



COMING ALIVE: STEP 1: TRACKING YOUR FIGHT FLIGHT FREEZE PATTERNS

As a leader, you affect the people around you. *On a good day when you are centered, clear and confident* things may go well. When stressful situations arise, you handle them with skill and grace. You think, wow, that went well. If you're a woman, you might feel like an imposter and silently be surprised you got here and you start thinking of all the people who supported you through it. If you're a man, it may feel a little less surprising. You'll think you're on your game and you did it alone. (Trust me, social conditioning is part of the whole conversation about aliveness, resilience and leadership). On these days, you treat others as fellow humans with dignity and you believe in yourself and others.

On the days when you are overwhelmed and acting from personality, you may not be so skillful and you will revert to baseline survival reactions involving variations and combinations of your fight, flight and freeze response. You might treat another human

Knowledge isn't enough.

Leadership is embodied.

Embodiment is *practiced*.

really badly or treat yourself badly and the worst of you will come out. You may get entitled, righteous and ruin a few people's day. Your worst defensiveness patterns rear their ugly heads. If you're a man, you may beat the crap out of yourself in silence unless you're one of the lucky ones who has some people to whom you can tell the truth and talk about your insecurity, shame and uncertainty. If you're a woman, you may call a friend or if you're lucky, a sister.

I have baseline reactions too even though people pay me to help them through theirs. I've been doing this work for almost 25 years. I'm not going to make promises that you will never feel anxious, angry, entitled, unsettled, insecure and sad again. Early in this work, I believed that I would reach the mountaintop and all my neuroses and anxieties would go away. I believed I would treat people with compassion, skill and grace 24/7. Because I didn't move to a monastery and didn't meditate full time, I had to face the big lie. After all this time, a pandemic and the loss of my sister who was part of me who I didn't think I could live without, I now know the difference is practice, practice, practice.

IT'S A PROCESS THAT TAKES INTENTION, ATTENTION AND PRACTICE. Lather, rinse, repeat. *It's all about attention and energy management.*

When we gather in June, you will receive **embodiment training** to train your body to shift from a *baseline survival reaction state* to a *centered, clear and confident state* through individual AND partner exercises grounded in three primary PRACTICES:

1. **Somatic Awareness**
2. **Leadership Embodiment**
3. **The Enneagram**

I've been receiving training in the field of **body based coaching** over the past 12 years. In 2011, I taught Wendy Palmer's intuitive body/embodiment material to women's groups for the first time and was told it was the most important class I taught. Why?

Clients often tell me they experience me in session as grounded, present and able to elicit deeper self-awareness that happens in ordinary coaching sessions. I don't think I have some magic pill. *I believe this can be taught, but it must be practiced.* It's like exercise. Use it or lose it. (I can attest to this. Whenever I lag on my body based practices, my coaching and teaching is less skillful as I'm using only the Head center and Heart center). I believe this is a differentiator in coaching and leadership *if it's practiced.*

You will be the first leadership group to whom I have taught this material. I will be looking for feedback from you as I tweak it over time.

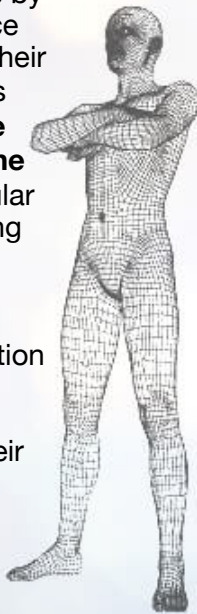
I believe in my bones, we are in this human race together and we can't do it alone. We learn from each other. I have learned from each of you and you learn from me. Neuroscience has taught us that we do better when we practice these skills. There's a lot of data that I will share with you AFTER the workshop. I don't want you getting too in your heads about this.

First, I'm going to clarify a couple of things. You know the Enneagram, but I've taught you little about somatic awareness and leadership embodiment. I have been doing somatics for 10 years and have more recently, picked the embodiment work up again because I HAD to in 2020. I had no choice if I was going to do my job well as I faced burnout for the first time and all the losses of the past 5 years.

I first learned it when I spoke at the same conference as Wendy Palmer, the aikido master who founded Leadership Embodiment. We did the gestures and moves at the conference and then I started practicing them on my own. I taught them to a number of women's groups between 2010 and 2013. Now I'll share it with you.

