

Sensory Intelligence

'I feel, therefore I am.' 'I feel that I am.' Dr. Bud Craig

The Language of Wholeness work often starts with a 'locating' exercise. Some activity to transition into the present activity, to arrive and set the tone for what comes next. One of the basic exercises is asking you to look around the room, listen to the sounds of the moment, note your mood and how warm or cold you feel. We are essentially asking you to come to your senses, awaken you to your sensory information, your interoceptive awareness, your felt sense. Sensory information is the foundational of your ability to manage your well-being, to determine your safety and to make personal artistic choices. It is the foundation of The Language of Wholeness.

In our culture information coming to us from NPR or the BBC or a research article or some external expert is given great validity. It is as if the only source of valid and true information is external to us. Your system is also giving you information through your senses. This is an essential source of information. It allows you to make choices. It gives you the information of what does and doesn't serve your purpose; what does and doesn't give you joy or power or anything you want.

This is not to say external information is less valid. This is to invite you to have access to as many sources of information as possible to navigate your life. This is about revalidating our inner-compass as the foundation of well-being.

Below is a quote from one of these external, research sources, Dr. Bud Craig, (note: better heartbeat perception is a method of measuring someone's *interoceptive awareness* or body awareness):

"Better heartbeat perceivers function better not only on an emotional level but also cognitively. They make better decisions based on subtle environmental cues, they perform better in tasks of selective and divided attention, and they respond more quickly to intuitive choices. They also have a more accurate subjective sense of time...they expend less energy than poor heartbeat perceivers." -- Dr. Bud Craig. *How Do You Feel? An Interoceptive Moment with Your Neurobiological Self*, p 6-7.

Neuroanatomist Dr. Bud Craig. In his book *How Do You Feel? An Interoceptive Moment with Your Neurobiological Self*, has put forward a whole new paradigm for understanding how we feel, literally. What he has discovered couldn't have been mapped before because we didn't have the instruments to see the tiny, tiny tissues he has mapped. His work is vast and complex.

In his introduction Craig writes: "*'I feel, therefore I am,' or more aptly, as I will explain, 'I feel that I am.'*"

An understanding of embodiment isn't revolutionary anymore. Craig makes a thrilling contribution to the field. The Language of Wholeness is about developing practical strategies to apply new information about our system to daily and artistic life.

Foundations for Well-being • Locating Practices • Tools for Transitioning • Your 'Felt Sense'

(These are examples of possible locating practices. Perfect to do in groups.)

Coming to Your Senses • Developing Sensory Intelligence

Sound Attention: Ring a bell and ask people to raise their hand when the sound stops. Do that several times.

Visual Attention: Do a simple two-handed shape and ask the group to move with you, follow you. For example move up and down, in a comfortable range, slowly, with both arms, as if you were lifting something, the pressing it down. Do this slowly, gently, repeatedly as you look at the group with an easy smile. If you change the shape, warn the group, "Now I'll change shapes." The goal is to be predictable and easy. Note the change in the feeling in the group. This is the kind of activity that helps someone shift from stress and fear to calm. Activity with a long slow exhale can do the same thing.

Felt Sense:

Take a moment and very simply look at the scene before you.

Do you see anything you haven't noticed before?

Gently listen to the symphony of sound in this space.

How awake are you?

How tired?

Notice the sense of the earth coming up under you to support you, the feeling of the chair, the ground. What is your state of being? Alert, bored, annoyed, interested? If you give your state of being a name like happy, where do you feel the happiness? Indicate with your hands where you feel the sensation of your state of being.

Do you know what anxious feels like? Where do you feel it? Notice we have a word – anxious. This is a concept. The feeling of anxious, the experience of anxious is in your being. It is a sensation. Can you describe it?

As you receive the information of your sensations explore finding descriptive words for these sensations beyond easy and tense. How about: bubbly, light, dark, rigid, fluid, tingly, grinding. Develop your sensory vocabulary is a powerful tool toward sensory intelligence and navigating life.

Theory interlude: When you started seeing the space, listening to sounds, you were perceiving the world around you. The head is the limb for perception. It is like a periscope giving you lots of information about the world around you.

There are lots and lots of other senses. These are dispersed throughout your body. They tell you about how you, your internal balance, your hunger or temperature, your balance. They give you your feelings. They give you the sensations of how you interpret the world around you at every moment. Dr. Bud Craig calls this ‘interoceptive awareness’ Dr. Eugene Gendlin, 50 years ago called this our ‘felt sense’.

When you recognize and name these sensations you develop more access and facility with your ‘felt sense’, your ‘interoceptive awareness’, your ability to navigate life. This ability is the foundation upon which all the other exercises and experiences in the Language of Wholeness stand.

You perceive the world, interpret it and then get sensations of your response to the world. These sensations are your feelings. This ability to perceive, interpret and respond is an ancient and foundational ability. It is in every cell in your body and every living cell everywhere. It is a fundamental information source.