

SHINRIN-YOKU

THE MEDICINE OF BEING IN THE FOREST

32 INVITATIONS TO DEEPEN
YOUR CONNECTION
WITH NATURE

Life
UT OF BOUNDS
by Monica Schwartz

These Invitations are simple and will not take much time. They are intended to help you decompress, relax and ground you into yourself.

If possible, the optimal location to do these invitations is in a semi-wild forest environment, though a local park, garden, or simply by a tree in your backyard will do for every day.

You can choose to do them individually, or several together, one after the other, to expand the benefits of your time in Nature. You can also modify them to suit your comfort, location and the weather. They are, after all, just that: Invitations. You can accept them or decline them as feels right to you, just like in a guided Shinrin-Yoku walk.

The most important thing is that you are safe, comfortable and feel relaxed. If you find yourself efforting, just let it go.

You can do these Invitations alone, or with others. If you do them with others, I suggest that you do so in silence, so each person can fully benefit from their own personal experience. You can, if you like, share with each other at the end of each invitation, or a series.

If you keep a journal, you might feel called to write down your impressions and thoughts afterwards.

This is what we do at the end of an actual guided Shinrin-Yoku walk: at the end of each invitation, we gather in a circle to share what we experienced. It is called Council. Each person in turn has a chance to speak while receiving everyone's focused attention. This is a very rewarding part of the walks.

My intention is to offer you something easy and beautiful that will make you feel better afterwards. It will be like joining me on a Shinrin-Yoku walk from wherever you are.

Please Note

Before you begin, especially if you are someplace unfamiliar and/or a wild environment, always look around to notice and acknowledge any potential hazards, from ticks to loose gravel and rocks, poison oak and ivy etc, and be aware of wildlife in the area. The main thing is that you are safe.

If you choose to do your Invitations in a wild or semi-wild environment, be sure to dress in layers and wear appropriate footwear. Also make sure to bring sufficient water, as well as any snacks and other supplies you might need to ensure your comfort and wellbeing.

You might also want to bring a blanket, towel and/or a camping stool for sit spot and other invitations that involve sitting or laying on the ground.

All the invitations are simple and easy, but not all of them are suited for all environments and weather. Use your good judgement to choose which are suited best to where you are or where you are planning on going.

Shinrin-Yoku is a gentle practice, and most invitations can be done by just about everyone. However, some are not suited for people with disabilities and other health and mobility challenges. Young children should be supervised by an adult at all times.

Always read through the invitation(s) you are planning on doing before heading out, so you will know if a special situation, location, time of day, or other item(s) is needed or suggested.

A tip about those slow, deep and long drawn breaths: make sure to exhale all possible air particles from your lungs before inhaling again. That way, you will clear out toxins.

PLEASURES OF PRESENCE

That is what we call the 'access portal' into the Shinrin-Yoku experience. This is the Invitation that introduces all Invitations, the one that sets the tone, that helps take you from your head, with all the worries and thoughts that dwell there, down into your body.

Through the breath, and by touching on the five physical senses, this initial invitation prepares you for a more pleasurable and fun experience with the invitations that follow, as your time in Nature will be enhanced if you are truly present in the moment.

During a guided walk, the Forest Therapy guide leads the Pleasures of Presence invitation. In this situation, where the walk is self-guided, you will have to first read, or memorize, the invitation for yourself. But after the first couple of times you will have no problem remembering, and even bringing your own variations.

If you have the time, I suggest you always do one of the Pleasures of Presence invitations first, followed by one or more of the other invitations. If not, just remember to start whatever invitation you choose by planting your feet solidly on the ground and taking a few deep, slow and long drawn breaths, preferably with your eyes closed.

Invitations nr. 1, 2 and 32 in the set are Pleasures of Presence.

Remember: since you are self-guided, take all the time you like.

Invitation 1

PLEASURES OF PRESENCE

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU.

CLOSE YOUR EYES, AND TAKE FIVE SLOW, DEEP AND LONG DRAWN BREATHS, EXHALING THROUGH YOUR MOUTH. BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF THE AIR IN AND AROUND YOU. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE? EXAGGERATE YOUR BREATHING A LITTLE, ALLOWING A LOW HUMMING SOUND TO ESCAPE YOUR MOUTH ON THE OUT BREATH.