What are somatics and what do you mean by “Leadership embodiment?”

Somatics are the perception of internal bodily sensations. There’s growing evidence supporting its crucial role in domains such as body ownership, intuitive judgment, decision making, emotional experience, emotional processing and behavioral self-regulation.



In my practice I begin the process by helping my patients to first notice and then describe the feelings in their bodies—**not emotions** such as anger or anxiety or fear **but the physical sensations beneath the emotions**: pressure, heat, muscular tension, tingling, caving in, feeling hollow, and so on.

I also work on identifying the sensations associated with relaxation or pleasure.

I help them become aware of their breath, their **GESTURES** and **MOVEMENTS**

The **mind needs to be reeducated** to feel physical sensations, and the body needs to be helped to tolerate and enjoy the comforts of touch.

Bessel van der Kolk,
The Body Keeps Score

**SLOWLY
RECONNECT WITH YOUR
BODY’S WISDOM AND
ALIVENESS.**

Leadership Embodiment: uses breath, attention, gestures and movement to works with 3 competencies that focus on developing greater capacity to work with stress and intensity. They are:

1. *Being inclusive:* the ability to use an embodied expansive presence to send the nonverbal message, *We are all in this together.*
2. *Listening for the the whole:* The ability to listen for the whole and hear what is being said without taking it personally
3. *Speaking up clearly:* The ability to speak one's truth with clarity and precision without aggression or collapse.

We are going to begin by gaining awareness of your fight/flight/freeze response patterns that knock you into reactive patterning. *These patterns can't be controlled with your will and your mind.*

But you can LEARN your patterns using these steps:

1. Awareness of your triggers by identifying situations that trigger you.
2. Track inner and outer cues that you are triggered.

3 CENTERED MINDFULNESS: PART 1: Where are you NOW?

TRACKING YOUR FIGHT/FLIGHT/FREEZE PATTERNS

Over the next week, **you will practice getting to know the distinct way your fight, flight, freeze response gets activated.** You will use the Enneagram to help you unpack what may be underneath some of your reactions. Your Enneagram idealizations and avoidances *which are housed in your body.* (**Your Enneagram related idealization and avoidance is at the bottom of this sheet.**)

When your idealization is punctured, your body responds. When life puts you in contact with your Enneagram avoidance, your body reacts. In a spirit of curiosity and kindness, you will learn to track how your body response.

The Fight Response

By **fight**, we do not mean a physical altercation, but rather the tendency to:

verbally yell and/or express anger toward another person
stop the person from talking
raising your voice
demanding what is rightly yours
blaming others.

*For instance: an unexpected phone call in the morning puts me behind my normal departure time period. There is more traffic than I expected, and I realize that I'm definitely going to be late for my important meeting. I reach for my bag and spill coffee on my shirt. As I get out of my car, my lunch spills out of my bag. I am talking on my cell phone and begin to angrily rail about someone who has frustrated me. I feel entitled to better behavior. Through the buildup of stress, I became off center and my fight reaction was activated. I am finding an **object for my anger** as it's more familiar than feeling my anger in my body and coming back to center. I dehumanize the person with whom I'm angry. Dehumanization is*

simply the process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities.

The Flight Response

In an organizational context, **flight** is unlikely to show up as physically running away. Rather, in a group or interpersonal situation flight is more likely to show up as disengagement behavior, including:

1. leaning back
2. looking away
3. ignoring what someone is saying
4. spacing out
5. looking at cell phone/computer/reading material

Certainly someone is having a flight reaction when they leave a room before a discussion is complete, but we can also leave the room, mentally. We are not present when we're daydreaming about our upcoming vacation or thinking about what needs to be done when we get home.

My flight response shows up when I distract myself with my iPhone when feeling bored, limited or trapped. It can show up if I'm anxious about an email I sent earlier in the day. Rather than come to Center, I distract myself.

