**Aines’ Musings – Inner Confidence**



Underneath our outward accomplishments and apparent confidence is often a gnawing question of ‘am I good enough?’ When things are going well and the world seems to be in our favour that question is barely audible, but when we are in transition and unsure of our next course of action it gets louder and often drives us to search for reassurance and outer certainty.

I’m observing that voice in myself at the moment as it arises in different guises, whilst I’m in transition. I’m also watching a certain element of ‘neediness’ occurring in my interactions, which often takes the form of looking for approval. With that recognition comes the shudder of self judgement. Not a very attractive package!

So how can we break that cycle? Taking an **‘up and out’** approach we can attempt to move away from the discomfort of self doubt by

* Rising above it and supressing it
* Convincing ourselves that we are fine through positive affirmation
* Looking to others to make us feel better
* Interrogating the reality of the beliefs underlying the self doubt
* Distracting ourselves through food, activity, alcohol

I’ve tried all of these strategies and I still sometimes offer them to my clients. Some are more productive than others! Often they are not enough.

Sometimes it is beneficial to take a few minutes to try a different, what may appear counterintuitive **‘down and in’** approach. This requires us to move towards the self doubt and

* **Let go of the old story and beliefs** e.g. they don’t value me, that decision is too unpopular, I won’t be able to hold my own ……. ad infinitum
* **Feel the feeling** that sits underneath the self doubt e.g. fear, sadness, anger
* **Notice the sensations and contractions** in the body as the feeling arises e.g. tight stomach, blocked throat, scrunched up tongue (that’s mine!)
* **Breathe into it all** so that an opening can be created
* **Ask yourself** from this space what action to take or not to take

I find that, when we do this, things begin to open up again. We feel more connected to ourselves, and our inner guidance, more whole somehow and the energy around the self doubt dissolves naturally. Things begin to flow.

Self doubt doesn’t disappear overnight but over time practicing approaches like this, our relationship to it changes. It doesn’t have the same hold over us. It’s as if there is a distance now somehow between us and it, as if the Velcro fastening has come undone. I offer it to you as something to try out (or perhaps to use again) and adjust as necessary to suit your unique way.