FEEL THE WEATHER ON YOUR SKIN, EVEN THAT INSIDE YOUR CLOTHES. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE THERE, IN THIS MOMENT IN TIME?

LISTEN FOR THE SOUNDS FURTHEST AWAY FROM YOU... AND NOW FOR THE SOUNDS NEAREST YOU.

BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO YOUR FEET, FEEL THEM SOLIDLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH.

WIGGLE YOUR TOES A LITTLE. LET YOUR BODY GENTLY SWAY TO A RHYTHM THAT FEELS NATURAL AND GOOD. COME BACK TO A PLACE OF STILLNESS, TAKE ANOTHER LONG, DEEP BREATH, THEN OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND YOU AS IF YOU WERE SEEING THIS PLACE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME.

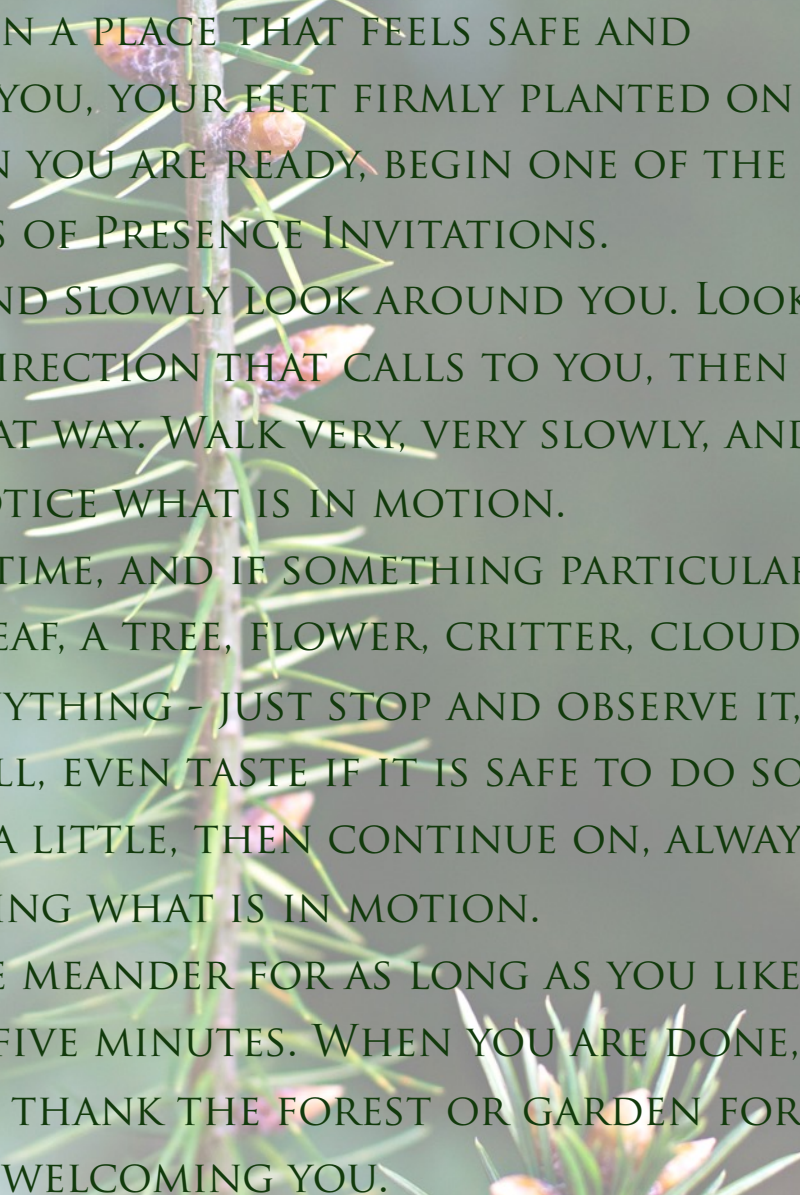
Invitation 2

PLEASURES OF PRESENCE

IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU, LOOK AROUND FOR A ROCK THAT IS CALLING TO YOU. ASK THE ROCK PERMISSION TO BE YOUR ROCK FOR THE DAY AND, WHEN IT FEELS RIGHT, PICK IT UP. HOLDING THE ROCK IN BOTH YOUR HANDS, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TAKE FIVE SLOW, DEEP AND LONG DRAWN BREATHS, EXHALING THROUGH YOUR MOUTH. FOCUS ON THE ROCK IN YOUR HANDS, AND GET TO KNOW IT A LITTLE, FEELING FOR TEXTURE, WEIGHT AND PECULIARITIES. WHAT DOES THE ROCK FEEL LIKE? NOW THINK OF WHAT IS WORRYING YOU TODAY, AND ASK THE ROCK TO PLEASE HOLD THAT WORRY FOR YOU FOR A WHILE, SO YOU CAN ENJOY OUR TIME IN NATURE UNENCUMBERED. NOW TAKE ANOTHER SLOW, DEEP BREATH AND, WHEN YOU ARE READY, OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT YOUR ROCK. THANK THE ROCK, AND PLACE IT BACK ON THE GROUND. BEGIN YOUR FIRST INVITATION AND ENJOY YOUR TIME. WHEN YOU ARE DONE AND RETURN TO THE ROCK, YOU MAY FIND THAT YOUR WORRY HAS DISSOLVED INTO THE EARTH. THANK THE ROCK AND MOTHER EARTH, AND RETURN THE STONE TO ITS ORIGINAL PLACE.

Invitation 3

NOTICE WHAT IS IN MOTION



STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU, YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU ARE READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. OPEN YOUR EYES AND SLOWLY LOOK AROUND YOU. LOOK AND FEEL FOR A DIRECTION THAT CALLS TO YOU, THEN START WALKING THAT WAY. WALK VERY, VERY SLOWLY, AND JUST NOTICE WHAT IS IN