

Figure 3.2: Noticing What It Feels Like to Be Authentic

Learning who you are as an authentic teacher can take several years and requires constant reflection on yourself; your students' responses to your practice; and the effectiveness of your teaching methods, activities, and structures. This activity can help you begin to reflect on what works and what doesn't. It will also give you a technique to help you physically distinguish when something you do is or is not congruent with your authentic self.

1. Think back to a lesson you taught or an activity you facilitated that did not work at all—a lesson where you felt uncomfortable and your students did not engage. If you have not experienced this as a teacher yourself, think about a time when one of your teachers did this.
 - What was it about that lesson or activity that made it so unsuccessful?
 - What were you doing as the teacher?
 - What were the students doing? How were they responding?

- What resonated with you the most?
- What did you hear or notice that did not seem to resonate with the students?
- What thoughts were going through your mind about yourself, your teaching, and your students?
- How did your body feel (notice if you were tense or relaxed, if your breathing changed, if your heart rate changed, if you felt anxious, if you were sweating, or if you had other physical responses)?

2. When we are doing, saying, or creating anything that is congruent with our true selves, it feels different in our bodies than when we are trying to be like someone else. For this activity, we will ask you to engage in several visualizations so you can feel that difference in your body.
 - a. Remember a time when you felt totally in your element—doing something you felt competent in, that aligned with your values, and that you enjoyed doing. Imagine being in that moment again.
 - What are you doing?
 - What are you feeling?
 - How does your body feel? (Are your eyes, jaw, and forehead relaxed or tense? Is your neck tight or not? Are your shoulders up and tense or low and relaxed? Is your breathing slow and full or short and quick? How is your heart rate? Are you warm, cold, sweaty, or comfortable?)

- What are you doing?

- How does your body feel? (Repeat the body scan from the previous prompt.)

- This is important to notice and memorize about yourself because this is your barometer to know when you are or aren't doing, saying, or creating something aligned to your true self. As you reflect and grow as a teacher, recognizing what feels congruent with who you are and what doesn't will help you become a more authentic teacher.