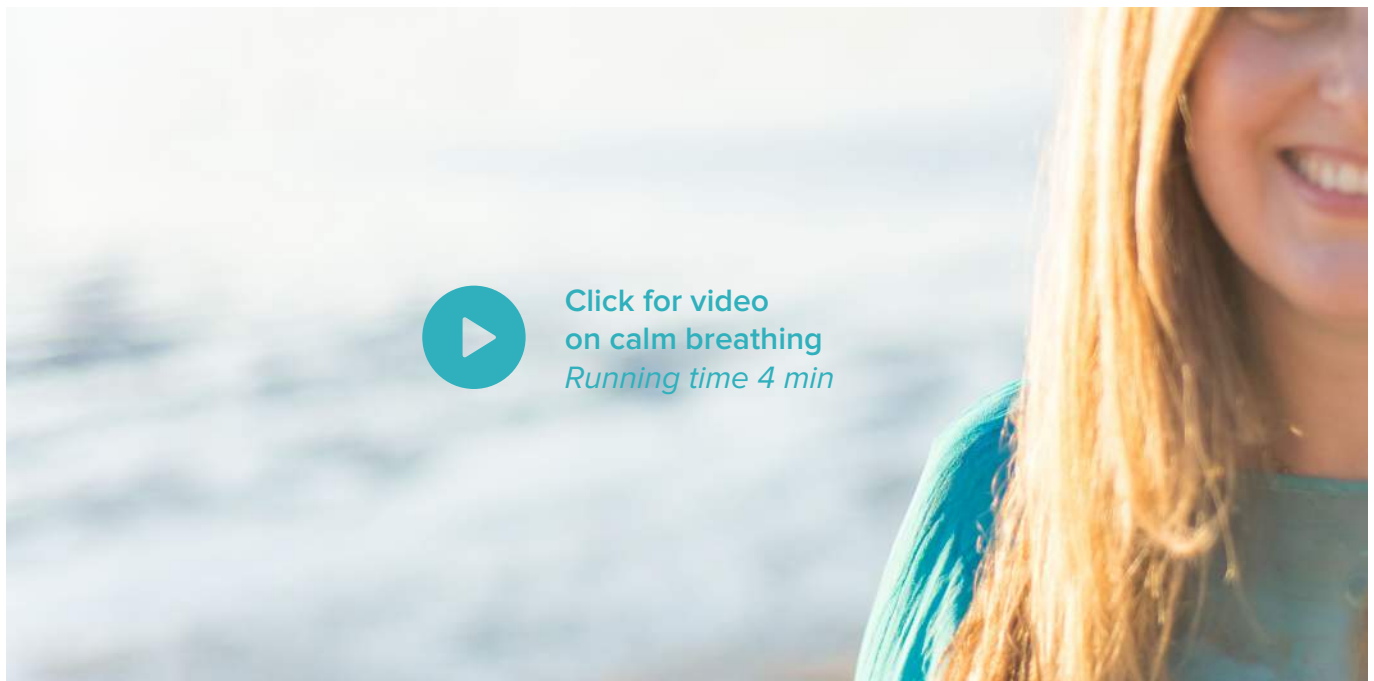
And we can spend our whole lives bouncing from one worry to the next, putting out fires, thinking ahead to try and ward off the next one.

What helps you to slow down and ward off the stress and anxiety enough to actually be present in a moment? How present do you feel reading this? Are you rushing ahead to some new information, or are you slowing down and taking in the ideas, reflecting on how they affect you?

When you can calm down the physiology of your stress response, you can better access your wise mind and all the possibilities that exist in any given moment.

So what helps for you? Being out in nature? Leaving the house for a coffee? Being physical – running or gardening, depending on your pace? A pleasurable experience that engages your senses like a warm shower or massaging in body oil with a fragrance that soothes you? Slow, deep breathing?

We're not talking about solving the whole problem here, just having some techniques that work for you to calm down the physiology of your stress response



A tip on the “calm down” breathing – it’s all in the out-breath.

Start by focusing on your out breath. Consciously slow it down. Pause at the bottom of the out breath, really empty your lungs and then allow your in breath to come, however it comes, don’t force anything. For a few breath cycles count to four as you breathe out. Pause and count to three as you breath in and pause again. In this way you can down-regulate your nervous system, slow down the adrenaline and cortisol and return more easily to a calm state. Try it now.