MOTION. REALLY TAKE YOUR TIME, AND IF SOMETHING PARTICULAR CALLS TO YOU - A LEAF, A TREE, FLOWER, CRITTER, CLOUD, ROCK, BIRD, OR ANYTHING - JUST STOP AND OBSERVE IT, MAYBE TOUCH, SMELL, EVEN TASTE IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO. CONNECT WITH IT A LITTLE, THEN CONTINUE ON, ALWAYS NOTICING WHAT IS IN MOTION. ENJOY THIS GENTLE MEANDER FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE, BUT FOR AT LEAST FIVE MINUTES. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, BEFORE YOU LEAVE, THANK THE FOREST OR GARDEN FOR WELCOMING YOU.

Invitation 4

SIT SPOT

IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU, STAND STILL WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU ARE READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND, MOVING SLOWLY, HEAD IN A DIRECTION THAT CALLS TO YOU.

FIND A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN SIT COMFORTABLY, AND DO JUST THAT. SIT THERE FOR A MINIMUM OF FIVE MINUTES, THOUGH TWENTY WOULD BE BETTER.

BECOME A PART OF THE PLACE.

THE CRITTERS THAT LIVE THERE WILL GO QUIET AS YOU ENTER THEIR SPACE, BUT AFTER A WHILE, THEY WILL ACCEPT YOUR PRESENCE AND RESUME THEIR NORMAL ACTIVITIES.

LOOK AROUND, SMELL THE AIR, AND NOTICE THE LITTLE DETAILS. IF YOU WISH, THIS IS A GOOD MOMENT TO JOURNAL.

WHEN YOU FEEL REFRESHED, BEFORE MOVING ON, THANK YOUR SPECIAL PLACE FOR HOSTING YOU.

Invitation 5

CONNECT WITH A TREE

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND YOU, THEN FIND A TREE OR PLANT THAT CALLS TO YOU.

WALK OVER AND STAND IN FRONT OF HER/HIM. IF YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW IT, LET GO OF THE BOTANICAL NAME. NOW INTRODUCE YOURSELF, THEN OBSERVE THE TREE OR PLANT, REALLY PAYING ATTENTION, MAYBE TOUCHING HER GENTLY, AND SMELLING FOR ANY FRAGRANCE.

IN A FLOWERING PLANT, SOMETIMES THE FRAGRANCE INTENSITY VARIES FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER. SPEND SOME TIME GETTING TO KNOW HER, AND MAKING FRIENDS. SEE IF A NAME COMES TO YOU FROM THE TREE OR PLANT.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE, EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO THE PLANT, AND THINK OF WHAT ELSE YOU ARE FEELING GRATEFUL FOR IN THIS MOMENT.

