

-- [00:00:00] Welcome to the Closeness podcast. The following is based on personal experiences and wisdom, as well as experiences that have been contributed to us. Generalizations are sometimes made for the sake of brevity, but are never meant to exclude or offend. You can support these podcasts by donating to our patreon@patreon.com closeness. Now, are you ready to come closer? Let's get started. Happy New Year, everyone. I thought it would be fun to start the year off by doing a podcast about how to take care of yourself and what it looks like and a few ways that we can experience closeness with ourselves so that we're better prepared to give it to others. To me, there's no better way to dive into that than to take a look at our morning routine, our evening routine, and then the things that we do during the day to bring ourselves back into balance. If we lose focus or if we get too scattered or stressed or anxious, what are the things that actually bring us back into balance? I'm going to share with you a handful of things from my personal experience that have always worked well for me and the way that I modify them depending on what I'm in the mood for or what my body needs. So let's jump right in. If you're going to take care of yourself, you have to have a system in place that's easy for you to do. It's easy to access. You like doing it. You enjoy using the tools that help you get there. It's easy to do. You shouldn't have to drive 20 or 30 miles to get there. It shouldn't take you a long time to access what you need to to get into the right space for yourself. One of the best ways I know to bring my body back into alignment is the simple art of taking a walk.

[00:01:41] However, there's taking a walk with an intention to restore yourself and ground yourself, and there's taking a walk to just trying to check another item off your list that you're trying to get through. How do each of these look? Here's what an unbalanced walk would look like when you're just trying to power through. You force some time in the middle of your day and you put on some headphones and you just start stomping through. Your mind never stops thinking. There's no awareness. You're not paying attention to how you're stepping, how you're walking. Maybe your phone is in your hand, maybe your shoulders are tight. Everything is closed off because it's cold or it's hot or you're anxious or you're trying to get through it, or you think that this is what you're supposed to do to feel good and experience wellness. In sum, by the time you finish something like this, not a lot has changed and not a lot has improved. You've done something the way you've ran an errand, cleaned the house, done some work, or taken the kids to school. It's ticked an item off your list, but it hasn't changed your state or the way you feel in any way. On the other hand, the simple act of taking off your shoes, connecting to real grass, being barefoot and letting your feet touch the earth, letting yourself discharge negative energy, letting yourself literally get grounded by touching something that's alive. If you think about day to day, what you're actually wearing and what your feet are touching, you're either wearing socks, wearing slippers, shoes, boots, or tennis shoes with a rubber sole. Walking on concrete, carpet, hardwood, a high rise building, an elevator, metal, anything that's not truly natural and biologically breathing. In fact, you should spend a moment and consider when the last time was that you actually took off your shoes and walked barefoot. Some of us live close to the ocean. Some of us play on the beach all the time, so that's a little more accessible. Beach is great, too, and it's an incredible way to discharge energy. But there's also something special about just walking on grass or even dirt. But the easiest way to do this is to go to a park somewhere clean where you feel safe, something that you find attractive to look at. In sum, to recap step one, you carve out enough time where you're not going to be rushed. It's not going to be a five minute or a ten minute or a 15 minutes walk. Give yourself 20 to 40 minutes if it's possible to really see how far you go so that five minutes into it, you're not trying to turn around and come back to your car or wondering if you have to run to your next errand. You need to have space where you can decompress and be with yourself. You block out time. You go to a park that you like, and maybe you become a connoisseur --

-- r of parks. Which ones have fountains or birds, or more nature or more trees, or just big areas full of luscious green grass. What are you going to bring with you on your walk? Absolutely nothing. Your car key. You're going to leave your phone, leave your wallet, leave things that are cumbersome. If it's cold out, wear a jacket and gloves or a hat. If you need it. And leave your shoes in the car if possible. Or what I do is I just leave them wherever I start my walk and pick them up on my way out. Now begins your walk. I'm going to give you several other things that you can do to make this an incredible experience. Notice your shoulders and where you put your hands. Are they in your pockets? Are you holding something? Are your arms crossed? What does your gait look like? The way you walk the simplest, easiest way to put your mind back into balance is something ex girlfriends know that I call arm swinging. And it's the natural way your body moves. When you step forward with your right leg, your right arm swings back and your left arm swings forward. And when you step forward with your left leg, your right arm swings forward. Natural. Just back and forth, back and forth walking.