The Freeze Response

The **freeze** reaction is the classic *deer in the headlights* phenomenon. During freeze, there is little physical movement and thought process are suspended. We experience being stuck and unable to move or think about a course of action. Biologically, this serves to make ourselves invisible to a predator. In today's business environment, It is more likely to show up as:

1. your mind going blank just before a critical test, speech, important interaction
2. losing your ability to coherently say what you mean
3. spacing out/zoning out/disengaging

My freeze response is activated when I have to do a presentation in front of my peers. Suddenly, my mind goes blank and my 25 years of expertise goes out the window.

Source: Wendy Palmer, Leadership Embodiment

GETTING STARTED:

Find your type's compensation belief, idealization, avoidance and mental habit. (The mental habit is easier to observe than the idealization and avoidance. The idealization and avoidance are more hardwired into your emotions and body and thus tend to be more unconscious). Start identifying triggering events and record some of them in a journal, on the sheet I provided or verbally with someone you trust. On the last page of this sheet, you're given instructions on how to record events.

Type One: The Perfectionist

Compensating Belief: You must gain worthiness and love through being as good and perfect as possible, because the world judges and punishes "bad" behavior.

Idealization: I am good and right.

Avoidance: Making mistakes, losing self-control, being so wrong that you are unworthy.

Mental Habit: 1s pay attention to what is right, wrong and could be improved. Criticism of myself and other.

Type Three: The Performer

Compensating Belief: The world rewards doing, not being. To be loved, you become a little human "doing" instead of a human "being."

Idealization: I am successful.

Avoidance: Being a failure, becoming incapacitated by your own strong true feelings (an unconscious fear that you will be unable to accomplish anything).

Mental Habit: 3s pay attention to tasks, to-do lists, what needs to be done and how to get it done most efficiently,

Type Four: The Romantic

Compensating Belief: A painful loss of original connection leaves a terrible feeling of deficiency and a sense that something vitally important and special is missing which must be regained.

Idealization: I am authentic.

Avoidance: Being ordinary, deficient, lacking.

Mental Habit: 4s idealize the past and future and notice what is missing in the present moment. I comparing myself to an ideal. Fantasizing about the ideal project, meaningful conversation and authentic expression

Type Six: The Loyal Skeptic

Compensating Belief: The world is dangerous, threatening. People can't be trusted. You must seek (the phobic style) or defy (the counter-phobic style) security, avoid or face danger.

Idealization: I am loyal. (I am guarding your/my safety no matter what!)

Avoidance: Becoming helpless and defenseless, avoided either by aligning with authority (the phobic style) or by defying it (the counter-phobic style).

Mental Habit: 6s scan for potential hazards, what can go wrong, threats, inferences, implications, inconsistencies. I have a habit of doubt in myself, others and situations.

Type Seven: The Epicure

Compensating Belief: The world limits and frustrates people and causes pain that can be escaped.

Idealization: I am OK.

Avoidance: Frustrations, constraints, limits, getting enmeshed in suffering.

Mental Habit: 7s attention goes to plans, ideas and positive possibilities, interconnections, interesting ideas

Type Eight: The Protector

Compensating Belief: This is a hard and unjust world in which the powerful take advantage of the innocent and impose their personal truths on others.

Idealization: I am strong.

Avoidance: Weakness, becoming vulnerable and powerless.

Mental Habit: Power and control, power dynamics, strengths and weaknesses of others, big actions to make something happen



WORKING WITH TRIGGERING EVENTS

Triggering Event

Either here or in your journal, record the events which trigger you.

What is your clue that you are triggered?

Inner cues (found on Body Sense Sheet) ie. tight chest, heat in the belly, shallow breathing, headache, cold/clammy, sweaty, belly tightening frustration, high charge of energy, judgment, replay scenarios in the head, catastrophize, obsessive thinking, minimize/magnify, tiredness, cynicism, personalize,)

Outer cues (ie. I interrupt, I talk over, talk fast, I brag, I'm abrupt, I am unclear, hesitant I withdraw into silence, I trivialize with humor, I rationalize, deny my role, I want to be right)

Fight/Flight or Fear?

Look at the Fight/Flight/Fear definitions. Can you identify which response pattern you experienced?

Enneagram Idealizations, Avoidances and Attentional Style

Identify your Enneagram idealization:

Identify your Enneagram avoidance:

Identify your Enneagram pattern of attention (found on Enneagram diagram):
