

DEFINITION (Presence)

Begin standing with feet at hip width apart – feet parallel, knees soft. The feet, ankles, knees, hips, ribs and shoulders are all in alignment – stacked naturally. Allow the head to float on a long neck. Close eyes to focus internally. Breathe deeply into the pelvic area. Feel soles of feet connecting with the earth for stability.

Take a moment to breathe.

Visualize the form of the whole body in space. Have a 360-degree awareness of your “edges”, sensing where skin meets air or clothing and mentally defining your shape. Breathe deeply, filling this shape evenly as though inflating a balloon and energize the presence of this shape in space.

Bring the focus to the HEAD. Breath into the head, energizing its presence.

Become aware of the sculptural form of the curves of the skull, facial features, ears and neck – take time to make this survey.

Now take this “sculpture” and gradually begin to maneuver it, beginning with seeing how far back and forward your anatomical structure will allow, then side to side. Carry this “head sculpture” through a variety of angles, redefining its form in space with every increment of motion.

Activate the FACE – animating the individual features. Exaggerate opening and closing the eyes, looking in different directions, opening the mouth, pursing the lips, sticking out the tongue – again, treat this part of the body as a plastic sculpture and investigate it’s modeling potential.

After this exploration, relax back into a neutral position and breath.

Next move down to the SHOULDERS. Use the breath to bring an internal sense of expansion of the shoulders into the surrounding space, become intensely aware of the definition of their shape. Begin to manipulate this shape and it’s relationship with space, allowing the head, neck and upper body enough pliability to facilitate the motion, while keeping the focus of presence in the shoulders only.

Repeat with the same intention focusing on the CHEST and then the SHOULDER BLADES. As these parts of the body are connected in counterpoint, of course it is impossible to manipulate them independently – however, the focus of presence and definition can be placed solely in one or the other. Visualizing the distinct shape of that one area (e.g. chest) and slowly shifting its form in relationship to space.

Always return to a neutral position and take a breath before placing the focus in a new part of the body.

Now the HANDS. The hands and fingers are probably the most versatile body parts in terms of potential for variations of shape. Try not to get too carried away with this “can of worms” – maintain the concept of creating strong, energetic

presence, focus and definition of the form in its relationship to space, while exploring its complexities.

Release tension from the hands before bringing the focus to the ARMS.

Again, for the purpose of this exercise, it is more important to keep the focus on inviting the breath in to energize and define a simple form in space than to become an "octopus" in an attempt to wildly experiment with all the possibilities! Allow enough give in surrounding areas to facilitate all pathways of the arms through space.

We are so familiar with constant utility functions of the hands and arms – give yourself time to shed this association and allow them to become energized sculptures.

Bring the focus down to the RIB CAGE – this can literally be inflated by the breath, as it houses the lungs! Again, visualize the entire 360-degree form as it exists in space and gradually explore manipulating that entity.

From here, take a breath, release and move on to focus on the BACK. Breathe into the back, define its presence as a sculptural form in space.

Release into a neutral stance before repeating this whole process in the PELVIS.

As with the rib cage, the pelvis is to be visualized as a 360-degree form – breath deeply into the center of the pelvic area and keep the form of its whole structure in the mind's eye.

Now down to the FEET and LEGS. Isolate each foot, using a wall or other support to balance if desired. As the feet are "all the way down there", it can take more focus to connect with an internal sense of their form. Use the image of breathing into the feet as if expanding a balloon. Then continue to define each foot's presence in space and energize its shape.

After this, plant both feet on the floor to establish the total form of BOTH LEGS in relationship to space and ground. From here, each leg can be defined as a separate entity as well as acknowledging their interdependent relationship.

As the focus shifts from one part of the body to another, make sure to take a moment to return to a neutral state within the whole body, breathe and release tension from the last area of focus before moving on to the next.

At the end, return to the visualization of the whole body as a powerful form and presence defined in space and acknowledge that this in itself is complete.

INTENTIONS:

This exercise serves to guide the performer away from a "self-conscious" cognizance of the shape of the self-body and into a more objective sense of their presence as a sculptural form in space. This allows a full ego-less embrace of the potential power in the raw material of the human form alone – before any action has even taken place. It enforces a sense of defining one's edges, the surface tension of the skin. It is about finding a powerful place of existence and presence via definition of form. The creative aspect of exploring shapes is comparatively superfluous – it is only this sense of presence and definition that will give them any integrity.