Invitation 6

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

FIND A LAWN OR A MEADOW WITH SOFT GRASS. GO AND STAND THERE FOR A MINUTE, FEELING YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND REMOVE YOUR SHOES.

STAND ON THE GRASS (CAN BE MOSS, TOO) BAREFOOT, AND FEEL THE STRENGTH AND SUPPORT OF THE EARTH BENEATH YOU. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

TAKE A FEW STEPS IN THE GRASS... KEEP GOING AND WALK AROUND A LITTLE, FIRST WITH YOUR EYES OPEN, THEN, IF YOU FEEL SAFE, WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED.

WALK AROUND BAREFOOT FOR A FEW MINUTES, THEN SIT DOWN ON THE GRASS AND LOOK AROUND YOU.

IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT, LAY DOWN COMPLETELY, YOUR BODY RELAXED. LOOK UP AT THE SKY, THE CLOUDS, THE BIRDS THAT MAY BE PASSING, THE TREES ABOVE YOU.

STAY AS LONG AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO LEAVE, BEFORE YOU DO, EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO THE GRASS FOR HOLDING YOUR WEIGHT AND KEEPING YOU SAFE.



Invitation 7

PLAYING WITH WATER

WALK TO A CREEK, RIVER, POND, PROTECTED NOOK BY THE OCEAN, OR EVEN A FOUNTAIN IF YOU ARE IN A CITY PARK. STAND WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH AND, WHEN YOU ARE READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

THEN FIND A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE PLACE FOR YOU TO SIT SO YOU CAN EASILY REACH THE WATER WITH YOUR HANDS. LOOK AT THE WATER AND HER ENVIRONMENT. NOTICE WHAT IS STILL, AND WHAT IS IN MOTION. HOVER THE PALM OF YOUR HAND JUST ABOVE THE WATER. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE? NOW GENTLY TOUCH THE WATER WITH YOUR PALM, OR EVEN JUST YOUR FINGERTIPS. IF YOU CAN, TOUCH THE ROCKS AND SAND ON THE BOTTOM. ALLOW YOURSELF TO BECOME PLAYFUL, AND GATHER A FEW LITTLE TREASURES, PEBBLES MAYBE, AND CREATE A DESIGN. FEEL LIKE TAKING YOUR SHOES OFF AND DIPPING YOUR FEET IN THE WATER? OTHERWISE YOU CAN JUST SIT THERE AND QUIETLY OBSERVE.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO LEAVE, OFFER A GESTURE OF GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO THE WATER FOR HER PRECIOUS GIFT OF LIFE

Invitation 8

MIRROR MIRROR

IN THAT PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU, STAND WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH AND, WHEN YOU ARE READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND YOU. FIND A TREE, PLANT, BUSH, FLOWER, ROCK, CLOUD OR CRITTER THAT CALLS TO YOU AND WALK TOWARDS IT (IF A CLOUD JUST OBSERVE, OF COURSE). OBSERVE HIM/HER FOR A MOMENT, THEN MAKE A MOVEMENT WITH YOUR HANDS, ARMS, OR WHOLE BODY, THAT MIRRORS THAT BEING IN SOME WAY.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE? IT IS A LITTLE LIKE A DANCE, ISN'T IT? IT REMINDS ME OF HAWAIIAN HULA.

NOW LOOK AROUND AGAIN, AND SEE WHAT ELSE IS CALLING TO YOU. WALK OVER AND SEE WHAT MOVEMENT THIS NEW BEING INSPIRES. CONTINUE FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE, LOOK AROUND ONE MORE TIME AND EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE ALSO WITH A GESTURE OR MOVEMENT.



Invitation 9

SENSORY THRESHOLDS

IN THAT PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU, STAND WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH AND, WHEN YOU ARE READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND, USING ALL YOUR SENSES, TAKE A MOMENT TO NOTICE WHAT THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE FEELS LIKE: IS IT COLD, WARM, HOT? IS THERE A BREEZE, A PARTICULAR FRAGRANCE, SOUND?

NOW START WALKING IN A DIRECTION THAT CALLS TO YOU, AND NOTICE WHEN THE NEXT SENSORY THRESHOLD OCCURS. A THRESHOLD CAN BE AS OBVIOUS AS GOING FROM SUNNY TO SHADE, COOL TO WARM, OR IT MAY BE SUBTLER, LIKE A CHANGE IN FRAGRANCE. OR SUBTLER STILL, WITH A SHIFT IN ENERGY AND FEEL THAT CANNOT ALWAYS BE PUT INTO WORDS.

