

Choosing to Center into Connection with Love and Gratitude During 'Crisis' / “Less Than Lovely External” - Why One Might Make this Choice and “How” One Might Do It by Joy Holland

You may apply this practice to any crisis or moment you receive in news that you don't love or understand, as well as any time your faith wavers.....

I share my practice with you, not because it's 'best' but because it works for me and for many clients whom I have customized it for.

I am known for my ability to peacefully move through external while keeping my heart open and celebrating the blessing (even in what some might call 'poop'). As you read, I ask that you consider what is being presented, explore what resonates and release what doesn't.

Full Presence and Centering

The idea of centering into full presence is to bring your energy, attention, awareness and intention into this moment of now.

We choose what energy we center into but, whatever we call it, the base is **connection**.

I choose to call that connection 'love and gratitude' and I choose to center into these energies as the foundation for my life.

When we choose to center into love and gratitude, our focus and attention is on ...love and gratitude – this is what we are feeling, being, cultivating. Meaning....in those moments, *we are not feeling*: fear, doubt, regret, uncertainty....

Centered into love and gratitude, we may naturally draw energies that support healing and growth into our space and into the moment and experience – without changing external. These energies include, but are not limited to: forgiveness, grace, peace, joy, possibility, abundance, whole body wellness, calmness, patience, trust and courage.

You will see the word 'naturally' quite often in my work. Naturally means it is a process that will happen without direction from us *and* also means that (when we honor the process) there is ease, peace and joy **inherent within it**.

Practices of Presence

My entire life is a practice of presence. So, each action, breath, thought and feeling could be considered a practice of presence.

However, when we want to explore fullness of presence, and centering into that fullness, there are many different practices to choose from – some as simple as taking a breath, others requiring external resources as well as knowledge of a technique to complete.

I recommend choosing practices that feel good to you and that resonate well with your learning style, beliefs and ways of moving through world. (Because when they feel good, you will use them and when they resonate well you are more likely to explore depth and fullness with them.)

The practices I use consistently (daily) are: gratitude, silence, breathwork, chakra work, journaling, meditating, hours spent in nature each day, prayer, laughter, some sort of physical movement like yoga or dance, drumming, singing/chanting, candle ritual, crystal work, rituals to tap in the natural elements and time spent with loved ones and people who inspire me.

Initial “Space” of Crisis and Reflections about Awareness and Labeling

When I am in a space of 'crisis' – I first ensure my physical safety, then I invite love in while taking a cleansing breath and *then* I work through my practices of presence to move energy and open my heart space internally.

Please note: part of this process I am going to share with you is *to be fully aware* of what you are physically in, as far as it's being presented to you - to be physically safe. So, it might be that you need to first remove your physical body from whatever you are in and then process the energy. I am not at all advocating staying in what might be labeled a dangerous or harmful space.

Please also remember, as you process what I am sharing, that I have been practicing presence for 16 years – it is my way of being, what I do each day, throughout each day. I am learning daily to center further, because my goal is to keep my heart open - always centered into connection with Source. I shy away from offering my personal practices as a reference point, because I understand how radical they might seem, dependent upon where you are on your path. I am offering this practice for you to think about and feel into, and - if it resonates with you - to customize it *according to your experience and beliefs*.

As an example, I personally don't label external 'good' or 'bad' unless I am speaking with someone who requires that context to understand. I move through my day (and world) intuitively, completely dependent upon energetic resonance. So, I might find myself in what some might call 'dark' spaces full of shadow, one: because I find those spaces interesting and relevant to understand for fullness of presence and two: because I am not afraid to be in them and am very aware of where I am and the physical and energetic dynamics, as I move through it. (Again, I am always learning, it's what I love to do.

I use concepts such as foundation work, sacred containers, energetic intention, resonance and boundaries as I move my body (and energy) through my day.

When processing the presence of external variables, I immediately turn my attention inward to see why and how I drew such energy into my space, as I center and move through the experience.)

I don't 'blame' external for what is being presented.

I hold the belief that there are natural cycles and I learn about them so that I may understand and honor them. As I do inner work, external will shift and I honor each stage of that process. People are accountable for their actions, yes – and I also understand the dynamics of energy movement, patterning, and presence so ultimately I hold myself accountable for what is in my space.

How do I label then? I tap into the feel of energetic resonance. If something feels very non-resonant, *or* is new/unfamiliar/I don't yet have an understanding of it, I might feel extremely vulnerable. (That vulnerability *is often a sign to me* that I am in new/unfamiliar physical or energetic space.)

At this stage of my life, my mind no longer naturally thinks 'burden/blessing' – the natural thought is resonant, hmmm maybe not so resonant. For me, the challenge is in the depth of vulnerability I feel, and the 'readiness' I feel to open my heart to connect through it.

The question many people ask me is how I practice centering, even when I am unexpectedly handed (or find myself in) less than lovely external, drama, or am in the midst of losing material or heart connections that are meaningful and dear. How do I keep feeling so peaceful, connected, and grateful for life, even in a moment when external doesn't seem to support the experience?