ESSENCE: 2. WORKING THROUGH WHAT YOU ARE NOT

IN DOING FOR OTHER WE CAN LOSE THE SENSE OF HAVING A “SELF”

Tending to children, meeting the needs of a job, especially where technology means we often don't ever completely sign off from the job, looking after parents or friends in trouble. Life can end up being one long series of responding to requirements “out there”. We forget we even have a “self” with its own needs, feelings and desires.

So slow down and tune in.



What are you feeling right now? What's needed right now? What's one small way you could bring that into your life right now?

PUSHING BACK PAIN KEEPS US SEPARATE FROM OUR TRUE JOY AND POWER.

And we do it because so far in life there has been no better way present that we were able to bring ourselves to.

This could be a hurt from long ago that has been papered over or perhaps has seen the pendulum swing so far in the other direction that all the while you are acting as if you have risen above it, the basic wound is still there. It could be something in your current life that you know is no longer true or right or good for you, but you can't figure out how to accept it, evolve it or step away from it. This could be a job, a relationship or a life circumstance that is hard to accept.

What comes up for you when we talk this way?



Is there a hurt, a wound or a stuckness that is ready for the next layer of healing? If you were a little more free from feeling this way, stuffing it down, doing whatever you do to cope – what would you do with the extra energy? Where would the freedom take you?

FEELING “LESS THAN” PREVENTS US EMBODYING OUR TRUE ESSENCE

This next reflection is an invitation to look in on one or some of the ways you feel “less than” in life and to try out some of the approaches from the “Essence of You” program for working through this false self, into your essential self.

Think about a time when you felt diminished, less than, put down, unseen, not important. It might be in a job role where you were not appreciated or a relationship where the other person acted badly from their own stuff. It might have been in a social setting where you felt you didn’t have what was needed or valued by the group.

If you are aware that this could be a theme for you, that you feel this way a lot of the time, be gentle just now. It may feel like this is the truth of things, but it is not. You just heard this message, one way or another, too many times and took it in as truth. Once an idea like this becomes part of our unconscious cognitive structure or way of thinking, we respond to life from this place and life will seem to validate it again and again. So for the sake of this experience, accept that unpacking it may take some time (and may benefit from sessions with a therapist). If you can, just find a very small, very specific example of a time where you felt less than.

Write down briefly, simply, the circumstances, how you felt, the thoughts that went with it and how it has affected the way you interact with the world.

For example, last week I was very sick. A well-meaning friend tried to comfort me by offering advice. After the advice I felt lonely as I could see she didn’t really understand. I held back from this friend for a little while. It taps into a part of me that feels unseen and “made wrong”.

OK, let’s start (or more likely continue) to evolve it ...

TOOLS THAT
HEAL THE
HURT AND
ALLOW MORE
OF YOUR
ESSENTIAL
NATURE
TO SHINE
THROUGH

UNREALISTIC THINKING LEAVES NO ROOM FOR YOUR TRUE ESSENCE

Working with unrealistic thinking:

Not always, but often unrealistic thoughts contribute to feeling less than about ourselves. The most damaging thoughts are the unconscious ones that affect how we experience the world, interact with it and make sense of things, without us even realizing.

A good practice is to work to identify the negative belief about yourself and the world and then challenge it until you arrive at a more realistic thought. Not necessarily a Disneyland happy thought, but a realistic thought. This will often improve how you feel about things.

Looking at the negative or worried thought you just wrote about, ask yourself, am I exaggerating the likelihood of this bad thing being true? Am I overgeneralizing and making assumptions about what others think? Have I lost track of times and situations where something different is true? Am I judging myself too harshly? Am I having unrealistic expectations of another and who and how they need to be?



What's really true here?

REPRESSION AND DENIAL MAKE MORE STRESS, NOT LESS.

Working with mindful awareness:

When we are stressed or unhappy, it is tempting to try and push the thought away, ignore it or suppress it, disconnect and deny it. These strategies don't usually work in the long run and can backfire.