WALK AROUND FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE, NOTICING ALL THESE THRESHOLDS AND SHIFTS IN THE WAY A PLACE FEELS. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, FEEL INSIDE YOURSELF TO FIND WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR IN THAT MOMENT.

Invitation 10

COLOR THERAPY

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND YOU. TAKE TIME TO NOTICE ALL THE MANY NUANCES OF COLOR THAT NATURE IS OFFERING YOU. WALK TO ANY COLOR THAT YOU FEEL PARTICULARLY ATTRACTED TO, FOCUS ON IT AND INHALE IT INTO YOUR BODY AND ENERGY FIELD. NOTICE IF THERE IS A PARTICULAR AREA IN YOUR BODY THIS COLOR IS FLOWING TO.

NOW FIND ANOTHER ONE, OR MAYBE EVEN THE SAME COLOR IN A DIFFERENT SHADE, AND REPEAT. THERE IS AN INCREDIBLE ABUNDANCE OF COLORS OUT THERE FOR YOU TO FIND AND ABSORB IN ANY SEASON, ANY ENVIRONMENT, EVEN ON RAINY DAYS, OR WHERE THERE IS SNOW.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO THE NATURE BEINGS THAT HAVE HOSTED YOU BY USING A GESTURE OR SIMPLE MOVEMENT.



Invitation 11

TEXTURES

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, LOOK AROUND YOU, AND START WALKING IN A DIRECTION THAT CALLS TO YOU. BEING CAREFUL TO AVOID POISON OAK AND IVY, FIND TEXTURES FOR YOU TO GENTLY TOUCH: THE BARK OF A TREE, MOSS GROWING ON THAT TREE, A ROCK, GRASSES, NEW BUDS, FLOWERS, WATER... BEING GENTLE AND CONSIDERATE, MEANDER FROM ONE TO THE OTHER AND TOUCH WITH YOUR FINGERS, YOUR PALM, OR EVEN THE BACK OF YOUR HAND. WHAT DO THE VARIOUS TEXTURES FEEL LIKE? HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT ONE FROM THE OTHER? BEFORE LEAVING, THANK THE FOREST OR GARDEN FOR WELCOMING YOU AND FOR HER GIFT OF HEALING.

Invitation 12

CONVERSATION WITH A TREE

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, SLOWLY LOOK AROUND YOU, AND FIND A TREE THAT IS CALLING TO YOU, OR MAYBE YOU ALREADY KNOW WHICH ONE. WALK TO HER/HIM, AND REALLY LOOK AT HER, GIVING HER YOUR FULL ATTENTION. MAYBE YOU CAN GENTLY TOUCH AND EMBRACE THE TREE, AND EVEN SIT AT HER FEET WITH YOUR BACK AGAINST HER TRUNK.

NOW INTRODUCE YOURSELF USING YOUR FULL NAME AND, IF YOU LIKE, ALSO THOSE OF YOUR ANCESTORS IN YOUR MATERNAL LINEAGE, AS FAR BACK AS YOU CAN REMEMBER, EVEN IF THAT IS JUST YOUR MOTHER. OPEN ALL YOUR SENSES AND LISTEN FOR THE TREE'S RESPONSE. THEN ASK THE TREE A QUESTION, AND LISTEN FOR THE ANSWER, IN WHATEVER FORM IT MAY COME. CONTINUE THIS CONVERSATION FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE. BEFORE LEAVING, THANK THE TREE FOR HER WISDOM, AND OFFER HER A GESTURE OF LOVE.



Invitation 13

NATURE'S TREASURE CHEST

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

NOW THINK BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, AND SEE IF YOU CAN RECALL A MEMORY OF PLAYFUL TIME SPENT IN NATURE. LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF THAT CHILD, SLOWLY WALK IN A DIRECTION OF YOUR CHOICE, NOTICING THE LITTLE THINGS.

