

Tree Time

Where

Go to a place that you love, not too far away from your home, where there are some trees. It could be a wild place or a park or even your garden. You could go at any time of day but if it is a place that many people visit choose a quiet time.

Go with an open heart and mind letting go of expectations and assumptions. Allowing your experience to be simply what it is.

Guidelines on how to follow the score

Once on site give yourself time to arrive and make any practical preparations you need, for example with your clothing. Then make yourself comfortable and read the score slowly as if soaking it up. Read it a second time reminding yourself of the different phases. Then put it and your bag away and begin. Resist the temptation to look at the score again once you have started as this will interrupt your experience, instead stay in contact with yourself and with the trees.

It is not a memory test. It doesn't matter if you don't remember everything.

When doing the score give each phase as long as it needs, don't hurry on to the next part. It doesn't matter if you don't complete the whole score it's more important that you inhabit what you do as fully as possible.

Tree Score

Entering and settling

Take time to arrive – choose a place to sit on the ground with your back supported by a tree.

Whatever you've been doing during the day give yourself time to settle – releasing your weight into the earth, feeling the support of the tree.

Receive the flow of your breath without trying to control it

Receive the sounds of the natural environment

Receive the atmosphere of the place.

Slow down - let other pre-occupations and concerns fall away

Feel the touch of the air on your skin – rain, sun, breeze....

Be aware of movement in the environment, wind in the branches, birds, wildlife, changing light....

Receive the colour, forms and textures around you.

Stay as long as you like, landing in your body, grounded through your contact with earth and tree, connected to your breath. There's no need to hurry on.

Your standing – the tree's standing

When you are ready come up to standing. Move a little away from the tree that has been supporting you and stand facing it.

Feel your standing: your feet on the earth, your spine connecting earth and sky, the width of your back....

Receive the tree's standing....

Bowing thank the tree for its support.

Walk among the trees around you, feeling your feet on the ground, the movement in your spine, your breath....

Every now and then stop, feeling your own standing among the trees, receiving their standing.

Do this for as long as you wish.

When you are ready open to one tree in particular.

Stand at some distance from it while still feeling you are within its orbit.

Grounded in your own body receive the tree's body.

Recognise the space between you.

Start to walk in an irregular circle around the tree, stopping several times: each time receiving your body, your connection with the earth, your bones, your back, your breath and receiving the tree's body. You may find you need to alter the distance between you and the tree at different points on the circle. Take your time, you may choose to circle the tree more than once.

Returning to the earth

When you've completed circling, lie on the earth in any position that feels comfortable. Release the weight of your whole body, receive your breath. Open all your senses. Grounded in your contact with the earth, receive the tree.

When you are ready change your position, either in lying or to another position near the ground e.g. crouching, kneeling, sitting. Give yourself time to land in this new position, to receive your body, your contact with the earth, your breath. Receive the tree. You may change your position several time, landing and receiving yourself and the tree each time.

Approaching the tree

After some time open to the intention of moving closer to the tree, don't plan how this might happen. Start close to the earth and follow the journey towards the tree as it unfolds. Take time - the route might not be direct. Allow moments of landing in stillness, feel the changing space between you and the tree.

You might change levels or orientation. You may not always see the tree but you know it is there. In some positions you may be more aware of the wider environment and the tree's companions.

As you move closer you may find yourself coming in contact with a root or a branch, receive this contact between your body and the tree.

Stay simple, don't rush. Stay connected to your breath, your body, the earth. Although your eyes need to be open when you are moving try not to let your seeing dominate. Your eyes follows your moving, they are not fixed nor do they lead, they may sometimes close when you are still. Open all your senses.

Getting acquainted

As you come closer to the tree, without imposing yourself, allow your body to come in contact with the tree's body. Give yourself time to experience this meeting. Breathe out.

Then, following what arises between you, simply change from one position to another, staying receptive as different parts of your body come in contact with different parts of the tree. Be guided by the tree, allow your body to respond, take the time to receive each new relationship between your two bodies. Listen, be respectful, let go of ambition and of desire.

In time this may evolve into moving in contact with the tree. Start simply, stay connected to your breath, to your whole body, to the earth, as you respond to the changing contact between you. Include moments of landing in stillness.

At some point you may find yourself breaking contact with the tree but continuing to move in its vicinity. Let go of any preconceptions about what your movement should look or feel like. Stay aware of the presence of the tree, engage your whole body and freely follow the movement that arises out of the relationship until you feel complete.

Completion

Take time to return to stillness, landing in your body in contact with the earth, maybe also in contact with the tree. Receive the sensations in your body and your breath. Receive the atmosphere around you and any images or feelings that arise. Recognise where you are.

Acknowledge the tree. Find your way of completing with it, of thanking it and of leaving it.

Don't rush.

If you feel inclined take some time to draw or to write from your experience. This is for you. There is no need to try to describe or explain or document it. Simply respond freely with colour, shape, movement or words, allowing whatever arrives on the page, in the same way that you allowed your movement to arise, without veto or judgement.

You may just want to rest or have some tea.

Allow time to make the transition to your daily life.