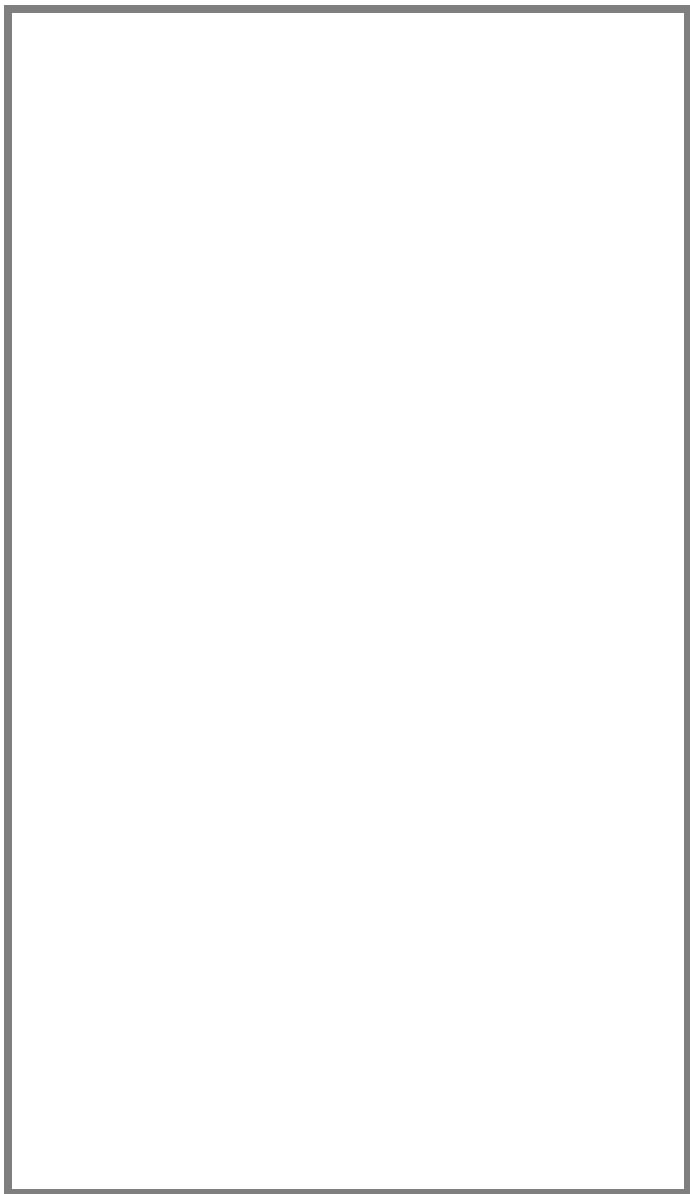
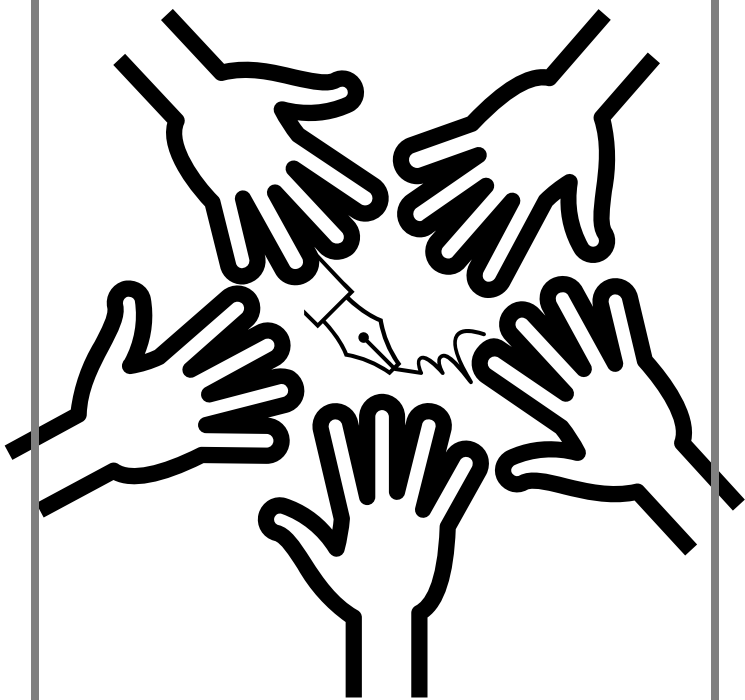


*Little Book of  
Grounding Skills*







## **Introduction**

Grounding exercises are techniques designed to help individuals become more aware of their physical presence and remain focused on the present moment. These practices can support mental, physical, and emotional engagement with others.

