Episode intro:

There is a way that our body processes and our brain processes that requires not thinking, and yes, I think stimulation, being in your body is one of the things that helps that to happen.

Welcome to the Art of Accomplishment where we explore how deepening connection with ourselves and others leads to creating the life we want with enjoyment and ease. I'm Brett Kistler here today with my co-host, Joe Hudson.

In VIEW work, we talk a lot about being in our body. There are practices and exercises in the courses where we are invited to feel into our sensory experience and speak from our head, our heart or our gut, accessing deeper wisdom beyond our intellect. Now, this can be very confusing to people when they approach this work for the first time as it most certainly was for me.

Today, we are going to explore what it means to cultivate awareness of what's going on in our body and how it can help us access different kinds of knowing and wonder in our lives.

Brett: Joe, what does it mean to be in your body? What makes that so important for this work?

Joe: Let's take that one at a time. The first one is: What does it mean to be in your body? The simplest way to feel that is to put part of your attention into your body. It's just as simple as that. If you talk, sometimes you can talk and your attention is fully on the other person. Sometimes when you talk, your attention is completely on what you want to say. Sometimes when you talk, you can put a percentage of your attention into your body, and then it changes the dynamic of both the listening and the talking. That's the easiest way to explain what it means to be in your body.

Brett: How does that work? What does it do then to be putting this attention in your body?

Joe: It makes it far less likely to lose yourself in a situation, meaning that to not speak from your truth, to not identify where you are in the conversation, to make it so that you are less likely to be caught up in emotions in a way in which you lose yourself or caught up in somebody else in a way that you lose yourself. It increases your awareness of yourself and your own system while you are in a conversation.

Brett: Interesting. There is almost sort of a paradox there because I think the practice of feeling into your body while you are having a business conversation, one might think that would get you lost in your emotions, but actually being lost in the emotion would be not recognizing it is there. Perhaps, having some awareness

on our body in a conversation can allow us to be alerted to the fact that maybe we are feeling fear or we are feeling triggered.

Joe: Correct. That's what it does. It brings awareness to your emotional or nervous system state while you are having the conversation. What I would invite is that people who are listening to this right now to right now put a certain amount of attention into your own body as you listen. Instead of hearing what I think it does because neurologically I don't have any studies that explain this or I haven't found them yet, but you can just a part of your attention in your body when you listen to me. You can feel the different quality of the listening. What does it do?

What's weird about it often when you have some attention in your body, especially when you are beginning, you might not even be tracking as well as you normally are what I am saying but all of the information is actually sinking in, meaning you could tell me what it is that I just said, but it doesn't feel like you are grappling with it in the same way. That's the other thing that being in your body does is it actually allows for a flow state to happen much quicker. It is why you see in acting or in sports or in music that people will often do some exercise that puts them in their body, that reminds them that their body is there and how it feels because it helps induce a flow state quicker.

Brett: It reminds me of an improv intro class I was at recently. Basically every one of the exercises actually involved a lot of movement. It was a fully embodied thing. It wasn't just come up with a line right now on the spot, but a lot of the actual improv involved turning and clapping in synchrony so your body had to do something at a certain time. You were forced to do something from your intuition.

Joe: That's right. It is interesting because the artists have really figured this out. They know it. To be very creative, this is a requirement, to be in your body. People who are doing art, especially any kind of theater or any kind of collaboration of jazz or something like that, really understand what this means. You don't have to explain to them because they have the felt experience of it, yet teams in businesses often don't utilize this tool at all. They will sit for a meeting for two or three hours straight as if that's the best way to be creative or solve problems.

Brett: I am kind of thinking of an opposite situation of being in your body. If you are in an interview and you are feeling really tight and constricted and your body is not wanting to be there and can't wait to get out of the hot seat, out of the spotlight, then that's the opposite of being in your body. The things that you say and the creativity that you have in those moments is very different from feeling in your body.

Joe: That's exactly how it works. If you are uncomfortable and you put the attention in your body, you immediately become more comfortable. If you try to get

out of it, which is a general principle that I carry with me everywhere, which is embrace the intensity. If I am having a business problem and I don't want to look at it, I look at it. If I am having an emotion I don't want to be with, I stay with it. If I have a conversation I am avoiding, I go have the conversation.

Brett: If there is discomfort there, feel the discomfort.