[00:05:30] It may sound strange, it may sound unbelievably easy, but consider when the last time was that you walked more than ten or 20ft barefoot in the light and your body's natural rhythm was able to get back in place. Just this one step alone I find to be life changing, and I think you will too. If you're new to taking walks and you haven't done this before, get outside, give yourself 25 to 35 minutes and just start walking peacefully. You can play with your pace. You can slow it down a little bit, speed it up slightly if you want to get your heart rate up. But it's not about cardio and it's not about achieving a goal or getting fit. It's about restoring and relaxing yourself to your natural state. Once you've got that down, here are a few other tips that can be of benefit. Lengthen your stride do you take short, quick steps? Do your steps almost stumble over themselves? Are you in alignment when you walk? When you lengthen your stride and you push off your rare foot, you can squeeze your butt muscle a little bit on that side, and you can also lengthen your leg so that your hip flexor gets a nice stretch. So it may look a little funny publicly if people are watching, but you can adjust it to make it look very natural. So as your arms are swinging, you could find a natural gait with a lengthened stride. Then, of course, the most important thing you can work on your breathing. Do you want to just simply take long, deep inhalations and exhalations through your nose? Do you want to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth? Do you want to breathe in for 4 seconds? Hold for 4 seconds. Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds. Many different breathing techniques you can use, but most importantly to me, see if you could find what your natural breath feels like. Is your stomach relaxed or tight? Do you feel better breathing with your shoulders down and your chest open and your rib cage expanded? Probably another thing you can play with is your posture. If you catch yourself slouching at work or you just don't have great posture to begin with, roll your shoulders back, lift your arms up high over your head and let them fall naturally to their sides and see where that sits. The difference between confident and unconfident is sometimes two inches, sometimes it's 2 cm. Lift your chest up. Don't arch your back too much. Don't tuck your tailbone under too much. Where do your hips sit naturally?

[00:08:00] Remember, this is about decompressing and relaxing. So when you're taking your Walk, don't worry about is my butt tight, my stride long, my chest up, my chin up? You don't have to get too caught up in all of that, but these are just some things that you can begin to layer on. Once you're comfortable in your stride now, you should notice yourself starting to feel better and better. I find that it takes anywhere between five to ten minutes, especially on a stressful day, to start to let go of the day. Let go of what's happening in your life and what you're so holding on to and what you need to change. Once you've done that, you'll start to feel better. And that doesn't mean that it's time now to leave the park. It means you've just started to feel better. Give yourself the time and space to go deeper and deeper and deeper. And if you have --

-- a moment after your walk, how about a stretch? How about that hip flexor stretch? Or a runner's stretch, or a quad stretch by holding the back of your foot or just putting your leg up on a chair, stool, bench, or cement structure that's at the park and leaning forward from your hips so that you can stretch out your hamstrings. Make it a thorough experience. Then you add in hydrating yourself before you begin your walk, hydrating yourself after maybe having a snack with you to snack on after you're done and you've put yourself in a pretty remarkable place.