## **Benefits of Grounding**

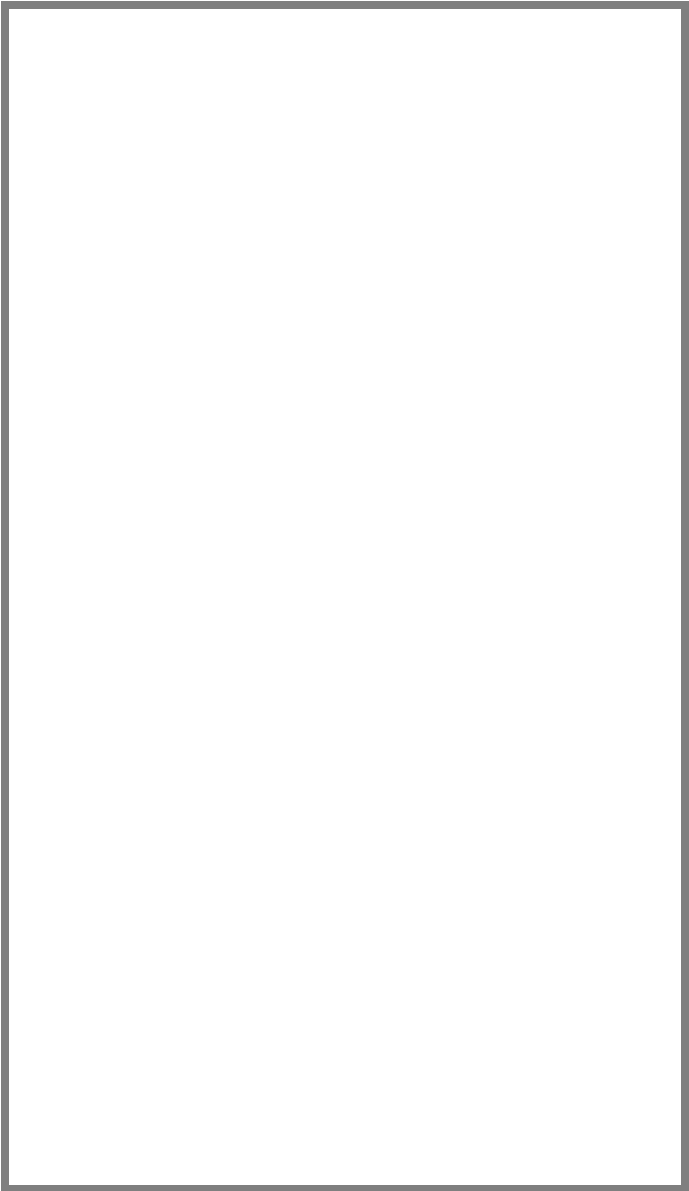
Using grounding exercises may reduce the likelihood of responses such as emotional flooding or stonewalling, which are less effective ways of managing strong emotions. During periods of heightened emotion, cortisol levels can increase and affect advanced cognitive functions, making it more challenging to address difficult conversations. As a result, intense emotions can become more influential than conscious management efforts.

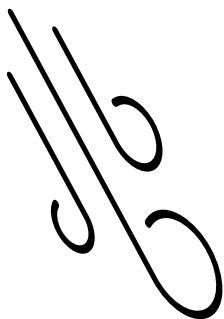
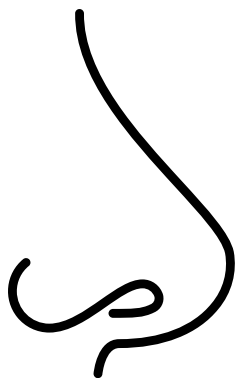
## **Factors Contributing to Overwhelming Emotions**

Experiences such as insufficient self-care, illness, triggering events, previous trauma, or limited skills in emotional regulation may contribute to episodes of overwhelming emotion.

## **Overview of the Booklet**

This booklet introduces a number of grounding techniques. Most of these are easy to use and the booklet is portable for convenient reference to provide support during emotionally intense situations wherever you might be.





## **Take Deep Breaths**

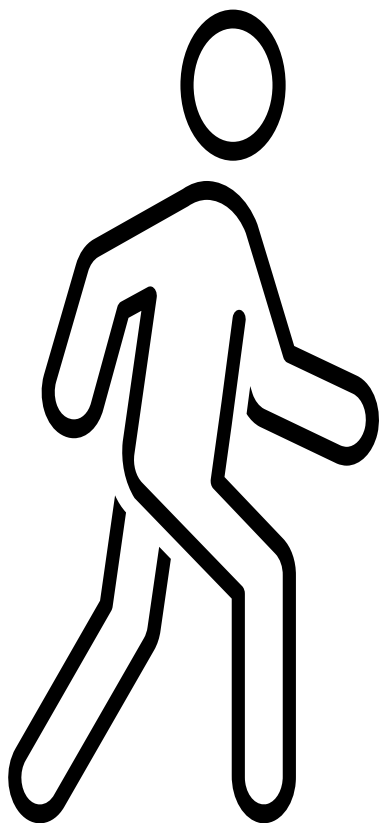
Take deep breaths as attentively as you can. Focus on the sound as you breathe, count the seconds of each inhale, exhale, and the spaces in between. You can do the 3-3-3 triangular (adjust the count to suit you, e.g., a 4-4-4 count might work better for you) method where you inhale 3, exhale 3, and hold out for 3 seconds. Put your hand on your belly to feel your breath move in and out of your body. Have all your senses focused on your breath.



