

Social Presencing Theater: 20 Minute Dance

Overview

Mindfulness of body is a foundational skill for Social Presencing Theater. And like any skill, we learn it through practice. The 20-minute Dance is a practice in which we pay attention to the feeling of the body, without thinking about it or judging it. We are not trying to fix or change or accomplish anything. We welcome every moment.

Purpose

The invitation is to become more present and grounded in our bodies. To support fully being present in the moment by resting our attention (mind) on the feeling of the body. When body and mind are synchronized, we have access to a holistic intelligence.

Principles

- This is a practice to restore the natural synchronicity of the body and the mind.
- When we become lost in thoughts of the past or future or we fixate on our opinions and judgments we lose touch with the present moment.
- Throughout the practice, the attention is on the feeling of the body; the sensations involved in movement and stillness. (It doesn't matter at all what it looks like.)

Uses & Outcomes

- Slowing down and becoming more grounded, appreciating the moment to moment experience
- Body, mind and heart become more open and aligned, resulting in greater emotional intelligence and heartfelt listening
- Increase in confidence, clarity, and creativity
- Preparation for Stuck and 4D Mapping

An Example

This can be used as a personal mindfulness of body practice (as one might use yoga). Participants in leadership programs engage in this practice to transition from the speed and pressures of work life into a more grounded and receptive state of mind.

Process

Set Up

People & Place

- Room with a clean wooden or carpeted floor
- Sufficient space to lie down on the floor, in front of your webcam if practicing via videoconference. If social distancing guidelines allow you to practice jointly with others, you will need sufficient space to do so together without feeling crowded.

Time

- Everyone begins the practice together. Use a gong or bell to indicate the beginning time.
- Ideally the practice is 20 minutes long. It is fine to practice for 10 minutes.
- Allow time for a short reflection.

Materials

- Encourage people to dress comfortably
- Bell or gong to indicate beginning and end of practice

Sequence

Lying down

- Begin by resting on the floor with the eyes closed. Feel the body resting on the big body of the earth. Bring some attention to abdominal breathing. Experience your body, simply, without judgment or a goal.
- Let a movement begin. Do whatever the body feels like doing without planning anything. For example, the body might feel like stretching, rolling over, or wiggling its fingers. Keep the movement close to the ground. Any movement is good. Pay attention to the sensations, the feeling of the body, as it is moving.
- Then, pause and feel the body as it is resting in a shape or a posture.
- Then begin to move again, paying attention to the feeling of the body moving.
- Continue in this way, alternating resting and moving, paying attention to the feeling of the body. As we move or rest, our attention can be on part of the body (we feel our lower back or knee or shoulder) or on a sense of the whole body.
- When you notice that you are thinking, labeling, or judging the experience, let those thoughts go. Simply rest your attention on the feeling of the body.

Sitting

- After several minutes, let the body rise to a sitting position. Continue alternating stillness and movement, allowing the eyes to remain closed.

Standing

- Again, later in the practice time, come to a standing position. Continue to alternate moving and stillness. You might include bending or twisting, maintaining a sense of standing on one spot.

Moving through space

- Open your eyes and begin to move around the room. Keep your eyes downcast with a soft gaze so that your attention remains in your body and is not drawn outward into what others are doing.

Finding an ending

- At the end of the 20 (or 10) minutes, stop and hold the still shape. Wait in the still shape until the others have found their ending shape and place in the room. Feel the back of the body. Feel the full three-dimensional shape of the body. Then become aware of the space above and below and around the body.

Reflection

- Whether in person or on a webcam, reflect briefly in pairs, or in trios. Allow each person one or two minutes to speak. The others listen with their full attention. What did you notice? What did you learn about yourself?
- Speak from the first person voice about what you noticed, felt or did. Remember, there is no ideal dance or particular “better or right” experience. Experience is not the same as interpretation or thoughts about the experience. Each person’s experience is the perfect dance for them at that time.

Continue the practice

- As you go about the rest of your day, sitting in a chair or standing in line or walking to your car, remember to be aware of the body. Feel the whole body – the feet on the floor, the upright posture, the top of the head.
- Notice that once you feel embodied, there is a natural sense of being and of presence.