

# "AM I PRESENT?"

## About Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

by Ilse Jakobovits, RN

This is a little chat today about our Mind, a little scrutiny, if you will, looking into the games it plays.

Hi everybody, are you all present?

Yes, I see you sitting here, but: "Are you **really** present?" Are you here with your thoughts? 100%? Or maybe a little less, lets say, 70%?

Don't you feel sometimes like having dozens of antennas sticking out your brain receiving and sending messages while you 'think' you are listening to someone, but at the same time having flashbacks of messages like: "Oh, I almost forgot to pay my gas bill today!" "It's Mary's birthday today and I need to call her!" "I have to run to the store before they close!" and the like, the list is endless.

So, again: "Are you present right now???" "How many are on automatic pilot?"

Close your eyes for a moment, please, and feel like being in these two situations. How did it feel?

Being present and aware of everything around us can give us harmony, stillness, consciousness, peace, etc. On automatic pilot we can be restless, unaware of our inside and our environment; we are daydreaming, analyzing, thinking and reacting to situations from our past, present or future, we are fidgety, etc.

In our Kinesiology work, as well as in most moments of our daily lives, it is so important "to be present". How can you be a good listener if you are not present during the work with your client? Sometimes it is difficult to stay present and being a good listener, but you can hardly learn about another person if you are scattered and busy with your own problems. If you have effective listening skills, you have an effective communication.

Up to six years of age a child is totally present or asleep, then it starts to become scattered. It

learns to numb out, it doesn't listen to what the Body and Mind are saying. How much do we numb out in our lives? Perhaps 90%? Why do we do this? Is it because of fear, pain, habit, avoidance, our brain makes up stories, etc. We might hear: "I don't want to talk about this right now", and the person closes the door of communication. The inner chatter continues, nevertheless, taking us to other places and times, away from present time

### **Exercise I:**

Let's try our 1st exercise:

Please, pair up in two's; one is the listener; the other one is the communicator (you have 2 minutes per side).

- a. The communicator tells you verbally about his/her life, both are paying attention to body language, details, etc. and at which point both face out.
- b. Did you listen all the time? 100%? 70%? Answer honestly.
- c. Why did you pay attention? (Listener).
- d. What engaged you in this conversation: expression, body language, excitement?
- e. Were you totally present while communicating?
- f. Or were you not because the listener was not listening? (Person is scattered).
- g. Were you boring, confusing, not organized? (Communicator). (Person is scattered).

Most of the time we are really not 100% present while listening or communicating. We listen more when there is some similarity in some aspects of the story with our own issues, like events, emotions, or because of the excitement, the body language, anything captivating of the person.

### **Exercise II**

You can switch partners. You can use the same story, but a different subject would be more interesting. (You have 2 min. per side). This time **the communication is non-verbal**, body language is ok.

- a. Find the difference in the engagement level.
- b. Was it easier to stay focused? (Eye contact).
- c. What was your Mind doing while listening? (Was it quieter, more vulnerable, a feeling like using radar to listen better, a better communication because you listen more to the feeling than the actual story, the story didn't matter, was there more intensity)
- d. At what point did you withdraw?
- e. Why? Was the emotion too intense?

### **Exercise III:**

Switch partners if you wish. Now feel an emotion, something that you can communicate, like love, joy, pain, anything that you can feel deeply. This time **the communication is non-verbal, no body language**. (3 min. per side).

- a. You might come to a point where you have to stop, because it feels like you are reaching a wall, you just can't continue, perhaps some feelings come up, like shame, guilt, panic, fear, so you become scattered, you avoid being present.
- b. Try to stay with the experience, don't stop – Be present – Feel it deep inside.
- c. Try to push through the wall – Be present – Don't run away from it – Stay relaxed.
- d. Push gently against that wall to find out what is behind it – Don't judge it. Just find your own sweetness.

This exercise is like a direct communication with our feelings. It's almost overwhelming to feel the intensity of the processing in the other

person. How much do we numb out, suppress, in our lives? Why? Can we avoid it?

Can we pick up if a person is scattered, besides detecting a glazed look?

Yes. Let's try it with the next exercise.

### **Exercise IV:**

Join in groups of 5 or 6 people. It is **non-verbal, no body language**.

#### **Eyes open:**

- a. Be present. Pay attention to how you behave, what you feel.
- b. Be scattered. Pay attention to how you behave, what you feel. Are you avoiding something?

#### **Eyes closed:**

- c. Be present and touch someone in the group. Is there intention, any feeling, did it mean something? Did you enjoy it?
- d. Maintain the touch and now scatter. Did the feelings change?
- e. Stay present and touch somebody else.
- f. Scatter and touch somebody else.
- g. Get feedback from both people involved.

When we communicate we want some contact, not only physical non-sexual, but on the mental and spiritual levels also. If we are 90% not present during the communication or scattered, just imagine when two scattered people get together! It means being 180% scattered!!!!

The final exercise is to give as many hugs as possible, and feel if you are more scattered with one or the other person. I am sure we will find only good huggers...

