



A Quiet Place  
Inner Landscapes  
A Smooth Guide-for everyday

Welcome to Inner Landscapes!



**What is meant by Inner Landscapes?**

By Inner Landscapes I refer to the world of the imagination. This world will be stronger in some who have a vivid imagination than others. For everyone it will be characterised by circumstances and experiences that have occurred in their life, and in particular those with a high emotional charge.

An emotional charge can be positive or negative. Where experiences have given rise to strong memories, for example where something particularly dreadful has happened and the visual memory can flash back very strongly when a stimulus, conscious or unconscious occurs. Extreme cases can be called post traumatic stress disorder. The whole experience is highlighted. At the positive end it could be a concert or a highly emotionally charged moment e.g, the birth of a baby or wedding day.

All our experiences describe our inner landscape and it is a useful metaphor to look back from the present moment and see the mountains and valleys through which you have passed in order to get to this moment in time.

We all love to see dramatic landscapes and this may reframe the past for some people.

**What is meditation?**

The word meditation derives from the Latin word '*meditari*' meaning to heal, to think, to contemplate, devise and ponder. "

Meditation and Mindfulness have been practised for thousands of years usually as part of religious practices. They do not however need to be attached to any particular belief system as they offer techniques for disciplining and quietening the mind in order to access a sense of calm.

The techniques are simple but that does not necessarily mean easy. In our western society today the underlying common denominator tends to have developed into a place where busy..ness and noise tend to be the norm. Nostalgia for the country life rests deep within many and although it is accessed through a rather rosy golden gateway the reality was hard work for most with a limited time for anything but survival.

It was not until the mid to late 1700's when the countryside, reflected through the eyes of our great poets Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley etc. began our romance with nature and beauty, peace and quiet.





I have been teaching yoga and meditation for over 30 years now and use an eclectic approach of techniques to allow options for each person's time and preference to begin to access their own still centre. There will be suggested readings and poetry, music and films if you want to look deeper in different ways.

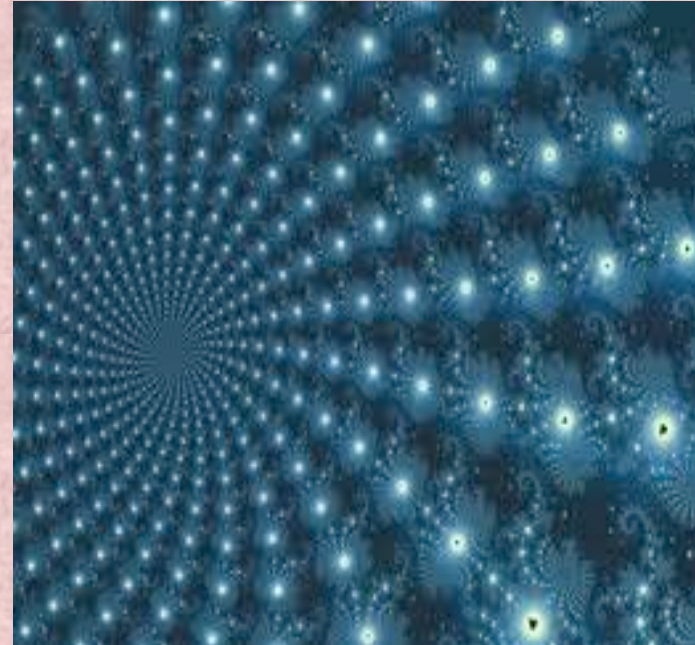
It is a work in progress as indeed you, as people who have agreed to pilot the course, are also an essential part. Your feedback, your adventure, certainly the process as well as the content will play a part in this developing work.



The intention of this course is to provide a practical introduction to the art of meditation. It is a simple practical guide for anyone to learn how to be still and to access a deeper sense of themselves. Learning how to tap into the treasures of the imagination can bring untold benefits, amongst many for example:

- Self Knowledge
- Creativity
- Relaxation
- Self management
- Resilience
- Empathy
- Contentment and acceptance

There are 3 parts to this, considered to be '*hologrammatic*' i.e. each is a whole in itself! I trust that it will recommend itself to both newcomers as well as crusty old meditators who might find the light and brief exercises to bring new insights into old practices.





**Apology, Photographs:** Using Google images I have endeavored not to use copyright if I have I apologies. This book is freely available and I know for those who have got this far that your images will have been inspirational. Thank you. If perchance I have please let me know and I will remove them immediately

### **How to use this e-book**

There is much information in this book from a wide range of belief systems and practices. Using your reflective diary dip in and out as you will, let the labyrinth of your mind connect with the internet and wander where it will. Create your own creative web and experiences and practice, enjoy the adventure and trust the process.

### **Part 1:**

Message in a bottle - you will find a playful dialogue that is both welcoming and offering an overview of the ideas within the whole. It can be downloaded or you can listen to it as a form of relaxation.

### **Part 2:**

A more formal book design that gives a background perspective, whilst essentially secular in approach, the techniques have usually been developed from various religious belief systems. These will be looked at briefly from a historical context.

This book is intended for everyone to learn to tap into their

inner resources.

Consisting of words and pictures and filled with beautiful photographs of nature, it will offer simple exercises designed to nurture spirit in your own unique way.  
(in progress)



### Part 3:

A month by month guide to personal development and meditation. Designed to be a personal journey throughout the year it can be used on your own or maybe as part of a new or existing group who may gather together to practice the techniques. Initially it may be much easier to have the support of a group and then continue with relaxation exercises at home in the intervening time.

There will be a guided visualisation to listen to and then discuss creative ideas as you keep a reflective diary and watch in wonder as your creative imagination is offered the right conditions to blossom.

This gentle approach to self reflection is based on the experience of the author, a practising yoga teacher for 30 years as well as a single parent and full time worker.

