

## **Clip 1: Beginning: What is embodied healing?**

Embodied healing is supporting our bodies in making good choices even under stress; that is, making decisions and taking actions that reflect what we value, rather than acting from our strategies to survive. After the effects of trauma are felt, embodied healing practices can help us reopen the window, adjusting our tolerance for stress, so that when we face something challenging, we are able to access more choices of how to respond by involving the body. It is our bodies' versions of grassroots organizing -- a bottom-up approach beginning with the struggle for resilience that lives in our tissues, bones and muscles. The practices supporting embodied healing range from "emotional first aid," helping us get out of the emergency phase, to joining with the broadest views of our situation to gather ourselves around our commitments, or helping us to speak aloud the important necessary things during a big time of change.

When I started learning about embodied healing, I was skeptical about ever seeing my way beyond the maintenance mode. I had things to work on that felt very immediate and urgent. I also felt like some of my instinctual habits in surviving were either still serving me or I wasn't fully aware they were even there; they were pretty deeply conditioned. Staci Haines and Richard Strozzi-

Heckler, two popular trainers in somatic coaching, talk about an arc of somatic transformation in which I knew what I was committed to, as a leader and as an educator, but I was still learning about what made me experience safety, connection and dignity. And that was/is an OK place to begin. I didn't have to be bought-in to the big picture or the possibilities that might come with a new shape. To find some relief from the ways we are really suffering or burning out, we just need to be curious enough to learn about our current somatic shape, the ways in which our body is our self. To begin working with me as a Unitarian Universalist, we just need to be curious about the First Principle dignity of our body *as* a self -- not separated from our mind or intellect -- but composing the complexity that is our life, as individuals, as a faith.