Joe: That's right. It immediately creates more presence, more creativity. How do we do that in our body? When I am saying speak from your body, that's what I am speaking to. Speak from the silence, I will say something like that, too. It is such a hard thing to put into words, but you literally get in touch with the silence. Right now you can get in touch with the silence in yourself. There is my voice, and that's taking a certain amount of frequency. But there is a whole bunch of frequency that's silent. If you pay attention to that silence or if you pay attention to the silence between what I am saying.

Brett: As I am doing that, I am having an interesting experience where I am going into feeling into my body to think. That's an interesting pattern there, but to feel into what I might say next. I expect there to be silence because the patterning is my body is not a part of this conversation. It's just sitting in a chair and I'm talking. I am a part of this conversation. My brain is a part of this conversation.

As I feel into the body, there is an expectation of silence but what I actually feel is there is something going on in there. There is a little bit of agitation. Say something. We are recording. Make sure it is good. That's present all the time, but for me to feel in and be with that gives me more access to what it is that I actually want to say.

Joe: Exactly. When you are just with the thing and then you let it speak, whether that's your body or silence or maybe it will be your head or your heart, whatever, it is literally just being with that aspect of yourself and seeing what it wants to say. A default for most Americans anyways is that we are coming from our head, and we are saying what it wants to say. But right now if you do this very easy experiment and you say: What does my head want to say? You listen to your brain. You say: What does my heart say? You listen to your heart. What does my body want to say? You listen to your whole body. They are different experiences. They have a different quality to them. They will want to say different things.

The way I conceive of this is that it is very much like they talk about the eight intelligences. Some people have more. Some people have less. We have different kinds of intelligences, and each of these intelligences, some of them speak naturally and some of them don't. Learning how to listen to them and learning how to speak their voice is really an important part of being able to master all the ways of knowing.

Brett: We did this in one of your courses where we did an exercise in our group where we spoke from our head, and then from our heart, and then from our gut. It was just a basic introduction of ourselves. My first impression of this was okay, this is kind of weird. How am I going to repeat my introduction and speak from a different part of my body? That doesn't make any intuitive sense to me, but as we went around the circle and did it, we found that the head introduction was just a lot of facts and data about who we are. Then speaking from the heart, simply from that instruction, it resulted in a lot more about who we are as people as an introduction. Then speaking from the gut, it really just resulted in a lot more about how we actually feel right now. Are we nervous? Are we scared? Are we hungry?

Each of those different levels being present in a conversation is a lot more information. Somebody could be listening to the facts and data about what you think you want in a conversation, but they are just not necessarily going to feel you as much as if they are really hearing what your needs are as a person.

Joe: Not only can you speak from them, you can listen from them. As I am talking right now, the person who is listening to this podcast can listen from their head, see what I am saying, try to understand it, decide if you think it is a good idea or bad idea that I am speaking about, or you can listen from your heart. What is that experience if you are listening from your heart? It has a different quality to it. There is less of a yes or no to it. There is less of a binary nature to it. It doesn't mean you believe everything that I am saying, but it doesn't mean you don't either. The idea of judging something to be right or wrong is far less important to the heart when you are listening from that place, or you can listen from your gut.

Some people just naturally listen from one of these places. Most people in America, their head, but there are some people who are very much operating from their gut all the time. It can be incredibly successful. I mean I know very successful business people who operate from their gut all the time, and I know very successful business people who operate from their head all the time. It is awesome because in this whole world there is it's better to act from your gut, better to act from your head, better to act from your heart. People have all these judgments, and they are all part of the same system. Essentially they are the same thing, but it's useful to make distinction so we can learn them so we can incorporate and integrate so we can see them all as one thing.

Brett: We do have a lot of this encoded into our culture. We say listen to your heart, and go with your gut. My gut instinct says… I have a gut feeling about this. We do have some of this encoded in our American culture, but a lot of it just seems to have become counter intuitive for many of us where we are more focused on the head and more focused on the logical answer and explanation. What makes that the case? What makes it that a population of us, a culture can largely feel less

tightly associated with our heart or our gut or other ways of knowing than our intellect?

Joe: My body says that's a really heady question. What does it matter if I know how it got here? As soon as we open up that door, then there is going to be an intellectual discovery, maybe a debate. Not that that is bad in any way, but what does it get us? As opposed to the experience of being able to experience each of these states and seeing what it does, when it is useful, how we can use it so that it makes our life more effective.