The approaches are for all of us, without necessitating any belief system but the beginning of understanding the phrase *know thyself* as a being of great value in itself, as opposed to simply being and existing in relationship to others.

Get to know yourself as the wonderful golden being that you are, shimmering with light and expectant with possibilities and potential. Yes I do mean YOU!





**Possibly?**  
A day for beings of light to meet together !



Please come disguised in your Earth suit  
or the neighbours might become alarmed!!!!





## A Quiet Place

### Know Thyself

These ancient words were carved above the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Apollo was the god of the sun for the ancient Greeks and the temple is where people went for healing.

What you may be wondering has this got to do with me, living at the end of the 20th century?

There is nothing new under the sun and ancient peoples have gifts for us if we care to look carefully. In our modern throw away society, peace of mind has been lost to allow materialistic consumer needs to take its place. Unfortunately money cannot buy peace of mind though it can make our suffering more comfortable.

Understanding how we work in our human body is essential to getting it to work better to relate and communicate more easily with others is crucial to our success as functioning human beings. 'We are spirit colonising matter' according to the author Colin Wilson. This maybe a useful metaphor at the least!

## The temple of Apollo at Delphi





Peace of mind is not the pursuit of happiness but the acceptance of love and by that I mean the development of the full potential of each one of us - a lifetime's journey!

How do we begin this lifetime's journey? With the first step, which means recognising that there is work\* ("love made visible" Gibran) to be done.

Self-understanding is a process rather than a final outcome, one approach is self observation i.e. observe your own behaviour without judgement. There are many ways to practice self reflection, some ancient and others more modern. They will become the underpinning exercises in your meditation practices. The many options will allow you to start where you are comfortable and maybe try different ones as you develop your skills.

**Are we made of Flesh and Blood alone?**



**Or are we something more?**



## **Activities:Try These:**

### **Visual:**

*Wear something different, change your hair, pretend that you are positive, hum a little tune, smile and remain calm in every situation, do not allow others to read your face like a book, a hint of mystery never did any harm - play at being you!*

### **Auditory;**

*Voices are a real give away to our inner state. Notice your tone of voice, the pace of your words the mad glint in your eye and nervous tic when you get pulled into an emotionally charged subject, the choice of words - do you have an oft repeated phrase or word that is telling something about what kind of state you are in?*

### **Breathing:**

*Notice your breathing rate and whether you are breathing deeply or shallowly. Notice when and if your breathing alters in different situations then deliberately change it and notice whether you feel any different?.*

### **Tension:**

*Notice your body temperature, if you break out in a sweat, all over or here and there. Do you itch, tense your face jaw, forehead, hands back calves be specific. Do you have specific gestures or symptoms stomach, bowels palpitations at certain times of day or that are triggered by thoughts or situations. Do you feel these differently in relation to the time of the month, the weather, the season, an anniversary, the phases of the moon?*

## **A Very Practical outfit for example?**



### Internal dialogue:

*Talking to yourself - listen to the content and tone of voice, have you heard these words before and from whom? Does it make you feel useful or drain all energy from you? Some people might like to make a dream diary whilst they are in this period of information gathering as the unconscious can throw up interesting light in dream patterns.*

*Before you go to sleep at night re-run the day as if you were watching a favourite soap opera, notice the parts that were interesting, the parts that flowed and those that jarred, there are times for both. There may have been melodramatic moments, could you have placed yourself to better effect the outcome, dressed differently, chosen other words, tone of voice gestures. Play with the re-run and notice the choices of outcomes, if you had used different options, speculate and use your imagination as Einstein said “ Imagination is not nothing! ”.( a deliberate double negative for those grammarians amongst you, for emphasis of course!) Then after re-running the notable incidents of the day, probably those you will remember will be highlighted by and emotional charge whether positive or negative. Play them backwards, action replay in slow motion and let it go!!!*

*‘Be careful who you let interpret your world for you’*

### The Past in the West...or not?



### The Present in the West...or not?





**Models:** Google these (make sure you add 'free' or they will try to charge you!) and try some out these sites:

**Ancient:**

- Ayurvedic: Pukka herbs.com
- Astrological: Astrodienst.com
- Numerological: life-answers.com

**Modern:**

- Physical: mysomatotype.com
- Psychological: Myers Briggs, keirsey.com, Transactional Analysis, ericberne.com
- Spiritual: Enneagram Institute.com, Belief.net

**Fun:**

- 100 acre wood - Half-asleep.com
- Colour - testcolour.com
- Learning Style - acceleratedlearning.com

**DO NOT** get fixated on any of these matters try the observation over a month and you will inevitably see patterns build up as you begin to play with the kaleidoscope that is you!

There are many programmes, questionnaires ways of defining the types we fall into we seem to have an innate need to classify ourselves and then break out of the boxes in which we have locked our selves. Decide for yourself. Guess what...we hold our own the key!

**Just who is looking back from you in the Mirror?**





## A Quiet Place Inner Journeys

Historic development of meditation practices

### 1. Prehistoric

#### Shamanic

The shamans in prehistoric cultures as well as present day tribal society fulfilled a number of roles according to the ancient writer Eliade

- Direct intermediary between the human and the spirit world.
- Healing by treating the soul as well as the body with medicinal plants
- Offering solutions to problems affecting their community

Techniques for achieving these states of mind included

#### 1. Drumming

Find a quiet place where you sit or lie comfortably and cannot be disturbed, wrap up warm and listen to some drumming for 5-10 minutes. Notice your inner state before and after.

Try different drumming, Native American, Siberian, Celtic for example

Prehistoric Cave Drawings



The shaman drawing in the spirits



## 2. Dance

Find a space where you can move on your own so you do not feel self conscious. And stamp your feet to the sounds, let your body make free movements in rhythm with your breath and the sounds

Try different movements, South American Huichol, African, sangomas for example



## Repetitive and rhythmical chanting

Find yourself somewhere quiet where you may neither be disturbed nor disturb others. Take 3 deep breath and as you breath out loud:

- Sigh
- Hum
- Make each of the vowel sounds
- Each of the consonants
- Make and hold the sounds inside your mouth and through your nose
- Notice the sensations inside your head before and after.

