



Practical Exercise Module 3 Safety and Neuroplasticity Advanced Ecotherapy Training Course

An exercise for creating safety and supporting trauma

For this exercise, *take a journal with you as you explore attuning to the land in this special way.*

Choose a walk or place in nature that you would like to take a client to, or maybe one you have already been on and felt in tune with.

1. Start the walk as if you are the client; notice what it feels like to arrive, settle and begin to observe the space with new eyes.

Imagine taking each step for the first time. What do you notice?

See if your mind can forget the *names* of the flora and fauna and see them just as they are; in their visual aspect, as life forms, with whatever other qualities they have, including sound or scent. Using all your senses, take in everything about this place, including smells, textures, temperature on your skin, sun, wind etc.

How do these sensations *feel* on your body?

What do these sensations bring to your mind?

As you begin to move around or otherwise explore the landscape, continue to check in with your body and mind, noticing whatever arises without judgement or comment.

2. Now, as you observe the landscape can you attune to a place that looks or feels *safe*? Perhaps there is a particular feeling in your body drawing you to one spot or another. If you are on a walk, continue until you feel drawn to a place of safety.

As you choose the spot, notice how that safe place resonates in your body. Explore this for a few breaths and then move towards it.

Stay for 10 minutes and notice how you feel before and after. Journal this experience as you stay in that place that feels safe.

3. Now, as you leave the place that feels safe, take time to observe the landscape around you again. Is there somewhere in your view that feels *unsafe* or even threatening in some way, no matter how subtle or obvious?

Bring awareness to your senses again and notice what about this spot may feel uncomfortable or unsafe. See if you can feel this in your body.

Now, move toward this space, step by step, and notice again what happens in your body. Step as close as you feel comfortable to do so, slowly attuning to your body as you do. When you feel you have come close enough to the space, sit down and write about your experience.

Commentary: for many clients, being in nature and trusting another to lead is new. Even after a few sessions, their nervous system may continue to adjust to this trust, and for many of them being able to attune to safety in their own body may take several sessions. They will most likely rely on you to be their safety guide, so having our own internal sense of what may or may not feel safe can support clients in relaxing into the experience.