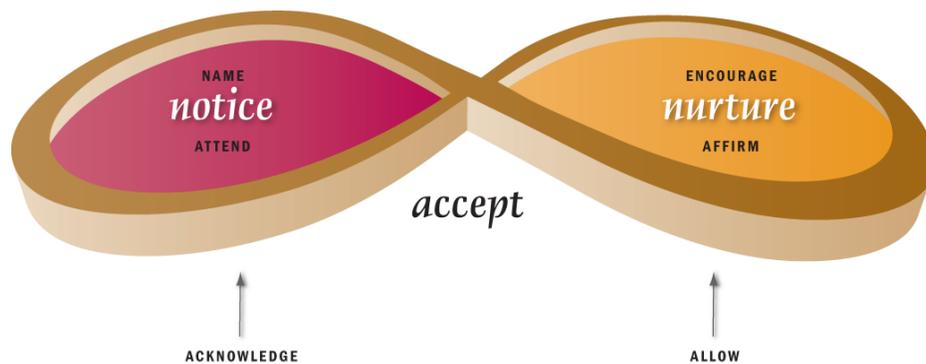


Practical Steps in Coming Back Home to Ourselves

Attentional Living *A way of being with what is*



Remember, as we do this, **we're building trust in ourselves**. We trust when we have a sense of emotional safety in our body. Notice this is a sense of emotional safety, NOT comfort! Emotional safety allows us to be with our discomfort without having to hide, fix, or run away from what's there.

1. First **notice that these experiences are *happening to us* – they're *not who we are!***
There's the part that's upset, and the part of us that's noticing the part that's upset. Even if the part of us that's upset is VERY BIG, when we stop to notice, there is ALWAYS the part of us that's noticing the upset.
2. If it feels challenging to hold onto the noticing part of us, **reach out for support!**
Connect with a trusted friend or mentor who will hold with you the possibility that *you can navigate this* – like you would for a friend having this kind of experience. Sometimes it just feels too big and scary to be here and take these next steps on our own. We're human. We're created to be in community. There's *no shame* in reaching out.



3. **Be curious about what's happening.** On your own or with your friend, notice whether this feels like a familiar pattern. Ask yourself "When was the first time I remember feeling like this? What was happening? Where was I? How old was I? What skills and capacities do I have now that I didn't have back then?" Often in these situations, our adult selves have disappeared and our reactions are being driven by very understandable (though no longer effective) protective mechanisms we developed long ago.
4. **Be a compassionate witness to yourself.** Continue to notice what's happening – your thoughts, the sensations in your body, what you're feeling, and what the upset part of you is needing, what are the real fears or desires? There's no make wrong here, we want to really deeply understand and witness our own experience in the way we've always longed for someone else to do.
5. **Take some deep breaths,** allowing all the sensations flowing through your body to be there. Breathe some special love into any parts of you that feel tight and constricted. Welcome and feel fully whatever is there – embrace and invite all of you to be present.
6. **Soothe those tender parts.** Let them know how sorry you are that they've had to navigate life in such a painful way, that it's so understandable why they made the assumptions and choices they did. Assure them they're no longer alone, that you're there, you see them, and they're being held and loved by you. You'll sense when they've felt really witnessed. There's often a big breath – more like a sigh - that's a sign of a release of the tension that's been being held. This is the signal that those parts that have been reacting in that old pattern are likely open to our beginning to mentor them.
7. **From that deep, wise, grounded part of you encourage and mentor them into what's more deeply true.** Share the more nuanced, perspective that those upset parts had no way of accessing. This is more than a contradiction of what they've felt or feared. For example, if they've been feeling not seen or heard it's not enough to say "You are so seen!" That just makes them wrong, and repeats the injury. And *never* tell them anything that might make them feel better in the moment, but they might have to un-believe later, like "Everyone loves you!" This is the moment to really tell the truth – "Not everyone will listen, and that's painful, but you have something really valuable to contribute. I'm committed to learning how to stand and speak our perspective clearly, and to nurturing relationships where our voice is heard and honoured." Again, you'll feel when what you've said has 'landed'. There'll be yet another sense of release of tension and opening to possibility.
8. **Make good on your commitment to them.** Nurturing yourself in whatever way seems appropriate. Learning or honing the skills, and expanding your capacity in whatever way you said you would. And remember to honour your own humanity as you learn. Don't expect perfection from yourself! This isn't a one time, quick fix thing. This is a coming back home, and a deepening of your relationship with you in a profound and powerful way.