



Deepening the

Dance



Being present - why it matters

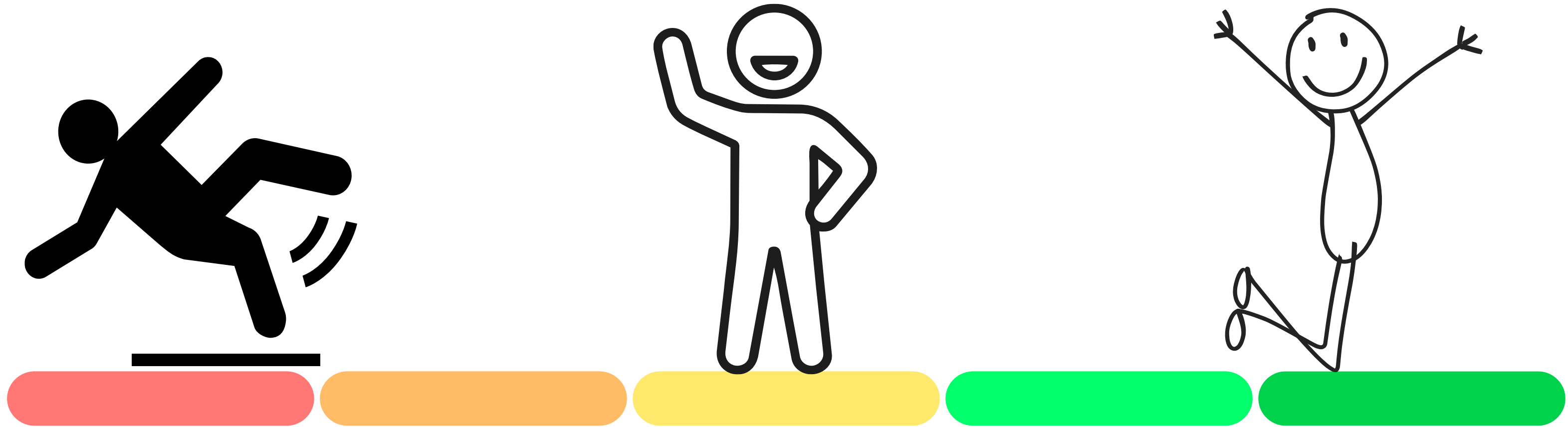
- Presence means being fully with the client - not performing, analysing from a distance, or over managing or censoring ourselves
- Creates real contact (Gestalt: healing happens in contact - aware of myself, you and what's happening between us. In TA this is when we relate in the Adult with autonomy)
- Clients feel seen, heard, and genuinely met - not analysed or handled
- Reduces defences - clients don't need to perform, comply, or resist
- Supports the client's own process - more space to feel, reflect, and explore

Presence isn't a different version of me..it's me when I'm not trying so hard to be a version of myself.



Our 'Dance' Steps

Both Gestalt and Transactional Analysis suggest that our presence can wobble not because something is wrong with us - but because we slip into learned ways of being that take us out of relationship (contact)



- Natural to go up and down - we are only human!
- Where can we encourage ourselves and each other about how we've grown, and where could we grow?

‘When the dance wobbles’ Bingo!





Got to get it right

Polishing everything we say, searching for the 'best' intervention, keeping everything on track, making sessions 'productive'

TA drivers (be perfect, try hard, be strong, hurry up, please others, be helpful)

Gestalt: **introjects** - rules/expectations we follow from parents, teachers, authority figures, (and maybe employer expectations!):
I should know what to do, mustn't upset the client, a good therapist would...

Loosening it:

- Be Perfect → Be human, good enough
- Please Others → Be real and connected
- Try Hard → Trust and allow the process
- Be Strong → Stay present and responsive
- Hurry Up → Take your time



