
Environment & You

THE PRACTICAL PRIMER

When your surroundings are just right, you experience a lightness of being. Your body feels light, and everything seems natural. You feel relaxed. You are in harmony with your physical surroundings, and you feel an inner emotional peace.

This lightness is what we desire. It's the way we want our bodies to feel. We feel light when the place we're in is serene. We may move naturally, even playfully. There is ease to the way we walk across the room; there is fluidity to our movements. When we sit in a chair, it feels good. It feels comfortable. We feel peaceful within. When the environment is the most sublime, we may even feel like we're flying, floating or weightless.

If you are working in your own Body Knowledge Styles, your body feels light, not heavy, most of the time. When we feel heavy, it feels like we are walking in mud to get to where we want to go. The Body Knowledge Dance can tell you whether you are feeling light or heavy. That is, any movement, done with intention, can reveal the body's truth.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENT?

Environment is the context in which you and your body experience the world. Everything in your surroundings affects your body. By environment, I don't mean just your physical environment. I mean your mental environment—your mind—and your emotional environment, too. When your thoughts are full of static, your mind feels taxed. A free mind is a light mind, an agile mind that can think purposefully and clearly.

The body can store emotional weight and can feel heavy with negative or neglected emotional states. She can pick up emotional static from others, and she can feel agitated.

So it's not just your physical environment—your home, your office; it's the music you play; it's the message on your phone. It's your relationships—the richness of them in your life. Your thoughts

~ *Your Body Awesome!* ~

and beliefs create your mental environment. Your thoughts, for instance, about money, can either make you feel light or heavy. You can feel empowered or burdened. This creates the frame in which your body functions in the world.

It's so human to want to be around people who are like you. That's an environment, too. It can be encouraging and supportive to be around people who resonate with you. When you go to the health club, you feel more comfortable exercising with people with whom you feel you have a lot in common with. When you go out to a social occasion, you're going to be more comfortable with people who dress up or dress down the way you do. When the environment around you feels foreign, you may feel disheartened. Your body may tense up to let you know this isn't your place—or at least, signal that you need to negotiate it differently.

There are certain places and times when we want to feel surrounded by like-minded people. Often that need is stronger when we take on a new experience. Or when we want to be introspective or processing an emotional situation.

The trick to all of this navigating is to know your Body Knowledge Style. In some situations, you may feel comfortable and you may find it easy to adapt, but in others you won't.

MATCH YOUR STYLE

Being conscious of your BKS Style—organized (*O*), analytical (*A*), spontaneous (*S*), or inspirational (*I*)—helps you create or influence environments that match your style. You can't always control your environment, but you know your style when you're in that type of environment. You'll compromise. You adjust the time you spend in that environment, or you change an aspect of that space. When you are conscious of your style, you make good choices about how you move with your body in that environment.

In this Practical, just as with *Eating & You*, the five senses come to the fore. I do believe that being tuned into your sensory input—one of the components of the Body Knowledge language—helps you to cultivate that conscious relationship with your body in every environment.

Start now to notice how your body responds to the visual, aural, olfactory and kinesthetic awareness of your environments.

Does clutter bother you?

Do you notice if **just one thing** is out place?

If a room is clean, how does your body respond?

Or does she notice?

~ *Environment & You* ~

When you see a lush waterfall, how does your body feel?

Calm?

Energized?

Does your pulse go up? or down?

Notice five beautiful things in your environment:

A flower

A scent

A musical note

A texture

A Child's Face

How do these inspire your body?

Do you sit up straighter?

Do you relax a little more?

Do you smile?

Is your environment comfortable in this moment?

Are you too hot, too cold or just right?

Do you wish there was a breeze?

Or do you wish it would just stop raining?

Nature plays a big role in how we experience our environments. Our bodies are tuned to nature, even if we're not nature-oriented. Our bodies wake up with the sun and start to feel sleepy when the light fades. You have probably heard about people in Alaska who have seen the midnight sun. That's when the sun is so far to the north that it's up for days and days, and everything is light. In the winter, though, light near the Arctic Circle can be so dark and dreary that people use light boxes to keep their bodies on a cycle of waking and sleeping.

Cleanliness and order also influence our environments. We each have different levels of tolerance for clutter. Some people have a high tolerance, while others simply can't function if their space is cluttered.

When we take our bodies to so many different kinds of places, it can be hard to sort out our BKS Styles. That's where the Body Knowledge Dance comes in. Move with it, feel it in your body. Your Style will emerge. From there, you can make decisions about how to create your environments to serve your purpose, rather than detract from your experience.

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Review your rankings from Chapter 3 in the Environment & You Practical, and write them in here.

- 1 ___ Your predominant style
- 2 ___ A style that sometimes governs your approach
- 3 ___ A style that comes up occasionally
- 4 ___ A style that least describes the way you function in this area

Check this list of how the styles apply specifically to the Environment & You Practical. Make any adjustments to your rankings if necessary:

ORGANIZED (*O*)

You need orderly space. You have a place for everything.

You need “white space” around you to feel comfortable—open, clean, uncluttered space. If you have a junk room, the rest of your house is uncluttered, and you can close the door to your junk room.

You may not like noisy spaces. They feel disorderly to you.

ANALYTICAL (*A*)

If something's not quite right in your environment, you want to delve into why in order to solve the problem.

When you analyze your environment, you take in all facets of the situation.

When the emotional climate is out of balance for you, you are willing to spend time processing it so you understand the situation better.

SPONTANEOUS(*S*)

You may have a cluttered space, which you totally ignore.

You may thrive on the activity level in noisy restaurants.

You are a social person. You surround yourself with creative, outgoing people.

You like a supportive emotional climate.

You are not very materialistic.

INSPIRATIONAL(*I*)

You decorate your space with words and pictures that inspire and encourage you.

You like emotional climates where you feel encouraged. You thrive when you feel supported. As a result, you give a lot of compliments to people.

A beautiful environment makes you excited about the activities taking place there, whether it's social, leisure or business.

You love nature. You really thrive when you're connected to animals, plants, rocks and sky.

SYNCHRONICITY

When your environment is so familiar and comfortable you no longer notice it, then it's time to still yourself and experience it from a fresh point of view. Once you have identified your predominant style, try exaggerating it for a moment while you scan your environment. Are there inconsistencies? Is anything there intruding on your comfort level which you may not notice, but will certainly intrude you're your performance? Or perhaps something is missing that will improve your enjoyment of your activity in that environment? The presence or absence of specific details that are consistent with your style may affect you and your body more than you realize, so now that you know, be aware.