

The Somatic Enneagram

SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL | WISDOM
SCHOOL

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Welcome Back!

CENTERING PRACTICE

GROUND IN TENDERNESS (Type 8)	SETTLE INTO YOUR BELONGING (Type 4)
AWAKEN TO ALIVENESS (Type 9)	EMBODY INNER ABUNDANCE (Type 5)
SOFTEN INTO EASE (Type 1)	TRUST INNER SAFETY (Type 6)
FLOW WITH RECIPROCITY (Type 2)	SAVOR PRESENT JOY (Type 7)
REST IN BEING (Type 3)	

THE INNER OBSERVER

A Witnessing Awareness That Softens Type Pattern

- Noticing without fixing.
- Presence instead of performance.

INTRODUCING THE INNER OBSERVER

The Inner Observer is the part of us that can notice our:

- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Sensations

without being swept away by them.

It is:

- Quiet
- Steady
- Neutral
- Present

“WHO IS THE YOU THAT NOTICES YOU?”

When I feel anxious...

Who is the one who notices my chest tightening?

When I react to someone...

Who is the one who quietly says, “Ah — there I go again”?

This capacity to observe is the beginning of transformation.

KEY INSIGHT

The Inner Observer
is not just awareness —
it is awareness with kindness and curiosity.

WHY CURIOSITY MATTERS

Curiosity keeps us open.

Without curiosity, awareness often turns into:

- Self-critique
- Analysis / overthinking
- Shutting down / disconnecting

THREE TRADITIONS, ONE EXPERIENCE

Enneagram: Inner Observer

Somatics: Empathic Witness

Christian Contemplative Tradition: Indwelling Holy Spirit

Different languages for the same loving presence.

THE INNER OBSERVER COULD BE DEFINED AS

An awake, compassionate awareness that can
see without judging,
hold without fixing,
and stay present in the middle of our inner storms.

ENNEAGRAM TEACHING

Awareness itself is the doorway to change

ENNEAGRAM TEACHING

Helen Palmer- “witnessing consciousness “

Marion Gilbert- “Awareness derived from a neutral position — no opinion, no judgment.”

ENNEAGRAM TEACHING

The Inner Observer:

- Helps us see type patterns in real time
- Loosens the grip of automatic behavior
- Creates choice
- → Choice is the birthplace of freedom.

“Trauma is not what happens to us; it’s what we hold inside in the absence of an empathic witness.”

Peter Levine

Healing happens when we are safely seen.

SOMATIC TEACHING

In Somatic Work: The Empathic Witness

- One part of us feels what's happening
- Another part of us witnesses with compassion

This is called **dual awareness**.

We don't fix.

We stay.

We get curious.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING

Richard Rohrer-

“Soul, consciousness, and the Holy Spirit can be thought of as the same thing — the stable witness within.”

Rohrer even calls the Spirit the Compassionate Observer, the Inner Anointing, the Always-Already Awareness.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING

“The Spirit bears witness with our spirit...” — Romans 8:16

The witness is not something we create.

It is something **we return to.**

You are never witnessing alone.

TRAUMA-INFORMED LENSE

The Inner Observer can go offline when we are:

- Overwhelmed
- Activated
- Shutdown
- Dissociated

This is not failure — it is protection.

When we cannot observe ourselves,
we borrow another's nervous system.

We are not analyzing
ourselves today.

We are witnessing
ourselves with kindness.

“We don’t change the
pattern by force.

We soften the pattern by
staying present to it.”

QUESTION ONE

Which description of the Inner Observer resonated most with you — the Enneagram's Inner Observer, the Somatic Empathic Witness, or the Christian language of the Indwelling Spirit?

Why do you think that one felt most natural to you?

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QUESTION TWO

When you think about your own life, can you think of a moment where you were able to notice yourself instead of reacting automatically?

WHAT IS SOMATIC AWARENESS?

Somatic Awareness =

Noticing what is happening in the body as it is happening.

It is:

- Direct experience
- Not conceptual
- Not analytical

We don't think our way into new patterns —

We sense our way into them.

THE FOUR CAPACITIES WE USE

To work somatically, we rely on:

1. **Inner Observer** — noticing with compassion
2. **Grounded Presence** — stability in the body
3. **Felt Sense** — what the body knows
4. **Resourcing & Regulation** — enough safety to stay

We move slowly. Layer by layer.

