

Have an Experience

An Exercise for Quieting Fear by Engaging the Present

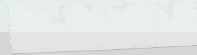
Fear has a way of pulling us into imagined futures and into remembered hurts. One of the best ways to calm a fearful mind is to reconnect with the present through your senses. This exercise invites you to slow down, notice what is happening around you, and share that experience with your partner.

You will need at least 30 minutes for this activity.

STEP 1:

You have five primary senses — Sight, Hearing, Smell, Touch, and Taste. Choose an activity for this experience that engages at least three of these senses. The exciting thing about this exercise is that it can be done in an infinite number of ways. Let me offer you a few ideas, but feel free to be creative. The possibilities are endless.

- Sit on a park bench in a city park
- Enjoy an ice cream cone
- Watch a sunset
- Sit in a shallow pool of water
- Drink coffee (or tea) on the porch.



Fear narrows our attention.
Wonder expands it.

The more ordinary the better.

STEP 2:

Once you have chosen the experience—**Have the Experience**. During the experience, your job is simple. Stay in a state of noticing what you are experiencing in the moment. What are your senses sensing?

STEP 3:

Discuss together the following questions.

Initially, the question is
“What do you see, smell, taste, hear, or feel?” Note those initial sensations.

But dig a little deeper into the sensations.

Now ask the question:
What does my body feel, or how does it react to certain sensations? What do I like about the temperature, brightness, texture, or smells?

Last, allow your mind to try to be quiet in the experience.

What thoughts come to your mind?

WARNING: If your mind drifts toward old worries or future fears, gently return your attention to what you can currently see, hear, smell, touch, or taste. Let the present become louder than the fear.

Take a moment with each other to share your experiences and the thoughts that come to mind.

Before you leave, share one more thing with each other.

What surprised you most about today’s experience?