## **Cold Face Wash**

To ground yourself, immerse your face in cold water. Repeat until you can feel unified internally. As you continue to splash and immerse your face in water allow all your senses to join you. Notice how the water feels on your skin, the sounds it creates, the smell.

It may be more prudent at times to place your hands under cold running water or place your hands in ice or hold an ice cube. The principal is the same, engage all your senses in the experience, if possible.



## **Go for a Walk**

Taking a walk is a good antidote for many things but can be especially grounding if it can be a place where you feel safe. A place that feels peaceful or relaxing to you. Again engaging with as many of your senses as possible. Choose a focus, internal, external, or rotating. Internal would focus on things internal such as the feel of your foot as you step on the ground. External would focus on things outside yourself such as the trees, birds looking for the details in each of these things.

1

2

3

4

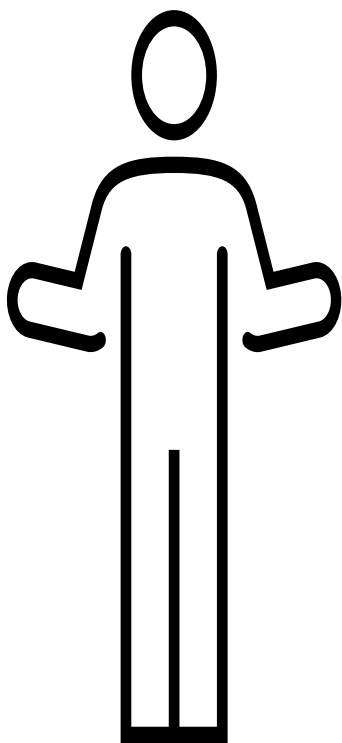
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## **The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique**

This one can be done in many places. Here's what you do when you are upset up and need to relax. Take a pause and identify,

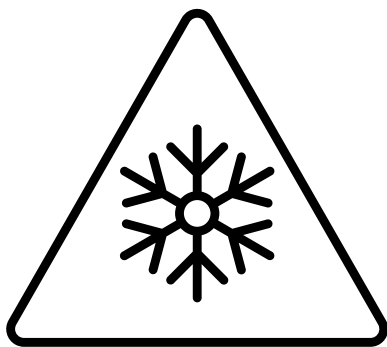
- Ⓔ 5 things you can see
- Ⓔ 4 things you can feel
- Ⓔ 3 things you can hear
- Ⓔ 2 things you can smell
- Ⓔ 1 thing you can taste

Speak them aloud or to yourself, write them down if you prefer. You can say them out loud or silently. This exercise literally forces you to return to **HERE** and **NOW**. It can be done in reverse as well.



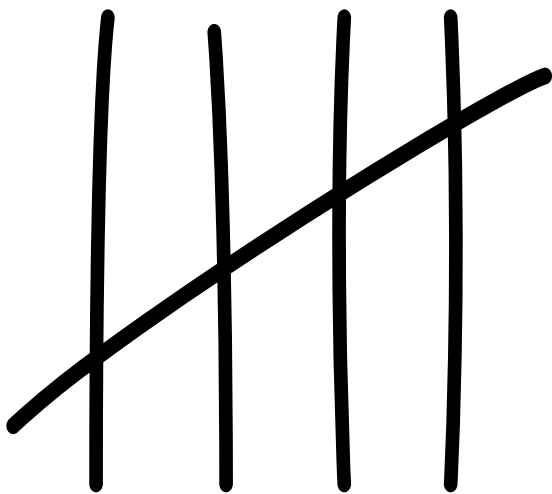
## **Do a Body Scan**

To do a body scan, you can either work your way up (toes to the top of your head) or down (top of your head to toes). Attend to each body part. Is it holding tension? If it is imagine breathing into that part and let it relax allowing any tension to flow out. Do this for each body part, only leaving the amount of tension it needs to support the position you are in, e.g., sitting, standing, laying prone. and breathe in and out easily, slowly with a relaxed rhythm. Take your time and let all the tension leak out of your body and be taken away by the air around you.



