



Leading by Nature
by Giles Hutchins



Opening to Nature: This activity involves going outside and sitting on the ground for about five minutes or more, so we need to ensure we are dressed appropriately. Let's find a tree that attracts our attention, and sit down next to its trunk, making ourselves comfortable. It is best if we sit up right with our back and spine reasonably straight yet remaining relaxed and comfortable with our hands gently resting in our lap or down by our side, and our legs crossed or stretched out, whichever we prefer. Once we are settled comfortably, we can undertake a few rounds of conscious breathing, feeling the fresh air filling our lungs, and releasing any nagging thoughts through our out-breath. Then, with our eyes closed or slightly open, we simply sit and feel. We don't think, we feel.

Simply feeling our body sensations while we sit is easier said than done as our ego-chattering mind will no doubt try and distract us with discursive thinking. Notice these thoughts and gently and repeatedly bring ourselves back to simply feeling, taking some deep breaths if we feel we need to relax further into this sitting meditation. As we allow ourselves to relax and our head-chatter starts to wane (which may take a few minutes), let's bring our attention ever-more intensely into the sensations of what we are feeling, whether in our gut, heart, legs, arms or the sensations on our skin, or the noises and gusts of air around us. Then, we can start to bring our awareness into the tree as a living being behind, beneath and above us. Sense the roots radiating out in the soil under us. With our imagination, let's sense the roots spreading into the soil beneath us, deeper and deeper they go. We can then use our imagination to go further into the earth beneath us, all the way into the molten core of our planet, if we wish.

Then, we bring our awareness from deep beneath us back up into the roots of the tree and into our buttocks sitting on the ground next to the tree, and then into our body, up our spine, back and chest, up into our head, and the space above our head. Sense the branches, twigs and leaves radiating and reaching out into the sky above. Sense the clouds and vast expanse above us, taking our awareness up further in to the stars that lie beyond. And then bring our awareness back down into where we are sitting now. Let's just sit here for a couple of minutes with this relaxed awareness of the feelings within us and the world all around us. This is a lovely little practice that we can do once a week or perhaps more frequently if we wish.