Again, the label we apply to an external variable often carries it's own energy and associations with it. So, if we think something 'is horrible', it might *energetically make it more challenging* for us to move through than if we think '*this is new and different, how shall I remain centered and weave love into this?*'.

So, my immediate thought, then, is 'wow, I feel ultra-vulnerable and I'm not sure I know how to open my heart through this, show me how.' (That thought automatically energetically opens the door to possibility, even if myself or another can neither see nor feel the possibility in the moment.)

Within Fear and Vulnerability, Our Body Naturally Reacts

When we feel vulnerable or afraid, our body naturally reacts. It doesn't matter how long one has been practicing presence, or how centered one is, their body will have a reaction. *What differs is the feeling of the reaction and the effect that reaction has on their subsequent choices.*

When my body reacts, I take the time to acknowledge that. Sometimes my body's reaction is the signal that I am in new / unfamiliar / vulnerable physical or energetic space. Noticing that reaction is my sign to center deeper into full presence.

When we hold space for our body's natural reaction, it will eventually, on its own, unfold to peace. The challenge is – and the pain happens – when we don't like the feeling of the reaction and we quickly build a barrier or judge, numb, or deflect it...that stops the process.

If the barrier or judgment remains, it blocks energetic flow. Whenever the numbing, avoiding, deflecting stops (which could take moments, months, years) – we *then* either resume processing and healing from that point or create a barrier.

Something to consider: everything that happens *before* we resume processing and healing is 'holding pain' which creates a barrier. We hear that phrase a lot 'holding pain.'

The choice to erect a barrier, or judge, numb, avoid, deflect a feeling or healing process *is also the choice to hold pain.* One can understand then, to release that pain requires awareness, feeling and processing and healing. (And, if we have made a past choice to hold onto pain, we can also choose to currently release it by beginning this process.)

Please note: One might also understand that, energetically if you are holding pain, yet attempting to manifest in 'more than previously before' (in regards to tangible or energetic manifestation) *or* re-pattern or shift internal energy, that barrier will prevent you from drawing in fullness of the experience – it has nothing to do with your understanding of, or skill in, manifesting and re-patterning and

everything to do with the resonance of holding pain.

Holding Space for the Physical Reaction

Learning to hold space for the reaction invites peace and possibility into the moment. When you understand the reaction, while it might be potentially uncomfortable, *it no longer holds bearing on the choices you make*. Your body can react, while your energy remains centered.

Meaning, you can simultaneously be in physical reaction as you choose to center into connection with Source energy / peace / love / gratitude / joy.

Let's pause for a moment, here. I am not at all saying any of this is 'easy' or painless (although it can be).

I am saying that we have choices, and one of those choices is to react with fear and allow that reaction to redirect our presence/energy/attention/intention *or* to center into creation with love and gratitude (or whatever energies support centering) as we move through the 'less than lovely' external.

Holding space for the reaction (or anything) is honoring the unfolding, without adding to it or judging it.

Please note: Again, your physical safety (as well as energetic, spiritual, emotional safety) comes first. So, if your physical reaction requires medical attention, that could be part of the unfolding of the experience. Please be aware of what your being needs and is asking for as you move through your experience.

Centering Into Source Connection

While I am holding space for the reaction to unfold, I am doing so with as much compassion and kindness as I can muster, while centering into source connection.

I understand it's a time when many people disconnect from source and/or are unkind with themselves, so maybe that sounds radical. Because I have been practicing presence so consistently, and so long, when my body naturally reacts, *part of that base reaction is to naturally center into a point of connection* - wherever I am. I no longer think about it, it just happens that I center into connection. That means I quickly look for the light in the room while I take a deep breath and call in energies such as grace, trust and courage. (For me, this now happens right along with the physical reaction – there is no longer a separation in my process.)

This is the time to fully 'plug into' anything that amplifies your faith, trust and courage and to unplug from anything that amplifies your fear, doubt, uncertainty, discomfort.

When your body is in reaction mode, sometimes you might crave food. This is the time to feel into your true hunger – it's usually not about food, but about some sort of connection, as well as an attempt to numb internal pain while increasing temporary joy. If you find you truly are hungry for food, please make sure you eat something that will support your intention to center into full presence and connection (and if you do eat something heavy, simply be kind with yourself and keep centering).

When your being is processing this vulnerable state, you might experience a myriad of feelings –

including anger, rage, doubt, disgust, self-judgment, sorrow, grief, fear.

Please allow yourself to feel all that arises within, while holding space for the feeling to unfold into peace. The challenge is *to neither judge yourself for the feeling and to not act upon those feelings* – to simply give them ample room and time to unfold.

Your focus is on making sure your physical body is as comfortable as possible as the feelings arise and unfold and that you are continuing to center, regardless of what feeling arises. And, as you become experienced with this, you may also focus on weaving those feelings into creative expression and allowing them to inspire you in some way (yes, sometimes especially while your body is in reactive mode – but again, that's for when you have learned to hold space).

When my body is in reactive mode, I try to put myself in physical spaces that inspire me and/or feel sacred to me. I feel 'supported by Source' in such spaces, so the connection is naturally amplified and that helps to calm my body's reaction as well as supports my intention to center. (Again, this might be radical to you – many withdraw during vulnerability, and I understand that as part of the reaction.)

