

Here-Nowing

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY **

Stand facing your partner or a good friend.
 Decide who will go first.
 One of you will speak, and the other will receive.
 Let your bodies be relaxed and comfortable,
 Your arms hanging loosely by your sides,
 Your legs relaxed so that your knees are not locked.
 Look softly into one of your partner's eyes.
 For the one receiving, you are going to be absolutely present.
 Just looking, receiving, hearing, without any reaction at all.
 You're going to be like the sky, open and receptive.
 For the one speaking,
 Looking into one of your partner's eyes,
 Give a commentary on the present moment.
 You're going to report on what is seen,
 What is heard, what is felt in the body.
 You can report on thoughts, on judgments, on memories.
 But make sure you report them as thoughts.
 Speak only of what is being experienced exactly now.
 After five minutes, fall silent for a few seconds
 And then switch roles.

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My wife, Chameli, and I have done this practice together literally thousands of times, over many years. This simple practice cultivates

two qualities, both of which are essential foundations for translucent relating.

The first essential quality is listening without reaction. When it is your turn to be receptive, keep absolutely still; do not react in any way. If your partner cracks a joke, do not laugh. If your partner starts to cry, you can be fully present in your heart, but do not interact in any way. Be like the open sky, receiving and being present for your partner in every way.

The other essential quality is that of radical honesty. You are learning to tell the truth about what is real in this moment without explanation, history, or blame. Absolute honesty means that the words coming from your lips are perfectly synchronized with the actuality of your moment-to-moment experience. Generally, when we try to be honest, we tell stories about the past: “I forgot to tell you that I never called to order the plane tickets.” This is generally useful information, and a good thing to do. We would call that “sharing withholds,” which we describe in practice 34. Radical honesty goes far beyond that. “I can see your eyes looking at me. I can feel the air entering my nostrils. I can hear the sound of the car passing outside.” This is not useful information, and might get you wondering, What is the point?

This practice brings you both more deeply into the present moment, together. It quickly and effortlessly increases intimacy. When we can tell the truth about what is happening, now and now and now and now, without explanation or concept, we are revealed to be who we are behind the mask of reason: naked and absolutely innocent. “Here I am, like this. Take me or leave me; I am like this.” In listening, we give our partner the greatest gift, the

one that everyone is longing for: to be received unconditionally without evaluation, bypassing the conceptual mind.

Do this practice for five minutes, each way, every day at the same time for thirty days, and you will be amazed at the result. Do not do this practice when you are in crisis, but use it regularly and you will not enter crisis mode so easily.