

HEALING EXERCISE FOR STRESS OR ANGST

Three Gestures

Setting: The following exercise can be used personally, one-to-one in spiritual companioning, or in a group setting. Ask the person(s) *to be in a seated position*, with a goodly 12 inches between chairs, or push their chairs back. Eyes closed during exercise, assure confidentiality.

Note: With a group you may sing a chant or short verse of a song as a way to enter silence (then sing it again at the end). Or just start with a brief quieting prayer. *Option for a group: After explaining the exercise, you *may* invite participants to turn their chairs outward (if in a circle) or facing away from each other and from you as the leader.

Leader: This exercise is based on the contemporary process of “focusing”—pausing to notice where in your body you sense stress, anger or angst. Literature see Eugene Gendlin: *Focusing*. http://www.focusing.org/short_gendlin.html <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7PEC5Mh5FY> However, the kinesthetic exercise in three gestures is my own, based on holistic spirituality linking body and soul.

- Invite the person(s) breathe deeply a few minutes... to **get in touch with some stress or area of tension** going on in their life (allow one to three minutes): a relational, institutional, or personal problem. Eyes closed.
- Simply **be with** that tension or stress, not censoring it, just noticing it.
- Begin to **notice where in your body you sense the tension most**. Some go to the sides of head, shoulders, heart area, stomach area, groin, or thighs. (Leader: don't get too wordy here, just name a few suggestions.) After a few moments of silence, repeat: Just be with it gently in God's presence.
- Next, invite the person(s) to the following three gestures:
 1. Now see if you might **place your hand or hands on that area of stress or angst** (no one is observing you). Or it may be you place your two hands on slightly different areas. But again, the goal is just to be with that stress or tension (two minutes or more).
 2. Invite the person(s) **to find a second gesture, one of offering or releasing** the stress or tension (one or two minutes). Leader might repeat the invitation to offer or release this area of tension to God...
 3. See now if a third gesture would emerge with your hands: **a gesture of healing... or integration... or invitation...** (a few minutes).
- Ring a soft bell to segue back to conversation and debrief. If you used a chant at the beginning, you may softly begin to sing it again... *Allow a few minutes for participants to make a few notes in a journal or notebook.*

Note: You may allow a time for making notes in a journal; follow by conversing one to one, then responses from the whole group. Option: Allow silence, offer anointing.

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