AS YOU WALK, SEE IF YOU CAN FIND SOME SMALL TREASURES THAT DELIGHT YOUR HEART. THESE COULD BE ANYTHING: A ROCK OR PEBBLE, A FEATHER SHED BY A BIRD, A PINECONE, MAYBE EVEN A BONE. IF PICKING A FLOWER OR LEAVES FROM A PLANT, REMEMBER TO ALWAYS ASK FOR PERMISSION FIRST AND GIVE THANKS AFTER. ONCE YOU HAVE YOUR LITTLE COLLECTION OF TREASURES, ARRANGE IT ATTRACTIVELY IN A SPECIAL PLACE, MAYBE THE SAME ONE WHERE YOU USUALLY START OFF YOUR TIME IN NATURE. DON'T WORRY IF YOU ONLY FIND ONE, YOU CAN ALWAYS ADD MORE LATER ON.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE, OFFER A WORD OR GESTURE OF GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFTS RECEIVED.

Invitation 14

FOLLOW YOUR NOSE

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, START WALKING SLOWLY, FOLLOWING YOUR NOSE. CONTINUE TO WANDER UNTIL YOU PICK UP A NOTICEABLE SCENT, AND SEE IF YOU CAN FOLLOW IT. KEEP YOUR BODY MOVEMENT FLUID, SO AS TO STAY WITHIN THE SCENT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

NOTICE IF IT CHANGES AND HOW, AND TRY TO FOLLOW IT TO ITS SOURCE, WHERE IT WILL BE STRONGEST.

IF YOU COME TO THE SOURCE, EXPLORE THE SCENT'S TEXTURES, AND NOTICE HOW IT CHANGES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE PLANT, AS WELL AS BY MOVING BACK A LITTLE, THEN CLOSE AGAIN.

IF YOU LOSE THE SCENT, KEEP WANDERING UNTIL YOU PICK UP ANOTHER ONE, AND FOLLOW THAT. CONTINUE THIS FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE. WHEN YOU ARE READY TO LEAVE, PAUSE FOR A MINUTE AND THINK: WHAT ARE YOU FEELING GRATEFUL FOR IN THIS MOMENT?

Invitation 15

CALLING MOTHER EARTH

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

NOW SLOWLY TURN TOWARDS EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION, AND ACKNOWLEDGE EACH ONE: NORTH, EAST, SOUTH, WEST, THEN UP (HEAVEN) AND DOWN (EARTH), AS PER NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS.

LOOK AROUND YOU, AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND A FLOWER THAT GROWN STRAIGHT UP FROM THE EARTH. IT CAN BE A WILDFLOWER, OR A TULIP OR IRIS IN YOUR GARDEN, OR EVEN A FLOWERING HERB LIKE DANDELION.

IF YOU CAN, SIT, KNEEL OR CROUCH AS IS MORE COMFORTABLE, NEXT TO IT. INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND ASK THE FLOWER IF IT IS WILLING TO BE YOUR TELEPHONE TO MOTHER EARTH FOR A LITTLE WHILE. IF AND WHEN YOU RECEIVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE, SEND YOUR MESSAGE OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO MOTHER EARTH. MAYBE EVEN ASK HER A QUESTION, AND SEE WHAT ANSWER COMES TO YOU. YOU CAN HAVE A FULL CONVERSATION IF YOU LIKE. IF THE FLOWER IS BUSY, MOVE ONTO ANOTHER ONE. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, THANK THE FLOWER AND MOTHER EARTH FOR THEIR FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT.

Invitation 16

THROUGH THE EYES OF A PAINTER

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

LOOK AROUND YOU AS IF YOU WERE GOING TO PAINT THE SCENE IN FRONT OF YOU. MOST PLACES IN NATURE ARE ABUNDANT IN THE COLOR GREEN, BUT I AM INVITING YOU TO NOTICE HOW MANY SHADES OF GREEN YOU CAN SEE. AS YOU SLOWLY WALK AROUND, NOTICE HOW, EVEN JUST BY CHANGING YOUR POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE LIGHT, THE SHADES OF COLOR ALSO CHANGE.

ARE THOSE LEAVES REALLY GREEN, OR DO THEY APPEAR WHITE WHERE THE SUN TOUCHES THEM? IS THAT SOME GREY, OR EVEN BLACK IN THE SHADED AREAS?

YOU CAN START WITH GREEN, AND THEN MOVE ON TO ANY OTHER COLOR YOU SEE IN ABUNDANCE.