Start by thinking about something that is working well in your life. Take a deep breath as you think about this experience of comfort or ease or wellbeing. Bring it to life for a moment in your imagination. Notice how you feel in your body as you connect to this experience.

Now, with this as your base to return to, allow yourself to speak simply the difficult thing you have been trying to avoid. Label it as a thought, just a thought. We all have a lot of junk mail thoughts that run through our heads every day. It doesn't make the thought true or helpful. So just now, label the thing you have been avoiding.

I am having the worried thought that:



Just see it as a thought. Don't try and make it mean anything, just see it as a thought, a bunch of words that have come together in your mind. Accept it. Make room for it. You don't necessarily have to believe it.

Now notice the feeling that goes with this thought. Be gentle, kind and accepting about the feeling. Again, don't make it mean anything, just observe it. It's a feeling, so notice and allow it. I am feeling:

Now gently bring your attention back to the image of strength and wellbeing that you started with. Breathe that in, connect with those images. Keep your attention with this place of ease and wellbeing for a full minute before your continue.

CALLING UP THE GOOD STUFF CREATES A MORE OPEN SPACE FOR YOUR ESSENCE TO BREATHE.

Working with positive psychology and attention:

We are wired, for survival reasons to pay much more attention to negative thoughts than positive or neutral ones. This was handy in caveman times when missing a potential threat meant death, but missing the beauty of a spring flower still allowed our ancestors to live another day.

In modern life our stress response, designed to activate under threat for our very survival, gets triggered a hundred times a day, from being late for work to forgetting to pick up dinner on the way home. The more time we spend in a stress response, the more our brain adapts and comes from this place as a default.

In relation to the difficult thought above, see if you can find a time when something different was true, when you felt accepted and appreciated for who you are, a time when you were aware of belonging and having a place in the world. Even if it was long ago or just for a short time, call it to mind now. See the people and the environment you were in. Take a breath and notice how this felt. Notice what's happening in your body now, with your breathing, your heart rate, your muscle tension and your posture.



Write down how it feels to be accepted and appreciated.

JUDGING YOUR FEELINGS, NEEDS AND RESPONSES LEAVES NO ROOM FOR THE TRUE YOU.

Working with positive psychology and compassion:

Compassion is an anti-dote to the stress response. It slows down our heart rate, reduces the stress on our immune system and allows us access to more of our brain and a larger perspective on life events.



It's often easier to feel compassion for another than it is to offer it to ourselves. Look back on the feeling less than scenario above and call to mind a person or spiritual figure you regard as extremely compassionate. What would they have to say about it? Write it down, take a deep breath and see if you can take it in, even just a little.

This has been a taste test of some of the psychological tools we work with in the embodying more of your true essence. I hope that no matter where you are on y simply a moment with yourself.

STRESS HORMONE OVERLOAD HOLDS YOUR SMART BRAIN HOSTAGE (NOW WHERE ARE YOU?)

Working with neuropsychology:

Stressful thoughts lead to a stressful physiological response in the body and neurological system, with hormones like cortisol, adrenaline and norepinephrine pumping through our system helping us respond to the perceived threat to our life or sovereignty.

Often a great place to start to improve things is to work with your body's physiology to reduce the level of stress hormones pumping and allow you better access to your smart brain with all of its higher perspective and creative solutions.

Start now by taking five breaths where you count in for five, hold, then count down for five and hold. Five breaths, five counts. As you breathe out, focus on really emptying your lungs. As much as you are able, breathe deeply down into your abdomen.

No, I mean it, really do it.



Now check in with your issue and see if there is a new perspective that is helpful for you.

full “Essence of You” program to move through the barriers that keep you from our path, there was a little something in that for you. An insight, a reminder or



THE WORLD WITHIN & THE WORLD OUT THERE

There is a very beautiful
thing that can happen in
meditation.

There is a very beautiful thing that can happen in meditation. Or any place really when you are feeling full and soft and open. Or empty and soft and open. You may already experience this; the knowing and felt sense that what is alive within you is also what is alive all through the world around you and beyond you.

In yoga we talk about prana, in eastern culture generally we talk about chi or life force. In the west we may talk about the spirit of a thing.

Spirit. Feeling inspired. Inspiration. To take in breath. To take in life force. From the Latin *inspirāre* - to breathe upon or into.

