

Simple somatic practices for grounding, calming, and reconnecting

Use this handout when you need a quick way to settle your nervous system, reconnect with your body, or return to the present moment. Choose one practice, try it slowly, and notice what changes.

How to Use This Handout

- Start with one practice that feels simple or inviting.
- Move slowly and gently; the goal is regulation, not performance.
- Pause afterward and notice your breath, body, thoughts, or energy.
- If something feels uncomfortable, stop and choose a different grounding option.

Quick Reference

Practice	Try this when you want to...
Grounding Through Your Feet	Feel more steady and connected.
Orienting	Return attention to the present moment.
4-Count Breath	Slow your breathing and create rhythm.
Hand to Heart Touch	Offer yourself reassurance and warmth.
Humming	Use vibration to support calm.
Safe Place Visualization	Imagine safety and comfort.
Thymus Thump	Use gentle tapping for regulation.
Yawning & Stretching	Release tension and reset energy.
Ball Toss	Use movement and coordination.
Tension Release Shake	Discharge restless or stuck energy.
Butterfly Hug	Use bilateral tapping and slow breathing.
Eye Tracking	Support focus and integration.
Rock	Use gentle rhythm to soothe the body.

Practice Menu

Grounding Through Your Feet

Stand barefoot. Notice the texture beneath your feet. Shift your weight slowly side to side.

Feel your connection to the earth.

Orienting

Slowly turn your head left and right. Notice what your eyes are drawn to.

Let them settle on something calming.

4-Count Breath

Inhale to a count of 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, pause for 4. Repeat 3–5 times.

Hand to Heart Touch

Place your hand on your heart. Feel the warmth and weight. Say something kind to yourself.

Humming

Hum a soft tune or “Ahhh.” Vibrations help calm the vagus nerve.

Safe Place Visualization

Imagine a location where you feel safe. Notice what you see, hear, and feel there.

Thymus Thump

Form a flat fist. Thump slowly, just below your collar bone. Use a metronome set at 65 bps.

Yawning & Stretching

Encourage a few deep yawns. Stretch your arms high and let out a sigh.

Ball Toss

Gently pass a ball between your hands. Cross the midline.

Tension Release Shake

Shake out your arms, legs, and shoulders for 30 seconds. Let your body release stuck energy.

Butterfly Hug

Cross your arms over your chest. Tap each shoulder alternately. Breathe slowly as you do this for one minute.

Eye Tracking

Move your eyes slowly in a figure 8 pattern. This helps integrate both hemispheres of the brain.

Rock

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes and gently rock side to side.

Affirmative humor means making others laugh, or making yourself laugh, without putting anyone down. It can reduce overall stress.

Disparaging humor — targeting others or yourself — can be demoralizing.

Mattering means feeling seen, important, and needed. It can increase satisfaction at work and in overall life.

Anti-mattering means having needs neglected or violated. It can increase the likelihood of mental health challenges, including depression and anxiety.

THE PRACTICE OF CULTIVATING MATTERING



NOTICE PEOPLE

Make eye contact, check-in regularly on people's lives.



COMMUNICATE OTHERS' SIGNIFICANCE

Show people how their traits, strengths, and behaviors make a difference.



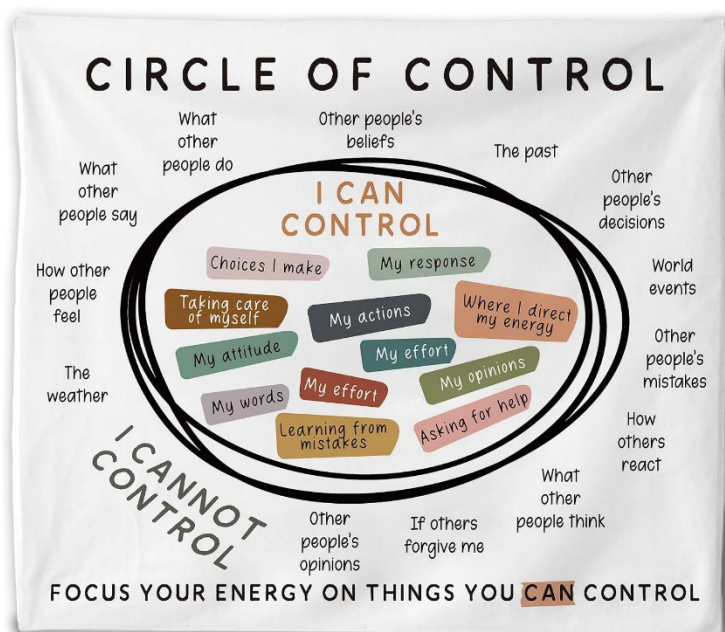
SHOW PEOPLE THEY'RE NEEDED

Regularly remind people they're a vital part of your life, school, organization, and society.

Adapted from Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981

 ZACH MERCURIO

Try this reflection: Which practice helped most today? What did you notice before and after?



10 Boundaries You Must Set to Protect Your Peace

1. Digital Accessibility: Set specific "Off-Grid" hours where you do not respond to texts or emails to reclaim your mental space.

2. Emotional Labor: Refuse to be the "pro bono therapist" for friends who only reach out to complain without seeking growth.

3. The "Yes" Filter: Decline any invitation or task that doesn't align with your top three priorities to prevent chronic burnout.

4. Work-Life Separation: Stop checking professional notifications after 6:00 PM to allow your brain to enter full recovery mode.

5. Privacy Shield: Keep your personal wins and struggles off social media to avoid the drain of external validation and judgment.

6. Energy Vampires: Limit time spent with people who leave you feeling exhausted, regardless of how long you have known them.

7. Morning Protection: Dedicate the first hour of your day to your own rituals before letting the world's demands enter via your phone.

8. Financial Limits: Say no to social outings or purchases that exceed your 50/30/20 budget to maintain your long-term security.

9. Direct Communication: Express your needs clearly and immediately instead of hinting, which prevents the build-up of silent resentment.

10. Self-Comparison: Unfollow or mute any account that triggers feelings of inadequacy rather than providing genuine inspiration.