

Activating a Second Circle Connection

- Walk, with energy and purpose, as though you have to go somewhere urgently. Breathe easily and look around you. Notice, even quickly, details in the space. Feel the earth through your whole feet. Keep the ankles released.
- When you feel energized in your body, come to a standstill but don't try to brace or lock your body. You are effectively still but not stopped. Energy is suspended.
- Check that you don't pull back on your heels, lock your knees, pelvis, or spine, or interfere with your shoulders. Don't jut your head forward, look down, or pull it back.
- Look around the space. See it clearly in this physical state. You should feel alive and alert.
- Feel energy through your back. The whole space around you feels available. You know and feel what's going on around you. This is bound to feel vulnerable to both First and Third Circle, so where you want to place your physical energy—withdrawing it (First) or forcing it out (Third)—is a good guideline to your habits.
- Repeat. Notice if you want to really stroll and scuff on the floor (First), or strive and make noise with your feet (Third). Second Circle is as silent as possible. To survive you don't want predators to hear you.

Try to walk with purpose but with efficiency for thirty seconds before stopping. See and experience the space specifically.

- Now move from walking into running, back into walking, then into standing and holding present Second Circle energy. Don't sink back or brace yourself as you come to stillness. You are fluid and alert; metaphorically, your ears are pricked up and the center of your body is tuned to the world.
- Run or walk quickly up a set of stairs, then stop and focus around you.

- How do you sit?
 - A slumped position indicates First Circle.
 - A rigid and exaggerated "good" posture is Third: shoulders back and spine hard.
 - Make sure your feet are on the floor, shoulders released and spine effortlessly up. Rock to feel the base of your spine.
 - Now get up with as little effort as possible, your head leading you, and walk as though you have somewhere to go. Come back and sit with all that walking energy in you.
 - You will find yourself sitting with greater alignment. More energized. More present.
 - Push with both hands against a wall. Look and focus your eyes onto the wall. Keep the shoulders free and chest open, your knees unlocked, and the balls of your feet engaged on the floor.
 - Breathe easily and feel the breath low in your body. Your stomach should move outwards. Gently push yourself away from the wall and stand and look around you. Feel your presence. Repeat at least seven times.
 - Remember the western saloon doors in cowboy movies? They represent a perfect Second Circle physical exercise.
 - To push through them and arrive with dignity into the bar, you have to be in Second Circle. Any exaggerated, overdone attacking energy (Third) will propel the doors back onto you—deeply humiliating. Any underfocused, indirect, apologetic energy (First) will move the doors unevenly and produce a clumsy entrance into the bar.
- Second energy is clear, direct and efficient. In the absence of saloon doors, you can experiment along the same lines through revolving doors. You know you are in Second if you can negotiate revolving doors with complete dignity of entrance and exit. Or line up two substantial chairs back-to-back on an uncarpeted floor and push through them. When you move through them with ease, you are in touch with Second Circle energy.

What you have started to feel is that if your energy is too relaxed or casual, the body falls into First Circle, and if it is too tense, controlling, or overexpectant, it will pull itself up in Third.

Additional Exercises

Here is a great exercise to do if you have an hour to spare and want to feel open enough to Second Circle energy. It is also great to do before you go to bed. You will sleep better and be better placed for Second Circle in the morning. I will return to this exercise later with additions to help you clean bad energy out of your being.

People in Third Circle will find this hard as they may feel powerless and frustrated. Those in First Circle will find the first section easy but the reengagement more difficult.

- Lie on your back on the floor in a comfortable, safe room. You shouldn't feel that you could be disturbed. Place your head on a thin book or cushion. Lift your knees up so that your feet are on the floor. Shake your thighs free. Gently lift and drop your shoulders until you feel them free. Then let your arms and hands relax.
- Place one hand on your upper chest until you feel it release. Place a hand on your stomach to help release any tension. Keep breathing as calmly as you can.
- Try to stay there for at least 10 minutes—more if you can bear it. Then slowly get up: roll onto your side, then onto your hands and knees. Roll up through your spine until you are centered. Check feet, knees, hips, spine, shoulders, and jaw. They and you will feel more released and placed.
- Most people will now be in First Circle, so go to a wall and gently push against it. Feel the breath low. Push yourself away effortlessly and you will find yourself in Second Circle.

Daily Practices and Exercises for the Second Circle

Actors, dancers, sportspeople, or anyone practicing a craft already know the power and fundamental importance of repetition. It is through repetition that work lodges into your body. I always say to artists that you have to know the work so well in order to forget it and live the work freely and forever.

So, don't be frightened of doing basic exercises in order to reengage to your natural Second Circle, the energy you were born to own.

One other observation. Our education system is heavily weighted in favor of the intellectual rather than the experiential. This focus encourages your mind to interfere with your physical energy. The mind can place you back in tension rather than living in the freedom these exercises offer.

Learn to be kind and non-judgmental toward yourself and allow yourself to play. Know that your mind is fine so it needn't overpower you. If you can't structure daily exercises for your Second Circle bodywork, try to incorporate these daily practices and activities into your life.

- Walk with clear, uncluttered energy, with focus and purpose. Notice objects, buildings, and so on, around you.
- If you spy a revolving door, go through it in Second Circle.
- Walk with purpose up any stairs, and as you reach your destination, stand and check your body and energy.
- Take every opportunity to walk in nature and on unpaved surfaces.
- If you have to spend hours sitting, take a brisk walk around inside or outside the building every two hours, and return to feel the different energy when you sit.
- Do the same after leaving your car.
- Stay attentive in meetings by keeping your feet on the floor and your spine up. Gently push against a table when bored and you will breathe lower and stay more present.

- Shake hands with Second Circle energy. Use a firm handshake with eye contact, not the limp First Circle handshake or the too strong, controlling Third Circle one.
- Enter spaces and rooms with Second Circle energy and purpose.

Within days you will have a new physical approach to the world and it to you. Take time to observe the world around you in the context of this energy.

- See the physical shifts of babies and children. Watch how their bodies fill with Second Circle energy as they notice a new toy or a wonder of nature like a bird or an insect. Feel and see their bodies turn off when they are bored and fall into First Circle.
- Notice someone slumped on a sofa in First, who suddenly gets an idea and sits up into Second Circle energy.
- Watch a sportsperson focus, like a tennis player winning shots in Second Circle. Notice how if they lose concentration—maybe because of a contested line call—they might push into Third Circle and lose more points because of their loss of Second. Between games they might sit in First contemplating their game plan; then, as they walk onto the court, they get up again into Second Circle.
- You might be able to spot that a footballer is going to miss an extra point if he is trying too hard to prepare for the shot in Third Circle.
- Athletes pace in First, reserving energy for the race, and move into Second as they wait under starter's orders. Those who move into Third are likely to have a false start.
- All great actors, dancers, and musicians move into Second before they perform.
- In meetings, you will sense those gearing up to ask a question in Second Circle. Even sitting next to or in front of the person, you can feel this shift of energy.

- Notice how some people can control meetings or classrooms with generalized Third Circle energy, but fail to engage you.
- First Circle in public is always boring and uninspiring.
- Notice the physical energy of your family. Do you copy the energy or have you revolted against it? Imagine a Third Circle parent producing a First Circle child, or a First Circle parent's passivity forcing their child into Third Circle.