

## Presencing Issue 38: Asking for Help - Part I

**From Jack:** *During the past few months I have had the privilege of spending time with a friend who has been grappling with cancer for the past two years. We have entered the stage where his pain is very great and the fears associated with dying dominate much of his internal awareness. Rather than putting fear on the back burner, we have both reached into the somatic expression of the fear in our bodies, and described what it feels like. At one point we came into a place of no words, a kind of inner barrier. It felt like a physical barrier inside, breath diminished, weakness suffused our bodies, thoughts became knots... and silence took us into just being. Then something arose inside both of us. I spoke the words I heard inside: "What about asking for help?" All of a sudden it was as if this offered a fresh start to our lives and our journey together. The words weren't about seeking external help; they were about reaching towards internal help. Immediately feelings of curiosity and livingness ensued, as if we had passed through the gates of fear.*



**Moving beyond fear:** In the next three issues of *Presencing I* will explore some aspects of our work as bodyworkers and professional caregivers from the perspective of Spiritual Direction. I have been doing this all along because of the emphasis on opening the treatment relationship to more and more presence. Recently at a seminar I was giving in Tokyo on working with our clients' fear, a chiropractor shared that she had recently gotten in touch with how much fear has been a background factor in her life. Now she is changing the internal commitment of her practice to helping clients free themselves from fear. When I decided on teaching presencing as the core of my work, I

made the same commitment. Fear cannot dominate our minds when we are present. I hope that we can declare ourselves and the Earth free from human fear.

**Developing an inner relationship:** What do we mean by an inner relationship? It is the discovery that we are never alone inside. There are other parts of our mind, starting with what is called the inner self, the one inside who is learning from every experience we ever have. Perhaps it is why we always feel the same age inside no matter what is happening to our body. This one is always curious about life, always wondering about what comes next, and just like the curiosity of the child, this one is always questioning why? We also have an ego which is continually speaking to us and asserting that we are living in a world that is presided over by rules of guilt and judgment, reward and punishment. Our ego is derived from the belief in separation in which humankind is divided into individuals that are separated by competition and reputation. We strive for excellence at the cost of suffering; some win others lose. Indeed this is the one we carefully train from childhood in order to maintain a predictable system in which the collective ego reigns.

**Witnessing and inner guidance:** And another presence inside is sometimes called the "witness." This one becomes increasingly familiar as we shift our awareness more and more into the present moment. It is said that the ego cannot survive in presence and that the false notions about life projected by the ego begin to dissolve as we begin to



accede to curiosity and realize the possibilities of extending ourselves in oneness. The fourth inner partner is sometimes called the Holy Spirit; the one who is our collective Consciousness; the one inside who is one with Creation itself. It has been said that this one is closer to you than your freshest breath, and loves you more than any Earthly lover could. I also call this one the intrinsic, meaning that part of the design of the human being is directly derived from our Source and speaks for our collective Being. This one never interferes with the way we choose to live our lives. Sometimes called the "voice of the silence," we start to become aware that we are *feeling* the words we are hearing. Indeed, as we feel the effects of presence, we become aligned with the presence that speaks from our collective identity. We link to this guidance as we feel our thoughts and words emerging from our heart center or *kokoro*. In other words, we wittingly form a link to Being through presencing. It is our choice.

**Asking for help:** We are never alone; this is one of the most profound realizations that emerges out of our growth of an inner life. We start to experience different forms of communication from within. Sometimes it is a thought that seems to come from a different source inside. Sometimes it is a voice where there are none to speak; a voice emerging from the silence. There is also the development of a strong feeling of awe inside as we are speaking. We feel a presence and a stillness inside and then word source opens and we hear ourselves speaking words we never heard before, new ideas forming inside and emerging from our heart center. And one of the surprising developments is that whatever this source is, it is beckoning us to ask for help. In other words we are encouraged to test our inner relationship and find that there is a true teacher inside. And just like Saint Francis we start to test the presence and perspicacity of this one inside; "show up and show me that you exist." My friend Trixie Allingham, who was a British medium, would test her inner teacher constantly by following what she would hear inside. One of her most common utterances was: "that's evidence" of my inner guidance. But the most significant shift is when we think to ask for help. Not only is it an acknowledgment that we can't solve everything with our egos, but it is an act of true humility.

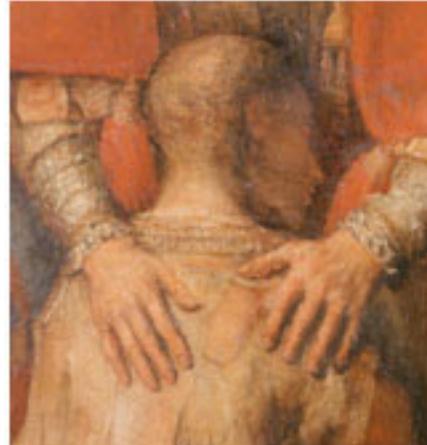


**Ways of Presencing:** There are many ways of becoming present inside: following our thoughts like watching clouds; noticing the close reflective relationship between our thoughts and the feelings they stimulate in the body and vice versa; paying attention between our inner experiences and our external experiences; becoming aware of how we are projecting our past relationships and experiences onto the present moment; feeling the interaction between our bodily sensations no matter whether they are pleasant or unpleasant, and using our curiosity to explore and subtend those sensations until they become doorways into pure consciousness; interacting with another in

mutual presencing and sharing the effects of oneness and awakening out of the shadow life of the ego; pursuing our curiosity in nature, which is always in a state of presence; exploring the signs and gifts of presence internally and externally; and using any of those experiences of presence to speak our heartfelt feelings to those aforementioned deeper parts of ourselves.

**Somatic awareness:** I have written much about using somatic awareness as an authentic and reliable way to validate the experiences of presencing. Unlike grace, of which so much is written in spiritual literature, we can choose to become somatically aware in any moment. Indeed we can start to develop our memories to create more and more experiences of somatic, bodily-felt awareness. As we choose more and more presencing through somatic awareness we open up more and more to the gifts of presence. The body itself always exists in the present moment, so training our minds to "presence" becomes a dependable way to live in a state of grace.

**Inner anatomy:** Thomas Hanna in his writings about somatics makes a distinction about the third person analytic objective experience and the first person subjective experience. Both ways of gathering information are important but in most caregiving professions we focus on third person objectivity, rather than paying attention to what the client is presently feeling inside the body. Because we are dealing continually with bodies, we need to recognize that the body we study as students of our work is the third person body, as we interact with different approaches to symptomatic treatment. The bodies we work with are not the third person stories about bodies that our clients reported during intake. It doesn't matter whether we are working with energy, positional release, Trager® movement, structural integration, or myofascial release; we are treating the body as an outer form rather than an inner experience.



**First Person:** The first person experience of our body is quite different than our third person abstractions. If we are not providing a way for our clients to share their present internal experiences with us we are missing a key aspect of life in a body. Inner or felt anatomy is quite different from outer or descriptive anatomy. Fear is a felt experience in the body whereas stories that use descriptive fear rely on past memories. When we experience the feelings of fear in our bodies, we start to commune with those deeper parts of ourselves. That is a perfect time to ask for help inside. We then discover that we are indeed never alone! Stories that produce fear are third person abstractions, whereas the feelings of sympathetic body states are first person subjective reactions that only occur *now*.

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