

Grounding exercises for nervous system self and co regulation



Self regulation is a term for how we regulate our own nervous system, whereas *co-regulation* refers to 2 or more people supporting each other in regulating their nervous system in shared activities.

Something cool about self and co regulation is that through the effect of the electromagnetic field of the body and probably other systems too, our state of nervous system influences those around us.

Stress has a substantial impact on our mental and physical health. Many of us have to demystify and sort through a lifetime of programming that make it taboo to admit our stress and emotional responses to it, let alone care for our selves.

Stress can push us out of our bodies, numbness and quickening between inputs and reactions can be examples of this.

The more fully embodied ourselves the more access we have to our senses and naturally vast intelligence.

Tricks for getting back in our bodies and maintaining emotional sovereignty:

☞ focus on the sensations on the surface of your skin on the left side of your body. Maybe a breeze, fabric and/or temperature. Extend your awareness through that sensation as far in this direction as comfortable. Repeat this exercise to the right, the back side of your body and the front of your body. Also the tops of your head, feet and shoulders. Sense in this way into the soles of your feet. Bring to mind those in your life, alive and or philosophically, friends, authors etc. who have your back.

☞ pat down legs and arms energetically. No need to be super hard but with enough pressure to feel blood flow stimulation. Go from toes and fingers to shoulders and back until you feel more present. We might not feel a big change the first several times we try this, but it's still working.

☞ tense and relax muscles one muscle group at a time starting at the feet and traveling to the face. Tense and relax each muscle group three times before moving to the next.

☞ inhale lifting spine tall from the top of the head. Exhale and keep the length but let all else relax. allow the bones to go with gravity. Particularly let the sacrum and tale bone be heavy. Let the pelvis tilt forward as if it were a bowl of water spilling onto the floor before you.

☞ imagine having a tail that balances you in space like a cat. Or a kangaroo tail that creates contact with the ground and holds you up. it can feel silly but it can also be very balancing!

☞ relax feet and feel as if you have roots pulling up nutrients from deep underground. breath that into the belly. picture the aspect of mountain that speaks to you most and breathe that into your pelvis/belly.

☞ picture the aspect of water that speaks most to you and breath that into your heart. feel the breath travel, circulating that earth energy through the body.

☞ picture the aspect of sky that most speaks to you and breath that into your mind and head.

☞ if an interaction feels like it is tugging at you, crowds, apprehension, insult or compliment, picture that sensation and energy dropping to the ground outside of yourself/ between you and any person/s stimulating your nervous system. Doing a breathing exercise with this visual may help.

I like to try each of these on, feeling for those which I most connect to. Focusing on one visualization and one physical/breath exercise and practicing them regularly, perhaps as a morning routine, helps build a personal language between mind and body. In this way in a scenario that hijacks our nervous system, the exercise shows up quicker and can help hold space for us in a stronger way. The idea is not to push away or cage the feelings but to slow them down and find greater agency for ourselves in navigating them and their impact on our bodies and minds.

Wishing you tenderness and resilience.