



# *Grounded*

by Monica Herald



# About the author

I'm a writer, a storyteller, a listmaker, a teacher, a daughter, a sister, a friend. I'm an artist, a joy-seeker, a divine-lover, a healer. I've come here by twist and turn, but always guided, never alone—even when I thought I was solo.

I'm passionately curious about the role stories play in our lives. And the power of listening. Real listening, where the listener and the speaker feel seen and heard and met. I believe we need more time outside, more time learning from Mama Nature, who isn't always super nurturing—I've found she's actually quite ferocious sometimes. Thresholds, edges, the in-betweens beckon and fascinate me: the spaces where Mama Nature is still wild and unruly and those places in our lives that are also that way.

I hang out on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Pinterest](#). Or there's always [my website](#); [I'd love to hear from you](#).

## Monica





What does it actually mean to be grounded?

Have you asked that before?

Or maybe someone's asked you?

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Well, for me, to be grounded means that I'm present. Instead of being in my head or being not-here, I'm actually present in the moment to what's going on around me *and* I'm present in my body. I notice noises in the space around me, or movements of animals, bugs, wind on things. I actually hear what people I'm talking to are saying, rather than hearing part of it and missing snippets of the conversation.

I'm aware of my body—of what it wants to eat and when it is hungry; of what needs to move or of what is sore. Our bodies are super smart and they know when we need sleep or need motion. Our bodies tell us we feel safe or restless or tired. Yet so often, I've missed the cues.

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Grounding helps me pay attention to the cues and grounds (haha!) everything I do. Usually it also involves the super basic stuff that I forget when I get stressed or overwhelmed.

Here are ten of my favorite ways.





# 10 ways to stay grounded

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A photograph of a person from the waist down, wearing a white lace dress and standing barefoot in a grassy field. The person's hands are clasped in front of them. The background shows a natural setting with grass and some dry leaves.

# 1

## Stand in the dirt!

No, really, I mean it.

Go outside and stand in the dirt. Put your bare feet into the ground, and take a few breaths. If you can, put your hand onto a tree trunk. Feel the bark. Concentrate on your toes. Move them around in the dirt a bit. Connect to nature's knowing. Hold the solidity of the tree and let it share that with you. Listen to the roots of the tree, deep in the dirt, and let your feet stand in the ground. Maybe you notice the leaves or the grass or the squishiness of the dirt.

What's it feel like?





## Dance.

So often we forget to actually be present in our bodies. So instead of being grounded, we end up free floating in the sky, in the clouds, in our minds.

Put on a piece of music that's new to you, and ask your body how it'd like to move. Then listen. And keep asking as you dance. Wait for the music. Don't just jump into your go-to-move. That could be fun! But it won't necessarily ground you. Five minutes. That's all it takes, although less or more could also work.

I love how Christine teaches [this](#).



# 3

## Cook something.

By hand. Follow a recipe. Or don't.

I love to chop up vegetables. And clean them all by hand. I especially love making soups when I need to be grounded. Something about the smell of the lingering dirt on the vegetables mixing with my hands just brings me back to the moment. The repetitiveness of washing and chopping and prepping the food roots me firmly in my body. It pulls me from my mind.

And afterwards? When the food's finished, I get incredible, nourishing food that feeds my body and grounds me even more.





