

## Developing Your Heart's Internal Guidance

### Heart's Navigational System

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### D.I.G.S.

### First Practice for Developing the Skill in using your *Internal Guidance System* [IGS]

#### Feeling Tones

The Invitations often first arise into awareness through the feeling tones of the IGS. So this becomes not only a psychological but a Spiritual practice and skill.

To develop skill in using your IGS it is important to know more about the subtle bodily feeling tones that surround whatever you experience with an often faint feeling aura. Feeling tones are the visceral-emotional *meanings* that *implicitly* attend any situation: your thoughts, ideas, plans, projects, obligations, relationships with people and so on. Feeling tones are rich in the intelligence and implicit wisdom of the body, and when the mind gets aligned with this natural intelligence amazing shifts in perspective and perception can occur. The heart always implicitly communicates through the organismic *feeling tones*. It is important to keep in mind the difference between feeling tones and a felt-sense. A feeling tone about something is usually clear as soon as we notice it. A felt-sense is murky, unclear at first, and requires a little focusing on the felt sense for it to open and reveal its intricacy. With a feeling tone you know what it is about. With a felt-sense you must invite it to open. For now we are staying with feeling tones, later, in another discussion we will explore the practice of focusing on a felt-sense.

If you develop skill in noticing your feeling tones about anything or any situation, you will be able to know what the heart's doors are doing or saying with respect to them. The implications are right on the surface. The feeling tones are the signals that so often constitute the sense of organismic rightness or wrongness about some situation. Let's take a few minutes and do the 'first practice.' [\[i\]\[vii\]](#)

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#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FIRST PRACTICE

*You will need some quiet space and a journal and pen.*

Close your eyes and let yourself imagine or bring to mind someone you really care about and enjoy being with.

Once you have them clearly in mind, notice the feeling tones in the middle of your body. Ask yourself, where do I carry the feel of all about this person in my body. Notice how you carry the *feel* of all about this person, the sound of their voice, their manner of moving, the uniquely individual expressiveness of

their face, their various inner-personal qualities that you appreciate, and their idiosyncrasies. You may notice a stirring of feeling anywhere in your body, not just in the middle, but putting your attention there is a good place to begin.

Notice the quality of the feel of all that. There are no words for this feel, for these feeling tones in just noticing, accurately perceiving them with the bodily *feel*. Take a little time just to be with that feel, and hold it constant.

Take as much time as you need to be clear about the feel of this person as a whole, but without words. Then, keeping a hold on the bodily *feel* of this person while you *ask* some words to come that fit precisely this *feel*. Say them out loud or write them down in your journal.

**Sample journal entry:** *aunt Inez: I feel a low burning energy, chest softening, inward parts feel like cakes and ale, a stirring...my face smiling big now*

Now, keeping your eyes closed, let that person go and bring to mind or imagine someone who is difficult to be with, someone you are not comfortable around. Perhaps this is someone who annoys you, or painfully criticizes you, or perhaps you are not clear about why you don't want to be near them, but you just have a persistent sense that *you don't want to be around them*.

Once you have this person clearly in mind, notice the *feeling tones* in your body that come with...(whoever it is). Again, notice how you carry the *feel* of all about this person (the sound of their voice, their manner of moving, the uniquely individual expressiveness of their face, their various personal qualities that you find uncomfortable to endure or be with).

Notice the *quality* of the *feel* of all that. There are no words for this concreteness yet, for these feeling tones, just let yourself notice... without words. Take a little time just to be with that *feel*, and hold it constant as you get more acquainted with its presence (but without words).

When you feel ready, try to describe this feel in concrete words or images...If you have a journal, keep a hold on the bodily *feel* of this person while you *ask* some words to come that fit this *feel*. Take as much time as you need for the words to come.

