

Meditation Script –Pause in the Forest (10 minutes) – Letting Go of SNS arousal

“Let’s begin this meditation with finding a restful position and if comfortable, closing the eyes. Opening this meditation with taking a few deep breaths. To make sure that you are breathing in a way that will prompt your body’s relaxation response, imagine that the soles of your feet breath in air, then let the breath travel all the way up your body and out at the top of your head. Notice, even exaggerate, the short pause before the breath enters back into your body, entering at the top of the head and slowly making its way down the body and exiting through the soles of your feet. Continue doing these full body breaths a few more times, following your breathing mentally on its journey through the body. *Break*

Notice how the body softens will each full exhale. Notice how the body let’s go of any tension.

Allow the breath to return to its natural rhythm now.

With our eyes closed, our mind often becomes more aware of other sensations. Let’s check in with body sensations. How does your body feel today? We are often so engaged in the thinking mind, that we don’t realize we have a body attached to our head.

To help you check in with your body, I invite you to scan down your body. Starting at the head and slowly scanning down until you reach your toes. Noticing any areas of the body that feel tense, or other areas that feel at ease. This is nothing to analyze or evaluate but to simply notice. We are merely building a mental picture of what our body feels like in this moment. *Break*

Let’s also become aware of the sense of touch. Observing the sensation of the soles of our feet making contact with ground. Where do you feel the point of contact of the chair or the floor the strongest? And in the same way becoming aware of the hands and arms resting on our lap.

Let’s now shift our awareness to any sounds. Sounds that seem nearby ...sounds that are coming from further away. Again, these are nothing to judge just simple awakening to the sounds all around us.

Have you noticed that sitting here, your breath creates a rising and falling sensation? So where in your body can you experience your breath more intensely? Perhaps you sense the breath cycling through your nostril and throat area? Perhaps you sense the breath as your chest moves up and down following its own rhythm.

To help remain focuses on the breath, try counting each inhale and each exhale. When you get to the number five, start over – beginning at inhale 1. *Break*

Don't worry too much if the mind wanders, it's perfectly normal for the mind to wonder off. When you noticed that the mind has drifted, congratulate yourself on that important awareness and simply return to counting your breath. *Break*

Let's invite your imagination to be part of this experience. We are going to a beautiful place to unwind. Imagine you are sitting under a tree besides a clear stream in the forest. You are breathing in the beauty of the warm fall day. You are seeing and sensing your surroundings as if for the first time. Breath in the fresh air around you, notice the sounds of the stream and forest, see the colors of the trees and leaves, take in the forest' fragrance of dried pine needles and damp moss. You are fully alive and connected to the nature around you. *Break*

In front of you, leaves slowly fall from the tree and land in the stream. The slow current gently moves each leaf downstream. Your gaze follows the leaves until they are beyond your sight. As the next leaf falls into the water, imagine placing a thought onto the leaf. This can be any thought, picture or image that is coming into your mind. Simply place the thought onto the leaf and watch as it drifts gradually downstream. Continue this for a little while longer. *Break*

If the mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to sitting by the stream and attending to the leaves. *Break*

Now bring your attention back to the body. Noticing how your body feels. Sensing where you are making contact with the chair or the floor. Becoming aware of any sounds in your presence. Visualizing the space you are in. And when ready slowly open up the eyes. (12:04)

*Heidi Schreiber-Pan, PhD, LCPC*

*Peace in the Wild Meditation CD*