

**Given Together**  
**Online Course, Spring 2016**  
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**Transition to Week 2**

In our opening session, I introduced the basic theme for the two online courses planned for this spring. We find ourselves in a world that seems to us indifferent or hostile; we do not feel at home or at ease. The TSK Vision tells us that this situation can be traced to the way that we occupy space. In turn, this depends on our limited understanding of the space we occupy. As the first paragraph of the ‘Space Field’ essay puts it, the self—as the one who knows—is located in space in a particular way. It appears as the bystander, standing ‘outside’ what is observed. Our approach will be to work with, expand, and gradually transform this ‘bystander’ orientation, as well as the understanding of space that supports it.

The first step is to become more attentive to space itself. To start this process, we did an exercise based on a phrase from p. 104 of the essay: “A comprehensive starting point . . . is appreciation for the active allowing and accommodation of space.” This is one to do practice for the coming week. You can do it at any time. Look for ways to remind yourself to do this, because the normal tendency is to fall back into ordinary ways of experiencing and forget about other possibilities.

Note that this is not an appreciation for the *idea* of space. It means actually appreciating space, rather than giving all our attention to the objects that appear in space. Looking at the objects on my desk as I type, I can appreciate the space that they occupy. Reflecting for a moment on my own body, I can appreciate the space that allows me to be here. ‘Appreciation’ here relates in part to a feeling of gratitude (no space, no existence!). But is also just a recognition or sensitivity.

In addition to appreciating space, we want to begin to explore how the self is located in space. Here is a practice for doing this: be aware that you are ‘here’; that you are located at the center of your own experience. A good way to do this is to focus on the sense that you ‘inhabit’ your body. In other words, cultivate a sense that you—your very self—are embodied in the world.

It may strike you that this is quite different from the bystander-observer model that the reading introduces. Making that comparison is a fruitful question for inquiry, but don’t make it the central focus. For now, we just want to get a sense of the self as inhabiting space, right here, in the body.

Next week, we will start to look more closely at what it actually means for the self to be ‘here’. Here’s a short passage from the first book in the TSK series that raises this question:

*The popular meditative injunction to ‘Be here now’ is seen from the Great Space perspective as being probably misleading. On one hand, it might be interpreted as invoking the ordinary sense of ‘here’ and ‘the present’. On the other, it might seem to refer to a kind of fleeting, immaculate sensum-like ‘here’ which must be apprehended. Such orientations are a perpetuation of the restrictive focal setting and its emphasis on locatedness, etc.*

*Time, Space, and Knowledge, p. 85*

(‘Sensum’ = a very small unit of immediate sensory experience.)

In doing these practices and reviewing the reading, let your inquiry be relaxed, alive, and dynamic. Enjoy!