**Sample journal entry:** *Jack. My stomach jumpy-jittery, spasmy, inward pressure, bracing, arms jerking, upper chest tightens, feels twisty..., compressing, shrinking in...*

Now allow yourself some time to move back and forth between the feel of the two people, noticing carefully the difference you feel in your organism, in your body, between the two people you chose to recall. Then write in your journal or say out loud some words that convey how the body carries the feeling tones of the caring person whom you like to be around, followed by some words that say out the implicit-meanings in the feeling tones of the person you wanted to back away from:

**Sample journal entry:** *The implicit meanings I carry in my body about aunt Inez: a feeling safety, ...of value, a sense of permission to be me...no..., not that exactly, ...it was more a sense that its good to be me. Ahh! That's it. A warm glow in my diaphragm that seems to say, "I'm so glad you are here."*

**Sample journal entry:** *The feel of all about Jack is distinctly different..... other kinds of words come and implicit meanings come about Jack: like invading..., intruding, defending, pulling back....Ahhhh,that's it! I fold up.... and jerk back in his presence, he seems intrusive, invasive.... Violating boundaries.*

In these examples the feeling tones also carry implicit meanings which have just surfaced a little after staying with the feel of what came in the body about these two people whom you brought to mind. They are at first unclear when we attend only on the feeling tones. In another place we will be discussing a more detailed method called 'focusing' for getting at the implicit meanings, but that is beyond the scope of this introduction. Let's just zero in on the 'feeling tones', for now, because through noticing them, paying more attention we already have a vital instrument, a kind of receiving device for listening to the heart as it speaks to us through the flesh. There are always feeling tones to any person, thing (or idea or plan), or situation we are dealing with. Feeling tones tend to be clear but not usually in the foreground of awareness. By bringing them into the foreground we have a clear channel of communication with the heart. In many instances, our actions require quick adjustments to the faintest physical signals, as when we are typing, playing in sports, dancing, making love, canoeing, jogging and so on. There is a fluidity of movement that doesn't require getting at the implicit meanings, only adjusting our action or behavior to the signals that are spontaneously arising with each movement we make. [\[ii\]](#)[ii][viii] It is the same with feeling tones. They can come like little signals that attend anything we are doing or considering doing. Attention to them can help us adjust our choices and actions in ways that honor the heart.

In general feeling tones will either be affirming (organismic rightness) and suggest that we are moving in accord with the heart's invitations or desires with respect to this person, thing, or situation, or they will be negative (organismic wrongness), suggesting that we are moving away from the heart's invitation or desire with respect to this person, thing, or situation. Failure to pay attention to the feeling tones can sometimes get us into trouble. For example I once hired a woman who was strongly recommended by a friend and colleague of mine. I so trusted this friend and colleague that I ignored the significance of my own feeling tones about the woman applying for the job. My body felt jittery, tight, and pulling back,

and in effect was saying “*There is something uncomfortable about the idea of hiring her.*” Yet I trusted the recommendation, which is to say, I followed the mind and ignored my own heart and its bodily feeling tones. This turned out to be disastrous in consequence. I learned the meaning of the old expression: “*Ah...I knew it in my heart all along, I wish I would have listened!*” Living from the heart requires that we give careful consideration to these feeling tones, going deeply into them if necessary, in order to understand, and better evaluate the possibility we are considering.

Probably all of us, or most of us, have noticed and used the feeling tones from time to time, but haphazardly or accidentally. With this first practice, which you just did by bringing these two types of people to mind, you now have a little map for how to go there intentionally anytime you want, and in any situation that is arising. When you use the feeling tones like this, you are using them as a signal or indicator system, the heart’s IGS. Poets and religious authorities have often considered the heart to be a feeler. It is, but this is not a precise enough statement. The heart is highly intelligent, has its own consciousness, its own deep directing wisdom, and is highly purposeful in its expression. Its capacity to feel is not simply emotions, but feeling tones which embody implicit meanings that are not yet conceptualized by the mind and which come along with the fact that the heart is intricately interlaced with the bodily organism. The feeling tones operate like the old biblical ‘bowels’ the instinctual-feeling centers of ancient biblical psychology, and those bowels and the viscera like the liver were considered to be intricately intertwined with the ‘heart.’ The wise person was one who consulted these inward parts upon which conscience and the Spirit of God moved.

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