JUST WALK AROUND, OBSERVE AND ENJOY.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, REMEMBER TO OFFER A BLESSING AND YOUR GRATITUDE.

Invitation 17

BIRD SONG

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, SIT DOWN JUST WHERE YOU ARE.

THIS IS THE PLACE THAT CALLED TO YOU AFTER ALL.

NOW WATCH AND LISTEN FOR BIRDS: LITTLE BIRDS, BIGGER ONES... SINGING ALL TYPES OF SONGS, OR EVEN SIMPLY QUIET ONES. HOW MANY CAN YOU SEE, OR HEAR?

ARE ANY FLYING AROUND OR NEAR YOU?

BIRDS ARE MESSENGERS, BRINGERS OF NEWS, THOUGHTS AND IDEAS. MAYBE THERE IS A MESSAGE FOR YOU, OR MAYBE YOU CAN JUST SING BACK TO THEM IN A CONVERSATION.

IF YOU ARE SITTING IN AN OPEN MEADOW, AND BIRDS ARE FLYING ABOVE YOU, SEE IF YOU CAN FEEL THEIR MOMENTS AND SHIFTS IN FLIGHT AND POSITION IN YOUR BODY.

ENJOY THIS CONNECTION AND EXCHANGE FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, SEND BLESSINGS AND GRATITUDE TO THE BIRDS FOR THEIR GIFTS AND PRESENCE.

Invitation 18

BODY RADAR

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

CLOSE YOUR EYES AGAIN, AND SLOWLY TURN ON THE SPOT, FEELING WITH YOUR BODY FOR THE DIRECTION THAT FEELS BEST TO YOU IN THIS MOMENT.

NOW OPEN YOUR EYES, AND START WALKING SLOWLY IN THAT DIRECTION. USE ALL YOUR SENSES: OBSERVE, LISTEN, SMELL, PAUSE TO TOUCH, AND EVEN OPEN YOUR MOUTH TO TASTE THE AIR. AFTER A FEW YARDS, STOP AND CLOSE YOUR EYES AGAIN. SLOWLY TURN ON THE SPOT AND LET YOUR BODY FIND ANOTHER DIRECTION THAT FEELS GOOD. IT MIGHT BE THE SAME, IT MIGHT BE A NEW ONE. OPEN YOUR EYES AND MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION, AGAIN NOTICING WITH ALL YOUR SENSES.

REPEAT THIS PROCESS AS OFTEN AS YOU LIKE.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, TAKE ANOTHER LONG, DEEP BREATH AS YOU THINK OF WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR IN THIS MOMENT.

Invitation 19

JUNGLE CAT

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

BEFORE YOU MOVE, LOOK AROUND, EVERY SENSE ALERT, JUST LIKE A CAT OR A FOX.

IF YOU ARE UP FOR IT, TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND SOCKS, THEN EVER SO GENTLY MOVE A FEW STEPS AS QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE, JUST LIKE A CAT. LOOK WHERE YOU ARE ABOUT TO STEP, AND PLACE YOUR TOES THERE FIRST TO TEST THE GROUND. THEN FOLLOW WITH THE REST OF YOUR FOOT AND FULL BODY WEIGHT. AFTER A SHORT DISTANCE, STOP AGAIN AND LOOK, LISTEN, SENSE, THEN CONTINUE.

IN THE QUIET OF A FOREST, THE SLIGHTEST SOUND CARRIES FAR. SEE HOW LONG YOU CAN GO WITHOUT MAKING ANY NOISE, AND ALSO SEE, IF BY MOVING THIS WAY, YOU NOTICE NEW THINGS, OR IF THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE FEELS DIFFERENT IN SOME WAY.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, THANK THE FOREST, OR OTHER PLACE, FOR HER HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS.

Invitation 20

RAINY DAY

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

WITH YOUR EYES STILL CLOSED, FOCUS ON YOUR OTHER SENSES. LISTEN TO THE RAIN AND WHAT THE FOREST OR GARDEN SOUNDS LIKE ON A RAINY DAY. NOTICE THE FRAGRANCE OF THE AIR. IN WHICH WAY DOES IT SMELL DIFFERENT THAN ON A SUNNY DAY?

LOOK UP TOWARDS THE SKY, FEELING THE RAINDROPS ON YOUR FACE. OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE. WHAT DO THE RAIN AND THE AIR TASTE LIKE?

