

**IT FILLS ITSELF IN:
The Process of Growing from the Insecure Child into the Woman I Am**

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This memoir, is about a session that was so important and powerful for me that I based a whole lesson on it. I called it, “It fills itself in” (one of the chapters of Gendlin’s FOT book). I am wanting here to express the amazement I felt (and still feel) regarding the totally transformative process that I experienced.

Sometimes we have an experience in childhood that is lacking or empty—where something vitally important is ‘missing’. Unless that ‘empty place’ can be filled, we are left with a ‘wanting’ feeling. What’s needed is deep listening, allowing a process to unfold, and a re-opening to a new moving-forward-energy. When that re-opening occurs, the old ‘place’ never goes back to where it was before. There is no longer a ‘lacking’ feeling in there. Rather, it is full of life and in the *now* . . . and still unfolding . . .

In this process, that I am about to describe, I listened to myself, and to the lacking place, and miraculously it got filled-in, transformed, changed forever. This place in me is now growing up, no longer feeling the ‘not-being-able-to small child’, but instead a grown-up woman, who is allowed to be just who she is, right here, right now.

SELF SESSION, NOVEMBER 2011

I started this process with what we might call ‘blind typing’, i.e. sitting down with my hands on the computer keys and just allowing the process to flow out. The comments in brackets throughout the process are there in an attempt to clarify the steps taken, and my understanding of it. These comments were added afterwards going over the session again with a more analyzing attitude, hoping to enable the reader to understand the process at a deeper level.

Something doesn’t feel right . . .

I don’t feel good, inside.

There is stress, restlessness.

A harshness internally.

Noise in the head, many thoughts tumbling around in there.

There are so many things I need to do that the system becomes paralyzed.

Not knowing where to start.

There is a feeling, an inner belief, that I won’t be able to do it all.

I cannot do it. (*Identifying the belief, hearing the inner judging part.*)

I see my mother, feel her presence.

She is pushing me

Telling me all the 'have to's:

"You have to be strong. You have to succeed. You have to be kind. You have to be special. You have to behave. "

And at the same time I sense her weakness, her failure, her harshness, her frustration, her anger, her helplessness. (*Seemingly two contradicting messages experienced at the same time . . .*)

Which one is true?

I feel like a failure. (It all comes down to one experience of failure, mine and hers.)

I never did it right or good enough. (*My mother's voice internalized.*)

I could be much better than I am. (*I search for the specific experience of a childhood lack . . .*)

Something to do with feeling safe. Unconditional love maybe ? . . . (*as opposed to the conditions my mother seemed to have for her love . . .*)

Not sure yet . . . (*giving it it's time to unfold, to reveal itself*)

It feels like a pressured hole inside the body . . . (*sensing into the lack, in the bodily sensation of it*). From chest to lower belly. Dark and murky.

Not much light in here.

It feels lonely, this place.

I ask for company . . . (being on my own, I invite the protective, safe interaction to help me through).

An old man with a stick appears and sits down next to me on a rock.

He smiles, his eyes are full of warmth.

It doesn't feel enough . . . (*not yet safe enough*).

Some of the loneliness is lifted . . . (*there is a small relief*).

Look inside, feel, what does it need, now? (Guiding myself.)

To be filled in with true love caring, being wanted just the way I am.

Who can meet this need?

I wait silently, patiently, still sensing the lonely space inside my body.

Still, nobody appears . . .

I notice a mistrust pattern that is there to everyone that does appear.

Something doesn't let anybody really come inside.

It is afraid to be hurt, more.

It's about trust. There is no trust. Not even for the most enlightened person on the planet.

(*A profound realization of this trust issue, "there is nobody to trust".*)

Then I 'see' the old man again, still sitting next to me. (*The interactive present supportive company . . .*)

Standing up and reaching for my hand. (*Suggesting a move in and toward accepting.*)

We walk. A narrow path. He is leading me quietly. Slowly (*no pushing, very accepting of what there is now*).