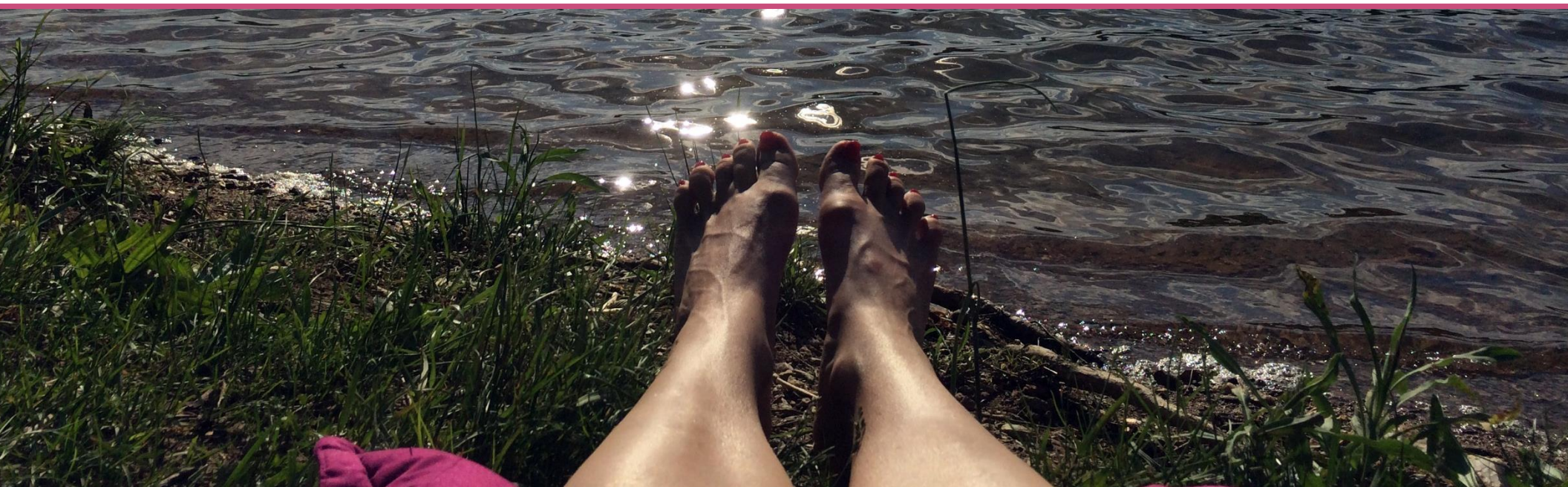
# 4

There's something about water in motion that returns me to the moment. Ocean water with its waves, lake water with its ripples, creek water with its trickling or rushing... it all has the same effect for me: serenity and grounding.

Some days I'll touch the water, other days, I'll just sit. You can watch the shadows on the water, you can watch the fish or insects. If there are trees around, I'll sometimes watch the branches.

The lake near my house has a log that, on sunny days, hosts a little brothel of turtles.

## Sit at water.





# 5

Lie down or sit comfortably in a chair... Notice your breathing; don't try to change it, just bring your awareness to your breathing as it occurs. Follow your breath in and out for a few counts. Then, starting with your toes, bring your attention to each part of your body. Your toes. The tops of your feet. Your ankles, calves. Your knees—the fronts of your knees AND the backs of your knees. And so on. Continue until you have gotten through as much of your body as you'd like. You might focus on listening to one part of your body, or you might check in with different parts of your body.

**Pay attention  
to your body.**



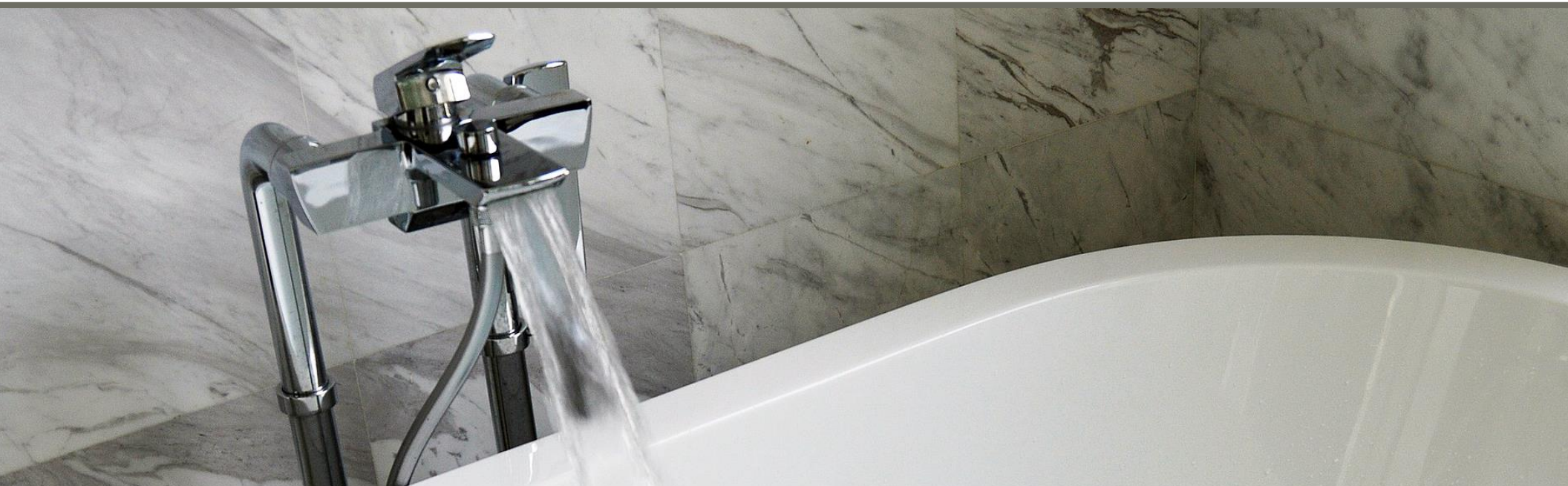


# 6

One of the best ways I know to clear out all of the extra gunk is to toss some Epsom salts into the tub and soak. The Epsom salts will clear out your energy field and allow you to start from scratch—almost like a reset.

If you were curious about the science behind it, I could tell you that it increases your body's magnesium levels (which helps with energy). All you need is 2 cups of Epsom salts and to soak for at least 15 minutes. I love to create my own scented Epsom Salts using essential oils (lavender is great for calming) and then water so hot that it borders too hot.

