

Ground Position

The mental shift to a healthy leadership stance that benefits both your health and your teams' growth.

We have created this exercise to help you train the rapid shift to a healthy leadership stance we call the *Ground Position*. A position where you feel at ease with yourself, the people around you, and the situation as a whole. This position is best defined by the principles of healthy leadership.

I show up.

I am okay.

You are okay.

We own our boundaries.

We do our best.

Scientific research has demonstrated that our physical, mental and emotional experiences are intertwined in fascinating ways (see [3,4]). You may have experienced this phenomenon when feeling nervous with a queasy stomach, or when a sunny morning lifted your spirits and gave you energy.

Based on this knowledge, we have designed a three-stage process to guide you into your Ground Position, the foundation of healthy leadership. This exercise deliberately intertwines physical, sensory, and emotional experiences, making it more easily accessible to you when needed.



Exercise Ground Position

In the 'Rising' phase, we intentionally use the body as a tool for self-regulation.

By adopting a stable and expansive posture, you set a powerful physical anchor that secures your system in the present moment. This stance activates your internal resources and creates the essential foundation for the next step: Grounding. By experiencing your body as a reliable base, you create the psychological space to build and solidify inner stability. Our posture acts as an anchor, allowing us to rapidly recall this state of mind whenever it is needed.

Note: this is not power posing. Our posture serves as the gateway to conscious self-leadership, not merely a facade constructed for the outside world.



1

Rising



2

Grounding

We are now going to travel back in time to a moment when you felt deeply at ease with yourself, the people around you, and the situation as a whole. A moment of strength and confidence. We call it your *grounding situation*.

I am okay. You are okay. We own our boundaries are our guiding principles at this stage.

At this stage, you will not only immerse yourself in a stable stance, your brain will also associate this experience with your body posture, making it more easily accessible to you in the future.

This is your body, your brain and your emotions at play in a conscious, controlled environment. The ideal setup to reprogram yourself for healthy leadership.



3

Releasing

In the final stage, we will deepen the connection between your bodily experience and your grounded state, preparing you to transition back into your daily routine.

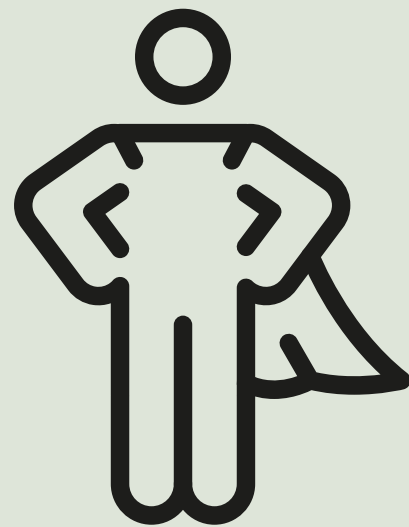
Your body posture will serve as an anchor to help you re-establish your grounded state whenever needed.

Rising into a grounded state will become much easier after practicing it a few times. The more you use it, the more natural and effortless it will feel.

You can now do a trial run of the full exercise while reading through the instructions on the next pages. Repeat the exercise without instructions once you feel confident, or use the one-pager at the end for a bit of guidance.

Stage

1



Rising

Find Your Space: Choose a spot where you can stand comfortably and freely. Ensure the area is distraction-free. If you do this trial run on screen, try to make sure your screen is on eye level.

Stand Tall: Position your feet shoulder-width apart for a strong and grounded stance. Distribute your weight evenly on both feet.

Place Your Hands on Your Hips: Rest your hands on your hips with your fingers pointing slightly forward or outward. Keep your elbows wide to open up your posture.

Lift Your Chin: Raise your head slightly so your chin is parallel to the ground. Avoid looking down; instead, keep your gaze forward or slightly upward.

Open Your Chest: Roll your shoulders back and down, creating an open and confident posture. Feel your chest expand slightly as you stand tall.

Hold the Pose: Maintain this position for 1 minute.

While Holding Your Pose:

Breathe deeply: Inhale through your nose, filling your chest and belly, then exhale slowly.

Engage your core: Gently tighten your abdominal muscles to support your stance.

Stay present: Stand firm, avoid fidgeting, and embrace the moment.

Stay clear: Let thoughts pass without holding onto them.

Feel grounded: Feel the solid ground beneath your feet.

Slowly shift awareness: Focus on the strength in your core and upper body.

Maintain deep, steady breaths.

When the 1 minutes are complete, you'll be ready to move to the next step.

Stage

2



Grounding

Step 1: Recall Your Grounding Situation

Recall a moment in your life when you felt completely at ease and aligned with yourself and the situation. This moment should embody the following experiences:

- I am okay - You felt confident and safe.
- You are okay - You trusted and felt comfortable with those around you.
- We own our boundaries - You felt your own limits and those of others respected.
- We do our best - You feel free of judgement.

