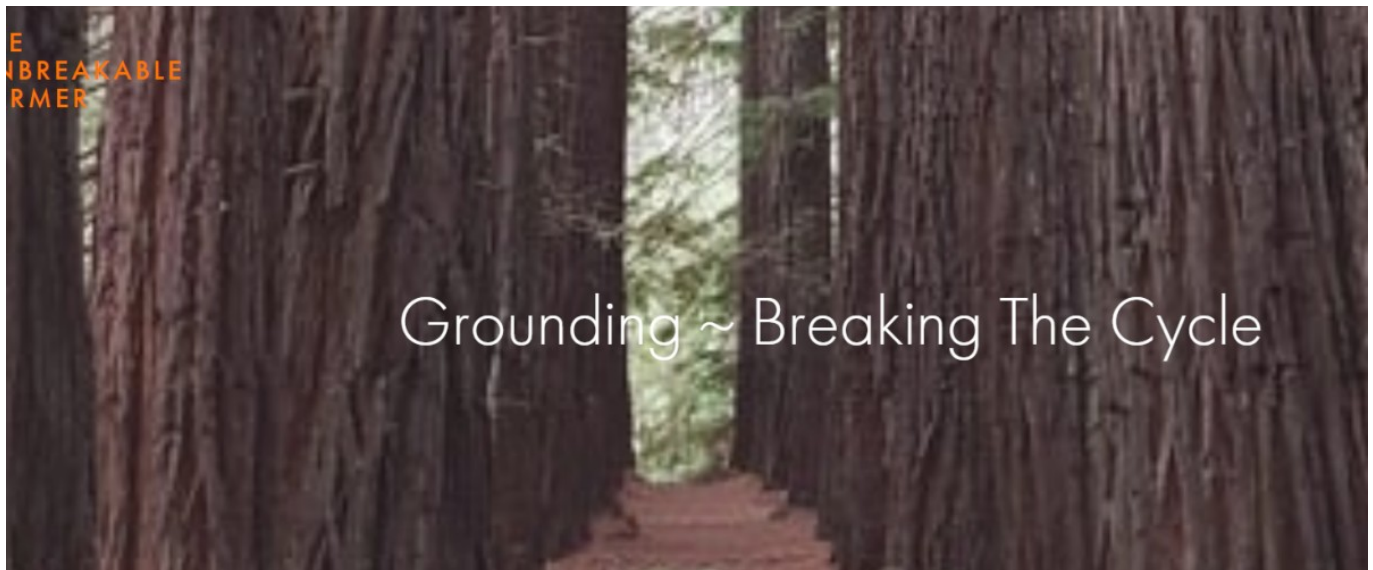


GROUNDING - BREAKING THE CYCLE



[Warren Davies](#) - The Unbreakable Farmer
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Grounding techniques are a group of strategies that helps keep someone in the present.

They help someone to regain their mental focus from an often intensely emotional state. Grounding skills can be helpful in managing overwhelming feelings or intense anxiety that can stem from extended stress or as a result of a traumatic event. I was first exposed consciously to Grounding techniques recently but discovered after further research that many of the strategies that I employ to cope with stress or anxiety were also Grounding techniques.

Recently after being involved and witnessing a very traumatic event, I found myself struggling to process what had happened. I was suffering from shock, flashbacks, low mood, and was having trouble concentrating and sleeping. After a week, these symptoms had not alleviated and actually started to intensify, so I decided to reach out for some help to get back on track.

Realising that I was going to need some professional help I reached out to Dervla Loughnane, the CEO, and Founder of Virtual Psychologist to see what I could do to get back on top of things.

Dervla suggested some grounding strategies to try and arrest the cycle that was playing out both mentally and physically.

A number of the strategies are listed below but I focused on two, breathing exercises and one that I thought was a bit left of centre but really worked, walking barefoot as much as I could to connect with the earth. As a farmer and having an ingrained connection to the land, Dervla said that this strategy was vitally important being directly grounded to the earth would be of great benefit.

The breathing strategy consisted of Breathing in through the mouth for the count of 5, hold for the count of 6 and breath out for the count of 7. Do this 4 times in total, three times per day. This helped regulate the anxiety to a certain extent and helped with the sleeping.

The barefoot strategy took a bit of getting my head around, probably because I started with the mindset that it was mumbo jumbo, but to my surprise, it actually worked. I tried, over a number of days, to walk around barefooted as much as possible, relaxing and breathing as I was walking. While

going through this process we took a family drive to the Redwood Forest at Warburton in Victoria and connected with nature and the surrounds. It is a serene, mystical place, a perfect place to walk barefoot, so I did with great benefits to my wellbeing, it was so connecting, and if you focused you could feel the energy.



Now it sounds odd, but imagine about walking barefoot down a beach, sand between your toes, How do you feel? What are your emotions and mood like? What are you focusing on? Well walking on a beach is a Grounding technique. But there is also a scientific angle, there is lots of evidence that shows it decreases cortisol levels. Cortisol is a stress hormone released by the adrenal glands. It's important for helping your body deal with stressful situations, as your brain triggers its release in response to many different kinds of stress. However, when cortisol levels are too high for too long, this hormone can hurt you more than it helps.

To connect with the here and now, do something (or several things) that will bring all your attention to the present moment. Be sure to keep your eyes open while you're grounding yourself so you're aware of everything that's going on around you. If you notice that you're slipping into a flashback or a dissociative state, try some of these grounding techniques listed below.

Sound

Turn up the radio or blast your favorite song. Talk out loud about what you see, hear, or what you're thinking or doing. Call a loved one. Put on some nature sounds such as birds chirping or waves crashing. Read out loud, whether it's a favorite children's book, a blog article, or the latest novel.

Touch

Hold an ice cube and let it melt in your hand. Put your hands under running water. Take a hot or cool shower. Grab an article of clothing, a blanket, or a towel and knead it in your hands or hold it to your cheek. Concentrate on what it feels like. Rub your hand lightly over the carpet or a piece of furniture, noting the texture. Pop some bubble wrap. Massage your temples. If you have a dog or cat, cuddle and pet him or her. Drink a hot or cold beverage.

Smell

Sniff strong peppermint, which also has the benefit of having a soothing effect. Light a scented candle or melt scented wax. Get some essential oils that remind you of good times (freshly cut grass, rain, clean laundry, or sugar cookies, for example) and smell one.

Taste

Bite into a lemon or lime. Suck on a mint or chew peppermint or cinnamon gum. Take a bite of a pepper or some hot salsa. Let a piece of chocolate melt in your mouth, noticing how it tastes and feels as you roll it around with your tongue.

Sight

Take a mental inventory of everything around you, such as all the colors and patterns you see, the sounds you hear, and the scents you smell. Saying this out loud is helpful too. Count all the pieces of furniture around you. Put on your favorite movie or TV show. Play a distracting game on your tablet, computer, or smartphone. Complete a crossword puzzle, sudoku, word search, or other puzzles. Read a book or magazine.

Other

Write in a journal about how you're feeling or keep a list of prompts handy that you can use to decide what to write about. Write a letter or card to someone you care about. Dance. Stretch your arms, neck, and legs. Go for a walk or run. Take 10 slow, deep breaths. Go to another room or area for a change of scenery.