Just to say that's the body's response to it, and now intellectually, to answer your question, how does this happen? What I notice is that cultures that have really dismissed emotional intelligence really rely heavily on the intellect. The idea is that these emotions have caused me pain, and therefore, they need to be managed. That's where people fall into the intellect, which is brilliant and has so many benefits. I love debating. I think it is such a wonderful thing, to sharpen your mind and to see things clearly intellectually is really amazing. It can often teach you stuff about your emotional experience or your body experience.

It has a tendency to cut off those other forms of knowing, those other intelligences as do the others, too. You see people who are very much operating from the gut, and they have a bias against those operating from their intellect. You see this in relationships all the time, somebody who is more emotionally led and someone who is more intellectually led, or at least they think they are. They think they are more intellectually led, and you get to see them have problems and not understand each other. I see this is in relationships all the time.

Brett: What are some of the problems that can occur with an imbalance in the other direction, if somebody is entirely moving from their gut and maybe paying less attention to the heart and placing less attention in their intellect or disowning it?

Joe: What you often see is they have a far more greater propensity to believe their stories. People who are more intellectually driven, especially if they have really cultivated that, the world becomes more relative in a way. Not relative like moral relativity, but more like I see the truth in this and I can see the truth in this. I can believe this thought I am having, but I can also see the faults in the thought. That creates a tremendous amount of freedom. If you are not cultivating that kind of intellectual peacefulness is really what it amounts to, then your gut can take you into stories and you can believe them. Then they can drive you.

It is the same exact way that you see it with head people. People who have a propensity for head, they have emotions but they don't think they do. They are driving them but they can't recognize it. They will have an intellectual debate. You

will see them get angry, but they don't think there is any kind of emotional thing that's creating that. They don't see the cause and effect on the emotionality. It is the same thing, somebody who is very driven from the gut won't see how their stories are affecting them and controlling them in ways that are unconscious or not peaceful.

Brett: Maybe they walk into a room and start to feel angry, so they believe the anger means they have been wronged.

Joe: That's exactly right. They have a story about how they were wronged, but they don't question it. If you question it in front of them, they get more upset. It is really about finding and understanding all of the intelligences. It is not about one is better than the other, which is a natural step on the path of learning. I see people who are really intellectual, and all of a sudden they understand their body has all this wisdom. They start using the body wisdom, and then the body becomes the irrevocable truth and direct connection to God, intelligence and wisdom, which is not true either. The body can get confused as well, or the heart does. The heart can get confused as well. It is really about being able to listen to all three of them. It gives you a lot more clarity.

Brett: One of my favorite things you have ever said to me when I had a question around this topic is the body lies just as much as the mind. That's really fascinating to me because these different ways of understanding and knowing in the world are all being fed by imperfect data from the world around this that is biased based on our own experience. There is no gut knowing in us that has experienced the totality of human experience and knows everything.

Each of these different ways is optimized for different things. If we fluidly recognize and work with all of them, then we are best able to navigate a changing world.

Joe: When I said to you it's a lie, I am not saying that's not true but I think that might be a little bit confusing for people who are listening. I like to describe it like if I take a picture of you and then I walk two feet to the right and take another picture of you, both of those pictures are true. They are actually moments of time that are there, but they are both lies because they are going to capture different things. They are not going to be the entirety of the truth. It is the same thing. There are moments where our thoughts are capturing a small percentage of the truth or a large percentage of the truth, but it is never capturing all of the truth. It is the same with the body.

This is the really uncomfortable piece. We are limited to the capacity of our senses and our mind. There are things we will never be able to understand because of that, because our minds and our senses are limited. We cannot understand, for instance, some little itty bitty shrimp thing but it is not a shrimp. It is called a Mantis

shrimp, but it is not actually a shrimp. It has 12 color spectrum instead of the three, red, green and blue spectrum. It sees things we can never possibly ever imagine. We are never going to have an understanding like the Mantis shrimp or a dog for that matter. They will never understand things we can understand.

I think that's what makes people really uncomfortable. The truth of the fact that we don't know. We can't know. It doesn't mean we don't know what's right for us right now. It doesn't make life purposeless. It's just the humility of the fact that there is always going to be a mystery.