[00:09:23] This is one of the most powerful ways that I know that is so simple and so easy to do and so many people don't do it, including myself. I have to remind myself all the time, get out to a park. Get out to a park. Do something other than just moving back and forth in the house I'm in or place that I'm training or where I'm working and all of that. The amazing thing about walking is if you find you like it and you've got the space to do it, there's no limit to how much you can do it. There's no overdoing it. You can do it 12345 times a day and your body will thank you for it. Because I find that the body likes to move at least once an hour. And it's so easy. We've really conditioned ourselves to sit or stand or be stationary in one place. Even as I'm recording this, sometimes I'm standing here for an hour, I'm moving a little bit, but not a whole lot. I'm not lengthening my body, I'm not stretching it. So it really comes down to putting the same amount of energy and effort that you put into watching YouTube videos or being on social media or any other mindless activity that you do, putting that same energy into taking care of yourself. And the funny thing is, it's not hard to do. As soon as you start doing it for more than a few moments, it feels so good. And that actually gives us a great segue into the second part of closeness with yourself, which is how you treat yourself hour by hour, moment to moment, in between doing what has to get done. And if you're like me, it's very easy to get caught up ticking off a checklist. I have to go here, then there, then I'm going to stop at the dry cleaner, I'm going to pick this up at the store. I'm going to take this class and go to this thing. You set up your whole day to go boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And in between these moments, it's just getting to your car, going to the next place, getting your car going next place, or you're at work and it's an hour on this project, or 3 hours on this project, or the whole day goes by and you realize you haven't eaten or you haven't eaten anything healthy. What are some things that you can do every hour, assuming that your job or your profession allows it, where you're taking a little time for you, if you have a door nearby to the outside and it's easily accessible, and you can take a quick walk around the block every hour and take five or ten minutes, if that's possible, or even five minutes, great. If you could stand up from sitting down in your workplace and just simply stretch out. And remember, stretching is not grabbing your ankle and just holding it there for like 5 seconds and taking one inhalation and exhalation and saying, voila, I'm there. No, it's like 10, 20, 30 deep breaths. 1530, 45 seconds, 1 minute holding for each stretch, twists and rotations, and moving your neck and your head around and rolling your shoulders back, or doing 15 or 20 squats. All of these things give your body a feeling of rejuvenation and excitement. Then, of course, choosing water with a little bit of Himalayan pink salt in it or lemon juice to alkalize it, and you're good to go. Notice, through all of this, nowhere did I say or suggest going to the gym, taking a yoga class, going for a run. All of that stuff is great, and I do strongly recommend it. But there's a difference between our fitness routine and managing the vibration of our system. Your subtle body, your energetic body, your field. And for years I've worked on myself on unlayering. So where do I hold my tension, and how do I let go of that? Is there tension in my jaw? Am I holding it in a hip or a shoulder? What do I need to be able to let go of that without having to pay for a massage or see a specialist? What are some of the ways that we can soothe ourselves so that we feel more refreshed and more productive? As humans, we are masters of making ourselves deal with pain. Or I can handle it. It's not that bad. Or there's this --

-- constant sensation in your shoulder, your hip, your back, your leg, wherever it is. And what we do is we ignore it. There's simple things we can do, such as taking a walk, gentle movement, twists and rotations. Gosh. Another one of my favorite exercises is to simply take a broomstick or your swiffer, or anything that's a dowel of some sort, that's long enough, put it behind your head and on your shoulders and just twist back and forth, back and forth. I'm doing it now as I'm speaking to you. You can also hold it straight up, overhead and laterally rotate so, not forward and back, but over into the side and over and back to the other side.

[00:14:02] What are some other things you can do to soothe yourself while you're working or while you're in the middle of your errands throughout the day? Something that I can't believe millions of people aren't speaking about is the take a breath phenomenon. Even when you tell someone to take a breath, or take a few breaths, or to breathe deeply, if they're stressing out. What does everyone do? We take one breath.

[00:14:25] Okay, what was I doing? Let me get back to the horrible. And it's like your mind grabs you. No, don't rest too long. You must be engaged with what you're doing, and that's a horrible curse. So what does a deep breath actually feel like?

[00:14:58] It feels like that it's lengthened, it's pure, it's not jaggedy. It's clean and crisp. And the more you practice this, the more you can lengthen these breaths out to 510, 20, even up to 30 seconds per inhalation and exhalation.

[00:15:15] When you begin to take your deep breaths, pluralize it. Do more than one, do more than five. Do more than ten, ideally, and see how you feel. And try different positions. Do you want to be sitting down? Do you need to be laying down? Do you want to do it standing up or walking? How can you incorporate ten or 15 deep breaths into your practice?

[00:15:36] The third pillar of closeness with yourself that I want to speak to you about today is presence.

[00:15:42] What does presence look like when you're spending time with yourself? And how long do you think that you can stay present before you lose focus or settle on to something else? Here's what lack of presence looks like. Imagine every time you've gone up and down a set of stairs in your house or your work, or when you run out to the garage in the morning, or are walking to your car. If you're on your phone, if you're just going from A to B, if you're carrying something, if your mind is distracted, I can almost guarantee that nine out of ten times you're not present or aware of your surroundings, of your breath, of your footsteps, of the position of your shoulders, how calm you are, how you're holding yourself. You're in a routine or a pattern. Your body knows how to do the same things over and over and over again. And there's no awareness about what you're doing. Every once in a while, try to bring awareness to what you're doing to each step. It doesn't mean you have to slow everything way down. If your energy is frenetic or anxious or jittery or stilted or disjointed, it's worth slowing way down. But if you're already moving through life at a relatively chill or casual pace, it doesn't mean you have to slow down what you're doing. But it's about bringing awareness to it so I can talk off the top of my head and go and go and go, or I can really zone in to what I'm saying to you and be here with you. Now. Again, once we're focusing, it's difficult to bring awareness and presence to what you're doing when you're actually doing something. Sometimes, and other times, bringing presence to a practice, such as dancing, movement, exercise, working out, it adds an entire new dimension of clarity and ease and often also prevents you from getting hurt. So see if you can find moments to practice presence. It's free, it doesn't take any time. It feels good, and it's the best way that you can possibly live. Most likely, though, you'll be sucked out of it almost instantaneously, and most likely, you'll be sucked right out of it. A phone call, a text, something you need to write, something you want to do. You have to go to the bathroom, you have to get something. And it just. You're done. Now you're running on unconsciousness, and you're no longer present. So experiment with being present throughout your day. Notice the times that you're running on autopilot. Stop, recalibrate, breathe. Bring awareness to your actions, and watch your life ch --

