

# relax into your being

the following guided meditation is meant to facilitate a conscious transition from a thinking to a feeling response to a photo, or anything else.

thinking is good up to a point and then it can be set down. shifting our focus to the body allows a complimentary feeling, intuitive, energetic response.

if a photo calls to you, thinking about it may be a useful first step. that might be enough. and, if you would like to explore the photo from a more internal body feeling approach, the following meditation could be a starting point.

read through the entire process or refer to this page as you go along. you may also have someone read this to you. or, you may record your own voice leading you through the practice.

## *allow time and space*

choose a time and place that is conducive to relaxing. finish any pressing need so it is not interrupting the process. turn your phone off. play some relaxing music. set the scene to encourage relaxation.

## *warm up*

before sitting down to practice, take a few moments to move your body in some kind of warm up exercise. this allows the body to make a transition from whatever we were doing to this meditation. it can be any simple movement/stretch that you

know. i like gentle shaking. standing, let your feet stay planted on the floor while allowing the body to gently shake any whatever way it likes. you may focus the shaking on specific body areas: feet, shoulders, right or left side. the intensity can be mild, medium or strong. listen to what the body needs in order to let go of our previous activity and transition into this relaxation process.

gradually decrease the outward shaking movement until there is none. pause for a moment, eyes closed, and feel how the body responds to this warm up.

### *arrive in the moment*

sit where you can view the photo in a comfortable relaxed way while maintaining good posture. relaxed does not mean collapsed.

feel your feet on the ground, connected to the earth, roots extending from your feet deep into the earth. as you inhale, earth energy flows up through your feet and fills your entire body.

from your feet, move up your legs to the pelvis, noticing how it rests on the chair. gently tilt the pelvis forward and back, rocking side to side to find a natural position.

notice the spine aligned over the pelvis, gentle movements rocking forward and back, side to side, allows the spine to find an effortless, relaxed posture.

notice the head aligned over the spine.

take a moment to feel your whole body from feet to head.

gently bring awareness to the breath, noticing sensations on inhale, sensations on exhale. no need to make it any certain way, simply aware the breathing process. what does it feel like? take your time.

when you feel ready, allow the inhale breath to flow to the belly, behind the navel. this is the center, core of our being (chinese: tan tien; japanese: hara). with every breath more attention, awareness fills the center. more of our focus is internal.

### *body scan*

when the internal focus feels strong, allow the breath to flow to the feet and notice how they feel. any sensation, any experience, no need to judge good or bad, no need to change anything. simply aware the feet.

make note of any sensations or experiences that arise.

allow the breath to follow into the calves and then the thighs. listen.

allow the breath to flow into the pelvis and sacrum. what do you feel?

allow the breath to flow into the abdomen and lower back. take as much time as needed to fully feel each body area.

continue with the breath into the torso and upper back, awaring these places.

allow breath to flow through shoulders, arms and hands.

continue the scan through neck and head.

the body scan can be short, long, medium, whatever is necessary to connect with each body area. let the body guide us toward what needs attention. there may be something calling strongly in the moment that needs attention before we can fully connect with a photo.

at any point, if the brain starts a thinking that distracts, try gently bringing focus back to the body. placing a hand on the navel, or elsewhere, may help focus attention. if thinking is too distracting, attend to it. write a note about it and set it down with the promise to pick it up again later. if super insistent, pause the meditation, take care of the matter, return to the meditation.

### *aware photo - detail focus*

once arrived in the moment and with strong internal awareness, we can bring attention to a photo.

slowly open the eyes and allow them to focus on whatever draws most strongly. it could be a color, line, texture, shadow, cloud, tree, whatever. allow the eyes to follow this calling and sit with it a few moments, taking in all the details.

then, close the eyes, holding the detailed image in mind's eye or heart. recall the details without concern for accuracy, simply aware whatever the image inspired.

as we sit with this, the image may change, grow, shift, morph. there may be body responses to this process. notice these without need for judgement good or bad, without trying to change or make anything different. aware the breath and allow

it to flow wherever you might feel this response in your body. it might help to put a hand where you feel a sensation to help connect with it.

body responses can be anything: color, texture, temperature, emotion, memory, dream. responses may be visual, tactile, auditory or some combination. allow body, mind and spirit to express this response in whatever natural way occurs.

this unfolding/feeling may be brief or it could last awhile. give it time and space to do whatever it needs to do. listen. follow.

we can repeat the focus on detail process as many times as needed.

when the detail focus feels complete, we may also explore another approach to the photo:

### *aware photo - widen the lens*

take a few moments to relax, eyes closed, breath into the body. slowly open the eyes and let them be soft, wide, allowing your gaze to take in the entire photo at once. let the eyes be half open, half closed.

after a few moments, close your eyes, holding this perspective in mind's eye or the heart.

notice the body response as we did with the detail focus. allow it to unfold and follow. repeat this widen the lens focus as many times as needed.

when this process feels complete, close your eyes and rest. check in with the body, noticing and sensation or experience.

allow them to settle in their own natural way. if thinking jumps in, gently set it down and return to body experience. connecting with breath or putting a hand on the body may help. take as much time as necessary.

when it feels right, we can gently transition out of the meditation. take a few moments to notice the surroundings. listen to sounds. feel the body in this place.

at this point, you may like to write about this experience. you could also draw, paint, sing, dance, or however you are drawn to express these body experiences and sensations.

once we are comfortable with the process, this body centered feedback process may be used in many different situations. with practice and skill, it may be modified, shortened, personalized in whatever way fits best.

this is a core part of meditation and chi kung classes, tai chi, bodywork and emotional processing. the intent is to listen to the body and how it responds in the moment, whether viewing a photo, being in nature, having a conversation, or exploring health issues.

i use this often while wandering the backcountry taking photos, also while editing, following a creative process to a finished print.

at first we may need to follow some guided steps, like those listed above, in a quiet, conducive environment. as the

process becomes familiar, it can be used anywhere and in any/  
all parts of our lives.