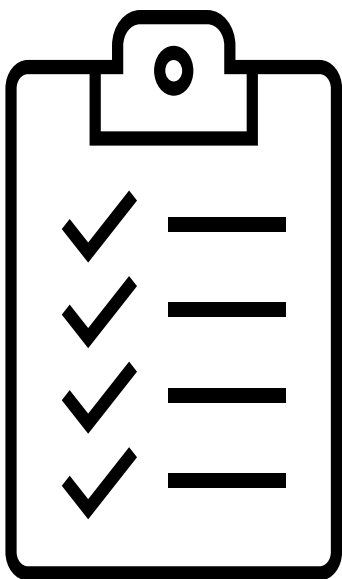
## **Hold a Hot/Cold Item**

Any item hot/cold will work. Items you can drink can serve to be sensed both internally and externally as you sip the liquid and it flows into your body. First attend to the external feel of the item. Think of the temperature, texture, smell, sound, weight of the item. Attend to how you feel as you hold it. Savor the item through your senses. Moving gently from these experiences to reconnecting with the outer environment. Take your time. Connecting to the environment then moving back to the item in your hand.



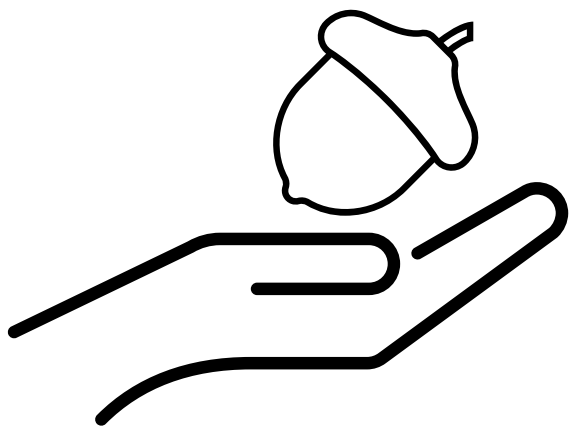
## **Count from 100 to 0**

Start at any number. Keep it easy enough to do but hard enough to focus. If an interval of 1 is too easy and you can do it by rote move to counting backwards by intervals of 3. The farther away from the present you feel the easier the exercise needs to be. Sometimes counting from 1 to 100 is too hard so move to 1 to 25. If that is way too easy start the count backwards from 100 start at intervals of 1 and move to intervals of 3 or 7 when that begins to be easy. Typically, as the exercise becomes hard but easier for you to do you are becoming more and more grounded.



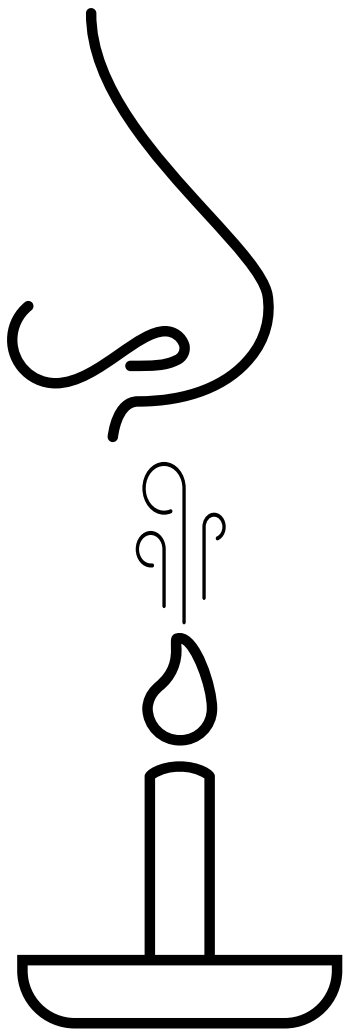
## **Do a Routine Activity**

Routines help us stay grounded. Chores on our routine lists of things to do are perfect to assist us in maintaining our presence here and now. Think of the things that you do on a regular basis for example, folding the clothes, washing the dishes, mopping, dusting, cooking, making the bed, laundry, putting things away, organizing, sorting, gardening, weeding, working on a hobby project, playing a game. This type of grounding skill often helps you get things accomplished, giving you a secondary rewarding of being able to check something off your To Do List.



## **Holding an Object**

Any object can be interesting if you choose to be curious about it. Pick an object employ all your senses. How does it feel? Does it have sound? Movement? Texture. What is its' shape? Color? Does it have a purpose? Is it edible? Does it have an odor? Note the details. If you were going to have to explain the object to someone that cannot interact with it so that they could draw a detailed picture of it could you? This is the observe and describe of Wise Mind's How Skills that are used in all mindfulness exercises. This exercise brings you back to this present moment with the object.



## **Calming Aromas**

What scents encourage you to take a deep breath and feel refreshed? Different scents may evoke different feelings or memories. Make a list of your favorite aroma and how you feel when you smell them. How might you keep these around you? Candles, foods, flowers candies, soaps, teas, perfumes, essential oils are examples of what could be useful in certain rooms that you frequent. Keep them in places where you spend time. Choose scents that evoke positive feelings and assist you in staying present in this moment.