*You Tube - Listen and do:*

Chamacoco Paraguay, Heal the soul chant 5, Native American, Sami, jojob Lapland

South American shaman using drums to invoke spirit



Native American's dancing



## 2. Drugs

Our own ability to release natural chemistry to make us feel good is all that is required in A Quiet Place practices. Drug use as part of shamanic practice was the norm and the types of drugs were taken by mouth or inhaled from local plants, herbs and fungi. They were taken as part of religious and traditional practices, prepared by and administered by the shaman.

## Amazonian shaman preparing drugs for prayer



## 3. Spirit Guides

The shaman was considered to have supernatural powers and often had a spirit guide which would usually be an animal or a bird. Sometimes even shape shifting into that sacred creature. They were able to delve into the spirit world to gain knowledge of the healing of the soul of the individual and perform a variety of techniques to foresee the future.

## Shape shifting into spirit guide



## Shamanic Journeys

Commonly in shamanic work there is an emphasis on the journey, a proving through a variety of tests or initiations that the individual becomes worthy of becoming the next shaman in whatever cultural disguise is relevant. This spiritual journey continues into the main religions where the mystical element is emphasised not just the intellectual component.

Usually the emphasis is on nature in whatever element is local and considered to be important or something to be respected. It is always something that produces feelings of awe and wonder, in other words something greater than themselves.

There will be an extraordinary landscape, with curious rock formations and caves that lead within. This would have been considered to be the feminine form, the goddess, whilst the upright rocks would be represent the masculine. These male and female elements dance together and exchange places in each of the elemental forms. No matter what time or culture the Journeys common process includes these elements:

1. The distant journey and pathway
2. Helpers
3. Obstacles
4. The gateway
5. The journey within
6. The treasure
7. The return

**The journey lay spread before her...**



## Shamanic Animals

These are sometimes known as Totem spirits, Spirit Guides or Familiar spirits.

These will depend on the traditions within the local geographical area. Some will be real animals and others will be spirit animals. Some will be displayed at certain festivals over the year and be considered helpful in warding off evil spirits. Others will be personal to the practitioner

We have our own traditions in the west, some of which have never left us!

## Hallowe'en



## Native American



## Australian Aboriginal



## New Age spiritual





## Signs and symbols along the way

### Signs and portents

Thing that implies significance to something else.

- A sign at a crossroads
- Natural signs eg. Smoke coming out of a volcano could mean an eruption, the sea retreating before a tsunami
- Language, verbal or non-verbal in a process for example an augury which means the flight of birds, the intestines of a sacrificed animal. The prophetic announcements of an oracle etc.

### Symbols

Representation of an idea, a physical entity or a process. The purpose of a symbol is to communicate meaning. Whether there is cognitive understanding of the symbol is not relevant as it speaks to the unconscious mind.

### A simple road sign



### A Warning sign



### The flight of birds



### The signs of music



### Writing



### Symbols



## Earth: represents the physical world

The first element earth, consists of the:

1. 'Chthonic' journey inside the earth looking at landmarks and other features for example:

- mountains, strange shaped rocks etc.
- caves and holes in the earth

Activities:

Find some local landmark that stands out from the rest

Look up its history

Touch the rock and feel the textures

Marvel at the colours and shapes

Find a spot to look at with soft eyes and see what images you can find in the shapes

Sit on it and close your eyes listen to it's story!



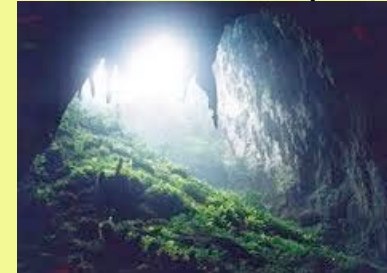
The journey begins, the end in sight



The long and winding road



Further on and deeper in



## 2. Nature,

- Trees
- Forest
- Glades

All cultures have considered that trees have spirits within, both good and bad.

The Druids for example worshipped the oak tree  
Their journey wove around the trees that they loved so much.

### Activity:

- Take a walk in a local wood, in the day and in the night...safely please
- Notice individual trees that you may feel drawn to.
- Notice how much more interesting the ancient gnarled trees are to the young saplings....
- Find a tree to hug, stroke the bark with your eyes closed
- Find a tree to sit in, under and listen
- Find a place to sit and look into with eyes out of focus can you see any pictures in the:
  - foliage
  - bark
- Get to know some trees locally and check out others on Google images

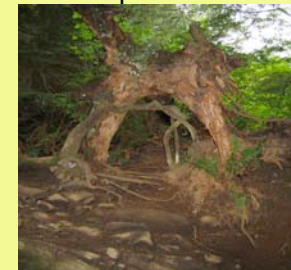
The forest path



The ancient tree



The path within





## Connections: the Earth as hermaphrodite

There are connections between all the elements, Earth and Water, Air and Fire are part of the whole manifestation of the material world. Whilst the Earth as a concept is usually considered as a whole to be feminine for example in Greek culture the principle of Gaia In fact the whole picture becomes androgynous The masculine (active and initiating) and feminine (passive and accepting) principles shift and change:

**Earth** as the **feminine** is the womb from which everything grows, the deep caves and hollows, the gentle curves of the hills change to **masculine** with the hard soaring mountains leap into the **feminine Air**, whose gentle breezes stir the trees and grasses as the **masculine** principle, whispering secrets to the feminine principle earth.

**Water** as **feminine** is fluid, fluctuating with the tides in tune with the rhythms of the moon and then as the **masculine** principle laps into the hollowed caves on the coast.

