

Self-Awareness / Self-Connection Exercise

Take 15 minutes of uninterrupted time and use the matrix below or mind map or write in a free flow style.

1. Take some quiet time to ease into yourself.

- Sit comfortably, with both feet on the floor, your back supported.
- Close your eyes or drop your gaze softly to the table in front of you.
- Bring your attention to your breath.
- For 3 breaths, visualize the air streaming in and out of your nose, into your lungs. Count each complete breath.
- For 3 more breaths, imagine there's a balloon in your belly, letting it completely empty and re-fill with each exhale and inhale. Keep counting.

2. What is going on in your body?

- Notice any physical sensations that are currently happening – is there tension, shallowness of breath, constriction, heat, coolness?
- Give yourself space to feel what is present.
- This is time for you to give yourself full attention, become more aware and self-connected.

3. Thoughts: get them out, vent, unload.

- While focusing on your breathing and body sensations, you likely noticed thoughts entering your mind.
- Take some time now to explore them. Perhaps they are random, or they may be about a certain theme that's troubling right now.
- In the "Thoughts" column (if using the matrix), start writing in an uncensored, unstructured way, sticking with jackal thoughts.
- When you've come upon a particularly loud, or strong thought ...

4. Feelings: focus inward (again).

- Turn your attention back to your body and notice emotions currently alive in you . . . what do you feel when you have the thought?
- You may at this point go back and forth between feelings and thoughts – taking your time to write them both down as you follow the trail.
- Try to avoid words that imply blame such as: I "feel that" I'm being bullied, ignored, cheated, betrayed, abandoned, victimized . . .
- Use only honest descriptive feeling words that describe what is going on in your body (see [Feelings inventory card](#)).

5. Needs: consider what is driving it all.

- Rest your attention on your feelings and thoughts – what are they trying to tell you about your underlying longings (see [Needs inventory card](#)).
- Find out what's so very important for you by continuing to explore if there are still deeper needs.
- Be careful to *not* move quickly into strategy-thinking ("but how?")
- Take a few moments to be present with these important needs; embrace their value, beauty.
- Can you experience compassion for yourself here?

6. Requests: consider possible next steps.

- While sitting with the needs, could you experience space for creativity? Brand new ideas, possibilities?
- You can make a request to yourself or to others to help meet your needs.
- See [Art of Making a Request – Checklist](#).

7. Observation: facts about the triggering event

- Making an observation (at any point in this process) can be important to help clarify what actually took place vs. your interpretations.
- It can make a tremendous difference when expressing to someone when you start with a neutral observation.

Observation (just the facts)	Thoughts (interpretation, judgment, comparison, blame, "should/must")	Feelings (what's going on inside?)	Needs (what's driving me?)	Requests (possible next steps)