



Four Stages Of Groundedness, by John J. Prendergast

The ground is both a metaphor and a felt sense. As a metaphor, it means to be in touch with reality. As a felt sense, it refers to feeling our center of gravity low in the belly and experiencing a deep silence, stability, and connection with the whole of life. Feeling grounded does not require contact with the earth; it can happen anywhere and anytime – even when we’re flat on our backs in a rowboat.

Reality is inherently grounding. The more in touch with it we are, the more grounded we feel. This is as true of the facts of daily life as it is of our true nature. Life is multidimensional, ranging from the physical to the subtle to formless awareness. When we are in touch with physical reality, we feel physically grounded. As subtle levels of feeling and energy unfold, we feel subtly grounded. When we know ourselves as open awareness, not separate from anything, we rest in and as our deepest ground that is sometimes called our homeground or groundless ground.

As attention deepens and opens, our experience of and identification with the physical body changes. Our felt sense of the ground shifts accordingly. After decades of working with clients and students, I have observed a continuum of groundedness that spans FOUR BROAD EXPERIENTIAL STAGES: a) no ground: I am not in my body; b) Foreground: I am in my body; c) background: my body is in me (as open awareness); d) homeground: Everything is my body (as open awareness).

[...] As we attune with inner knowing, we experience a deep relaxation in the core of our body and a growing sense of groundedness. However, most of us are in a state of chronic inner tension as we try to subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) control ourselves and the environment. Some of this tension is concerned with biological survival, while most of it is concerned with psychological survival – the preservation of the self-image. The psychological self – the little me – is always insecure and defends itself against potential annihilation. This manifests in the body as an attempt to hold ourselves up and in with an inner grip or core contraction. We can be forced to release this grip when we encounter a crisis that makes us let go of the illusion of control and/or brings the insight that it is futile and more painful to try to hang on. The chronic grip also softens as we live more authentically, both personally and essentially. Feeling held by something greater than our limited self also allows the letting go to happen more gracefully. Letting go requires trusting in life – no matter what.

Reality is inherently grounding. The more in touch with it we are, the more grounded we feel. [...] Reality can be temporarily ungrounding when we have been living out of accord with it, and yet there is a continuum of groundedness with distinctive stages that sometimes coexist.

Published at www.awakin.org on Dec 29, 2020