

## How I Use “Self Body State Using Watercolours”

### ***Materials Needed***

- Watercolours
- Mixing Palette
- Paint Brushes
- Water
- Either draw a body outline or download the one I included in the resource section

I like to encourage clients to use watercolours because:

The very nature of watercolour, is spontaneity, making this medium the perfect complement to painting intuitively.

Unlike other mediums, watercolours are semi-transparent, displaying a glassy feel, making them more appropriate for revealing emotional state, in the moment.

This activity is especially beneficial for clients who come into a session feeling like the world is on their shoulders, and feel weighted down by intrusive negative thoughts.

Because clients are forced to encounter something different such as this, any automatic negative thought patterns tend not to be absent (well, for at least the initial stages of this exercise anyway). Negative automatic thinking is soon overtaken by conscious thoughts that we're doing something unusual, and so a shift occurs in our thinking.

Just lying down is a very unnatural thing to do, especially on the floor of my practice!

The first stage of this exercise helps the client to focus, and centre themselves by concentrating on their breathing.

By visualising the breath circulating throughout the body, the client will generally have an indication as to where they feel their breath, hits an obstacle or doesn't flow as freely as it does in other areas.

When they're lying down, I ask my client the following questions. This is so they can just focus on the answers, rather than paint as they describe at the same time, because I want them to concentrate on their experience, in that moment, rather than physically taking them away from that conscious experience by asking them to paint.

What's the colour of your breath?

Does it flow freely or swirl ?

What colour is it when it leaves your body, and where else does it travel to?

Does the colour change?

What do the colours mean to you?

How intensive are the colours?

What does the colour intensity mean for you?

I will make note of their answers this usually takes about 5 minutes in total, and then I'll ask them to slowly get up and we'll discuss what I've taken note of, and to make sure I've understood it properly. I will ask for clarification from my client to make certain of this, and that I'm correct in my notes.

It is at this point I ask them to paint using a template (which is available in the download section) and they can use my notes as a guide. This way I find that the client isn't trying to remember from memory, what they experienced five minutes ago, leaving them free to concentrate on painting.

This is a great exercise I like to use with clients whose emotions are heightened and need some help in becoming grounded.

Once the client has finished their painting, we take some time to reflect and see how their painting reflects how they felt at the time of lying down. I often use this to check out with them a couple of minutes before the session ends, to see if they feel differently now, compared to how they felt in their painting.

I like to use this periodically with a client, to see if there are any patterns that can be identified through the medium and movement of colour.