

The Felt Sense

A therapist named Eugene Gendlin noticed that those of his clients who were able to experience the connection between their thoughts, emotions and outer life occurrences and what was happening in their bodies were the ones who experienced the most change. He called this inner body experience the 'felt sense'. As Heidi Hanson says in her blog *The Art of Healing Trauma*: "The felt sense is the embodiment (bringing awareness inside the body) of one's ever-changing sensory/energetic/emotional landscape. The felt sense moves our focus from actions and things happening outside us in the world to qualities of our present, internal experience (e.g. textures, colors, sensations)." Change and healing occur when we are able to experience the connections between our actions, thoughts, emotions and our 'felt sense' of them. Only with riding the felt sense through to its completion, like a surfer rides a wave, do we heal healing and even find peace and joy.

The Felt Sense is difficult to put into words. Therefore it is helpful to have some descriptive words to help you talk about what you experience.

pressure – tight, constricting, pulsing, even, uneven, supported feeling or crushed feeling, fullness

air current – gentle, cool, warm, from right, from left, stimulating, rush, like a feather, like mist,

pain – achy, sharp, twinge, slight, stabbing

breathing – shallow, rapid, tight, held, expanded, hiccupping, painful, suffocating

sensation – pricks, vibration, tickling, numb, itching, queasy, vibrating, spacey, dizzy, tremulous, knotted, blocked, disconnected, thick, expanded, tingling, trembly, nervous, electric, solid, dense, wooden, inflamed, congested, calm, energized

temperature – warm, hot, burning, cool, cold, clammy, chills, icy, frozen, sweaty

size – small, large

shape – flat, circle, boxy, blob, like a mountain

weight – light, heavy, floating

motion – circular, erratic, straight line, bouncing, roiling fluttery, flowing, twitchy, bubbly, streaming

texture – smooth, rough, dense, prickly, wooden

color – gray, blue, orange etc.

sound – buzzing, singing, humming, buzzy

taste – sour, bitter, sweet

smell – pungent, sweet, sour, chemical, like rain, like leaves

absence/nothingness – blank, empty, blah, hollow