

COLOR YOUR FEELINGS

Download the body outline and get out a set of colored pencils, crayons, or markers.

Review the last week in your mind and write down 5 different emotions you experienced. Pick a different color for each emotion. Sitting quietly with the memory of the emotion and what triggered it, notice how your body reacts now. You might also find that you have a strong memory or physical impression of what you felt at the time. Using the colors you chose, draw the sensations that accompanied your feelings on the body outline. Some things to consider:

- *Look for patterns of tension (tightness and constriction) and expansion.*
- *How intense are the sensations? You can use different shades of a color for changes in intensity.*
- *What is the energy of the sensation? Is it fast or slow? Is it moving in a particular direction? You can use arrows to depict the direction of energy movement.*
- *Is there a sense of weight or pressure? Lightness or heaviness?*
- *Is there a sense of density?*
- *Is there a shape? What are the edges like? Sharp, jagged, smooth, diffuse?*
- *Do any emotions seem to be outside your body? Are you feeling engulfed or trapped?*

When you have finished coloring your emotions in the body, reflect on your body image:

- *Are your emotions and awareness of sensations restricted to a particular area of your body? Are some areas empty of feeling, awareness, or sensation? If so, some possible explanations are numbness or dissociation due to trauma or injury; chronic stress and habitual muscle constriction; energy blockage because of negative associations with a body part; intellectualization and mental processing (relying on the head, a sense of control, etc.)*
- *Are there body splits? Look for differences between top and bottom, core and outside or limbs, the right and left sides. If so, some splits are due to trauma, injury, or early life experiences.*
- *Are your emotions balanced between positive and negative experiences, or do you have a predominance of negative feelings? Do you notice any common patterns among negative emotions versus the positive emotions? Negative emotions tend to cause constriction in the muscles, restrict energy flow, and increase internal pressure. Conversely, positive emotions tend to activate muscles in a more comfortable way, expand energy in the body and move it upward.*

Other Body Outline Exercises:

- Draw your health history on the body outline, along with your age and any incidents, life transitions, or losses that triggered an injury or illness.
- Choose a particular illness or injury and draw its development and healing process.

- Read over some of your journal entries. Do you notice any body metaphors, such as “bite my tongue,” “broken hearted,” “took my breath away,” etc? Draw some of these on the outline.
- Tell a story from your body’s point of view.
- Depict the development of anxiety, panic attack, or temper outburst. What are the earliest levels of activation that you are aware of?

GENERATING POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND ENERGY

Try this exercise for generating positive energy in the body: Sit quietly with your eyes closed and repeat the word “NO” silently in your head, several times. Notice your visceral reactions.

When you’ve had enough of “NO,” stop and take a deep breath. You might notice that you were actually holding your breath, a basic constriction pattern. Now repeat the word “YES” silently, in your head, several times. Notice your reactions. Eventually, you might notice a smile developing on the corners of your lips, a slight uplift in your cheeks, and upward movement of your eyes.

Allow yourself to intensify the positive emotion by thinking about some unconditionally positive experience for which you are *truly grateful*. Create an image of this in your mind and focus on it. Notice any changes in your breath as you meditate on this experience. If your mind strays, come back to the image as often as you like.

As you are of more aware of the positive energy state in your body, allow yourself to share it with others by directing your thoughts towards them, in ever expanding circles around yourself.