Let the memory come naturally. At least one person should be around. The more the better.

- Think of a professional situation, a nature experience, a personal encounter. Anything is fine.

Step 2: Immerse yourself in it

- Once you have recalled a memory, bring it to life by fully immersing yourself in it.
- What do you see? What colors, objects, or details stand out?
- What do you hear? What sounds or voices? Or silence?
- What do you feel physically? Is there warmth, movement, or stillness? What else?
- Are there any specific smells present in this memory?
- Can you recall any tastes connected to this moment?

Engaging all your senses helps deepen the emotional connection to your Ground Position.

Step 3: Solidify your boundaries

Remain immersed in your memories. Now, visualize your boundaries surrounding you. Imagine a safe space around you, free of distractions, allowing you to move through any challenge with confidence and clarity. Wherever you go, this safe space is going to follow you.

Stay in this physical, emotional and mental Ground position for about one minute before you move to the next stage.

Side Note

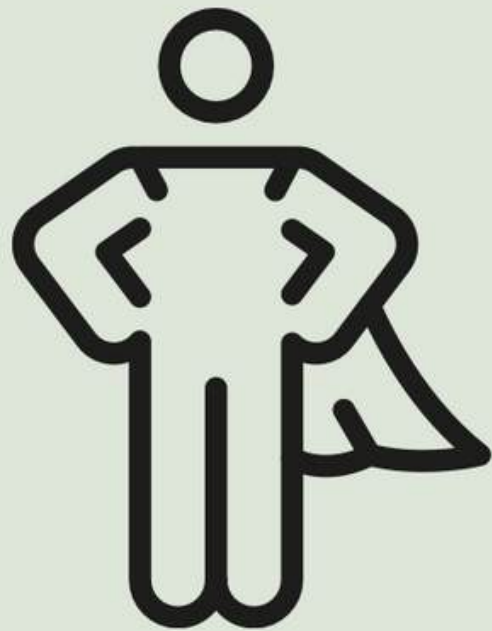
Grounding works best when you can recall a vivid memory of a real-life situation.

If you have difficulty recalling a specific moment, take a breath and think of a situation that comes close, then use your imagination to perfect it. Imagine all distractions and disturbances falling away. Create a space that belongs only to you. In this scenario, everyone else is a non-playing character.

It is just you, at ease with yourself, amongst a group of people. Focus on the details: the setting, the sounds, the scents, and the feeling of the ground beneath your feet. Make this your grounding situation. Take all the time you need until the image is clear, vivid, and feels okay.

Stage

3



Releasing

Releasing

Remain rooted in your inner ground position. Hold your stable pose and continue breathing deeply and steadily.

Feel the solid ground beneath your feet. Slowly shift your awareness upwards, sensing the strength in your core and upper body.

Take two intentional breaths before transitioning into daily life. Take your grounded self with you.

Use your stable pose and transition into Ground Position seamlessly in future. The more often you use it, the easier it will become.

Note: This self-coaching guide is not a substitute for professional help during challenging times. If you persistently struggle to achieve your ground position using this guide alone, consult a coach or therapist for additional support.

Debrief

Congratulations! With this exercise, you now have the tools to shift into a healthy stance. It will help you confidently navigate difficult situations without stress. This approach not only improves your personal wellbeing, it also strengthens your social interactions and boosts your team's performance. You will be able to address critical issues, you can remove stress and eliminate the most common, invisible productivity killer: conflict avoidance.

Make this exercise a habit over the next few days -perhaps by incorporating it into your morning routine or using it to refresh yourself during an afternoon energy dip. The more you practice, the more natural it will feel. Pretty soon, getting into your ground position will be as effortless as adopting a stable posture.

Over time, you will create the conditions for psychological safety, foster creativity, and make your organization a place where innovation can thrive without compromising your wellbeing.

Ground Position

1



Rising

Take your favorite stable pose. Breathe slowly and steadily. Allow your thoughts to pass by. Feel your body, wandering from feet to chin.

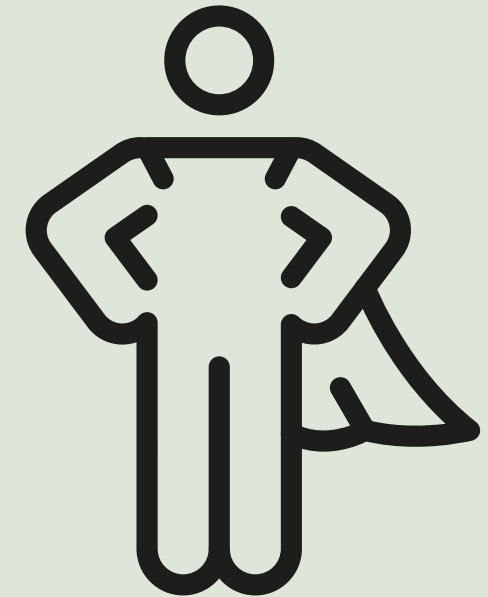
2



Grounding

Recall your *Grounding Situation* where you felt a sense of *I am okay. You are okay. We own our boundaries. We do our best.* What do you see? What do you hear and smell? Stay in your stable pose.

