

# SOMATICS



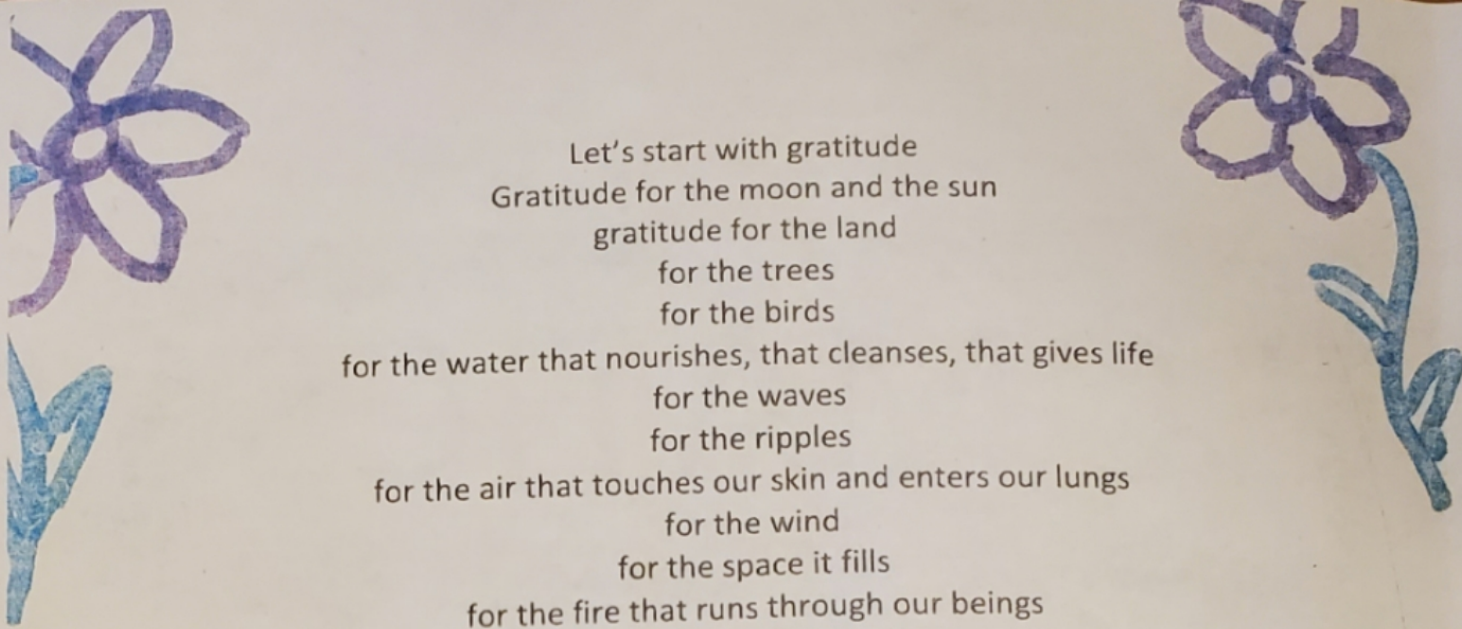
dipping

our

toes

in





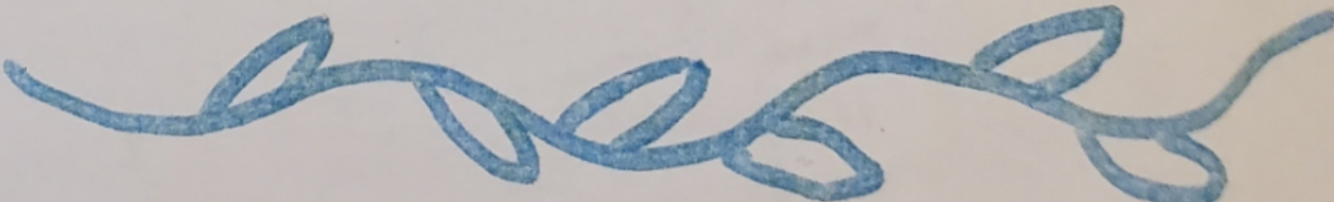
Let's start with gratitude  
Gratitude for the moon and the sun  
gratitude for the land  
for the trees  
for the birds  
for the water that nourishes, that cleanses, that gives life  
for the waves  
for the ripples  
for the air that touches our skin and enters our lungs  
for the wind  
for the space it fills  
for the fire that runs through our beings  
the fire that heats our food  
the fire that heats our homes

Let's start with gratitude  
for the people that came before us  
for the stewards of this land, who've been here for generations, who know this land intimately  
Let's start with gratitude  
for the people who carry the lineages of this body of work  
for the lineages of therapeutic integration of mind and body  
for the lineages of people that know the wisdom of the body  
Let's start with gratitude

I want to acknowledge that this zine has been created by a white settler on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Anishnaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

I want to acknowledge the history of colonialism, of patriarchy and of white supremacy that cannot be separated from anything that we do in this time.

I want to acknowledge the deep appropriation that has taken place in many mind-body holistic healing modalities. That there has been and still are systems in place to destroy, demonize and criminalize some of these ways of knowing and being.





What is

# SOMATICS

"Our bodies are wise and they have reasons for what they do"(1)

"Soma" is Greek for body(8)

an embodied approach to personal growth and change(6)

the practice of experiencing oneself directly without narration or interpretation of our thinking mind(8)

it is a transformational process that understands that change does not happen just through thinking differently but must take place in the body as well(8)

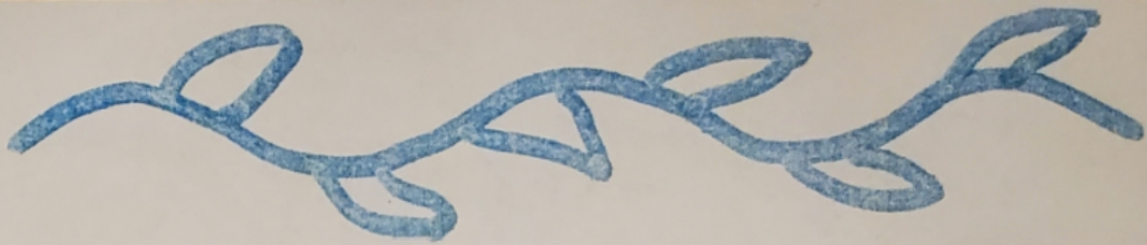
the physical body is a map of thoughts, emotions, experiences, beliefs, and cultures that we have been influenced by over our lifetime and our ancestor's lifetimes(8)

offers us the opportunity to realign to the principles of nature(9)

there is "three billion years of evolutionary wisdom" held in our bodies(6,7)

we don't practice this to feel good we practice it to feel more(7)





I am not an expert in somatic practices. I am a student of my own body, and of the teachers of this work. The intention of this zine is to share some simple useful somatic practices and introduce you to the brilliant folks involved in somatics.



## Centered Hands

This activity will help bring attention to the body. It can be practiced standing or sitting in any location that you feel comfortable doing it.

Stand or sit tall, with an upright posture.

Close your eyes if it is safe and comfortable to do so. If not, this can be done with eyes open.

Stretch arms wide, out to the sides, as if you had the wings of a bird.

Pause and notice your arms outstretched.

Very slowly begin to bring your hands toward your chest, belly or torso.

Paying full attention to the sensations that occur when you move.

Place the hands on the body in any way that feels natural to you.

Pause and feel your hands in contact with your torso. Can you feel yourself breathing? What is the texture of your clothes? Does your torso feel warm or cold? What do your hands feel like to on your body?

Once you feel complete in this area of the body, outstretch the arms again.

Pause and notice your arms outstretched.

Slowly guide your hands back to a new spot on your body. Notice what sensations arise.

Repeat this movement slowly and consciously as many times as you like.

When complete, rest the hands to your sides and notice if anything has changed in your body.

\*Practice was slightly adjusted for simplicity from Somatic Psychotherapy Toolbox by Manuela Mischke-Reeds





## Centering

Begin standing tall.

Drop into awareness of your body, closing your eyes can help but if that is not safe or comfortable this can be done with eyes open.

What can you feel in your body at the level of sensation. Temperature, heartbeat, texture, pressure, pain, movement.

Bring your attention and a hand 2 inches below your belly button.

We will center in 4 directions.

Feel the full length of your body, from the center down to your hips, knees and feet. Then stretching your awareness up from your center through your chest, neck and head.

Feel into your width, outstretching the arms if you'd like to. Feel from the left shoulder to the right, from hip to hip and hand to hand.

Feel your depth. Bring your attention to the back of your body, then feel the space inside you body, move the awareness of the front of your body.

Lastly, orient to longing or your purpose.

What is it that you long for? What do you care for or value?

Bring that into your awareness and into the center of your being. Imagine it spreading and filling your body, all the way to the edges, in every direction.


Let you awareness relax and notice how you feel.

Repeat this practice 5 times per day or when you need to come back to your center.

\*Gently adapted from adrienne maree brown and Stacy Haines







## Grounding – Earth Mindfulness

This practice can have a grounding effect. It is useful in times when you might be experiencing stress, activation or excess energy.

Lie on the floor or sit with feet firmly planted on the floor.

Begin by paying attention to the parts of your body that are in contact with the ground.

Notice the heaviness of your body and gravity connecting you to the Earth.

Imagine or experience the Earth meeting you here.

Feel how you are being held by the ground beneath you.

Allow yourself a few moments to just be with the feeling of being supported by the Earth.

\*Practice was slightly adjusted for simplicity from Somatic Psychotherapy Toolbox by Manuela Mischke-Reeds

## Identifying Resources

What resources do you already use to calm yourself in periods of stress?

