



# TEN CENTERING PRACTICES

To help you gain clarity and confidence to  
create the life you truly desire

**“There’s a center of quietness within you. If you lose that center,  
you are in tension and begin to fall apart.”**

~ Joseph Campbell



## Introduction

Developing the ability to center yourself may be the most significant step you can take in supporting your ability to move forward in creating what you really want in life.

When we are centered, we are aware of what is happening in the present moment in an open and non-reactive way. Being centered helps us see things clearly, navigate challenging situations, and make decisions that are aligned with our core values. We feel more alive, curious, patient, intuitive and energized.

When we are off-center, we are more easily stressed, defensive, worried, anxious and distracted. These emotional states lead to a sense of disconnection with ourself, what's most important to us, and the people we care about. This directly impacts our relationships, health, and ultimately our self confidence and sense of fulfillment.

When we are off-center it can be easy to believe that this is the only way of being and perceiving the world. In reality, it is possible to reconnect with our center at any moment.

### **So, how do we get centered?**

First, recognize when you're off-center. This is often the most difficult step. Second, shift back to center using one of many possible approaches or practices.

In this guide, I've included ten practices to support you in returning to your center. I encourage you to keep an open mind, experiment with the practices, and have fun with the process!

It would be my pleasure to support you in accessing the clarity and confidence to create more of what you really want in life. Connect with me on social media or visit [www.scottcaspell.com](http://www.scottcaspell.com) to book a complimentary coaching session.





## 1) Fingers Touching

Sit straight with your hands in your lap. Allow your shoulders to relax as you take a deep breath. If it is comfortable, close your eyes. Gently touch your finger tips together with a gentle pressure so that each finger touches the corresponding finger on the other hand.

Move your fingers slowly and continuously so you can feel every groove and indent as you rub them together. Focus intently on the sensations of your fingers touching. Continue for a minute or more. Afterwards, what do you notice?

Exercises like this strengthen the part of your brain that controls empathy, curiosity and decision making. See [www.positiveintelligence.com](http://www.positiveintelligence.com) for more research-based tools and practices to strengthen this part of your brain.

## 2) Shifting Awareness

Get comfortable. Take a deep breath and let it out with a sigh. Do this exercise several times, going slowly and smoothly through the steps.

Remain still. Notice everything within your field of view. Without moving your head, slowly shift your attention from in front of you towards your peripheral vision on both sides at once. Go slowly and keep your head still. Little by little, continue to shift your attention further into your peripheral vision. Once you reach the edge of your peripheral vision, gradually continue sending your attention backwards out of sight, allowing your other senses to fill in the gaps of awareness. Continue until you have completed 360 degrees of your perspective.

Afterwards, what do you notice? Has anything shifted in your awareness?





### 3) Diaphragmatic Breathing

The following three breathing exercises can help you get centered, lower your stress levels, reduce your blood pressure, and regulate your nervous system.

Sit or stand straight, relax your shoulders. Place one hand on your stomach, and the other hand on your chest. Breathe in fully through your nose, feeling your belly rise. Exhale slowly for four seconds through your mouth. Repeat for five to ten rounds.

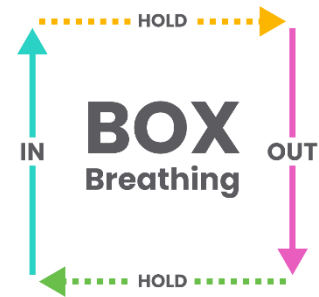
### 4) Box Breathing

**Step 1:** Breathe in through your nose counting to four.

**Step 2:** Hold your breath for a count of four.

**Step 3:** Exhale through your mouth, counting to four.

**Step 4:** Hold your breath for a count of four.



Repeat this cycle five times, or up to five minutes.

This is an effective exercise used by Navy Seals for balance, regulation, and centering.

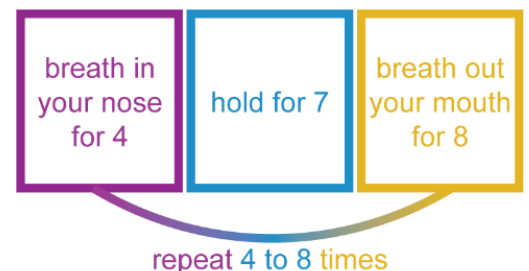
### 5) 4-7-8 Breathing

**Step 1:** Inhale through your nose for a count of four.

**Step 2:** Hold your breath for a count of seven.

**Step 3:** Exhale through your mouth through pursed lips for a count of eight.

Repeat this cycle four times minimum.





## 6) Body Awareness – Feet, Hands & Face

Start seated, with your eyes closed, if that is comfortable.