**Fire** in the sun initiates life as the **masculine** principle and explodes through volcano's when it becomes **feminine** subdued by earth as masculine in combination creating new land on which life can exist.

Activity:

Find some photos that demonstrate the reverse principle and some that bring them altogether.

## Earth accepts water



## Water accepts air



## Air accepts Fire



## Fire accepts earth



## Water represents our emotional world

The second element water consists of:

1. Atmospheric interacting with Air
  - Clouds
  - Rain
  - Snow
2. Fresh shaped and held by the land
  - Rivers
  - Streams
  - Waterfalls
  - Lakes
  - Pools
3. Ice transition to the masculine frozen
  - Crystals
  - Icebergs
  - Glaciers

Water is considered the element from which life originally emerged and as such is primarily considered to be the feminine principle. The constant shifting from droplet to stream, the winding journey back to dissolution in the formless ocean and once again the return by the fire of the sun to clouds. The endless cycle of life

### Activity:

- Take a walk:
  - by the sea, watch the sunset
  - by a wild river, watch the foam
  - by a lake, watch the reflections

Find some photographs that represent all aspects of water

Sunset over water



Wild river



Reflections in Lake



## Air represents the world of thought

The second element water consists of:

1. Air we breathe
2. The wind

Air is the most important element, if we are deprived of air this will cause our demise much more quickly than if we are deprived of water or food. It is invisible but we can see, hear and feel it's presence very easily.

Breathing in clean air can will mean better health, polluted air will quickly affect our well being.

The breath often represents the soul, bringing to life of the physical body

### Activity:

- Breath
  - notice your breathing patterns at different times of the day
  - notice other people's breathing patterns in differing emotional states
- Take a walk on a windy day:
  - listen to the wind in the treetops, in the long grasses
  - feel the wind whipping around you or caressing you gently!
  - notice the shapes the wind makes in the clouds
  - go fly a kite!

Find some photographs that represent all aspects of air, positive and negative.

Wind in the trees



in the grass



Hurricane



sculptures



Deep breath



enjoying the wind





## Fire represents spirit

The fourth element fire consists of:

1. The human fiery spirits
2. Fire in all its guises

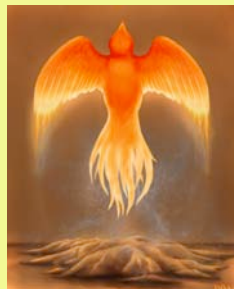
Fire is the fourth element and used as part of most rituals. Fire was considered to be the centre of tribe, in some societies it was never allowed to go out.

It was the place of warmth and survival, a place to cook food and share with the rest of the family, a place around which to tell stories, sing and dance and generally celebrate and maintain culture.

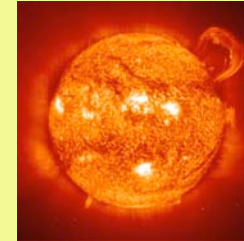
### Activity:

- Think about all the times you have been close to a fire, were you drawn to it, did you look into it's heart and see depths, images and stories dancing in the flames.

The Phoenix rising from the ashes



Solar Flares



Forest fire



Man made fire



Celebrations



## Treasure:

What treasure is found on the journey, when does the real journey move to the metaphorical journey?

- The legend
- The treasure map
- The journey to find it
- The discovery
- The consequences!

Can a real object represent the inner treasure, newly discovered?

- Jewel
- Insight
- Clear future ahead
- Companion

Impact:

Changes in response

Feeling good

Inside smile

The best you can be!!

## Story telling round the fire



## Treasure Island



## Treasure chest



## Treasure map



## Dragon Guarding



## Found it!



**Activities:**

There are many activities tied in with each element which you may have already have done.

If you want to do any more research here are some interesting people to look up and books to read.  
Enjoy finding the shaman down whichever elemental pathway you journey!

**Research** here are some you tube key words, let the net and your intuition enjoy the different sounds from a variety of First Nation folk as well as New Age adaptations

***Listen and do***

You Tube: Shamanic music

African

Native American

Latin America -Nagual

Sami

Siberian

Hawain

***Read and look up***

Eliade - Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy

The Wheel of Time - Carlos Castenada

13 Clan mothers - Jamie Sams

The Invitation - Oriah Mountain Dreamer

The Journey to the sacred garden - Hank Wessellmann

Women who run with wolves - Clarissa Pinkola Estes

The Way of Wyrd - Brian Bates

**You are a Child of the Universe**

**Tread softly for you tread on your dreams**



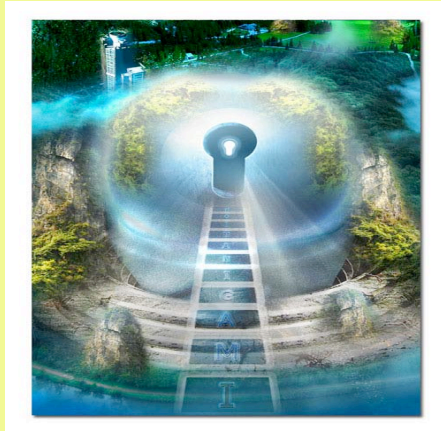
**Leave a wake of flowers in your footsteps**





## Elemental pathways

### Earth



### Air



### Water



### Fire





## A Quiet Place Inner Journeys

### Transitional beliefs

The religions practiced today by many people have their own practices which often include similarities to those found in early shamanic and religious beliefs.

From Ancient Egypt, to the Neo classical worship in Greece and Rome to the religious institutions we know today there have been a wealth of beliefs all underpinned by a variety of similar practices.

In this chapter we look at a number of these beliefs and enjoy both the similarities and the differences.