## Take a soaking bath.





## Play with an animal.

Have you ever had a cat or a dog? Maybe your cat was a dog-cat? Well, animals can teach you so much about how to be present and grounded. My acupuncturist has a dog, Adam, who helps her with treatments. He's often there when I go to her office. When I settle down, and speak without agitation, he usually calms down and lies on the floor, rather than nudging me and demanding my attention.

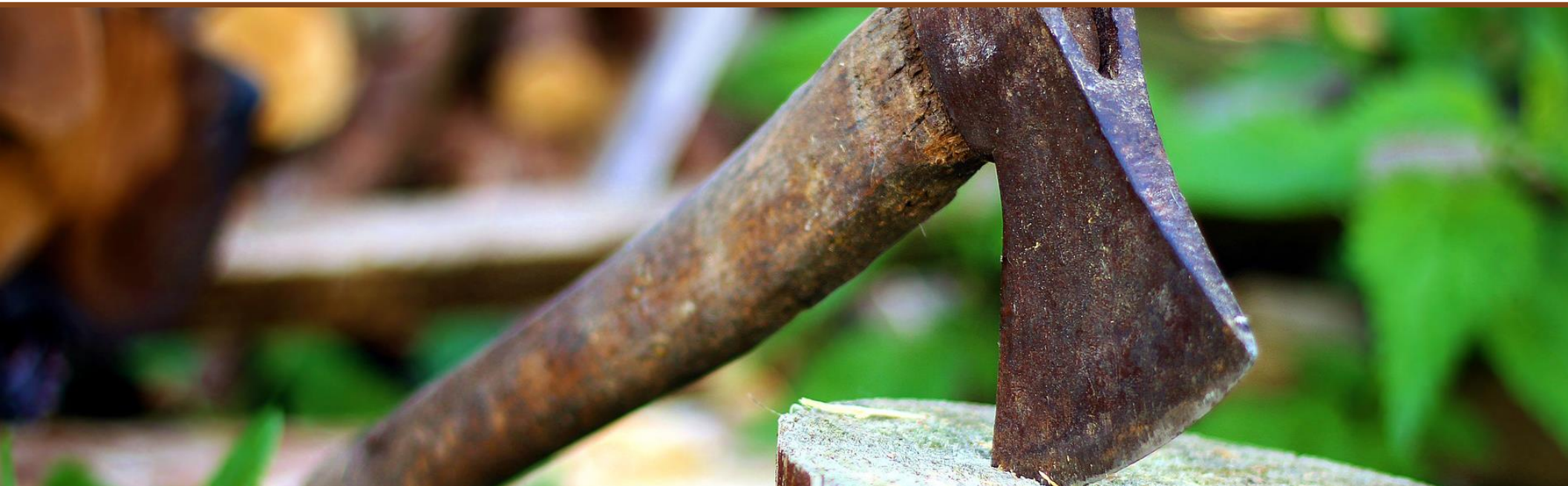
I recently acquired kittens, and boy don't they make me show up in the present moment. Playing with them could go on for hours and hours.



There's very little that is more grounding than working the land. There's a farm where I often volunteer. One of the most grounding things I do there is wash dishes: feed dishes and water dishes, bowls and big grain storage containers. I could easily spend four hours washing and drying. Meditative.

Other things I did at the farm included clearing weeds, moving firewood, digging holes, and placing poles—all physical activity things which keep me moving. And exert energy. They force me to tire my body. And be present in my body. Grounded.

## Work the land.





# 9

## Go for a walk outside.

It sounds simple, right? And it is.

Go for a walk outside. Notice your surroundings. What's the weather like? Where's the sun? Or the clouds? Can you feel wind or air moving? What's around you? Are there animals? People? Maybe vehicles or buildings?

Don't listen to music and leave your phone at home.

Practice noticing!



I know—they're two completely different ends of the spectrum. Hands or feet. Neck or ankles.

Leg warmers go, well, on the bottom of your legs: your calves and ankles to be precise. I wore leg warmers for months to help bring my attention down my body. This helped me stay grounded and in my body.

There are many stones that help with grounding, but my favorite one is red garnet. Our root chakra is red, and I think part of it is that the red in the garnet aligns with the red in the root chakra.

10

**Wear  
leg warmers  
or garnets.**





# M

## My fine ground.

My favorite way to ground isn't on the list. Every morning I drink a cup of espresso that I've made on the stove in a moka brought back from when I lived in Italy. I drink from a small cup and use a tiny sugar spoon. I savor my drink: its smell, taste...it reminds me of my family in Italy AND roots me in that moment of beginning my day.

Grounding doesn't have to be big or huge—added to our already-too-full-to-do-list. Five minutes to drink my espresso. That's it. But that five minutes? It's integral to the rest of my day. The ritual grounds me.





# Bonus Round

*Two options follow, lined & unlined*





# Finding *your* ground.

What brings you back to the present moment,  
back to your body?

Start to notice and pay attention to the  
choices you're making throughout the day.  
Maybe you already know or have some ideas  
about what it is that works *for you*.

Write them down here:

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*this book was made with love*

