



Creating a Safe-Authentic Space – With a Partner

Purpose

- To create the physical and emotional conditions to be present with attuned connection with another person.
- To transform an environment in order to leave behind the everyday mundane world and step into a time and space in which you can act with intention and awareness, and connect more deeply with yourself and your partner.
- To create a safe and authentic space in which to build safety and trust with your partner in order to move beyond the resistances, fears, wounding, or other difficulties that may be in the way of a deeper connection.
- To support the conditions for closeness, honesty about how you feel and who you are, and respect – a space you can be transparent and more deeply available to each other.

The full practice can be done, or an abbreviated form if you have a short time together or are going to meet in a public place. The practice can be done with a friend, family member, partner or co-worker, and can be used for personal sharing, planning, talking about difficult feelings or subjects, before or after an evening out or a vacation, or before emotional or physical intimacy.

Guidelines

- Spend time co-creating the physical space that reflects your intention for a special, meaningful experience, and inspires you to want to be in that space.
- Move consciously and with attention to each person's unique contribution.
- Choose something to sit on so that you can comfortably face each other.
- Be creative, playful, and allow plenty of room for spontaneity.

For a more formal, sacred, or romantic environment...

- Bring into your space any objects that have special meaning. Consider including what symbolizes connection, relationship, intimacy, friendship, love...
- Consider all the senses:
 - Comfort – Chairs, pillows, cushions, fresh air, warmth...
 - Sight – Flowers, special objects, lighting, candles, natural objects (shells, stones)...
 - Sound – Music, musical instruments, bells, drums...
 - Scent – Candles, incense, sage, essential oils...
 - Taste – Fruit, favorite sweets, water, juice...
 - Touch – Beautiful cloth to cover the ground of your space or to wear...
 - Visual Images – wall hangings, inspiring images, loved ones, spiritual teachers...

Creating a Safe-Authentic Space Ritual

Adapt all or part of these steps in a way that creates the emotional environment that is most comfortable for you.

Before You Enter the Space You Have Created...

- Approach the space and each other with reverence. Consider a simple bow to each other.
- Take a few minutes to connect in stillness and silence. Either stand in silence with eyes closed, or...
- Walk towards each other and hold your partner in a soft embrace. Close your eyes, and embrace in silence and without movement. Make any adjustments to be completely comfortable, supported, and relaxed. If comfortable, remain in a relaxed embrace for 20 seconds or more, breathing gently.
- Be mindful of your inner physical sensations and breath, as well as the connection. If thoughts arise, notice them then let them go, and keep returning to awareness of your inner experience and the connection. Open to the silent stillness.
- As you open your eyes, invite each other to sit in the space you have created.

Entering the Space...

- Enter the Safe-Authentic Space together. Sit face to face comfortably. With an inner smile, silently look into the other's eyes acknowledging each other's presence.
- Begin with a simple bow, maintaining eye contact – non-verbally honoring each other.
- Take a few minutes to close your eyes and become present to your physical sensations, emotions, and breath. Align with your core values and motivation to bring the best in you to this interaction.
- Use your hands to create a protective “bubble” around the two of you as you set the intention to remain present with your shared experience within this space.
- One at a time, clear away any unwanted energy from your partner. (Consider the ancient tradition of using incense or sage.)
- One at a time, honor each other's hearts as you maintain eye contact. Name something you appreciate about your partner's heart – their kindness, warmth, gentleness, compassion, sweetness, generosity – or other qualities that relate to your relationship. (Option: each person places their right hand in front of or on the other's heart center, and their left hand on top of the right hand that is on their own heart.)
- One at a time, share your intentions, fears, and boundaries for this interaction. (See the *Intentions, Fears & Boundaries* handout.)
- When you speak, practice one person being the Speaker, and the other being the Listener, maintaining eye contact and practicing compassionate and attuned communication. (See the *Conscious Communication Guidelines* handout.)

Closure...

- Extend Gratitude: Verbally and non-verbally express gratitude for what was shared and learned, and for taking this time for connection.
- Feedback:
What was the easiest/most enjoyable part for: (1) yourself (2) the connection
What was the most difficult/challenging part for: (1) yourself (2) the connection
What did you learn, and what are you willing to develop/practice for: (1) yourself (2) the connection
- End your time in Safe-Authentic Space with a simple bow – recognizing and honoring the time together.

Remember that this is a practice and these steps are general guidelines. Make it uniquely your own. Be creative, playful, and spontaneous, and enjoy the connection you are co-creating.