Brett: That notion of operating on our limited senses is interesting and another branching off point for this discussion. Something I and many other people have experienced doing this work is over time I've noticed that my sensory experience has actually become richer. I am able to feel a more subtle tactile sensation. Particularly socially if I am with people and I am placing awareness on my body, I will be able to notice something going on in them. Our social nervous systems have some kind of communication I wouldn't be picking up if I just parsed the words they said. Cultivating this heart, this gut and this connection to the body simply by placing awareness on the body I have been finding has been increasing my sensory awareness of actual, relevant communication with other people and my environment. What do you make of that?

Joe: When I was in my 20s, I made an album, a CD, some digital music thing. At the beginning of that, the way I listened to music was so different than at the end of that experience. When you dig into a bass line for three hours, you will never listen to a bass line the same way again. A studio engineer listens to music in a way that I will never listen to music, and you, because of your base jumping experience, feel wind in a way that I can never feel wind unless I put a lot of attention and time into it. It is the same thing with people who live in ice all the time. They have like 70 words for ice, and we have three or four.

There is a sensitivity that comes whenever you start putting your attention into something. It can seem like magic to people. When people see me do my one on one work, oftentimes they think it is magic. All it is is just years and years of cultivating the awareness in myself, and then extrapolating and seeing those patterns in other people. Things happen. The field of vision will change or the way we feel things will change, the tactile nature of it. Oftentimes it becomes more enjoyable and a little more overwhelming in waves. That's overwhelming, and now it is enjoyable, over time.

But then it can go deeper into that, too. It can go into really feeling being in touch with your mirror neurons or your social nervous system and start being in touch with other people. It can look like magic the same way it looks like magic when the

group of indigenous people go up into the hills before the tidal wave. They know it is coming because they have adapted to listening to nature for every day for decades, decades, and decades whereas we take a walk in the woods.

Brett: The experienced firefighter that suddenly has this intuition that everybody needs to get out before the floor collapses.

Joe: Correct. There is a lot of research on this. Blink by Malcolm Gladwell talks a lot about pattern recognition, intuition and how that happens in the brain, and then the neuroscience is getting more and more developed on it.

Brett: Ultimately whatever there is to say about the neuroscience, just the way the nervous system works is whatever patterns you are paying attention to and tuned to are going to become the ones that become processed in more fine detail.

Joe: That's right. As we learn to listen to our bodies, as we learn to listen to our hearts, it is amazing. If I am coaching a CEO who is an athlete, I will use the body metaphor all the time because they get it. If I am talking to a CEO who has had a really healthy Christian background, I will speak to the heart a lot because they really get that. That's been cultivated for years, years and years. The trick is to really cultivate all of them in a way they can start integrating it and see they are really the same thing.

Brett: That was an important part of my journey in this work. For myself, I had come from a strong athletic background where I had been working with flow in my body for years, but socially and in business I still had this constriction where I would frequently get into my head and then try to create an intellectual path forward through everything.

It wasn't until starting to see how I had already been doing this intuitive stuff with my body, just taking those examples from my life, if you are flying a wingsuit down a mountain, you don't have time to calculate wind speeds and trajectories. You just have to feel it. You can do all of that stuff in advance to give yourself a good map of plans and contingencies, but in the moment you don't have time for that. You just have to do it in your body. If you are cultivating that bodily awareness, the body will generate better solutions.

It was really interesting for me to realize that I had left that knowing in one realm where it served me very well, and then completely neglected it in much of the rest of my life until encountering this work.

Joe: What's interesting is oftentimes people understand it and then they will say I am just going to use that body intelligence for when the chips are down and when I have to act fast and I can't calculate. I think there's some intelligence to that. I mean obviously that's the best time to use that kind of intelligence, but there is a

space for that same body intelligence even when you have lots of time, even when you can calculate all the data. You see this happen all the time. People can spend months calculating all of the data to make a decision, and if they get in connection with the rest of their being, not just the intellect, that decision can be made far better and more effective. You see that all the time.

It is most acute when you are doing something like playing jazz or skydiving or in a clutch, shooting a three pointer. It is a useful thing to be in every conversation. I will say to the people who are listening again. How are you doing being in your body listening? Do you still have some attention in your body? What happens? Just notice a difference between how you hear me when you have some attention in your body and when you don't.