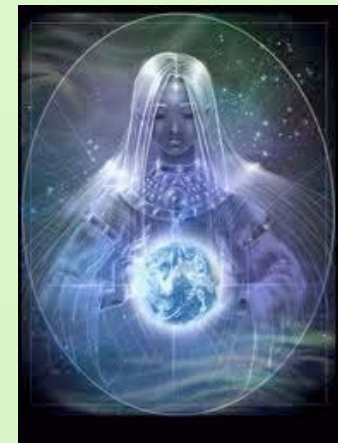
These will include:

- Atlantean said to be the beginning of all belief systems or simply a myth?
- Sumerian -Gilgamesh, Innanna myth
- Egyptian transition to Neo classical
- Thoth to Hermes with Hermes Trismegistus

### The Lost City of Atlantis?



### An Atlantean Priestess?



## Egypt

The religion of Ancient Egyptian was an integral part of society consisting of a system of polytheistic beliefs and rituals. These deities were believed to be in control of nature as well as human life and death. Many of the practices were designed to gain favour from these deities either in this life or the hereafter.

The Pharaoh, believed to be descended from the gods, acted as the intermediary to make sure the gods maintained order in the Universe.

These rituals took place in Temples of various kinds which can still inspire awe after thousands of years.

Thoth was the deity linked to the heart, then considered to be the seat of intelligence and communication. Later he was associated with the arbitration of godly disputes, writing, magic, science and the judgment of the dead.

He was then linked with the Graeco-Roman classics through the gods Mercury and Hermes.

The Eye of Horus



Thoth



## Graeco Roman, neo classical belief systems

The religions of the ancient Greeks and Romans was intimately tied in with philosophy. Their influence lives on in most of the religions of the world.

Their believed in a pantheon of gods and goddesses who mirrored a family structure living on Mount Olympus and generally behaving in similar ways to human families, both nobly and badly.

The mystery elements for example the Oracle at Delphi and the Mithras cult in Rome tied in with the soldiers reflect the deep need for such direct experiences of the gods whatever we choose to call them. Note that Mithras was a direct rival to Christianity at the beginning in Rome, with a similar mythology for example, born in a cave and ascended to heaven to help mankind etc.

The example chosen is Thoth who developed into Mercury and Hermes and ultimately into Hermes Trismegistus, who have direct influence of the Mystery religions of today through Theosophy and Order of the Golden Dawn.

They had similar roles in their society's belief systems including communication and magic!

Mercury



Hermes Trismegistus



Mithras/Hermes/Christ





## Sumerian

Their beliefs blossomed in the Mesopotamium Basin of the Tigris Euphrates, the source of some of our key present day religions which is interesting in itself. Their similarity to

The Egyptians were not the only people to believe in polytheistic religion. Additionally they worshipped using a pyramid shape known as ziggurats, of which the Hanging Gardens of Babylon are perhaps the best known.

The journey into the underworld is represented by Innanna, a forerunner of Persephone who visited her sister and was reborn again.

The Tower of Babylon



Innana





## A Quiet Place

### Meditation Process

There are some steps we can take that are common to all meditative practices. In fact the process of using 'altered states' of consciousness is a well worn path.

We will look at some of these steps which you may like to follow either in order or parallel to each other.

These will include:

1. Space
2. Posture
3. Breath
4. Safety
  - Anchor positive emotion
  - Inner companion, protector

### The well trodden path



## The Science behind Meditation

Over the past 50 years or so there has been much science looking at different states of mind. Originally in Indian Universities looking at Yogic techniques and how the body achieves such unusual states. Since the beginning of the 20th Century, a deep curiosity about Eastern practices has been investigated through Theosophy for example. More acutely and especially since the Sixties opening up 'states of mind' often through the use of psychedelic drugs has been an area of deep scientific interest. Since then there have been waves of academic interest both for and against even looking into these areas of the mind yet to be discovered.

More recently this has become acceptable and much work is being done on the study of 'consciousness' and the application of meditative skills as part of everyday life. There is an argument that states simply doing these practices will awaken individuals to the deeper aspects of themselves.

What is an altered state?

*An altered state of mind or consciousness is common to all as we drift in and out throughout a day. We alter our state of mind both consciously and unconsciously depending on our context for example*

- Day dreaming
- Highly emotionally charged states positive and negative
- High temperatures
- Using drugs or alcohol

In fact any state that is not in the immediate present moment could be said to be an Altered State of Mind.

## Brain Waves



**Brain waves** appear to be crucial to our thought processes. There appear to be four main brainwave states that range from high amplitude, low frequency to low amplitude, high frequency. These brainwave states range from high arousal levels to deep dreamless sleep. They are common to all human beings of all ages, gender, race and are cross cultural. Up setting though it may be to some it does appear to be in common with other mammalian brains! Perhaps we aren't quite the superior race of beings that we like to think we are!

At all times the brain is using a number of these waves with one that predominates according to the situation. An understanding of these different states enables people to be more productive during different activities for example relaxing or being intensely focused on a specific activity.

**Beta Waves** have the frequency range of 13 plus hertz. They are associated with high arousal wakeful states when the mind is busy and when short term memory is essential to any task eg. A teacher

**Alpha waves** have the frequency range of 8-12 Hz. They are predominant during wakeful relaxation with closed eyes, in other words the brain could be considered to be 'idling'.

**Theta waves** have the frequency range of 4-7 Hz. They are usually associated with drowsy, meditative, or sleeping states? They are proven to be linked to learning and memory.

**Delta waves** have the frequency of range of 0-4 hertz. They are usually associated with the deepest stages of sleep.

## Day dreaming





## Preparation:

### Space

#### Indoors

Find a space in your home to set up a focus for Meditation. It may be a quiet corner where you can go quietly and not be disturbed. It should be warm and comfortable.

Find a beautiful cloth to place objects that are precious to you.  
Have a candle, crystal and maybe some flowers.