For many of us, loneliness or isolation or a sense of being “separate from” becomes an issue at some point in our life. This could be anything from missing having a life partner, or wishing your partner would be more present with you, feeling your friends or family don’t understand you, to having a spiritual crisis about the meaning of your life. Separation and loneliness is the core existential pain of the human condition. We are always seeking to remedy or avoid it and this is natural. We need each other to survive.

And the sense of “separate” is something of a muse, to keep us seeking new levels of unity, one-ness, wholeness, connection.

I’d like to suggest a simple noticing that can bring you into awareness of your place and sense of connection and belonging in life. It’s available to you no matter where you are. And in the moment that you get it, it is impossible to be alone or separate.

Take a breath. Become very aware of it. Soften into it. Notice with each new breath how it touches into all parts of your body. Stay with the rhythm of this, as each breath brings the world out there, the oxygen that sustains life on earth into you, to sustain you.

Remember, as you breathe out, how the carbon dioxide on your exhale is sustaining for plant life. Notice how we are part of an interdependent eco-system, connected, each necessary for the other’s existence.

Be aware of the air inside your lungs and the air outside your chest being the same air. Consider that your breath is more than your breath, that it is chi or prana, life force energy that animates all.

Where in your life have you felt a sense of wholeness, unity or one-ness?

Think about rocks and oceans and mountains and fields and sunsets and night skies. If you are a very physical person, think of times you have been so fully present with and in your body that your whole being was aware of every breath and every heartbeat and your body moved with ease and elegance and no effort.

Think about the let-go you may experience through your sexuality, when boundaries dissolve and all becomes expansive. Think about times when you have felt the grace of love settle through you. Think about working or creating when you are in your zone and something is unfolding through you effortlessly.

Notice how this feeling stays with you on the in breath and the out breath. Notice how it is the same feeling within you and outside you and all around you. Smile. (If you want to).

Draw something, a shape, a symbol, a colour to remind you of this experience.



TURNING IN & MOVING WITH YOUR CREATIVE ENERGY

So as you heal and free yourself from the things that drain you and keep you separate from your true nature, well, little by little your true nature kicks in.

Just as stress and anxiety is felt very physically in the body, so is ease and wellness. And in that state of ease, wellness and acceptance, our true nature can also be felt physically in our body. Your life force energy, sexual energy and creative energy are all one and the same.

When you breathe deeply into your belly, can you feel a visceral stirring of aliveness? Can you allow that wakefulness to move with your breathe through all the cells in your body and the spaces in between?

Touch your arm. Can you touch your own body and enjoy the pleasure in the touch? Become aware of more and more subtle sensations? Lightly graze your arm with your fingernail and as you breathe in really register the sensations in your arm and elsewhere in your body that go with that. Can you slow down and into this moment ... or is your mind telling you to get on with something more important?

Can you find the ways in which your sexual energy and creative energy and vitality for life all feel like the same energy and fuel and nourish you? Your breath is an important clue here, so breathe deeply and read the question again. Feel the response in your body, don't try and analyse or label it.

If you feel some block or shut down in this area of your life, what are the emotions that go with that?

Creative here doesn't necessarily mean painting or drawing or playing guitar, although it could. It is about the way you respond to life in the moment, through your intuition, your felt sense, your body awareness, how you take something in and offer it back to the world – through your touch, your eyes, your words or ideas.

So what are you aware of now around your creative life force energy, your sensual self. Does it want nurturing and tending in? Does it want expression

through your voice or movement or writing or drawing or speaking? Does it need something percussive to break up stuck energy, like clapping or staccato sounds or jumping up and down? Does it want something soothing – soft music, a fresh juice or herbal tea, a natural fragrance?

Is it angry or passionate, does it want to pour bold colours on a page or speak in strong language about how the world is or needs to be?

My aim here is to help you get a sense of your creative energy as a felt sense or an energetic stirring, rather than an output of a particular kind.

When we listen to it and take some kind of small action in line with it, momentum builds. Have you ever had a sense of waking up with a desire to achieve or make something happen, but you're not sure what? Perhaps you go for a walk or talk with a friend who gets you or take some kind of action in line with the stirring from inside and then the next step becomes clear? In acting on it, the energy and momentum builds.