## **Exercise Movement or Pose**

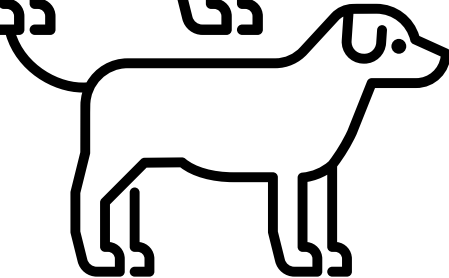
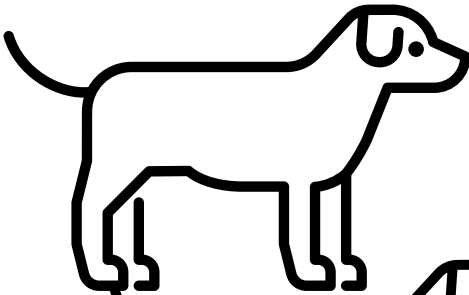
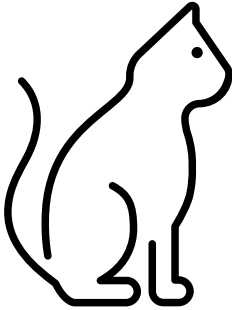
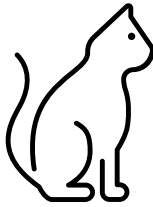
Movements or poses that are linked to things we enjoy can be grounding. A toe touch, jumping jack, lunge step, moving your weight from one foot and then back to the other foot with focus and intention. Dancing, running, skipping, swinging can also assist in getting you back into your body. Focus on your breath as it enters and exits your body as you do these things. Feel your body as it touches the ground and moves through space. Employ the senses and fully engage, i.e., participate in the process.



## **Read Aloud Slowly**

Read something inspirational or funny it can be from a book, computer or phone. Slowly and intentionally inhale and taste the words as you read.

Slowly read the words, enunciating them clearly, and focusing on their meaning as well as the sound of your voice and how it fluctuates with each word. Focus on how your mouth moves to shape the words. As you continue to read and begin to feel increasingly grounded step into the reading more fully as if you were fully engaged with words and reading it to an audience of your favorite people or pets.



## **Pet Your Pet**

You may already do this frequently. Sit with your pet. Fully attend to only them using all your senses. How do they feel, smell, look? What sounds do they make? Take note of their posture. How do they sit? What do you think your pet is saying? How do you think they feel? Are they worried because you are or sad? Are they reflecting their emotions or are you projecting yours? What are they saying to you? I am here for you. You've got this. It will all work out! Pet my belly! I'm hungry! I love you.



## **Positive Affirmations**

Self-affirmations are positive statements that you can say to yourself to overcome negative talk from yourself or others. You can use them daily or when needed. Some days you might want a pat on the head but there is no one around to do that for you. Give yourself that pat on the head. A little self-validation never hurts. Find affirmations, axioms or adages that work for you. Here are a couple:

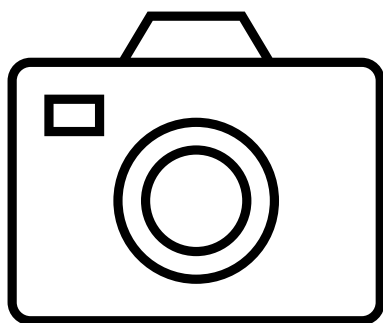
- ♣ I am present in this moment
- ♣ This too shall pass
- ♣ I am safe and well
- ♣ I am okay
- ♣ All is well

Repeat your affirmation aloud to yourself, slowly, with your hand on your heart, eyes closed, deep breath in, deep breath out as you ground yourself in the moment, saying what you need to hear.



## Choiceful Music Playing

Music is a powerful way to change your mood state. Create play lists that allow you to evoke the mood you wish to create in yourself. Give the music your full attention to every word that's said, its tone, the music, each instrument on the song, how the melody changes. Consider how you feel as you listen with intention to it. Make a note. If it makes you sad or anxious do not put it on an uplifting or relaxing play list. If you choose to sing along focus on your voice and inflection. Open all your senses to take in the music. You may have a tune you want to take with you to hum through the day that reminds you of the intention you had for that day. For example, when in a stressful meeting hum to yourself: *It's a small, small world over and over again*. It is proven to keep you smiling.