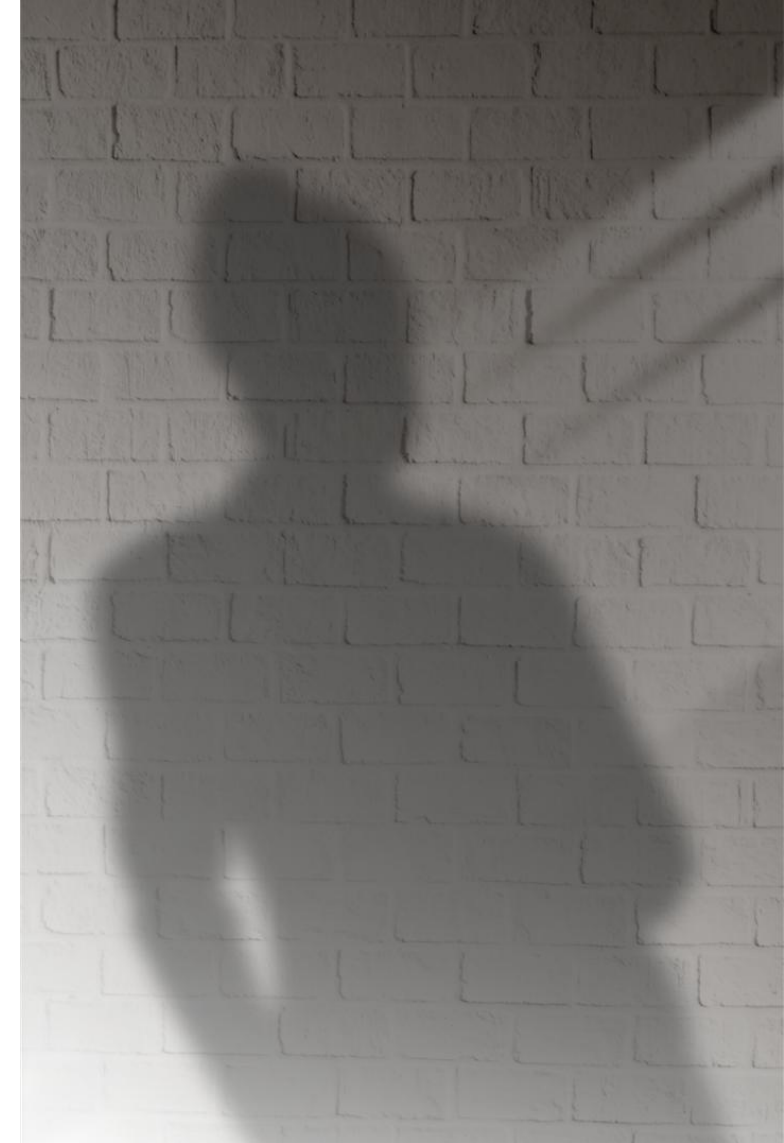


A step back...

We might **deflect** (move away from what's happening) by:

- Moving into theory or analysis
- Asking a different (safer) question
- Using humour to lighten the moment
- Changing the subject: client becomes emotional and counsellor says: "So how has your week been otherwise?"

Loosening it: noticing, returning, staying with what's happening:
being curious: "Can we come back to what you just said?"





Mind out the way, I have my hose!

Fixing, rescuing, trying to make things better

Taking too much responsibility, agree when we don't mean it (**confluence** - losing self in the other)

- Choosing topics quickly
- Steering the direction
- “Let’s focus on...”
- Offering solutions
- Reassuring too quickly
- Talking to avoid silence
- Asking lots of questions
- Avoiding difference or tension



Loosening it:

Noticing the urge to take over... and coming back to sharing the space:

“What feels most important for you right now?”



This is all my fault

- Watching ourselves
- Monitoring how we're doing
- Attention splits - we're no longer fully present
- (Gestalt: **Retroreflection** (holding it in/turning it back on ourselves/ TA: **Critical Parent**

Client expresses anger or dissatisfaction toward us:

“You don't really get it”

“This isn't going anywhere”

Loosening it:

Staying in the relationship and letting a little of our response back into the dance, rather than holding it in:

“It sounds like that didn't land well”

“Can you say a bit more about what didn't feel helpful?”

“I've messed this up”

“I'm not good enough”

“I need to fix this”

Imposter syndrome





I appear to have bought old me into the room

Old patterns, expectations

Assumptions about what's happening

The client meets our history, not just us

(TA: **Scripts** / Gestalt: **Unfinished business** and **Projection**
(attributing our own thoughts and feelings to others))



We fill in the gaps too quickly, assuming we know what the client feels or means:

“You must feel abandoned” (possible projection because we might feel abandoned if it were us)

“This client doesn't like me” (possible unfinished business from our own rejection wounds)

Loosening it:

- Pause: “I might be incorrectly filling in the gaps here...”
- “I'm wondering if there was any feeling of abandonment there - or is it something different?”
- It might be different from what I'm imagining

Coming Back into Step: 3 simple moves

1. Notice it

The first step isn't to change anything, it's to notice when we've moved out of presence

Gestalt: awareness itself begins the shift

TA: this is the Adult coming online, aware, present, able to choose

2. Allow it (instead of fighting it)

We recognise it's a learned pattern

Let it be there without letting it take over (this part is trying to keep us safe)

Gestalt: what is fully acknowledged can change

TA: moving from being driven by 'shoulds', 'oughts' and 'must' to permission to choose our response



3. Soften or shift our stance (small change in the dance)

Become curious, staying with what's happening, letting a bit more of our own response back into the dance