INNER OBSERVER + GROUNDED PRESENCE

The Relationship

The Inner Observer sees.

Grounded Presence supports.

Inner Observer → Clarity

Grounded Presence → Stability

Together, they create a safe internal container.

WHAT GROUNDED PRESENCE FEELS LIKE

When grounded presence is active:

- Breath deepens
- Jaw softens
- Belly has room
- Nervous system settles

When it's lost:

- Breath gets shallow
- Shoulders lift or brace
- Attention moves into the head
- We rush, collapse, numb, or push

Grounded presence isn't calm —It's capacity.

GROUNDING BY CENTER

Different centers ground differently:

- Body Types (8/9/1): weight / gravity / contact
- Heart Types (2/3/4): softening across the chest
- Head Types (5/6/7): dropping awareness into the belly

Grounding is not achieved —**It is returned to.**

INTRODUCING THE FELT SENSE

Term from Eugene Gendlin

Healing correlates with the ability to:

Pause → Turn inward → Sense what's true inside
before forming language.

The Felt Sense is:

- The body's meaning
- A whole situation forming inside
- Vague or fuzzy at first
- Atmospheric, not conceptual

EVERYDAY FELT SENSE EXAMPLES

- “Butterflies in my stomach”
- “A lump in my throat”
- “My stomach dropped”
- “My chest feels full”

Not metaphors —

The body speaking.

We don’t push or interpret.

We stay.

SIBAM

| S | Sensation | What is felt in the body |

| I | Imagery | Any impression or picture |

| B | Behavior / Impulse | Movement the body wants to make |

| A | Affect | Emotional tone present |

| M | Meaning | What reveals itself from the body |

Meaning is not forced.

Meaning unfolds.

Transformation happens
in the space between
stimulus and response.

This is where the
personality softens
and the soul remembers
its freedom.

A Somatic Practice

RESOURCING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

How We Stay Present to Our Own Transformation

Discomfort is not the enemy.

Being alone inside discomfort is.

WHY RESOURCING MATTERS

Transformation requires presence.

But presence requires safety the body can feel.

When things get hard, the nervous system asks:

“Do I have enough support to stay here?”

Resourcing builds the support that allows us to stay.

ACTIVATION AND CAPACITY

When we encounter discomfort, the nervous system may shift into:

- Fight — pushing, controlling
- Flight — anxiety, urgency
- Freeze — collapse, numbness
- Fawn — self-abandon for connection

We are not removing activation.

We are increasing capacity to stay connected while activation is here.

WINDOW OF PRESENCE

The Window of Tolerance = our capacity range where we can feel and stay present.

Too much intensity → overwhelm.

Too little → numbness.

Resourcing expands the window.

WHAT ARE RESOURCES?

Resources are anything that:

- Helps us stay with our experience
- Prevents discomfort from becoming the only thing we feel
- Allows us to remain in relationship with ourselves

Resources don't eliminate pain.

They hold us while we feel it.

INTERNAL RESOURCES

Support that lives within the body:

- A grounded breath that feels supportive (not forced)
- Felt sense of belonging or connection
- Awareness of boundaries or center
- A spiritual presence that is experienced, not just believed

Internal resources develop over time.

External resources help us build internal ones.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Support from outside our body:

- A person who helps us regulate
- Community or shared presence
- Nature, ritual, music, touch
- Environments that feel familiar or safe

External resources teach the body:

“I am not alone.”

THEOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

Christian Contemplative Tradition:

- Breath prayers
- Silence
- Communal worship
- Blessing and shared ritual
- The body as sacred dwelling of God

These practices were always resourcing practices —

They taught us how to stay with God and ourselves in difficulty.

GLIMMERS

Glimmers = micro-moments when the nervous system recognizes safety.

They may be:

- Warmth
- Light
- A familiar scent
- A softening in the chest
- A quiet exhale

Small. Ordinary. Powerful.

The nervous system maps safety in tiny increments.

ANCHORS OF SAFETY

Anchors are repeatable supports we return to when activation rises.

Anchors do not stop discomfort.

They strengthen our capacity to **stay inside our experience** without abandoning ourselves.

THE AIM

We are not trying to:

- Calm down
- Fix
- Override
- Make discomfort go away

We are learning to:

- Stay
- Feel
- Support our nervous system
- Remain connected

Presence is the site of transformation.

Thank you!
