



A Simple Practice of Being Present

Carrie Elizabeth Gray

When I look honestly, I see there is a gap between how I wish to live, and how I actually live...a gap between my ideals and how I respond to the events of my daily life. When I look into this gap, I see what is needed is something to help me bridge my concepts of life with my actual life. I need something that I can do.

I have found a practical entry into this question with the holistic system of Breema. The aim of Breema is to cultivate a tangible experience of presence in the body that becomes a foundation for a new relationship with who I really am. This begins with a new relationship to the body—the body not as I think it is, but the body as experienced directly in the moment. This fundamental distinction between “as I think” versus “as I am” lies at the heart of Breema’s approach to the art of being present.

Breema starts with mind-body connection. This is practiced with Breema bodywork and Self-Breema exercises, together with the Nine Principles of Harmony. When I apply any principle—



Mutual Support, Full Participation, No Extra, No Force, Body Comfortable, No Hurry/No Pause, Gentleness and Firmness, No Judgment, Single Moment/Single Activity—I have support to bring mind, body and feelings together in a single activity, with a posture of receptivity.

When practicing a Self-Breema exercise, my aim isn’t to do the exercise perfectly, but to experience applying the Breema principles for myself. For example, I can experiment with applying *Full Participation*. Leaning my hand into the top of my shoulder, I move with the whole body instead of with isolated parts. Remembering *Mutual Support*, I become interested in giving and receiving at the same time, in the same moment. I learn what it feels like to be balanced, to include myself more fully in everything that I do. I develop a relationship with the body not as the entirety of who I am, but as my ally, with me in any situation, helping me to be more available and in touch with my natural vitality.

Breema supports and deepens this process by helping me become familiar with *taste*. *Taste* is an inner recognition of being present that the mind alone cannot produce. *Taste* is a shift in dimension, a tangible indicator that something in me knows this body has life. This is the foundation for a new form of knowing and a new way of relating to myself. *Taste* helps me to experience actual interconnectedness with life and an inner confidence borne not of idea or ego, but of being alive in the moment. The mind often tells me how things “should” be, but *taste* helps me to be available to things as they are. With this clarity and availability, I know how to take a step.

Experiences in the Breema classroom are a springboard for daily life. The other day, I was rushing to get to work on time, but I decided to see if I could be present while driving. I took a breath and registered *Body Comfortable* while sitting in the car. As I drove, I stayed connected with knowing that I was breathing. Though I was driving quickly, I stayed with each part of the journey as it was happening. When I arrived, I saw that arriving was simply another step in traveling; it wasn’t separate from how I got there. There was connection between where I had been and where I was now, because throughout that experience I had stayed with myself.

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Working with the principles in daily life, my focus on accomplishment shifts to include a receptive relationship with myself and with this, I become more available to life as it is. The body becomes my anchor, allowing me to recognize the difference between ideas and actual experience. I begin to recognize that the only way I can “do” something about any of my goals and desires is to first be present in this moment. Whenever I shift my emphasis to how I am right now, I have the chance to enter into my life in a new way. ✱



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