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INTERNATIONAL



Staying Present with Intensity

Last year, we looked at our addictions, distractions and habits. Now, we're going to look at some more subtle patterns we have to avoid being truly intimate with our personal experiences.

As we do this, please keep in mind that **addictions, distractions, habits and deflections aren't bad or wrong**. Each and every one has served you at some time on some level. They are part of the dance that you're here to do. Experiencing these bondages lets us know and appreciate the experience of freedom. Knowing what hot feels like lets you know and appreciate cold in new ways.

We were born onto this planet into a 3D, dualistic existence. It's by fully experiencing it that we transcend it. By holding and loving both hot and cold, we become free to move and dance between them until we become so comfortable and present with both that temperature is no longer important.

When we aren't at peace with something, an internal pressure begins to build.

This can feel like any emotion – grief, joy, anger, passion, disgust, rage, ecstasy. Sensations build in our bodies. What's underneath all that is a building of energy. It's just that your mind interprets it as feeling and sensation.

These pressures, or waves of energy, are like the contractions of labor. When you stay with them and feel them and allow the intensity to build until it releases – and thus complete a cycle – something new is born. A new insight, and new level of connection, a new freedom, a new peace, more inner space, a new point of view. It's like a treasure has been unearthed. When you don't complete the full cycle, the treasure is left buried, waiting for you to come back. You can't miss out on what's yours to receive. You get to choose if that's now or later.

As you already know, **staying with the intensity can be very challenging**. Intensity can feel incredibly uncomfortable, whether it's the intensity of stretching a tight muscle, witnessing someone's anger, solving a difficult mental problem, or feeling your own pain. Very few people grow up being taught how to stay present with intensity, especially in our quick fix society.

So you developed strategies to relieve the tension and intensity. It made total sense to do this and may have been the wisest course, especially when you were a child. Things have changed, though, because you now know that (1) you can feel the intensity *and* be

safe, and (2) the intensity is energy that you can use for creating the life and freedom you want to have.

You're here in this group because you're ready to experience more freedom. **You get to do this at your own pace. You do *not* have to go into anything you don't feel ready to delve into or that you don't want to delve into. You do *not* have to give up any patterns that you're not ready to release or go deeper than you want to go. There is no should here.**

Please read that again.

I'm going to share some common deflections here so that you can have greater awareness and, from that, more choice. You may well witness yourself deflecting at times and think, "Yep, I'm okay with this." Brava! You're writing the script. You get to make the call.

What I ask is that, to the best of your ability, you don't deflect on our calls. More on that in a bit.

Here are more subtle forms of deflection than the patterns we've talked about before:

- Blaming someone else.
- Blaming yourself.
- Trying to make someone else feel better.
- Correcting someone else.
- Asking intellectual questions.
- Trying to figure out how to solve a problem or make things better.
- Sitting in guilt or shame. (*Acknowledging and being with a feeling is one thing. Holding onto it is another.)
- Overly monitoring your words.
- Trying not to rock the boat.

It's not that you should never do these things or that they're never useful. If you notice that you're doing them in order not to feel something, then you know it's a deflection. At that point, you get to choose your next step consciously.

Pushing the energy away from you by focusing on someone else (blaming, criticizing, etc.), or turning it inward and blaming or criticizing yourself takes you off your center. It disconnects you from your body and your feelings. It releases the energy that could otherwise be used to awaken more of your body, to build new neural pathways, and to create something new.

This does not mean that you don't need to or "shouldn't" address things with other people. Centering in yourself and *from there* sharing your truth and experiences can lead to transformative conversations. Being centered makes it easier to approach these conversations with openness, presence, honesty and perhaps curiosity, tenderness, playfulness, and/or passion. This is a recipe for magic.

This group is a safe space for imperfection and practice. I invite you to use our calls for deeper conversations and expressions of what's present for you. If something bothers you about something I or someone in the group says, please speak up. If something is happening in another area of your life, bring that to the calls. This is your grand experiment. Practice with us so that you can move out into the rest of your life with more confidence.

Ready to look at specifics for yourself?

When I was a child, I kept myself safe by:

Thinking back to recent calls or conversations, I see that I may have deflected by:

When I stay grounded and centered in my own feelings, body and experience, it's totally possible that I'll:

My North Star word is _____ . Embracing it in this process of staying with intensity can support me by:

Specific support I'd like from Sara and/or the group is:

It's totally possible that in building my capacity to stay present and grounded in my own body when I'm feeling intensity, I'll:
