

Kathy Cherry

*The Wisdom of the Body: Connecting with Your Inner Resilience*

Part 3: "Wisdom Arising"

August 21, 2021



Hi there, I'm Kathy Cherry. Welcome to the third week of "The Wisdom of the Body: Connecting with Your Inner Resilience." I hope you've been enjoying the pause practices and the invitations back into your body and the present moment. This third segment, "Wisdom Arising," starts to weave it all together. The first two elements on our map, mindfulness and continuity of mindfulness, give us knowledge. Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and data, stuff that you've learned or experienced directly. Wisdom, on the other hand, speaks to good judgment or discernment based on that knowledge. It's the ability to understand the reason, the "why" something is, and what that might mean for your life.

Wisdom arising means that we have a growing ability to understand the data and apply it. That might mean that we're working with our nervous system to bolster resilience. It also might mean that we're looking at different ways to reduce or even end our suffering. This gives me the opportunity to bring in one of my favorite Buddhist analogies, the wings of awakening: wisdom and compassion [makes wing gesture with hands]. This discernment, this wisdom, is warmed by the wing of compassion, the quivering of the heart and desire to help in the face of all of the data showing us how we get caught up in life.

You might have noticed that I use the term "wisdom arising," not "wisdom arisen." This is pointing to the fact that this is a *process*. There is not a line in the sand that we cross and suddenly we're wise in all aspects of our life. We can understand our conditioning at an intellectual, conceptual level, but that understanding isn't available to us when our system becomes overwhelmed. When our system is charged in that way, it takes us out of that resiliency. Some people call this the window of tolerance. In those circumstances, we don't have full access to that wisdom. It's the old circuit breaker analogy.

Sometimes, we'll be able to catch things as they're happening—we feel the body's signals of tightness in the chest, or we notice that we're talking really fast, dropping things, or bumping into things, and we get the signal to slow down. Other times, the patterns are really old or heavy, and we won't realize until after the fact that we've been caught up in some reactivity that's playing out. That's where we lean into that warmth and compassion. It's hard to uproot these tendencies. Even when we're noticing these setbacks, trust that change is happening.

Wisdom arising points at the potential for these "I see you, Mara" moments. We're getting wise to the patterns and getting underneath the details of the day-to-day, the "he said, she said," to these broader themes that speak more to our specific conditioning, the underlying survival impulse that's true of all humans.

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When there's more presence in the flow of life, it allows us to see these sticky spots more clearly and more quickly. We feel it play out in the body at the biological level—the contraction, the bracing, or the fogginess. That's the survival physiology that can drive us. We can trace these biological responses back up to all the afflictive emotions—anger, worry, grief, and the desire for control and security. We can also start to hear ourselves telling and retelling stories about the future and the past, but maybe now we start to see the impact that those thoughts have on the body.

I'm sure that at this point, all of us have had an opportunity to use these tools or others to interrupt these cycles, to break that trance, and to feel the return to regulation and the capacity to settle and just be here.

Today, I wanted to offer a more formal meditation practice that weaves together the earlier themes of external and internal resources and also adds on a tool for working with mental content. We'll be using an image of a situation that can get sticky for you. We're not looking for something big—we're looking for something manageable, but something that will bring up a sensation easily when you call it to mind. Once you have that image, I'll guide you in a visualization where you'll track the body's response as you take that image, shrink it down, move it further away from you, and bring it closer. In the end, what we're looking for is for you to be able to find a place where that image can be there and you can be present. As you might imagine, this is a great tool for working with the persistent visitors that can arise in practice.

You might want to pause the video for a moment, give some thought to the image that you might want to bring in, and make yourself comfortable, and then we'll get to it.

Starting from the outside, tune into your space, taking in those external resources, the different sounds, scents, colors, and textures in the space around you. As you are ready, start to draw the attention to your internal experience, feeling the contact of the sit bones or the feet on the floor. The invitation is to let the body arrive and be held. We'll spend a minute here just gathering and collecting.

Now that we've got a nice foundation built, a place to return to if needed, start to call up the image, letting it take shape in the mind's eyes and painting it out with familiar sounds or colors. As the image comes into focus, notice your body's response. Is there some apprehension? Is there an impulse? Depending upon what you notice, you can start to shrink the image down. Maybe shift it so that it's moving a little bit farther away. We want to move slowly, giving the body's response to the image time to adjust. Feeling for the body's response in relation to the image, can

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you care about that, calling in that compassion? Notice how that might shift the felt sense of what's happening.

Eventually you'll find a spot where the image is in a place where you're able to be with your body and the different sensations, thoughts, and emotions that arise without becoming overwhelmed. As we stay here, just continue to be curious. How do the sensations change? Are there any impulses? Do you notice a shift in the posture? There might be a word or another image that pops in. Just notice. Then let the image dissolve entirely. Feel the leaving of that simplicity and sink back down into the sit bones, feeling the support of the earth and your worthiness to be here just as you are.

Thank you so much for your practice. In the next video, we're going to wrap up the series with the theme of patterns releasing, where we explore the relationship between this clear seeing and its ability to facilitate the release of these different held patterns and forms of conditioning that all of us work with. I hope to see you there.