Out of My Space

Finding and holding your own space

Working with horses, I learned to establish my own space and hold my position so that the horse could rely on me as its leader. This experience led to the idea of *Out of My Space*, which means recognising my own space and holding my position without letting everything that comes from outside or from within affect me unchecked, even when I feel attacked or overwhelmed by my own emotions.

Find your position
Stand up and begin by noticing how you stand now. Feel the ground beneath your feet and become aware of your body as a whole.

Now explore what happens when you take up more space. Let your posture change as you find your full height. Give your shoulders, arms and the rest of your body the room they need. Move until you find a way of standing that allows you to experience your own size and strength.

Stay with the position you have found. Notice how you experience yourself when you occupy your full space. Let your attention move between your feet on the ground, your body and the space extending around you.

Remain there and notice what happens when you occupy the space available to you without pulling back. Follow your own experience as you stand there and discover what it feels like to be fully present in your own space.

Recognise your space
Become aware of the space around you while remaining in your position. Where does your space extend? How close can something come before you want to establish a different distance?

Think of the horse as an example. A horse has its own size and strength, yet you can establish your position in relation to it, making clear that it needs to give you room. Your own space is something you can experience and maintain, even when something larger or more powerful approaches you.

Bring this awareness to your own life. The space you occupy remains yours, regardless of what you are confronted with. Notice what is happening while you remain aware of your non-negotiable personal space.

Give your space a form
Now express this experience visually. Use lines, shapes, colours or textures to explore your personal space and the position you hold within it. Let your image reflect how you experience your space and what happens when it is challenged. Show yourself occupying your full space, standing your ground and remaining fully present within it. Include yourself in the composition and express your relationship to the space around you, allowing the image to show how you hold your position without withdrawing from your own space.

Name your space
Look at the space you have created and give it a name. Find words that express what you want this space to stand for and what you choose to allow into it.

Note it down, using colours, shapes, images, symbols, letters, words, etc. Say it out loud and notice how it lands, letting it settle and take root.

Define your own words for the boundary
Decide on the words you want to use when you need to establish your space. Add them to your image using colours, shapes, images, symbols, letters, words, etc. They are yours to use when you need to make your boundary clear.

Bring it into your body
Stand up and look at your image. Let your body take the position you have given yourself on the page. Find a movement that expresses how you occupy your space and establish your boundary. Adjust the movement until it expresses what you want it to express. Notice what happens when you hear yourself say these words owning your space.

Repeat the movement and let your voice carry the words while remaining aware of your own space. Give yourself time to experience what it is like to stand your ground and state your boundary aloud.

Work with what comes too close
Think of a situation in your life where you want to protect your personal space. It might involve someone else's behaviour or something happening within you that feels overwhelming. Take your place by recalling your image and engaging your body and voice. Say “Out of my space” using your words and notice what happens as you set a boundary while holding the scenario in mind.

You can experience strong feelings without letting them take over. Acknowledge what's happening within you while choosing how much space you want to give it. Likewise listen to what others say to you without carrying it all yourself.

Stay present, noticing what distance feels right and what action is needed to maintain it. Allow your response to emerge naturally as you remain rooted in your sovereignty standing tall in your own power.

Bring your experience into your everyday life
Display your creation as a reminder that your personal space is always yours. That way, you can draw on this experience whenever your boundaries are tested.