#### Outdoors

#### Outdoors

A special place where you love to go, in nature or at a sacred site of pilgrimage if there is one nearby, and there often is!  
Otherwise by the sea or a stream, somewhere beautiful where nature can wash over you!



## Posture

Traditional posture:

Most people thinking about meditation consider that the Lotus position (sitting on the floor cross legged) is the traditional posture.

However meditation can be done in any posture sitting, standing, walking and everyday mindfulness which means going about your business, whatever that is, with a meditative disposition.

It is, however, recommended when you first begin these practices to find a comfortable position in your meditation area/room. This will help you to focus without thinking about the needs and appetites of the physical body.

As near as you are able, keep a good posture with spine erect, head balancing and the rest of the body relaxed around the upright spine

Just as when you practice anything again and again your muscle memory will quite surprisingly quickly make that the starting position to move into a meditative experience. Your physical body is a key to that inner door!

### Lotus Posture



### Walking meditation (Tai chi)



## Breath

*'You can live 2 months without food, 2 weeks without water but only a few minutes without air'*

*Hung Yi-hsiang*

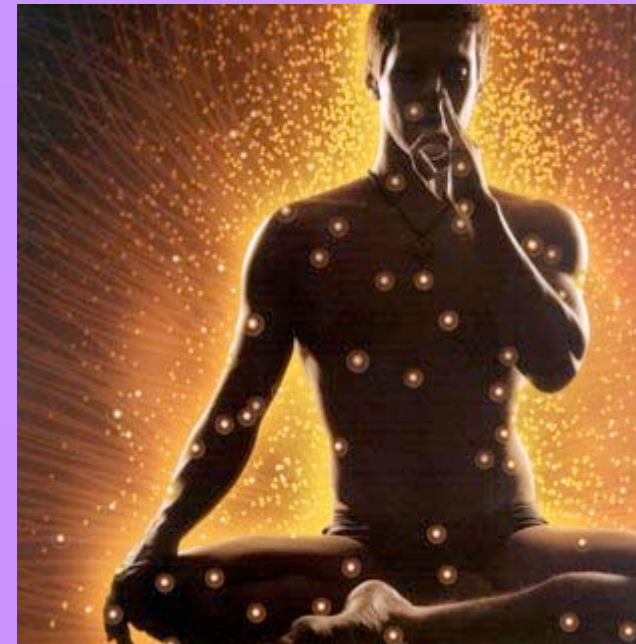
Pranayama is the science and practice of breathing in yoga philosophy. The aim is to oxygenate the blood supply for the body and the brain to keep the body in good health. Despite its size, the brain takes 20% of the oxygen according to the size of your lungs when you are breathing properly.

There are a certain number of exercises which can be of great help with meditative practices.

Breathing and emotions are tightly interlinked and control of the emotions (not suppression) is most useful for focusing on the meditation experiences.

1. Observing the breath
2. Complete, diaphragmatic or abdominal breath
3. Pulse breath
4. Triangular breath
5. Square breath
6. Alternate nostril breath
7. Humming breath
8. Cooling breath
9. HeartBreath

## The Body of Breath



## Safety

Why should there be an issue about safety?  
People sometimes have pre-conceived ideas about what happens to the mind when it becomes quiet?  
Will it stir up difficult memories perhaps?

If you are in a particularly difficult stage of your life and haven't done anything like this before then it is a slight possibility that memories could arise e.g. post traumatic stress disorder, in which case it is best to take professional advice.

It might be that simple guided visualisations will provide enough structure for the mind to remain in a positive.

To prevent any likelihood it is a good idea to use the traditional pathways stated in this process to build up slowly with simple breathing exercises for a few minutes. These ways can include an inner companion or an anchor to a powerful and positive feeling.

Yoga practice suggests there are 3 stages for meditation

- Concentration
- Meditation
- Samadhi

## Guardian angel



## Spirit guides



**Anchors** - naturally occurring psychological phenomenon in any of the 5 senses, we can deliberately anchor the positive memories





## **Concentration**

Training the mind to be still...

Focus all attention on the tree, notice when your mind wanders and return to gazing at the tree.



## **Meditation**

Train the mind to thinking about all aspects of the tree without distraction, always bringing attention back to the tree as the starting point

Thinking about trees



## Samadhi

Training the mind to let go of all thoughts about the tree this is an experience without words, simply

Becoming the tree!





## A Quiet Place

### Meditation Practices

#### Meditation Practices

In this chapter we look at a number of practices from a broad base of beliefs. All can be practiced safely without implication or offence to any religion.

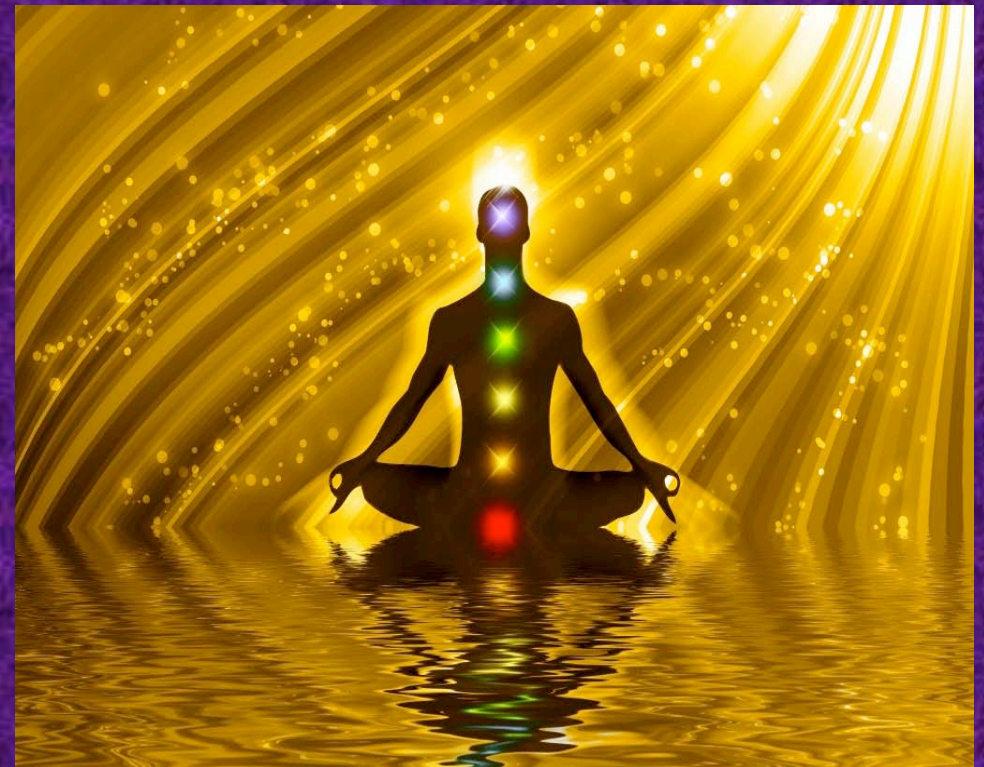
They are designed to build up gently and to use the time available without effort.

