

Milling Exercise



Begin to walk around each other in this space, increasing your pace and weaving in and out of each other so as not to collide. Continue to increase your pace further, being careful to avoid all contact with the other people in your space – just pass people without even acknowledging their presence.

Now imagine that you're in Times Square, in the heart of New York City, and it's rush hour. You've just finished a 12-hour day at work and you have twenty minutes to catch the subway, make your way across town, and get to a meeting where it will be decided whether or not you get the loan for the house that you so badly want. After that you've got to pick up the kids, go all the way across town again to get home, cook dinner, pay bills, put the kids to bed, check and answer e-mail and phone messages, prepare a presentation for the morning meeting at work, and try to get to bed before midnight so that you can get 5 hours of sleep before you have to get up and do it all over again.

You are starting to feel trapped, suffocated, like you're losing control of your life. In fact, you feel like you *have lost* control of your life. There's just not enough time for you to deal with everything. It's always GO, GO, GO, with no stopping... That's all there is, day in and day out.

Now slowly pick your head up from the dirty, polluted concrete upon which you are rushing, and begin to slow down and notice the people who are around you. Begin to realize that they are people and not merely obstacles blocking your path. Now look into the eyes of those people that you walk past and see that they are leading lives much like your own. Look into their eyes and recognize that you are not alone in this world.

Now come face to face with one of these people whose eyes you have met, and stop. Facing that person, raise your palms and press them together with the palms of the person in front of you. Looking into each other's eyes, slowly open yourself to the unique and wondrous power that this other person embodies. You see the gifts that this person offers the world in their own way-- qualities which are completely unique to this person. You see that this person in front of you has so much to give to the world and you want to learn how to help them see

their gifts, their abilities, and their power. Your greatest desire is for them to be free from the greed, the hate, the delusion, the envy, and the pretenses that keep them from fully being open to the beauty all around them.

Now, slowly, lower your palms and find a way, without speaking, to say goodbye to this person and wish them well.

Now continue to walk and look at those around you.

Now stop in front of someone new and raise your palms to meet theirs. Look into their eyes. You don't have to even know them, but contemplate your willingness to be with them. Your willingness to be with them in their suffering-- to just be with them without desiring to fix their suffering, but to simply be with them in their grief. Maybe it's grief over the loss of someone close to them, or despair over the future of the world, or the future of their children. Maybe their suffering is due to illness-- their own or someone close to them. Maybe someone close to them has cancer, is homeless, or is completely lost in the chaos of this world. Look into their eyes, understand that they, too, grieve and suffer.

Now lower your palms and find a way to say goodbye.

And resume walking... Find someone new and raise your palms to meet theirs. Look into their eyes and see the joy they have in the joy of others. They want so desperately for others to be happy and free of pain. They delight in the laughter of children, a puppy playing, sunrise, sunset, seeing others succeed and being confident in themselves. Like you, they want the world to be a more compassionate place to live-- yet they don't always know how to express it. Know that within them is the desire for kindness and understanding.

Slowly lower your palms and say goodbye.

And continue to walk and find someone new... Raise your palms to meet theirs. In this person you realize that our true nature is in our interconnectedness, our interdependence, and our authenticity. See the person in front of you as your child, your parent, your enemy, a dying friend. See them as a soul in search of meaning, in search of understanding. See them as longing for understanding. Recognize their unique being, and understand that they hold you as you hold

them. We often fool ourselves that we are alone, that we are independent-- but we are not, we are all connected, we are interdependent, and we are one.

Now slowly lower your palms, and realizing this is the last person you will encounter during today's rush hour, say goodbye and wish them well