

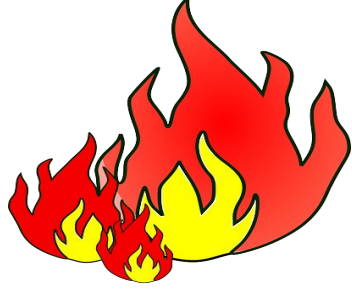


Getting Settled

Skills for soothing mind, body, and emotions

by Claire Hudson, Gestalt and Somatic Psychotherapist, 2015

Humans need 3 different Zones for Survival



Hot Zone



Optimal Zone



Cold Zone

After Trauma, there may only be 2 Zones

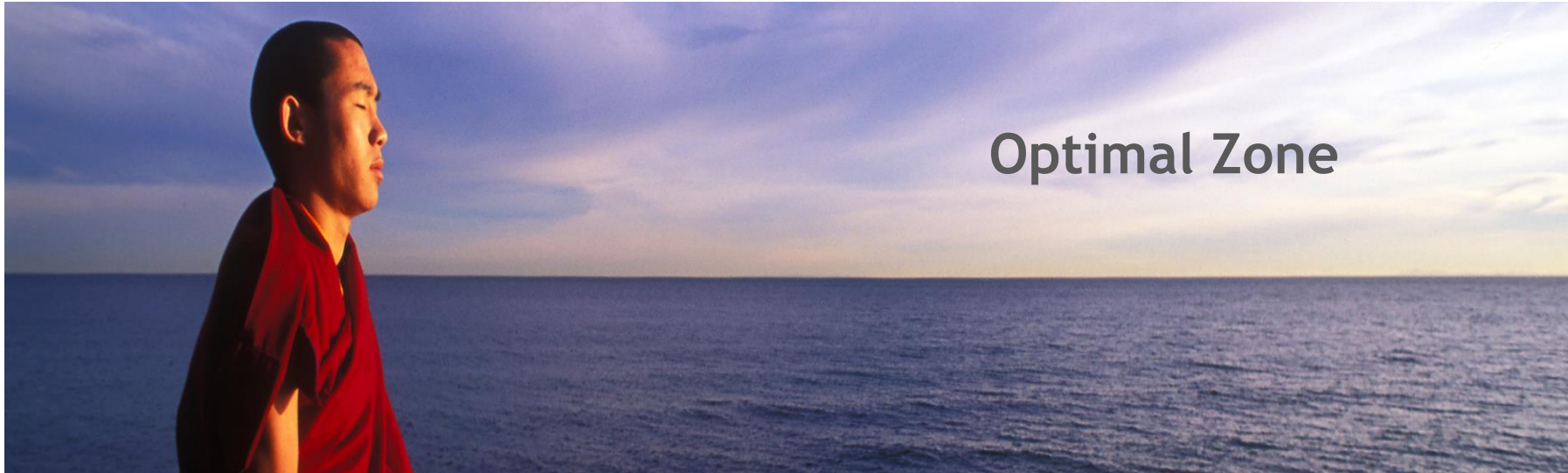


Hot Zone



Cold Zone

To create or expand the Optimal Zone,
we need to practice getting settled
every day



Different Strategies are needed for different zones

Signs of being in the Hot Zone

Signs of being in the cold zone

How to get settled from Hot Zone

▶ Start with large muscles:

- ▶ stretching, lengthening muscles, or moving in a way that feels good
- ▶ Mindful walking or running
- ▶ Posture- lengthen spine and sit upright for two or more minutes
- ▶ Push against something eg a cushion against the wall, legs against fitball
- ▶ Complete orienting self to present- be here and now- name out loud objects- 360 degrees look around
- ▶ Defensive movements- eg push off, push up, sit up, stand up- see what feels good
- ▶ Stroke a pet or an object such as a cushion
- ▶ Have a gentle play fight with a trusted friend or therapist

▶ Then Breath

- ▶ 5 Long slow exhales if in Hot Zone. Make sure the exhale is longer than the inhale. Pause between breaths.
- ▶ Belly breathing- lie down and allow belly to rise with slow in-breaths (antidote to shallow breathing)
- ▶ If this feels too hard, simply sit somewhere in nature, and listen to the sounds, including the sounds of your breathing. Feel yourself sitting on the earth. Notice the rise and fall of your chest. Allow yourself to be supported by the earth. Feel the heaviness of your body, as the earth supports you
- ▶ Breathe with a friend, have a competition for the longest out breath
- ▶ Practice laughing- be silly with this!

How to get settled from the Cold Zone

Start with movement

- ▶ Stand up, walk around the room
- ▶ Try a walk like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, or Arnold Schwarzenegger
- ▶ Adopt an expanded body posture as if you were chairman of the board
- ▶ Watch Amy Cuddy on TED talk
- ▶ Start walking more quickly with an upright posture- shoulders back, chest forward, for few minutes
- ▶ Notice what this feels like in the body

Then add breath and practices

- ▶ 5 long slow IN breaths. Make sure your in breaths make it all the way down to your belly, not just the upper chest
- ▶ Practice saying out loud and commandingly “I want some cheese”
- ▶ Practice Mindfulness of the body- start with legs and arms if core is uncomfortable
- ▶ Draw a bowl or circle Mindfully- feel the sensation of pencil on paper- go very slowly
- ▶ Practice throwing a ball or object with therapist or trusted friend

Aim for *small* improvements not large miracles.

Aim to practice being more settled several times a day.

Be curious and kind while practicing!

Ways to expand or strengthen the Optimal Zone

- ▶ Social engagement
- ▶ Learning how to play and have fun
- ▶ Learning to rest if too busy
- ▶ Learning how to set small pleasure goals if too exhausted
- ▶ Psychotherapy
- ▶ Mindfulness classes
- ▶ Trauma Sensitive Yoga classes
- ▶ Attention to healthy eating, sleeping, exercise and self care
- ▶ Find something with play, meaning and purpose if in the cold zone
- ▶ Empty out the diary somewhat if in the hot zone- create space for play and connection to significant others