Over time and practice you will receive a key to unlock the inner door wherever and whatever you are doing. This will help you everyday managing life's adventures more easily.

You may do these in order or pick and choose as you feel. If you are a newcomer to meditation I suggest most strongly that you do the initial practices in the order below as this will give you a gentle safe access to your inner worlds with a minimum level of discipline and structure!

Use 'you tube' to discover sounds and images that will take you deeper into each of these areas.

### What is Enlightenment





## Tratak - Enhances the ability to concentrate

Tratak or steady gazing is an excellent concentration exercise. It involves gazing with eyes out of focus at a candle flame and then closing the eyes and visualizing the flame in your mind's eye. The image remains on the retina. This helps to quieten the mind keep a focus of attention.

Look up Prometheus

## Candle Gazing



## Heartbreath

Breathing from the heart ,opens the heart up and focuses the attention on the strongest electrical field of the body. Additionally this particular breath connects the Mind and Heart to synchronise and therefore function to the maximum.

Place your hand on your heart, let yourself become so still you can hear your heart beating. Take a moment to appreciate your heart and all its hard work, thank it, pat it on it's little back, give it big round of applause. Now inhale to the count of 5 and exhale to the count of 5. Do this 5 times. Repeat at least 5 times a day. If you can do it more then even better, you cannot overdose. Notice how you feel, is your thinking clearer, are you making better decisions?

Look up Pranayama

## Appreciate your heart





## OM -the first sound of creation

Mandukya Upanishad: "OM: this eternal word is all; what was, what is and what shall be."

It is pronounced:

'AAAAAAUUUUUMMMMMMMMMM'

And usually chanted on the out breath

It is commonly used combined with Tratak and is considered very powerful in 'mantra' yoga, that is the yoga of sound.

Other Sanskrit phrases are used as well as the vowel sounds. Transcendental Meditation is known for its mantras that are chanted on a daily basis for a considerable time. As a shape it is also beautiful to contemplate.

Look up Tibetan chants

## The Sanskrit symbol



**Yantras** - geometrical diagrams which serve to focus the mind.

Each Yantra has a specific and mystical meaning and the symbol will enhance the feeling described by the colours and shapes.

In Buddhist practice the sacred art or Thangka is intended to stimulate the ability to visualise and develop the imagination and open up consciousness.

These can also be found in the more modern Mandelbrot fractals. Bear in mind that these meanings are intended to be mysterious and have little place for intellectualizing or left brain control!

Look up Sacred Geometry

Yantra





**Symbols** - the caduceus, represents the spine

As a symbol the caduceus is quite well known. However it's meaning is little known! You will have seen a version on your doctor's headed paper as it is used as a symbol for the BMA.

Asclepius was a son of Apollo and the god of medicine and healing. He was brought up by Cheiron and trained in healing arts. Hippocrates used the symbol and is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine and is often referred to as the father of Western medicine.

The original Hippocratic Oath began with the invocation "I swear by Apollo the Physician and by Asclepius and by Hygieia and by all the gods ..."

It is also the wand of the god Hermes and Mercury, the gods of communication. It represents the spine with the male and female energies arising like serpents from the earth. The wings represent human's connections to the heavenly realm.

Look up 'Kundalini' yoga

**Caduceus**



## Kuan yin - compassion yoga

The embodiment of compassion is Kuan Yin.

Avalokitesvara is the bodhisattva of compassion. As he looked upon the Earth, one tear fell from his eye and from this tear sprang a flower, Tara the goddess of compassion was born from the flower and danced across the land.

She became Kuan Yin and has many other names among which are:

Star of the Sea and Hearer of Cries.

*As you look at the full moon floating over water, with soft gaze, you may see the rainbow around the moon. Watch as the moon opens up like a shell, standing there in the centre is a beautiful woman dressed in moonlight.*

*As she looks at you with love one tear falls on her cheek. She catches the tear in her palm and blows it like a kiss to you. Take it, now a pearl, and hold it to your heart. Feel the love flowing into you, in every cell of your body warm energy, good health and well being.*

*When you look again she is gone and the moon hangs once again over the water reflecting its silvery path to your feet.*

Look up Bodhisattva

## Kuan Yin or Kwannon Sama





## Zen Buddhism

Many people know of the Koans designed to confuse the mind and allow quiet to enter!

*What is the sound of one hand clapping?*

Equally the meditation regimes can be very strict with masters hitting the pupils as a form of enlightenment!

Zen walking which includes mindfulness and breathing with every step is also part of Tai chi practices. It is a moving meditation and a way to develop stillness of mind.

