

## Strengthening the Core

Just as a strong physical core enables more effective, safe, and flexible movement, so does a strong psychological core enable more confident and free behavior. With a strong core sense, feelings of inadequacy and fear seem like transient visitors rather than intrinsic parts of one's character. Difficulties appear minor and surmountable. Other words for the core self are one's best self or true nature.

Below are ways of undertaking the important and rewarding practice of strengthening the core self.

- Engage your physical core using the breath. Notice the steady, rhythmic sensations of breathing. Feel how the breath grounds you. Notice how it fills your core with awareness and movement. Sense how the muscles of the abdomen and rib cage participate in breathing. Enjoy the power and richness of your core.
- Activate the way you feel when you have a strong sense of self or a strong sense of efficacy, competence, or mastery by imagining situations where you recall feeling that way. Notice the way your body feels. How is your posture and carriage, breathing, use of muscles, sensations in the chest and shoulders?
- Rest in the feeling and see how much you can amplify it and have it fill all your being. Allow yourself to settle into it, ground in it, and breathe into it. Own this feeling as being you. Sense its solidity and reliability.
- Are there any phrases that represent this feeling? Examples may be, "I have all I need," "I've got this," or "Life is good." Notice which phrases accentuate the feeling.
- Is there a fictional or real character or feature of nature that resonates with this sense of self? Does drawing on that identity deepen its strength?
- Is there a song or piece of music that amplifies the feeling?
- Does this core self have a spiritual or larger connection? What is it like to connect to it?
- How does your sense of purpose in life feed this core?
- How does this core sense of self affect its surroundings?
- Is there a cue word and a small physical gesture you can use to reinforce and call it up?
- Tapping your hands back and forth on your legs or opposite arm criss-crossed can help install this strong sense of self by helping the brain bilaterally register and store it.
- Any experience of contentment, be it joy, exuberance, peace, or gratitude, is an aspect of this core self. When you notice this feeling, or a phrase or song or place that accentuates it, you can install this as well by tapping back and forth.
- Spend as much time as you can each day residing in and strengthening your solid and steady core.