
Body Wisdom/Earth Wisdom

By Tina Beneman

What is Earth asking of women? Let's vision women as the feminine aspect within each of us, what Thomas Berry refers to as the knowing of the body. Our body is of Earth, composed of the same elements. It contains the cellular memory of our own life as well as all life on Earth.

Within this "blueprint," there is wholeness. We sense this wholeness in our bodies more often when things feel "not right." In order to feel "off," there has to be an "on." Knowing there is an inner template, we can trust the body to lead us toward "on."

Our body gives us lots of feedback, most of which we are taught to override. When we reject the body's signals about physical well-being, we exhaust our reserves and fall ill. When we shut out our feelings, we lose our heart connection and dismiss a vast store of natural wisdom.

I believe that this heart connection is our link to the wisdom of Earth. The heart is the magnetic field which connects us to all other sentient beings. This field is also the vessel which supports the soul. The body informs the soul of Earthly matters. It allows the soul to have an "Earthly experience" so that it can grow.

Just as we are evolving souls of Earth, Earth is an evolving soul of the cosmos. Earth has a "dream," a potential destiny just as we do. Obviously, these journeys are inextricably linked. Without Earth, we cannot experience physical life. And without human beings, Earth will not have the vital qualities we offer.

How can we deepen our heart connection and thus connect with the heart and soul of Earth? Certainly not by any pursuit that abandons our bodies. There is no other way to heart and soul but through diving into the watery realm of the emotions.

Learning to navigate by feelings is largely uncharted territory. Let's begin with a useful definition. Consider emotions as the energetic momentum within a feeling. This energy has an intelligent purpose, which is to help us maintain our boundaries. Each emotion carries messages from the inner worlds as well as the energy needed to address whatever brought the emotion forward.

When we ignore our emotions, we literally go off limits.

When our boundaries are unclear, confusion reigns. We neglect our personal safety; we get into other people's business; we take on projects that are not ours; and we lose sight of what desperately needs our individual attention. So many of us who long for a better world exhaust energy and create chaos by doing what we *think is best*, rather than what *we feel in our bodily hearts has our name on it*. As a result, many well-intentioned peo-

ple and entire organizations end up spinning their wheels, or even making things worse.

How can we take advantage of this elemental wisdom and learn what our feelings, the messengers of our heart and soul, are telling us? We can begin by recognizing and working through the upset feelings that arise every day. I'd like to share a process I use for myself and in working with clients who seek help in releasing energy that is blocked in their bodies.

1. Allow yourself to notice that you are feeling stressed, off balance or out of sorts. Locate where the feeling is being held in your body. Feelings first arise as bodily sensations, such as tension in your shoulders, tightness in your jaw or an upset stomach. If it's not immediately apparent where the feeling is lodged, scan your body with your breath. Where is the breath held back? What feels empty, numb, constricted or sore?
2. Identify the feeling by naming it. Are you angry, afraid or sad? Avoid focusing on the cause or trying to explain the situation away.
3. Use your breath to relax the tension. Experiment with the breath, breathing in through the heart and out through the solar plexus, or in through the tailbone and out through the top of the head. Work with your breath until you feel more comfortable.
4. Take the time to feel the feeling without judgment. There are no "bad" feelings. Feelings are neutral feedback, giving us information we vitally need. They will escalate until they get your attention. If you feel overwhelmed by what you're feeling, allow your breath to help you feel safe, breathing rhythmically in and out through your nose.
5. To complete this process, move your body in a way that feels good. Clap your hands, shake out your body, or take a walk—it doesn't matter. Movement helps the energy bound up in feelings to cycle through.

Once familiar to you, this process usually takes only a minute or two, but there are times when it may take a few days. In the case of deep grief and loss, the feelings come in waves that may last for months. As the poet Rilke noted, "Patience is everything." By allowing feelings to come and go freely, we can enter a state of deep

healing, where our hearts soften and undue pain eventually subsides.

By opening our hearts to ourselves, and taking care of our own authentic needs, we gradually become able to open our hearts to the world around us and receive clear feedback. This allows each of us to hear what has **our** name on it. It also provides the energy needed to take right action. As we model this behavior, others can entrain with us, and we will be empowered to give the same care to Earth, our larger body.

So, what is Earth asking of the feminine? Here is my answer to this “Grail question”: We must embrace the terrifying and awesome beauty of our bodily being and allow it to speak its truth. We must allow the Mystery to unfold as it does, without preconceived ideas. We must listen with our hearts and allow Wisdom to guide us. As men and women who care deeply about Earth, we must have the courage to experience the heart and soul of life. Let us help each other avoid temptations to burn out our physical energies or escape into unembodied mental and spiritual realms. As Gandhi said, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

Resources:

- 1) For help in naming your feelings, see *Emotional Genius: Discovering the Deepest Language of the Soul*, by Karla McLaren.
- 2) To learn more about the wisdom of the heart and many techniques for strengthening emotional equilibrium, go to www.heartmath.org.
- 3) A remarkable book about the bodily senses is *Our Twelve Senses: Wellsprings of the Soul*, by Dr. Albert Soesman.
- 4) To unravel tangled thinking, learn from Byron Katie at www.thework.org.
- 5) For an inspiring scientific glimpse of our evolutionary potential, see *The Biology of Transcendence: A blueprint of the Human Spirit*, by Joseph Chilton Pearce.
- 6) For information about positive entrainment, go to www.resonance-patterning.com.

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