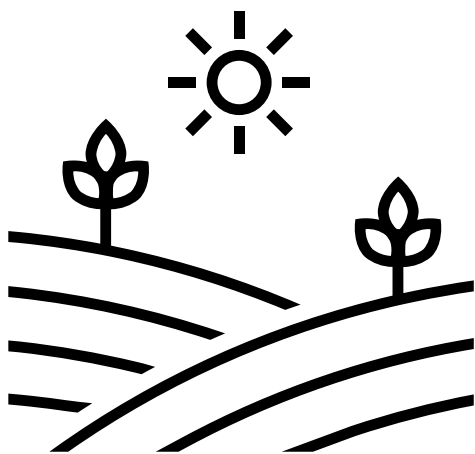
## **Happy Time Photos/Videos**

Photos or videos of a happy time in your life can help to reground in the present. Take yourself to a happier time when you were happy, having fun, with people you loved, in a beautiful place. Notice the details in the media. Allow yourself to feel the impact of viewing these items. What do you feel? Where in your body do you feel it? How are you breathing? What is your posture? Holding onto the things you noticed in yourself after you are done viewing the photos/videos can help prolong those feelings. They can also help you re-evoke a positive mood later by will. Allowing you to access the tools to manage and regulate your mood and emotions more maturely.



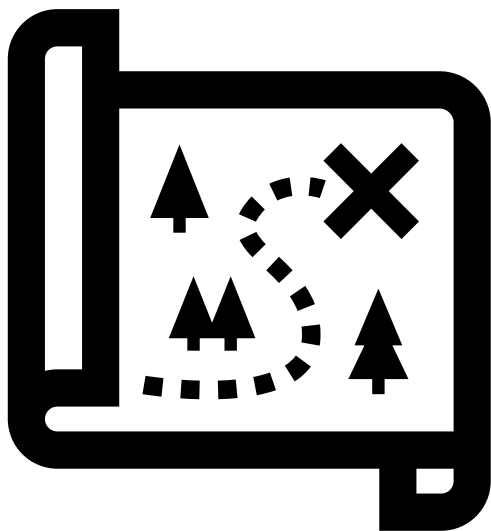
## **Paint a Landscape**

Painting can be fun and relaxing even if you have never done it. Try going back to kindergarten and figure paint. Mix some paint with a thinner and attempt some flow painting. If that is not your thing doodle with pencils drawing simple objects with care. Combine it with relaxing music, and comforting aroma. The outcome is not the goal it is the process of being with the art and being present to only it that is the intention of this exercise. Don't forget to notice the movement in and out of the flow where time is lost and you are immersed in the work itself. How does it feel in that right brained place?



## **Envision Your Best Future**

Write down in detail the positive quality of life vision you have for yourself. Explain your outer world, where and with whom will you live? What will it look like? Why did you choose this place? How will you feel now that you have reached this vision? How will you be living? What will you be wearing? What will you be doing? Spare no details. Be specific. Who else will be in your life? What will be your purpose or your legacy?



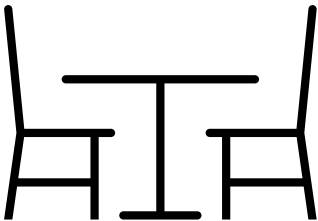
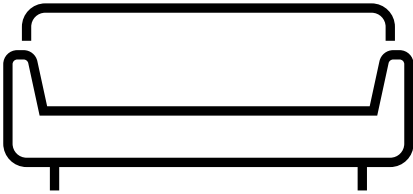
## **Change Locations**

When you are overwhelmed, and if you can, try to get a change of place as different as possible. Go to a different room, if that's what can be done, or go to a different place in your city, visit a cafe, go to a park, get yourself somewhere else and notice that place, get your mind to focus on where you are.



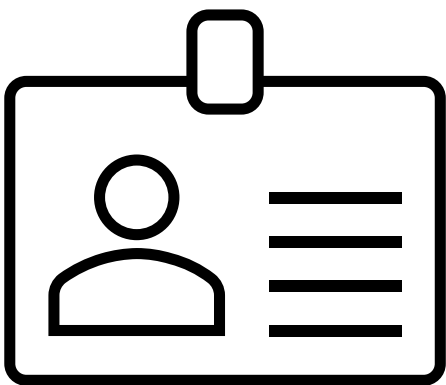
## **Slowly Savor Something**

Savor the food or beverage that you enjoy. As you prepare it to eat or drink, savor the process. Moving through the preparation process with intention. Slow down and notice any packaging, movements utensils then move to the act of savoring the food or beverage. Focus on the taste, each crunch, and how the flavor dissolves, the spices, the texture, the feeling... Savor it so well that you might be able to recreate that food/drink from memory. Think of a metaphor to explain the experience/taste to others.



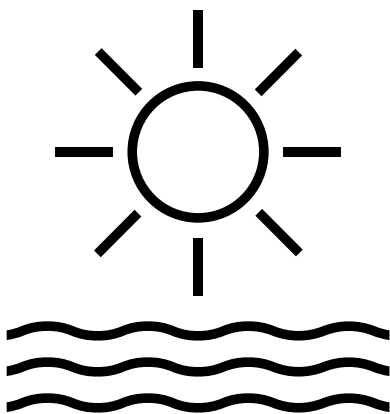
## **Describe Your Surroundings**

Move your focus to the room you are currently in. Take note of each object in the room. Speak the name of the object out loud (if you are able). Go around the room once. If you are still ungrounded. Go back in the other direction around the room naming the object and its location in the room. For example, *the purple glass vase sits on the corner table that is made of oak. The table sits next to the pink grand piano which sits in front of the bay window.* Continue with this process getting more and more detailed until you feel integrated back into your body.