### **Step 1: Bring your attention to your feet.**

What sensations are available for you? How does it feel to be grounded and connected to the earth? Rest here for 30-60 seconds, feeling all the sensations in your feet.

### **Step 2: Bring your attention to your hands.**

What sensations are available in your hands? How would it feel to handle yourself and your day ahead with care and compassion? Rest here for 30-60 seconds, feeling all the sensations available in your hands.

### **Step 3: Bring your attention to your head.**

Feel your eyes, cheeks, lips and scalp. Curiously feel and explore all the sensations available in your face. How would it feel to see and face the day ahead with care and compassion? Rest here for 30-60 seconds, feeling all the sensations available.

## 7) 5-3-1 Back to your Senses

Notice five things you can see. Identify each thing out loud or silently in your head. Pause to observe each of the 5 items completely for a breath or two.

Next, notice three things you can feel in your body: sensations, pressure points, hot or cold air against the skin, etc. Rest your attention with each sensation for a few breaths.

Lastly, name one thing you can hear, perhaps the quietest or most subtle. Listen intently for a few moments as you become focused and present with the sound.



## 8) Visualize Yourself as a Child

If you are feeling frustrated, upset, or impatient, go through these steps:

**Step 1:** How am I feeling right now – centered or off-center?

**Step 2:** Am I willing to shift back to center?

That is, can I accept the circumstances and change my perspective?

You may be unwilling, and that's ok. Be honest with yourself.

**Step 3:** Visualize yourself as a child.

Close your eyes and visualize yourself as a child in a setting where your true essence is shining through. Select a vivid image that easily activates feelings of empathy. Allow this image to foster compassion for yourself to help soften your inner critic.

## 9) Heart Centering

**Step 1:** Focus your attention in the center of your chest. With each breath, continue to hold your awareness in in your chest.

**Step 2:** Begin to breathe a little slower and deeper than usual. Inhale for 4 seconds through your nose, exhale for 6 seconds through pursed lips, or adjust to a more comfortable rhythm.

**Step 3:** As you breathe, focus on something you are grateful for in your life. Allow your feelings of appreciation to expand and permeate your chest and body with each breath. Continue for at least 5 breaths, or up to 5 minutes if that feels inviting.

Positive feelings, such as gratitude, help calm your nervous system for clearer thinking and effective decision-making. Check out [HeartMath.org](http://HeartMath.org) for more practices and research relating to the heart-brain connection.



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## 10) Tense & Relax

This is an exercise that progressively tenses and relaxes muscle groups throughout your body. You will tense each muscle group intensely, yet without straining, and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscles relax. If you have any pain or discomfort at any part of your body, feel free to skip that area. Keep breathing normally throughout the exercise.

Find a comfortable position either sitting or lying down. Take several deep breaths. As you exhale, imagine any tension you may have being released and exiting your body.

**Face:** tighten, scrunch and squeeze all the muscles in your face and forehead. Hold for about 10 seconds, then release and feel the tension dissipate. Smile softly as you notice and appreciate the sensations in your face.

**Upper Body:** clench your fists and tighten all the muscles of your upper body, including your arms, shoulders, and abdomen. Hold for about 10 seconds, then release, feeling the tension leave your body. Notice how you feel.

**Lower Body:** tighten all the muscles of your lower body, including your buttocks, thighs, calves and feet. Hold for about 10 seconds, then release. Notice how you feel.

**Whole Body:** clench and tighten all the muscles in your body at once. Hold for about 10 seconds, then release. Take a few breaths.

How do you feel? What stands out to you? Observe the sensations available throughout your body.







## **Tips for maintaining your center**

### **Develop a baseline for what your center feels like.**

Get to know what it looks and feels like for you to be centered or off-center. It can be helpful to occasionally rate yourself on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being completely off-center and 10 being completely centered.

### **Regularly assess what state you are in.**

For many of us, knowing how to center ourselves is not the challenge, it's remembering to do it. Set reminders for yourself. Make it a habit to tune in to how you are feeling.

### **Find and embrace a regular centering practice.**

Recognize what helps you get centered. There are many activities that could work for you, such as time in nature, martial arts, playing a musical instrument, yoga, qi gong, tai chi, wood working, gardening or meditation. Just knowing how to center is not enough. It is a skill. And like any skill, it gets easier with time.

### **Be curious and experiment.**

It is likely that certain practices will feel more natural and be more effective for you. Even so, remain curious and try each exercise several times under different circumstances to see what you can discover. I encourage you to keep an open mind, experiment with the practices, and have fun with the process.

Are you finding it easier to connect with your center?

Connect with me on social media or visit [www.scottcaspell.com](http://www.scottcaspell.com) to let me know what worked, what doesn't, and any other feedback you may have.