Brett: It is the way out of analysis paralysis. The episode we did in the Art of Accomplishment in feel over figure. In a business context, there can be many decisions where if you just keep researching for more facts and data to make your decision, depending on where you look, you will keep finding more evidence for or more evidence against or more evidence you don't know what you are doing so you determine you need more evidence. You can do that ad infinitum and then just be stuck in that logic, or at some point, if it is optimal to just make a decision even if it might be wrong and then collaborate your gut, then it can be helpful just to say with all the data I have right now, let me just process that into my body and see what comes up, then go with that and then pay close attention to the result, and repeat.

Joe: There is also the emotional side of that, too, which is like what's making you need to have the decision be right. What happens if you get it all wrong? What happens if you fail? To grieve all that before you make a decision can clarify your decision to no end.

Brett: If I fail, I will feel all of those bodily sensations associated with failure.

Joe: Right, exactly. Go feel those in advance and then you will make a clear decision. I mean that's the thing. We know through neuroscience that, as much as you can know, we make decisions emotionally. If you take the emotional center out of a person's brain, and I think we have discussed this before, people cease to make decisions. It takes them half an hour to decide what color pen to use or four hours to decide where to lunch. Simple decisions can't be made. We are using our intellect to figure out how to get into the emotional state we want to get into it. That's what the intellect is. I am trying to figure out the right way to win. What makes you want to win? Because then I will be safe. What makes you want to be safe? It becomes obvious it is an emotional decision very quickly.

Brett: The emotion sets the priority, and then the intellect goes to figuring out how to achieve that priority. Feeling into the emotion and feeling into the bodily sensation pattern of that emotion and even beneath that emotion allows us to have more access to that context from which our intellect can serve us.

Joe: It is a simple thing of just having access to all of it and incorporating all of it. It also just makes you happier. It makes you much happier to not be in the intellect or in the heart or in the gut all the time.

Brett: We have talked about this on a previous episode, so maybe we can give this a different twist now. How can we in an organization cultivate practices? For example, in meetings that cultivate people paying attention to their bodies and these different forms of intelligence within a work context. How can you create that in a culture and make space for that in a way that feels welcoming and not esoteric and confusing?

Joe: There are a couple ways to do it that are really simple that will feel odd if you are a traditional company. You can make sure that there is time to get up and stretch or move in the meetings. It is okay for someone to stand up in a meeting and just like shake or stretch a little bit or take some deep breaths. There is a company that I know that has a signal. I think it is a bell or something in all of their meeting rooms. When that bell gets hit, there is a moment of silence for everybody to just check in with their bodies, to just be present. I think that's what they call it. They don't say be in your body. I think the way they use it is get in touch with what's happening here and now.

Brett: It seems like a pattern interrupt for when people start going down an intellectual debate rabbit hole that might be off topic or things get heated. It might be a good opportunity for people to check in and see how they are actually feeling, so they are not just responding from a pattern.

Joe: I sat on a board where we would do meditation at the beginning of all of the board meetings, like 5 minutes of meditation. That was one that was an interesting way to incorporate a different way. I find gratitude practices are another way to not only get into the body. It is interesting when you are really grateful you have a deeper experience of your own body, but also it helps you see a way of solving problems that's different. When you are grateful, you can see what's right and how to build it, rather than in most meetings you are looking at what's wrong and how to fix it, which are two different ways to solve problems. Those are some really basic ways whether it is a company or a church or a community of whatever activists. There are ways to cultivate that kind of stuff.

I had a friend who was a programmer, and the way he would do it, mostly at home, 45 minutes in an hour he would sit and program and 15 minutes he would be in his

body. Then 45 minutes he would program. Being a programmer, every day he measured his practices and measured his results, how good at programming he did, how effective it was. He had done years of experiments to get to this. He found that six hours of programming a day, 45 minutes on, 15 minutes off, consistently, five days a week is what got the most code out of him, the most good code out of him.

Brett: I love that he did so much data collection on this.

Joe: Huge amount. I know writers who are the same way, novelists who have realized three hours a day first thing in the morning is how they get the most good pages out.

