

# 4 Elements for Stress Reduction (Earth Air Water Fire)

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- **EARTH : GROUNDING , SAFETY** in the PRESENT /REALITY.... *take a minute or 2 to "land" ... to be here now... place both feet on the ground, feel the chair supporting you.... Look around & notice 3 new things...What do you see.... What do you hear ?*

• [Attention is directed outwards to the reality of safety in the present]

- **AIR: BREATHING** for CENTERING

Breathing –you can do your favourite breathing exercise here. Option: breathing in through your nose (for abdominal breathing) as you count 4 seconds then hold for 2 and then breathe out for 4 seconds. *Take about a dozen deeper slower breaths like this.*

[Attention is directed inwards to your centre]

- **WATER : CALM & CONTROLLED** -switch on the RELAXATION RESPONSE

*....do you have saliva in your mouth?....make more saliva....(explanation –when you are anxious or stressed your mouth often "dries" because part of the stress emergency response (sympathetic N S) is to shut off the digestive system. So when you start making saliva you switch on the digestive system again (parasympathetic N S) & the relaxation response –that is why people are offered water or tea or chew gum after a difficult experience-A Spanish surgeon uses this production of saliva to train patients to ignore pain while he performs surgery without anaesthetics -when you make saliva your mind can optimally control your thoughts & your body.*

[Attention is directed to producing saliva & becoming calmer, focused & more in control]

- **FIRE LIGHT** up the path of your IMAGINATION -power of imagination > will power.

*Bring up the image of your SAFE PLACE (or some other RESOURCE) –where do you feel it in your body? Install with brief slow BLS / butterfly hugs.*

[Attention is directed to the feelings of safety/calm/etc. in your body]

*Option: this can be a way of introducing the Safe Place exercise as the 4th element, especially when client needs stabilisation first*