

The Contemplation of Nature

An accessible meditation practice

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The Contemplation of Nature

A simple and accessible meditation practice

We live in a time when many things feel divided. Forests are disappearing, cities are growing, and many of us spend more time indoors, surrounded by screens and noise.

Our culture often tells us that happiness comes from having and consuming more. Yet this way of living has a cost. Nature is under pressure, and many people feel disconnected—from the land, from each other, and from themselves.

The Contemplation of Nature is a simple practice that helps us reconnect. By slowing down and observing nature, we calm the mind and remember that we are part of the living world.

Sometimes the first step is small: taking a moment to breathe, pay attention, and be present in nature. With regular practice, the rest follows.

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Image: When you contemplate nature, remember you are not looking at an isolated 'object' but a small part of a vast connected web of life which includes yourself. Human beings are nature too! This awareness of interdependence and inter-being transcends the barrier of a Self and leads to more awareness. How Amazing!

The Relaxation Response

The Relaxation Response is a book written in 1975 by Herbert Benson, a Harvard physician, and Miriam Z. Klipper.

Scientific research on the mind–body connection shows that after about 22 minutes of mental rest, deeper physiological relaxation begins (Benson & Proctor, 2010). This discovery helped spark a “relaxation revolution” and led to practices such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

When the mind reaches a calm state, the body can enter the Relaxation Response, where metabolism, blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing become more regulated.

This state supports overall mind–body health and is increasingly used in treating various conditions and reducing healthcare costs.

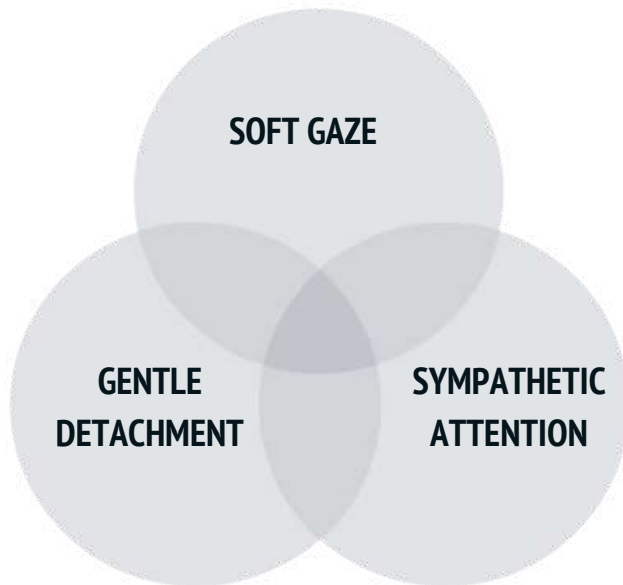
Including the time needed to settle the body and mind, 30 minutes is considered an optimal duration for practicing The Contemplation of Nature.



Three simple steps as a guide

The mindfulness practice involves three simple steps:

- Soft gaze
- Gentle Detachment
- Sympathetic Attention.



Step 1: Soft Gaze

Choose something from the natural world to look at; a landscape, a body of water, a sky view, or a plant, leaf, pebble or shell. Sit somewhere quiet and comfortable. Let your body be upright but relaxed, and rest your eyes on what you are observing with a soft and gentle gaze. Thoughts will come and go; when the mind wanders, gently return your attention to what you see. Look at the details, light and shade, colour. Simply sit and notice the quiet presence of nature.

Step 2: Gentle Detachment

Gentle detachment means observing nature without bringing in desires, worries or expectations. The philosopher Immanuel Kant called this *disinterestedness*; noticing your body and the environment without trying to control it. Notice what is in front of you just as it is. If thoughts or judgements arise, don't judge them, simply return to the soft gaze. Nothing needs to be achieved; nothing to do, nowhere to go. Simply observe.

Step 3: Sympathetic Attention

Sympathetic attention means bringing kindness to what you are observing. Rest your attention on the object and allow thoughts to pass without judgement. Let a gentle sense of appreciation arise for yourself and the living world in front of you. Notice how everything is interdependent. Recognise that you are not separate from it. Rest quietly in this sense of connection.



Image: The Contemplation of Nature 3 step meditation method has been used at conferences and meetings across the world.

Thank you!

Thank you for reading.

I hope this small zine is helpful to you. With regular practice, the contemplation of nature can help the body release stress and create a little more space for meeting the many challenges of life.

Remember that you can contemplate nature anywhere. When in doubt, simply return to your breath and feel how remarkable it is to simply be alive.

There is a magical world around us that we often miss when we are caught up in our daily struggles. Take a moment to pause, look, and notice that we are a part of the world that sustains us.

With warm wishes!

Posthuman Auntie