*Imagine an ancient tree, gnarled and twisted with age yet still vigorous, thick roots winding deep into the earth and branches that reach up to the clouds.*

*A monkey is jumping in the tree, swinging across from branch to branch. Sometimes he uses his arms, other times his legs and others his tail.*

*Watch the monkey jump, full of life and curiosity.*

*Now stop the monkey on a branch, hold it still for a few seconds then let it go again. Practice this until you can hold the monkey still for 10 seconds and increase the time.*

Look up Basho and Haiku poetry

Watch the monkey jump!



## Smiling meditation

Your posture and facial expression alters your chemistry. A traditional Taoist meditation aims to send good feeling into all the cells of the body.

Take up a meditation posture, deepen your breath and let yourself become still. Pay attention to your breathing, the touch of the breath on the tip of the nose, the cool in breath and the warm out breath.

Take a moment to remember when you last felt content, when you smiled at something or someone. If you have no such memory, maybe you have seen someone who smiles. How does that make you feel? Try it yourself, lift the corners of your mouth, relax the muscles of your face and smile a big smile, grin a big grin. Do that 5 times as you breathe out. After a little practice feel the smile extending inside on an in breath, feel the energy of the smile in every cell of your body. Imagine you are smiling at the cloud shapes, animal antics, a child playing, Smile now with your eyes.

Feel a deep inside smile flowing through you, round you, maybe a deep chuckle bubbling up, like a nice tasting memory, feel free to burst out laughing...no-one minds. Now practice these when you are out and about and watch other peoples reaction....

Look up Taoist smiling meditation

## Baby smiling





## Music

Settle yourself into your meditation posture and take a deep breath. By now you will find yourself easily falling into these good practices.

As you listen to Benedictus, *visualise hills just before dawn. You can see shadowy shapes of cloaked people walking in ones and twos from different directions.*

*As the sky begins to lighten you see them walking towards the same place, a hollow in the hills seems to be their goal. Indeed you can begin to see through the mists the shape of an old chapel.*

*Let the music guide your imagery. Watch as the sun rises above the horizon and lights the chapel with a great radiance.*

*All the people gather in awe and wonder at the beauty of the scene. The music will clearly tell you when this happens.*

*Soon, and though it might have been only minutes it seems like a lifetime, people start returning, animated now, full of joy and hope*

Karl Jenkins Benedictus

## Sunrise



## Rainbow spine

Be aware of your spine, think of it as a rainbow xylophone.

Energy points called chakras are believed to exist and open up certain aspects of your whole being.

Imagine your rainbow spine reaching down to the centre of the earth, drawing all the elemental energies to feed your body with good health and well being.

And reaching up through the top of your head up to the stars drawing the songs of the spheres into your Self.

Rich with energy and light to dance along your way.

Look up Chakras

## The Chakras and your Spine





## Drawing down the Moon

The power of the moon is often linked in most cultures with the feminine. Obvious cyclical events coincide with menstrual activities which synchronised with women in tribes before industrialisation.

Full Moon :

Some have described the moon as a hole in the sky, the light in the darkness

Find a place where you can gaze at the moon.

Soft eyes allow the light to pour in, silvery essence flows in with your breath, into your blood stream filling every cell of your body with cool healing light. Notice the silver reflections in water and how it lights up the dark places. Softening the edges, melting everything into one. Feel part of the rhythms of life the tides of the earth breathing, one and whole together. In harmony with all women who have ever been and who will come. Feel this creative process in yourself.

Look up the crescent moon

## A Wiccan concept



## Golden being

Close your eyes and breathe in the light.

Let yourself be breathed by the light.

Feel yourself in the centre of that radiance and see your Self as the beautiful golden being that you are.

Pure Heart shining through, dancing into the future.

Look up Gurdjieff and Ouspensky

## Purity of Heart





## Poetry

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my  
dreams.

W.B.Yeats

Look up William Blake

## Cloths of Heaven



## Prose

You would know the secret of death.  
But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the  
heart of life?  
The owl whose night bound eyes are blind unto the  
day cannot unveil the mystery of light  
If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open  
your heart wide unto the body of life  
For life and death are one. Even as the river and  
the sea are one..  
For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind  
and to melt into the sun>  
And what is it to cease breathing but to free the  
breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and  
expand and seek god unencumbered...

Kahlil Gibran -The Prophet

Look up Rabindranath Tagore, Eugene Halliday





As Above so Below

## Quotes

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.

Albert Einstein

Look up The Tempest by Shakespeare



## Here and now

After all there is nothing else.  
The past is a story in your memory banks charged with emotion or not!. Each visit to these memories alters them subtly.

The future is speculation based on the story of the past.

So live in the present, use the memory and imagination to create new futures everyday

The real secret and great gift is your PRESENT!

Look up Ram Dass





## Keeping silence

Meditation without seed

Take a few moments everyday as a self discipline and just be silent.

Enjoy the peace and tranquility of quiet.

Listen to the sounds of nature

Still your mind through observing, '*my mind is chattering*', let the thoughts rise and fall as you would watch clouds shape shifting across the sky, giving no energy to them just watching, noticing.

Let go... and let God...

Look up Eugene Halliday

## Silence



## Dancing into the future

So much to learn, so many possibilities ,inner resources and qualities sleeping within your greater Self.

Never ending, infinite being that you are, dance into your future radiant with light , hope and love whatever the adventure may bring.

Wonderful YOU!





And so.....

This is not the end but the beginning.

You have explored a great web, tapped into a spiritual tapas of practices, ancient and new. I hope you have enjoyed this as much as I have enjoyed writing it for you...or me perhaps!

The beautiful pictures I have found on the web, may I encourage you to find your own and thank whoever placed them.

Enjoy your great and mysterious Self as you become the Best that you May Be

**Apology**, I have endeavored not to use copyright if I have I apologies. This book is freely available and I know for those who have got this far that your images will have been inspirational. Thank you.

## The Cosmic Web

