

The Felt Sense Protocol *by Jake Ernst, MSW RSW*

The Felt Sense Protocol is a step-by-step tool to help you feel the emotions and sensations that arise within you. Emotions originate as sensations inside the body. Building awareness of our bodily sensations can connect us to our emotions.

- **Resourcing**

- A **Neutral Anchor** is any thought, feeling, or action that brings you closer to a state of neutrality, presence, groundedness, or safety.
- Examples include: Bringing your hand onto the chest, a breath rooted in your abdomen, a pet, visualizing a peaceful place, a few words of encouragement or a compassionate statement, a fixed points in the room, or a body part that doesn't carry much energy (legs, arms, knees, feet).
- Before starting this practice, name three *Neutral Anchors* that can help you regain your center when things begin to feel overwhelming.
1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

- **Scanning**

- Start by finding a location where you can be vulnerable enough to be with your body's sensations. Sit, stand, or lay down in a comfortable position.
- Scan your body and notice the regions where you typically hold stress or feel distress. You might identify a muscle group, a body part, or a specific organ. Some examples include the chest, heart, shoulders, or abdomen.
- For as long as you are able, start by bringing your focus and attention to the portion of the body you've selected.

- **Sensing**

- Bring your awareness to the sensations that take place, or are currently taking place, within this part of the body. Be sure to revisit your resources if the sensation becomes too much, too fast, too soon. Revisit your resources if it is too overwhelming.
- If you are having trouble noticing and naming sensations, you can use my vocabulary lists to help guide you.

- **Observing**

- Using the metrics below, begin to track and measure how the sensations change when you bring your attention to them.
- **Size:** Is the feeling big or small? Rate the size of the feeling from 1-10 (with 10 being the biggest it has ever been).
Tip: Visualize the sensation shrinking in size by counting down with a steady breath to decrease its intensity.

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- **Shape:** Is it smooth or rigid? Note the shape or form of the sensation and watch what happens to its shape as you make minor adjustments to your breath, posture, or position.
Tip: Imagine the sensations transforming in shape to make them less abstract. Name the shape if you want to.
 - **Speed:** Is it fast or slow? Notice the pace and rhythm of the sensation and make note of what slows it down or speeds it up.
Tip: Take a deep breath and notice what happens to its pace.
 - While attending to the sensations, shift your focus back to your Neutral Anchors every 30 seconds or so and note any changes.
- **Accepting & Allowing**
 - Now that you've observed how sensations exist inside of you, you can start welcoming and accepting sensations as they are. Accepting and allowing your sensations to take place can naturally cause things to shift.
 - At your own pace, practice building your awareness of how these sensations exist energetically within you without judgment. As you become more familiar with them, you can start to label the feelings associated with the different groups and combinations of sensations.
 - Remember that feeling your feelings is not the same as labelling them or thinking about them. In order to increase the effectiveness of this exercise, you will need to let the body do what it needs to do without trying to consciously control it or tell it what to do. This is how we feel our feelings as they need to be felt.