There is a give up, helpless feeling inside. (*Surrendering happening and being with the helplessness feeling, inside the lack.*)

I thought that this inner state can never be changed. (*Realizing the inner belief that the lack is 'me', and thus cannot be changed, is always going to be there.*)

A stiffening around the empty lonely space. (*The protective surviving pattern.*)

“Where are you taking me?” (*I internally ask the old man.*)

“You’ll see”, the old man says.

Then sadness comes.

I am walking through this beautiful place and am unable to notice any of it, so tangled up within myself. (*Noticing the gap between the outside and inside experience.*)

I feel I am getting smaller again. A feeling of being a small helpless child.

That’s ok, he says without opening his mouth, just let it happen. Be that little child for now. (*Reassuring, letting the experience of the inner child happen, and being with it together.*)

So there I am, as a little child, *holding his hand*, walking down the path.

There is a feeling that he’s taking care of me. (*Protective, safe environment.*)

Something relaxes inside. I feel more fully how my hand is holding his and how his hand is holding mine.

I feel my feet, walking. (*Start of life force flow.*)

Then we suddenly reach an open space.

A green field, that seemingly has no end to it.

There is a little scariness inside.

I hold on to his hand more tightly. (*Interactive present reassurance.*)

We just stand there, waiting, looking at the magnificent view. (*Supporting pillar.*)

The little girl and the old man.

Now, you go and sit in the middle, he says, and pushes me forward, gently. (*Suggesting deepening.*)

I look back, a little scared, receiving only warmth from his eyes, and some kind of certainty that *I can just do that*.

(*Reaffirming the ability, noticing the opposite feeling of the old man that says: “You do it !!” versus the inner belief, “I can not do it, I am not good enough.”*)

So I turn back, look at the immense field and start walking.

Step by step. To the middle of it.

I sense inside, still there is that empty space, alone, but around it there is more softness and a ‘doing it’ feeling.

(*Gently integrating the new can-do-it experience.*)

I feel the soft grass under my bare feet, the warmth of the sun on my skin. Soothing.

A gentle wind caressing my hair. (*Inner supporting pillar.*)

Then I feel that I have walked enough and sit down. (*Resting point.*)

I look back and see the old man waving, smiling. (*Reassurance.*)

(*When the supporting, reassurance experience is filled enough the next step comes . . .*)

Then suddenly, my old study tutor appears. A large, big smiling woman. A mother from my elementary school. (*The one that found me outside the class room, on one of the many occasions I was sent out with the label “too stupid to learn”.*)

(*She sat with me and taught me patiently and lovingly how to do the calculations. She supported me and stood up for me against the whole school system. I was her first student. After me, many more came. She ended up founding a supporting system for ‘different’ kids with learning disabilities all over schools in Holland. She is the one who answers the previous question: Who can meet this need?*)

So there she is, right beside me, no, in front of me. Looking at me with a big smile. I would like to call her ‘mama’. (*Instead of my real mother, she feels more motherly to me at this moment.*)

Tears come ... (*The lacking experience.*)

Then I sense right in to her. Just feeling very vividly how her inner being has no doubt in my strength, or in my abilities, my beauty or intelligence. It is all just there. She just beams it out to me. (*Sensing and allowing the organism to experience fulfillment of the need as it should have been.*)

It is not a matter of belief, it is a certain knowing as a truth. (*Implicitly, no doubt.*)

She is holding my hands and just looking in to my eyes smiling.

A strong need to feel safe appears.

I crawl up onto her lap. She holds me in a big mothering way. I am totally hidden inside.

You can come here anytime you need to, she says. Wiping my tears and stroking my hair.

That feels like a real comfort.

I again feel her non-doubt in me, her total trust in me. Through her I see myself growing into a tall, confident, light woman. There is a feeling of lightness inside. (*Experiencing the filling in process as a true real, bodily experienced happening.*)

The empty space hasn't disappeared, but is less dense and less big. Far less. (*The first body shifts.*)

I give her a last hug and start walking back, no longer a child but as the **Woman I Am**.

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