3



Releasing

Remain grounded. Hold your pose and continue breathing deeply and steadily before releasing into daily routine.



When you lead from your inner safe space curiosity becomes your compass and strength.

As we come to the end of this first seed, remember that Healthy Leadership begins from within. The practices we have explored, and in particular the Ground Position exercise, are designed to help you set a strong foundation. By anchoring yourself mentally and emotionally, Ground Position creates the inner safe space that Curious Minds need to thrive.

This inner safe space is not a luxury. It is the cornerstone of our architecture for psychological safety, the essential foundation upon which Healthy Leadership is built. When we are grounded, we can face the challenges of scarcity, competition, and uncertainty with clarity and composure. We can show up fully, support others, and lead with compassion.

For Curious Minds, this space allows creativity to flourish, insight to take shape, and bold ideas to emerge without being stifled by fear, self-doubt, or reactive patterns. It is the base from which principles can be applied consistently and effectively.

Healthy Leadership is not about perfection or control. It is about presence, resilience, and the courage to build environments where people feel safe to explore, grow, and contribute. Ground Position helps us embody that courage, creating a foundation for ourselves and for the teams, families, and communities we influence.

Step into that space. Anchor yourself. Lead from the ground up. The world needs Curious Minds who are supported from within and capable of creating positive impact from a place of inner safety.

We hope you found this first seed helpful and will find ways to integrate the *Ground Position* into your daily lives, so the Principles of Healthy Leadership can become a natural foundation of your personal and professional interactions over time.

We would like to close this seed with an important reminder: While we believe that our mental health and safety are non-delegable, and we provide tools to protect them, this must never be an excuse for anyone in a leadership role to step back.

On the contrary, we encourage everyone to continuously work toward Healthy Leadership as part of their role. Healthy Leadership is a shared responsibility that affects us all, and each of us can take the lead by setting an example and improving our own circle of influence. We hope that through our work, we can inspire more Curious Minds to embrace leadership and expand their impact in healthy ways.

A growing community drives meaningful change.



Gitte Klitgaard



Michael Laussegger

Sources and Inspiration



Amy Edmondson

Our work has certainly been most inspired by Amy Edmondson's research on psychological safety (see [1]). Her insights into creating environments where individuals feel safe to express themselves, take risks, and collaborate without fear of judgment or punishment have shaped the foundation of our approach. We strive to foster trust, open communication, and innovation in all aspects of our work. We hope to achieve this by leading by example and demonstrating how small changes in our own mindset can literally change the world.



Anna's story is inspired by a story from Paul Watzlawick (The Hammer) and illustrates how irrational thoughts and assumptions can escalate (see [5])



The concept is inspired by Eric Berne's Ground Positions, Author and inventor of Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy (see [6])



Inner Voices are inspired by Friedmann Schulz von Thun's metaphor of "The Inner Team" (see [7])

Sources

- 1) Edmondson, A. C. (2018). The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth. John Wiley & Sons.
- 2) Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. L. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review*, 95(2), 256–273. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.95.2.256>
- 3) Nair S, Sagar M, Sollers J 3rd, Consedine N, Broadbent E. Do slumped and upright postures affect stress responses? A randomized trial. *Health Psychol*. 2015 Jun;34(6):632-41. doi: 10.1037/hea0000146. Epub 2014 Sep 15. PMID: 25222091.
- 4) Mahindru A, Patil P, Agrawal V. Role of Physical Activity on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Review. *Cureus*. 2023 Jan 7;15(1):e33475. doi: 10.7759/cureus.33475. PMID: 36756008; PMCID: PMC9902068.
- 5) Watzlawick, P. (1983). The situation is hopeless, but not serious: The pursuit of unhappiness. Norton & Company.
- 6) Berne, E. (1961). Transactional analysis in psychotherapy: A systematic individual and social psychiatry. Grove Press.
- 7) Schulz von Thun, F. (1998). Miteinander reden, Band 3: Das "Innere Team" und situationsgerechte Kommunikation: Kommunikation, Person, Situation, Rowohlt.
- 8) The Dyslexic Advantage: Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain (originally published in 2011, revised in 2023) is the primary source for the "MIND" framework (Material, Interconnected, Narrative, and Dynamic reasoning).