

Nourished

Four

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Journal

Going to Ground

"Grounding," for me, is about being connected within to the earth and to nature. Grounding is about taking our heads out of the status quo of anxiety and frenetic overthinking, and being in the present moment. It's moving from where we are bombarded with digital information, overflowing to-do lists and yearning for an existence without emails to a space of connection to ourselves as human beings, not just human doings. Of course, this can be taken literally, as in getting your body into nature, taking your shoes off and connecting with the earth. However, it doesn't need to be.

I often ask, Why do we find ourselves so ungrounded and overwhelmed most of the time? One of the primary reasons is that we are never really "here," and instead, we yoyo between reminiscing about the past and projecting into the future, instead of being grounded in the here and now. Present-moment awareness is when we do one thing, and we do it well. With all of our attention.

I'm not a smoker, but I do love this story of an American studying Zen in a monastery in Japan. Sprung having a sneaky cigarette outside, he was ashamed, then surprised when the monk admonished him not for smoking, but for not really enjoying every bit. The monk explained to him that if he was going to smoke, he was to relish the moment, witness the tendrils of smoke sweeping up into the air, to taste every inhalation, to hear the faint crackle of the tobacco leaves burning, the scent of the cigarette—in essence, to bring awareness to everything the experience has to offer. It's like squeezing experience out of a moment like juice out of an orange. Imagine if we could do this with every experience? The richness life would offer!

Meditation is a profound practice through which we can feel more present day-to-day, and there are many different ways to do it. I choose to teach Vedic meditation, which I feel is the most effective for the busy minds of busy people. Yet you can start anywhere. Even sitting for five minutes a day and bringing the awareness to the breath brings you back to yourself. Start where you can with what you can, and continue exploring meditation as the ultimate tool for grounding and being connected to the within.

We sometimes feel ungrounded as we forget that our bodies are 100 percent made up of nature, and that we have five senses to be utilised at every moment

with which to thoroughly enjoy and explore the world. Although, as human beings, we have a remarkable set of tools at our disposal to help us live in the present moment, mostly, we just forget to use them.

When it comes to the senses, instead of opting to employ mostly sight (to stare at digital screens), we can instead explore all the senses. Unless these senses are impaired, taste, touch, smell and hearing are all luxuries that we take for granted. I study many ancient streams of knowledge that I then teach for modern living, and one of the favorites among my students, from the Vedic tradition, is "come back to your senses." It's a remarkably simple tool, of taking a few minutes to work through the senses and take in as much as you can with each. What am I seeing? What do I smell? What can I taste right now? What can I hear? What am I touching and how does it feel? You feel utterly connected to what's happening around you in real time. A deeper appreciation of the moment occurs. You expand and absorb so much more than if you were constricting your awareness. This can be done on the commute, when you first wake up, in meetings, waiting in line for a coffee, and so on.

We have also been sold the modern myth of multitasking. We pride ourselves on our ability to do so many things simultaneously. We constantly toggle between tasks, with nothing getting 100 percent of our attention. It's no wonder we feel so ungrounded, frazzled and fatigued some days, when we text at traffic lights, check social media while waiting in line at the café and check emails from bed. I call it mashing: when we look at Facebook while bathing our kids; when we look at Instagram eating our lunch; when we type an email while on a phone call; when we look at our iPads while watching television. We're all guilty of it in some way. If we wish to feel truly present and grounded, we must engage with one thing at a time and stop mashing!

The only person in charge of our feeling grounded, connected and present is us. It can take some awareness to shift the old patterns, the ways of doing things that don't serve us. On the continued path to becoming more connected and aware, we can enjoy every moment for what it is, and we are creating a richness and a texture to life that is, simply put, what we're here for. **N**

Bon Voyage

The Broad Place founder, Jacqui Lewis, shares her favorite travel memories and her best tips on stress-free travel.

Favorite destination

Tokyo, Japan.

Favorite hotel

Benesse House in Naoshima, Japan, then Hotel Shahpura in Jaipur, India, then Hotel Andaz, Tokyo, Japan.

Favorite restaurant

Fratelli Paradiso in Sydney

Most memorable meal

When Arran and I secretly got married then had the longest lunch at The Apollo, Sydney, and our families met for the first time.

Most prized souvenir

A kimono I got in Tokyo I wear all the time.

Most unexpected find

How tranquil Tokyo is.

Destination you hope to visit next

Okinawa.

Favorite season to travel

Summer, every time.

Planes, trains or automobiles

In cars, as you see so much more.

On the grid or off the grid

I document with notes and photos like a maniac and share most of our travels as we go, so on the grid.

Relaxation or adventure

Adventure.

Favorite travel song

In Los Angeles, I discovered The War on Drugs [band] and it became our theme album driving up the PCH.

Your best tips & advice for:**Packing**

I pack as light as I can, and I always take cameras and notebooks—my Kindle was the best investment for travel ever and has halved my luggage weight.

Plane travel

I take all my own food for the plane. I meditate most of the flight, take an empty thermos to drink hot water from, mix up miso soups and eat my own snacks and am generally a punishment for the flight attendant as I go back to prep all my meals in their area! In Ayurveda, an acute Vata imbalance is the cause of jetlag—a minimal amount of research on balancing Vata goes a long way for reducing jetlag symptoms.

Food

We just go with whatever is available wherever we are. We travel so much that I've relaxed how I eat at home and we go with the flow. It causes way less stress than lugging things around and luckily our daughter isn't a fussy eater!

Exercise

We tend to clock a huge amount of distance on foot and that keeps us fit, and I do a small amount of yoga and stretching where I can.

Relaxation

I always, always practice meditation no matter where I am. I get quite excited when traveling and this keeps me grounded and calm and brings me back to within myself! I read constantly. Depending on where we travel, I can find relaxation a challenge—as soon as we are out exploring the world, Arran (my husband and co-founder of The Broad Place) and I get our best ideas and then get pumped on how to execute them! **N**



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