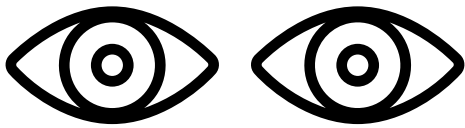
## **Picture a Loved One**

Close your eyes and bring to mind a loved one. Pick someone that has a calming presence for you. Supportive and encouraging loved ones work best here. Focus on the details of their face, the sound of their voice, how they laugh, your memories with them, and try to make it as clear in your head as if they were right in front of you. What are they wearing and where are they as you visualize them. What feelings arise for you? Where do you feel those emotions in your body? What would you say to them or ask them if they were with you right now?



## **Memory of a Beloved Day**

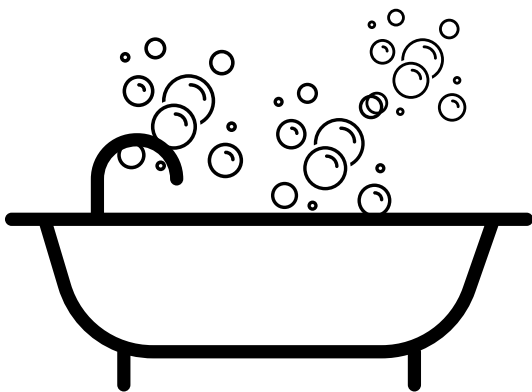
Think about a good day that you have had in the past. Relive the day with as much detail as you can remember. Embrace the moments of goodness that you recall. Speak out loud, write it down or sketch it. Create images in your mind of the day. Where were you? Who was with you? What were you doing? Why were you there doing what you were doing? Recall how you were doing things that day? What were you wearing? What was the weather? What do you see? How do you feel as you do this exercise? Where do you feel it in your body? How has your posture changed? This is another method of changing mood state and being able to re-evolve the positive feelings in the future when wanted.



## **Visualize a Place You Love**

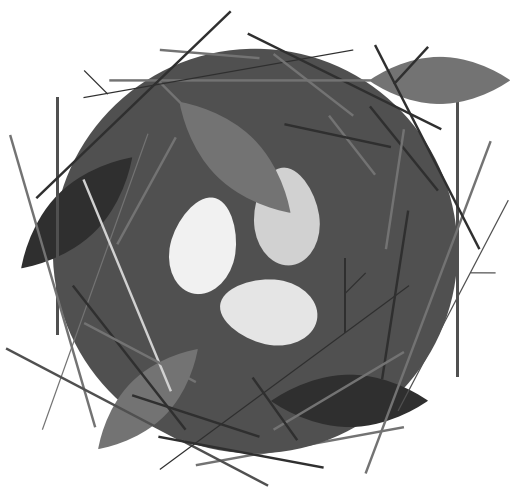
Take a mini vacation to a place you have loved. A moment your mind has captured. Close your eyes and take yourself to that moment. Stay in that moment as long as you want. Embrace the feelings and locate them in your body. Notice your posture and maintain it as you leave that place you loved coming back to the moment carrying this new mood state.

Remember that imagine is always within you. Take in the details, colors, the scents, the feelings, the lighting, the objects, the textures, the sounds, other things or people that matter.



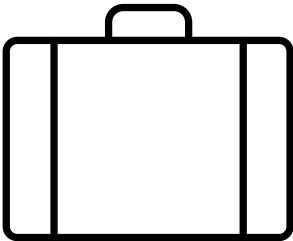
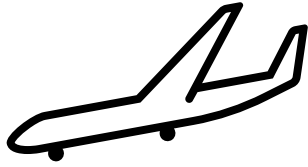
## **Take a Soothing Bath**

There are days when only a bath will do. Prepare the bath and room as you like with music or silence or a book on tape. Fill it with your favorite bath salts or bubbles. Light candles or dim the lights if you prefer. Add aroma with essential oils then slip in and allow yourself to be embraced by the warm soothing water. Allow your senses to be open to the experience. Enjoy the coziness and soothing water. Focus your mind only on the experience, erasing any other thoughts that come to mind. Allow yourself to breathe and enjoy.



## **Create a Comfortable Nest**

Provide yourself a comforting environment that will soothe and relax you. Wear your coziest clothes, remove your shoes, comforting foods, dim the lights, play relaxing nature sounds, or watch your comfort show, hug someone you love if they're near or hug yourself, sit, breathe, nap. Give yourself the love you need.



