



Presence Practice Group Overview & Guiding Principles

The primary intention of our Presence Practice Group is to cultivate our capacity for Presence, Compassion (also known as "Nonviolent or NVC Consciousness"), Authentic Choice (Authentic Power, living in alignment with our values) in all areas of our lives, *regardless of circumstances.*

These qualities are deeply valued in and of themselves, and they are also valued as powerful resources that help restore and sustain our authentic connection with ourselves, with others, and with Life Itself (God, Goddess, Spirit, Source, The Universe, or whatever name you know It by).

One of the most powerful paths to transformational healing (restoration of wholeness, or re-integration) I have found is *restoring connection with our own felt experience* -- our own Inner Truth, however that exists in the moment. And perhaps the most powerful way we restore this connection is through *compassionate, accountable, witnessing and witnessed awareness.*

The Presence Practice Group was created to provide a space where All That We Are -- from our magnificent and gracious power to our warts and farts and ugly parts and everything in between -- can be safely shared with full authenticity/transparency and even (in moments) vulnerability, and received, witnessed, and held with resonant awareness and compassion ... because *we cannot own what is ours to own when we are "made wrong" for it, whether by ourselves or others.*

We are supported in our practice by a wide variety of distinctions, tools, and practices from many different sources, including but by no means limited to the "classical" Nonviolent Communication (NVC) tools of feelings, needs, observations, requests; depth empathy processes developed by Robert Gonzales, Susan Skye, and Sarah Peyton (especially gifted NVC trainers who now live in our Portland community); Thriving Life principles, distinctions, and tools from my own work; and any others from any source that is discerned to be helpful in the moment -- including opinions, strategies, and advice *when requested.* (For those seeking a more NVC-focused group, please note that we don't actively use the NVC text or workbook. I recommend *Compassionate Noticing* or my *Healthy Boundaries Seminar* for basic NVC skill-building support.)

Our co-created process agreements are designed to create a powerful, resonant "container" of clarity, ease, flow, integrity, self-empowerment, and authentic connection.

The structure of the group (how members participate and how we spend our time together) is designed to allow **everyone** to be "received, witnessed, and held" by compassionate, resonant community each week, either during check-ins, or by "working" with the support of the group.

We are a leader-FULL group; while I hold primary responsibility for the creation and maintenance of our resonant, present, compassionate "container," everyone in the group is invited and encouraged to listen mindfully for their own inner wisdom, and to discern and offer what is Called For in any moment, that is in alignment with the requests active at the moment.

In addition, I'm a human being with my own inner work to do, and I'm a full participant in the group just like everyone else. Openly modeling how I live and practice everything I teach, including failing ("missing the mark") at times and making repairs, is a core element of all of my work. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you are in a place on your own journey where it would best support you to be "taken care of" by the group leader, or by the group as a whole, this group is not designed to meet your very legitimate and important needs. Please find a group led by a licensed mental health professional.*

Guiding Presence Practice Group Principles

I believe we all long for the ability to remain **present, compassionate, and at authentic choice** in our day-to-day lives, most especially when we find ourselves in the midst of challenging internal or external experiences.

Our **Presence Practice Group** provides a compassionate, skilled community that supports each of us in building our capacity to:

- Mindfully notice, experience, and peacefully Be With whatever's going on ("what's alive") inside us and others with compassionate, witnessing awareness, rather than getting "captured" by our own or others' stories, upsets, or emotions (Empathy; Compassionate Presence)
- Compassionately identify what's causing the disconnection, pain, and/or conflict we're experiencing, and respond in ways that contribute to our own and others' thriving (including respectful acceptance and/or detachment)
- Distinguish between what actually happened (observations, facts) and what we're telling ourselves (evaluations, interpretations, stories, etc.) in ways that leave us more deeply, authentically connected with Life, ourself, and others
- Honor ALL our feelings and needs, so that we become increasingly at home and at ease with ourself and our experience ... no matter the circumstances
- Develop a "friendly relationship" with the shame, pain, "failure" (missing the mark), and fear that are an inevitable part of being human, so that we can use them as the life-giving invitations to ever-expanding connection and thriving that they really are
- Develop our capacity for authentic, transparent self-connection, self-expression, and self-care, even in the face of "no agreement" from others
- Notice when our impulse to say or do something comes with a sense of urgency, compulsion, desperation, automaticity, or rigidity, and build our capacity to pause in that moment to identify/honor the unmet need that's "on alarm," and then mindfully bring ourself back to a grounded, peaceful, present state of Being ... *before* choosing what we'd like to do next
- Identify the "automatic," often unconscious/hidden strategies we're using to try to meet our needs, that may actually block our needs from being met, and identify or invent and then try out strategies that are more likely to support our thriving...and then notice if they work
- Connect directly with and bring in the nourishing, life-giving energy of our fundamental human needs, so that we're no longer primarily dependent on getting our needs met from outside of us (so that we're able to deeply nourish ourself at any time, regardless of what other people are doing ...or not doing)

Welcome to our compassionate, mindful, resonant, playful, transformational community! We're delighted to share All That We Are with you, and to receive your sharing of All That You Are with us.

Blessings on us all,



Vika