-- ange. Okay. The fourth big pillar to experience closeness with yourself is having a morning routine that works for you. I like starting mine with meditation. I like setting an alarm to wake up to peaceful sounds or some sort of music that you like. What's the first thing you put inside your body in the morning? Do you caffeinate? Do you fast? Do you hydrate? Do you take some deep breaths? Do you have great sex? Do you get right out of bed without stretching or moving and just jump in the shower, sit on the computer, or just get in front of a screen? I know I'm guilty of that sometimes. So a morning routine sets the tone for your day and creates more closeness with yourself. To me, it actually helps your body trust you. An expression that I really can't stand is my body betrayed me. And I generally don't think that could be farther from the truth. Your body doesn't betray you. It gives you sign after sign after sign. Warnings and warnings, subtle cues. Hey, give me rest, give me food, give me play, give me sunshine, take me on a walk, stretch out. And you can ignore and ignore, sometimes for hours, days, weeks, months, and even years. Then all of a sudden, a condition appears, and you think it came out of nowhere. It's like, how could this happen to me? So, taking care of yourself in the morning, as often as you can remember, will go a long, long way towards your well being and closeness with yourself.

[00:19:38] The fifth pillar of closeness with yourself, and I would be remiss. Not to mention it is, of course, touching yourself.

[00:19:48] It's so interesting to me how some words are so loaded. How many of you cringed when you heard that expression touch yourself or you should touch yourself more often, right? It sounds so pornographic or masturbatory, but it doesn't have to be that at all. Touching yourself and self care can look like stroking your finger. It could be massaging your back, ideally with your hand, but certainly on a rumble roller, or on a ball, or with a theracane, or on the edge of the bed or against a pole.

[00:20:20] It could be caressing your arm, scratching your back, scratching your leg, or giving yourself gentle caresses. It could be taking extra strokes on your skin when you put lotion on in the morning, or if you put any kind of oil on your body, skin, or hair. It could be giving yourself a few extra moments of a scalp massage when you're in the shower. It could be giving yourself dry shampoo and scalp massage when you're not in the shower. Do you know where you like to be touched, how you like to be touched, and with what intensity or speed your body Likes to be touched? I guarantee you, you don't. You know one or two things about yourself. Your nipples are very sensitive or they're not. Your back or your neck is very sensitive when it's kissed. But what about every other part of you? Do you know your areas? Something I like to share when I'm with a lover for the first handful of times is if they're up for it or they're really feeling exploratory, discovering where these places are and soothing each other by giving it to them. Very few people are actually up for workshopping this. It's one of the things that I love coaching the most because it's an incredible gift. But it also brings up questions of worthiness that you might ask yourself, do you deserve it? Do you deserve to feel this good? Is it okay? And the answer is yes, it's very okay.

[00:21:46] What a perfect place to end this episode. So be sure to touch yourselves.

[00:21:50] Bring all five pillars into your life. When possible, be present. Go for walks. Establish a morning routine. Take care of yourself. Find ways to touch yourself. All of these things will dramatically enhance your ability to be comfortable with yourself so that you can be even more comfortable with others and, of course, bring more closeness into your life.

[00:22:15] Thank you for listening. We hope you've enjoyed this immensely. To learn more about what we do, visit getcloseness.com and to donate to our Patreon [getcoaching](http://getcoaching.com) or have one of your personal questions answered on the closeness podcast, visit patreon.com/closeness. And remember, stay close.

[00:22:33] Bye. --