Timing of Asking for External Support

For me, personally, when in the beginning stages of physical reaction and/or fresh stages of feeling vulnerable, if I'm going to ask for external support from another, I make sure they are faith-filled and hold beliefs of peace and possibility.

Otherwise, I wait to ask for support until the physical reaction has waned and the vulnerability feels a bit more comfortable.

The logic and energy behind this is that sometimes when we are in crisis and we share even minimal details with people, they might feel and see the things to 'be afraid about' (even if their intention is to support and love you). Their reaction will only amplify your own.

For example, when one of my children was ill and I was asking for prayer, some people reacted to the details of the illness and expressed their own worries - instead of simply offering prayer. This is common and I am not judging people – I am explaining why *sometimes it's best to use discernment about who you choose to share with and at what stage of your experience you choose to ask for support.*

Just keep plugging into source and ask to be given physical support of what you know to be energetically true. For example, I believe in angelic energy and guides so, as I am plugging in, I ask to 'be shown physical presence of angelic energy in clear, easy to receive and process ways'.

Eventually, the reaction calms - sometimes it takes moments, sometimes hours....and I feel ultra-centered and peaceful again....even though external didn't change. At that point, I ask for external energy and support.

I direct that external energy and support to keep my heart open and to amplify courage and trust for any physical changes I need to make and/or any external patterning I'd like to release/re-pattern. (I also direct external energy and support temporarily to the love and care of my children because that brings me the extra peace of mind, knowing they are held by Universe while I am processing whatever I am moving through.)

When Uncertainty and Doubt Arise

There is usually a point during this processing of 'crisis' when mind begins to 'what if'.

Instead of shutting down the 'projections', I use a practice of presence to dissolve the power the 'what if's' have over me. (For example writing it all out, then ripping it up and throwing it away). It's kind of like holding onto pain – if you ignore or judge the 'projections' they can become a barrier – processing them dissolves the power they have over your choices.

Because my intention is always to keep my heart open, when the 'what if's' happen, my question/invocation is always 'how can I be love in this/show me how to be love in this, I invite love into this.’’

I center deeper into my practices of presence, connection, faith *and then* I entertain 'what if' as it arises, like this “okay, what if...then show me how to be love, move through it with love, experience the blessing in it all.”

Understanding Patterning and Placement of the Crisis

The main idea in all of this is to keep centering into love while holding space for your physical reaction.

The time to do the bulk of the work to understand your own patterning and the reason the external was placed, as well as to make external changes to enhance resonance and alignment with your inner core being, is *not* while you are directly in the crises.

It's best to wait until you have moved through the bulk of the experience and are centered into creative mode before you do the inner work around it all.

Please remember, in the midst of the crises, the focus is on centering, self-care and self-compassion, and centering some more.

Concentrating on, and Celebrating, Each Step

I saved this for last, so you could process the bulk of the practice, first.

The first part is to remember to focus your presence on this moment, this step.

When you choose to center into full presence with connection, and you take that one step, *you have no idea* what wonderful, miracle/blessing/healing/opening might be placed and experienced. **And how choosing to center and step *might shift and change* the entire experience.**

And, what we know about gratitude is that it is a naturally healing, heart-opening, faith-building energy.

As I move through each moment – sometimes especially the vulnerable ones – I celebrate each step. I say 'thank you for....choosing to connect in this vulnerable moment, choosing to understand your

hunger, choosing to center, choosing to be kind with your words to yourself....”

Besides using words of appreciation, I might also treat myself at certain points along the way as a 'reward' for stepping through vulnerability. My rewards usually have to do with centering and are usually based upon increments of time (because this is how I feel supported). For example, I might tell myself 'after you take your child to the doctor, you can then go to the beach – no matter what is shared at the doctors office. (Then, I make sure to truly follow through and go to the beach, no matter what was shared).

And, I keep that gratitude going for each step I have taken and am currently taking. I, personally, find it much more inspiring to move with gratitude than with fear – I even find that some steps I might previously thought impossible, were indeed, do-able.

From this space, I would then begin creative practices such as manifesting, visioning, and exploring creative expression.

That concludes my presentation on 'centering into connection during crisis / less than optimal external.'

Thank You

This document gives you a starting point to begin to explore the ideas of centering into connection during crisis or 'less than optimal' external.

Simply reading through, might shift something internally for you – so please thank your self for reading and then please be gentle and kind with yourself if you notice internal shifting.

As with any practice that I share, I thank you for your presence. Please explore and integrate that which resonates and release that which does not. And, if you have any questions, or you would like guidance as you move through your own experience, please connect with me via email at joy@facetsofjoy.com.

Much peace and abundant love,
Joy

Official Bio for Joy Holland:

Joy Holland is a love spinner and reflector of light. As an empathic intuitive, Joy shares practices of presence and energy movement as [she guides](#) those who choose to walk a heart-path into experiences of peace and possibility through connection and creative expression. As a mother of two teenagers she revels in family connection and applying these practices in daily life. Joy's web 'home' is [Facets of Joy.com](#).