**AGE Technique Exercise**

Beginning by settling yourself into a comfortable position where you are sitting. Perhaps sitting upright with your feet flat on the floor, your arms and legs uncrossed, and your hands resting in your lap or on your thighs, whichever is more comfortable. Let the body express a sense of being present and awake.

Now close your eyes if that feels comfortable for you. If not, keep them open and soften your gaze, focusing on something a few feet in front of you and toward the floor. The first step is being aware, really aware, of what is going on within you right now….Becoming aware of what is going through your mind. What thoughts are there? As best you can, just noticing the thoughts as mental events. Simply observing the thoughts…Then taking some time to notice the feelings present in this moment. In particular, noticing any uncomfortable or

unpleasant feelings…maybe these are feelings you’ve been avoiding or feelings that have been building, trying to get your attention…Rather than trying to push them away or shutting them out, turning towards them. Allowing yourself to just acknowledge these unpleasant feelings, perhaps saying to yourself, "Ah, there you are, that's how it is right now." *(Pause)*

Now turning your attention to the sensations present in your body. Just observing… acknowledging the sensations…. Are there sensations of tension?…pressure?… perhaps feeling your heart beating?… whatever you are feeling…noticing where those sensations are in the body. Just allowing yourself to become aware of them…allowing them to enter into your awareness…simply observing them for what they are in this moment…*(Pause)*

Now you've got a sense of what is going on right now. You have **Arrived**. You've stepped out of automatic pilot and into your experience. *(Pause)*

The second step is to **GATHER** your awareness by focusing on a single thing—the movements of your breath. So, now, really **gathering** yourself, focusing your attention on the movements of your belly…the rise and fall of your breath…Spending a minute or so focusing on the movement of your abdominal wall just below the rib cage . . . moment by moment, breath by breath, as best you can...noticing the differing sensations of your belly and chest as you breathe in…and as you breathe out…*(Pause)* Simply being aware of the feeling of the air entering the mouth or nose, gently expanding the lungs, and slowly leaving the body…You may observe the mind wandering off. That’s okay. Simply noticing and gently returning your focus to your breathing. *(Pause)*

Knowing when the breath is moving in and when the breath is moving out... Noticing, if you can, whether there is a pause between breaths…how does it feel when you inhale…what does it feel like when you exhale…curiously observe your breath *(Pause)* Just concentrating your awareness on the pattern of movements, breathing in and breathing out … gathering yourself, using the anchor of the breath to be really present in the current moment. *(Pause)*

Now, as a third step, allowing your awareness to **Expand** beyond your breath and into the body. Bringing your awareness to your whole body as well as to your breath…creating a more spacious awareness... Noticing any areas of tension or holding. If you feel like it, briefly scanning the body, releasing any tension you might observe as you breathe out …feet, legs…buttocks, back…stomach, hands, arms…shoulders, neck, face, and scalp... Following the breath as if your whole body is breathing... Holding it all in this slightly softer . . . more spacious awareness... *(Pause)*

In a moment, returning to your usual sense of awareness, bringing with you a sense of calmness that wasn’t there before…a sense of your capacity to gently hold your experiences in your awareness…holding and observing your experiences lightly…aware that they are your experiences, at least for now, and, as with all experiences, subject to change with each new moment. And then, when you are ready…taking a deeper breath, slowly breathing out and just allowing your eyes to open whenever you are ready. *(Pause)*