

## **WHEN FEAR COMES UP DURING FLOOR WORK (YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY READ ALOUD "THE BODY DOESN'T LIE" AND "THE MIND")**

There is a difference between terror and fear. **TERROR** is a true warning from our body. "This could hurt me. I need to not do this." If you are moving slowly, you will always have the possibility in floor work of stopping the movement.

**FEAR**, however, is a message from our mind. It is often very useful. When it arises, during floor work, as a general feeling, or when discomfort or pain show up during a certain move, the understandable, useful, message can simply be "Pay attention, be careful, explore more slowly."

However, often, something else may be going on as well, something that may be helpful to consider. The fear may be related to what we believe this pain means for us in our life. What if it gets worse? What if it never goes away? What will it stop me from being able to do? How does this affect others in my life?

Or it may be fear about your movements creating more pain, now or in the future. Small slow exploration, based on basic functional movement, is safe, and often is the only way to improve chronic pain. "**Functional movement heals.**" And after the appropriate amount of time, when an injury is no longer acute, not moving a joint stops its healing. Also, often, we create further pain by our natural protective response. There is a way **we have learned** to tighten and constrict, trying to avoid pain or at least diminish it. This has become a constant and habitual response. We might just do this in advance of a particular movement or situation. In either case, pain is anticipated.

Or it may be related to a heavy judgment about ourselves, which keep certain parts of ourselves in contraction, and thus in pain.

Or it may be that our mind is using fear, in order to stop the exploration process, in order to not lose its control over the way things are now.

You can always choose to stop exploring any movement. However it may serve you, each time you have the experience of fear come up, if

you are willing, to ask yourself, "Is this anger, grief, sadness, feelings of loss, that may be underneath the fear, and is now being released? Is it an important emotional piece that has been trapped in my tissues, costing me a high price? Is this a time to breathe and feel, and not move, or keep moving slowly, staying present? Is this an opportunity to surrender to and fully experience, till it passes, the release of what has been trapped there, for perhaps a long time? Will staying present with this release those contracted areas that are squeezing down my blood supply, and preventing my ability to be energetically present, in those areas? Is this my mind's strategy to interrupt what is happening in the lesson because it knows the changes that may occur are going to result in some loss of its control?

The familiar is not your friend when you are trying to discover new pathways and new possibilities in moving. So, if you are willing, separate out what is mind-generated alarm, which can increase your pain, or what is unfamiliar discomfort, which feels possibly scary, from an actual clear experience that it does not serve you to continue moving in this direction, and then honor that..

Please remember, if you move very slowly, you are always at choice. You can nibble slowly around the edges of discomfort and continue to explore the unfamiliar.

Also please remember, pain is often in an area that contains pathways of movement that go through it. We have developed habitual ways of moving through those pathways that bring up pain. When we discover alternate pathways of movement that do not contain that history of pain, we reduce our pain. When we, at the same time, allow other areas in our body, connected to the painful area, to release their habitual, pain-causing, contraction and overwork, we give ourselves a very likely chance of eventually healing the pain altogether. And by our upgrading our whole body function, we are much more likely to avoid injury from dysfunctional use or overuse in the future.