Thinking, analyzing, waiting for it to be perfect kills creative energy.

This is an exercise in being free and following the momentum from within into some kind of expression or action in your physical world, it doesn't matter what, only that you follow through with your body, in a connected way.

So take a breath, listen in to your body and do something, any kind of thing. Just now, without thinking. Breathe, listen to your body, act. You might stretch, you might collapse, you might go somewhere or write something or pick up an object or talk to someone. Breathe, tune in to your body, then move without thinking, whatever way your body wants (obviously keep it safe).



Now make a note of the sensations you feel in your body or your inner landscape

You might feel excited or hopeful or peaceful or energized. **Stay connected to this feeling and notice what it wants next. Act again, without thinking too much. See if some momentum builds.**

You might also have gotten in touch with a sad or worried feeling you have been trying not to feel. So just notice it, acknowledge it and hold it kindly. See what happens, what stirs or evolves as you accept and make space for this feeling.

If it taps into something big, make sure you reach out and put in place the support you need.



TAKING CARE OF YOUR ESSENTIAL SELF

nimore, sce mantiaet vendius es
cum denihin temquam et; hocciem
nequam atil tur, sulem

Who's ever been to a workshop or read a book or done a course and been all fired up until, well, about 10am on Monday morning or when the stresses start to pile up again or your mother-in-law comes to stay?

What we are doing here with this program is evolving a new way of being present with yourself and your life, even when you are busy or tired or under stress.

At times like this it is easy to fall back into old coping styles that often see our true essence dimmed, while we attempt to deal with stress after stress and the accumulating demands from outside and from the expectations we again start to place on ourselves.

Whoa ... slow down ...

Living from the essence of you means being in touch with your feelings and needs even while you are writing a report or driving the kids to school or listening to your friend talk about her demanding boss.

Taking a breath and being gently aware of what's happening in your body, even as you assess the needs and priorities in your environment. Present for self, while present for other.



Here is a list of ways you can stay there for yourself, even while you need to attend to responsibilities “out there”. Tick one or two you would like to try today.

- Take a conscious breath and notice how it feels in your body
- Find something neutral in your environment. Notice its colour, shape, texture. Practice alternating your attention between the object out there and the sensations of your breath. Start with 5 second intervals. Notice how in time you can keep attention on both at once with gentle ease.
- Practice the above when a friend is talking with you about neutral things.
- Practice again when a friend is talking with you about emotionally stirring things.
- Ask yourself “what do I need just now”. Think about a small way you can give that to yourself, maybe right now, maybe a little later.
- Ask your body “what do you need right now”? It might be touch or a shower or a certain food or a movement or a stretch. Be conscious and present as you offer this to yourself.
- Ask you inner child what he or she needs just now. Find a way to bring it in – some comfort or play or spontaneous moment that may not make logical sense.



Click for video
on being there for yourself
Running time 2 min



Click for video
on being there for
your dreams
Running time 2 min

PROMISE TO SELF



So, in the midst of the busy and the crazy of your life, the excitement, the boredom, the pain, the worries and the hopefulness, what do you want to promise yourself? How might you make more space for the essence of you to shine through in your life? How could you support the embodiment and felt sense experiencing of the essence of you?

With even a 10% shift in this direction, what would be better in your life?

How are you already nourishing and supporting your essential self?

What's one small thing you could do today?

MORE DEEPLY INTO THE ESSENCE OF YOU

You are beautiful, shining from your core. I hope you know that.

When hard things pile up inside and around you, I hope you can find that part that knows it still, that believes in you and believes in life. If it's hard to find, that's OK for now. Let that be OK just for now and offer some comfort and acceptance, knowing that the essence of you doesn't go anywhere, can't go anywhere, is you, is burning on and shining on regardless, even as you are finding your place with stuff, working through stuff.

I hope you know that also when things are going well, when there is ease in your field and your friendships. Take a deep conscious breath and feel the meeting of the essence of you and the essence of all of life. Breathe and allow this sacred breath to fill you and the space around you.

You are beautiful, shining from your core. I hope you know that.

Enjoy the beauty of you ... Deborah

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 Deborah Jackson
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