Brett: It reminds me of strategies like the Pomodoro technique where you do some amount of time on and then some amount of time off, and the assumption I had come to that with was that the benefit was from taking a break. The benefit was from focusing for a while and then just relaxing. But this is a different twist on it. What are you actually doing in that period when you are relaxing? You are probably getting up from your chair, wandering around, making yourself a drink or something. A lot of times thoughts come to us in the shower, which is a moment where we are having a lot of sensory information coming in from our body and pulling us out of our minds. I wonder how correlated that is, just having a lot of sensation bringing us out of the small world, the detailed world of our logic and intellect and into a more complex intuition. Jumping in the ocean being one of those things.

Joe: There are some very famous scientists who talk about how they solve problems. When you are a scientist, you think about how to solve problems, hopefully, as much as you think about the problem you are trying to solve. One of them who won the Nobel Prize, I can't remember his name, he would say I would think about the problem, I would get into it, and if I couldn't solve it, I would tell myself it is no longer okay for you to think about this problem until the solution presents itself in whole. Any time his brain would go to think about the problem, he would be like no, not thinking about the problem until the entire solution fell out.

I think it is the same thing, which is that there is a way that our body processes and our brain processes that requires not thinking. Yes, I think stimulation, being in your body is one of the things that helps that to happen. A break is one of the things that helps that to happen.

Brett: I've come to think of emotions and physical sensation as a doorway to the subconscious. If you have a problem and it is a salient enough problem for you, your subconscious is going to be processing it whether or not you are actively doing so. When you are using your intellect, you are taking the problem space and

then collapsing it down into a particular logical structure that fits into the four things you can hold in working memory at a time, these four chunks. There is some research behind that.

Sometimes that is just not enough complexity to be able to solve a problem, and just letting it go and processing it in the background in the subconscious, I feel like that's very tightly related to what we have been talking about with the body's wisdom and the body's knowledge.

Joe: The reason I call it the body's knowledge or the heart or the head is because they are just good pointers. I don't think our intellect just operates in our brain, and I don't think our love just operates in our heart. I don't think that our emotions just operate in the gut. They are just the good pointers. I think it is just really important to see it all as one, at one level to see it is our intelligence. It is the whole system, and all of them are really useful and good points.

Brett: Ultimately it is our whole system that is making decisions. It is our whole system that is taking in information and processing it. The more we feel into and acquaint ourselves and connect to our entire system, the more of our capacity we have access to to navigate the world.

Joe: It seems to be. It seems to be the case.

Brett: That's my intellectual wrap up of this conversation.

Joe: That's what I was thinking. I was thinking that was an intellectual wrap up. What would a non-intellectual wrap up be? What's a body wrap up? Don't forget me. I am important. The body is either like worshipped in some way or it is set aside. This burden thing I have to carry along that's one day going to kill me, something I have to take care of. It is like a chore. The body becomes a chore, or the body becomes the entire way to feel good. You can see that happening with people as well.

Brett: Feeling into myself to close the episode from my body, I am feeling just more open in the wonder, in the question. The desire is to invite myself and all of our listeners to stay with this, whatever feeling in the body this episode has brought up, to stay with it and be in the wonder and see what happens.

Joe: How about from the heart? How would the heart want to close this episode?

Brett: The first thing that comes up is gratitude. Gratitude to be able to have these conversations and to be able to share them, gratitude for feedback. There is a deep wanting to feel how this conversation or the conversation lands in people.

Joe: It is a desire for connection and gratitude. It is not even a desire for it as much as an acknowledgement of.

Brett: It is an acknowledgement of, and that definitely puts me in a different place. It is definitely a more open place where if I were to walk away from this conversation straight to one of our listeners, I feel like I would be a lot more curious about their experience than immediately after my intellectual wrap up, which would have been like: What do you think? Was it right? Was it wrong?

Joe: I remember hearing that from Oprah Winfrey. She said it doesn't matter who was present, I think she might have said everybody does is look over and say was I good, did that work, looking to see if it had worked out.

Brett: Yes, no based on a certain criteria.

Joe: What I notice is if we are ending in our heart, that question doesn't arise. The question arises, what's happening for you. It is interesting. How about if they are all together? What if it is the gut, the emotional aspect, the head and the heart, body are all in it?

Brett: From everything, it is just, thank you everybody for listening. Thank you, Joe, for this conversation. I am really looking forward to hearing how this episode landed in people. Check out view.life/podcast and reach out. Speak to us from your heart and from your gut and from your head.

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