## **Plan a Fun Outing**

Choose a place that calls you, book a room, invite a friend. Make your plan and give yourself something to look forward to in the near future. It can be big or small. It can include friends, a lover or you can go solo. Make it somewhere you will experience joy and peace. In this process enjoy the planning, preparing the going and the coming home. Allow your sense to take in the fabulous moments to keep with you forever.

01234

56789

**ABCDEF**

**GHIJKL**

**MNOPQR**

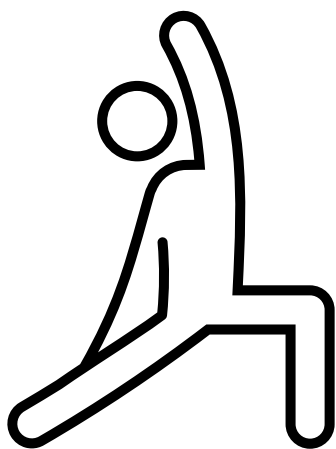
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## **Five Ways to a Number**

Choose a large number then create five ways to arrive at that number. For example, 87:  $62+25$ ,  $80+7$ ,  $44+43$ ,  $35+52$ ,  $16+71$ . Try three- and four-digit numbers to provide increased challenges. Like wise this could be done in other combinations with division or subtraction.

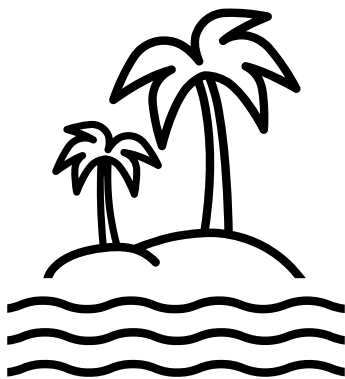
## **Alphabet Soup**

The alphabet game is great for grounding. It can be made very easy. Name any word that begins with A, etc. Or the difficulty can be increased as you become increasingly grounded. For example, name a country that begins with A. etc. Any category will work that you have some familiarity about.



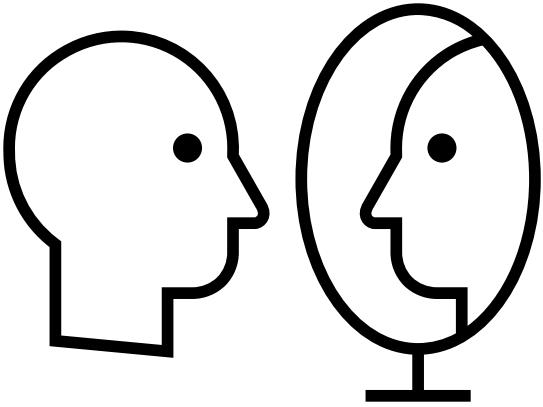
## **Stand Barefoot & Stretch**

Press your feet on the ground and pay attention to how that feels. Do some light stretching slowly, focusing on each movement of your body and the relaxation of your muscles, take deep breaths with each stretch. Follow the needs of your body. Stretch the areas that are asking to be stretched. Do this for some time and observe how it helps you relax physically.



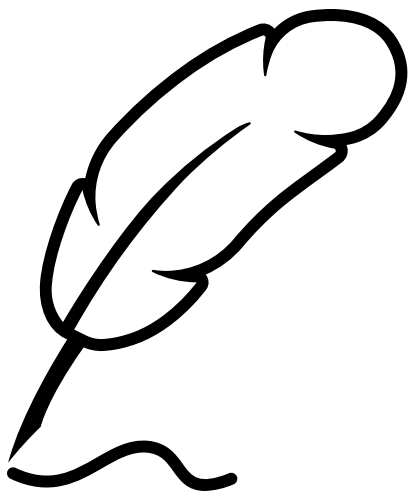
## **Imagine a Peaceful Place**

In your mind you will create a peaceful, safe paradise for yourself to visit. It may be a room, a house, a seaside, a mountain peak. It might be warm or cold, or temperate. Think about the details. What is there? Who is there? Is there and activity going on? What does it look like? It is your own safe world where you can be, peaceful, and happy. Close your eyes and let it take you there.



## **Describe Yourself Aloud**

State simple facts about yourself out loud (preferably) or silently. For example, "Today is...My name is ... I am ... years old. I am (where) ... I am doing"" I am wearing ... I can see ... I like to... My favorite color... Food... Beverage... Movie... Book... Song...



## **Journal to a Centered Self**

When ungrounded journaling can be a centering tool if done correctly. The trick is to move toward neutral or positive topics in order to shift the mind and mood. For example,

- J Gratitude Letters
- J Gratitude List
- J List of positive things that have happened to you.
- J Write about somethings you love.
- J Write a letter to someone you love.
- J Write a note to some that is sick or down.

Write until you are re-integrated with yourself. Mail your letters or not but if they bring joy to someone else, why not?