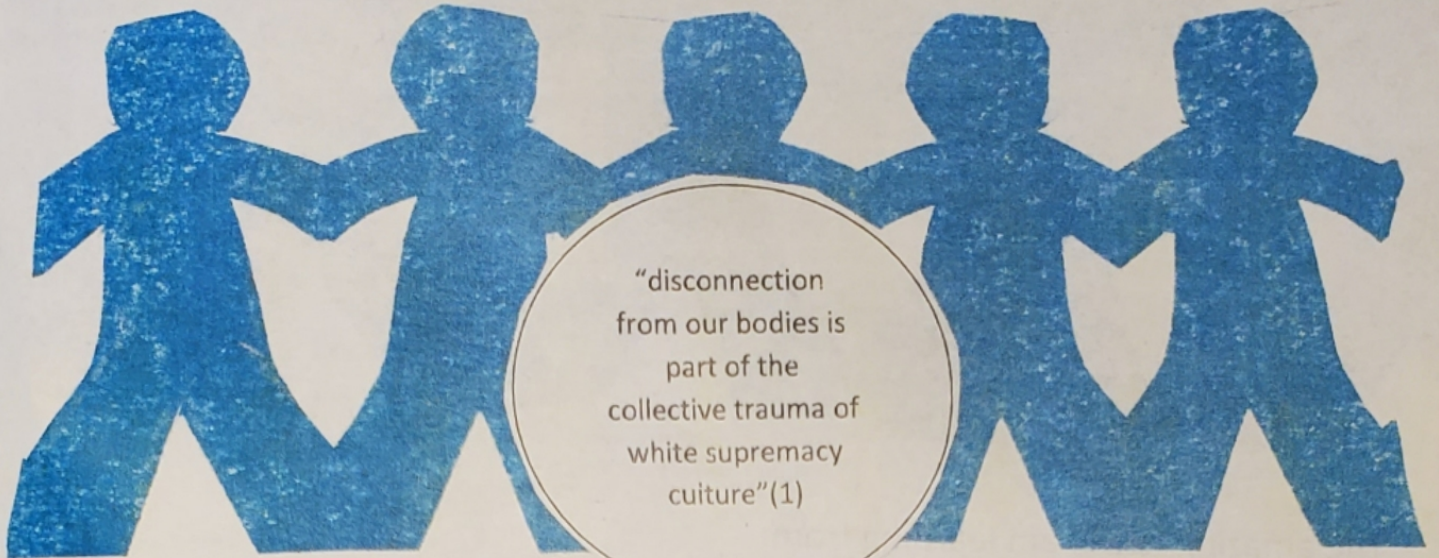
Do you take deep breaths, call a friend, go for a walk, sit by the lake, sing, pray, use cultural practices or ceremonies, have naps, eat certain foods or use dance or other movement practices?

Take a moment to think about what strategies you have and have been working for you so far. Continue to use these strategies and acknowledge that you may already have many somatic practices that you draw on.





Many great minds are using somatics to create and further social change!  
Here is a brief introduction to their works!



“disconnection  
from our bodies is  
part of the  
collective trauma of  
white supremacy  
culture”(1)

generative somatics(5)

“support[s] social and climate justice movements in achieving their visions of a radically transformed society.”

bring “somatic transformation to movement leaders, organizations, and alliances”

“engage the body (emotions, sensations, physiology), in order to align our actions with values and vision, and heal from the impacts of trauma and oppression”

## Somatic Abolitionism

Resmaa Menakem(3)

“Somatic Abolitionism is living, embodied anti-racist practice and cultural building —a way of being in the world. It is a return to the age-old wisdom of human bodies respecting, honoring, and resonating with other human bodies.”

“Somatic Abolitionism is not a human invention. It is the resourcing of energies that are always present in your body, in the collective body, and in the world. Somatic Abolitionism is an emergent process.”

## Cultural Somatics

Tada Hozumi(4)

“Sees individual and collective change as an inseparable, interconnected, and embodied processes.”

“The invisible sensing, feeling, and thinking body that emerges out of networks of complex relationships.”





The amazing folks I am learning from:

1. Marika Heinrichs @wildbodysomatics- <https://www.wildbodysomatics.com/rhythm>
2. Susan Raffo - <https://www.susanraffo.com/>
3. Resmaa Menakem - <https://www.resmaa.com/>
4. Tada Hozumi - <https://ritualasjustice.school/about/>, <https://selfishactivist.com/>,
5. generative somatics - <https://generativesomatics.org/about-us/>
6. Staci Heines – great youtube videos - <https://thepoliticsoftrauma.com/about>
7. adrienne maree brown - <http://adriennemareebrown.net/>
8. Manuela Mischke-Reeds - Somatic Psychotherapy Toolbox
9. Prentis Hemphill - @prentis.h

Created by Maggie Thomson-Kurz

Gratitude to the  
Toronto Birth  
Center for giving  
me the  
opportunity to  
create this zine.