OPEN YOUR EYES, START WALKING AROUND SLOWLY, LISTENING, SMELLING, AND EVEN TOUCHING THE RAIN ON (SAFE) PLANTS, TREES, FLOWERS, AND EVEN THE EARTH.

IF YOU FIND A PUDDLE, GIVE YOUR CHILD SELF PERMISSION TO ENJOY A MOMENT OF SPLASH-ABOUT, THEN CONTINUE ON.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, THANK THE RAIN FOR HER GIFT OF LIFE AND REGENERATION.



Invitation 21

DANCING TREES

ON A GENTLY BREEZY DAY, STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. WHEN YOU ARE COMPLETE, LOOK AROUND YOU, OBSERVE THE VARIOUS TREES AND HOW THEY MOVE AS THE BREEZE PASSES THROUGH. DIFFERENT TREES MOVE IN DIFFERENT WAYS. FOCUS ON ONE TREE, OR A GROUP OF SIMILAR TREES. PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR MOVEMENT, AND THEN MOVE YOUR BODY MIRRORING THAT TREE, AND FEELING IT. AFTER A WHILE LOOK AT ANOTHER TREE OR GROUP, NOTICE HER RESPONSE TO THE BREEZE AND MOVE ACCORDINGLY. IT IS LIKE A DANCE, ISN'T IT? OR MAYBE EVEN A CONVERSATION THAT NEEDS NO WORDS. YOU MAY WALK AROUND AND CHANGE PERSPECTIVE, NOTICING OTHER TREES AND THEIR GRACEFUL SWAY. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, THANK THE TREES AND THE BREEZE FOR THEIR GIFTS OF GRACE AND DELIGHT.

Invitation 22

NEW PLACE

STAND STILL IN A NEW PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

LOOK AROUND YOU. YOU ARE IN A NEW PLACE. HOW DOES THE NEW ENVIRONMENT FEEL AND LOOK DIFFERENT FROM YOUR FAMILIAR ONE?

WHAT DO THE TREES LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

OBSERVE AND NOTICE ANYTHING THAT MOVES, AND THAT IS APPARENTLY STILL. WHAT DOES THE AIR SMELL LIKE?

WHAT COLORS CAN YOU DETECT, AND HOW MANY SHADES? ARE THERE BIRDS AND ANIMALS THAT ARE NEW TO YOU? WHAT FLOWERS ARE THERE, WHAT IS THEIR FRAGRANCE, IF ANY?

USE ALL YOUR SENSES TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE NEW PLACE: LISTENING, SMELLING, EVEN TOUCHING AND TASTING WHEN SAFE TO DO SO.

WHEN YOU FEEL DONE, EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO THE NATURE AROUND YOU FOR MAKING YOU FEEL WELCOME.



Invitation 23

THE OTHER WAY AROUND

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

TODAY I INVITE YOU TO BEGIN YOUR WALK FROM THE PLACE WHERE YOU USUALLY END IT. IF YOUR PATH IS A LOOP, THEN REVERSE THE DIRECTION IN WHICH YOU HABITUALLY WALK (YOU WILL HAVE TO PLAN FOR THIS).

THIS SIMPLE CHANGE WILL GIVE YOU A WHOLE NEW PERSPECTIVE, SO I INVITE YOU TO TAKE YOUR TIME AND NOTICE ALL THE MANY BIG AND SMALL WAYS IN WHICH YOUR USUAL WALK LOOKS, SMELLS, SOUNDS AND FEELS DIFFERENT.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, SEE IF ANY INSIGHT COMES UP FOR YOU AS A RESULT OF THIS NEW PERSPECTIVE.

THEN THANK THE PATH AND THE NATURE AROUND YOU FOR HOSTING AND SUPPORTING YOU.



Invitation 24

THE PERSONALITY OF TREES

STAND STILL IN A NEW PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. NOW GIVE YOUR BODY A GOOD STRETCH, THEN START WALKING AROUND SLOWLY, LOOKING AT THE VARIOUS TREES. FIND ONE TO FOCUS ON, AND OBSERVE HER/HIM CAREFULLY. WHAT TRAITS AND PERSONALITY DOES SHE HAVE? IS SHE STRONG, DELICATE, OLD OR YOUNG, FLEXIBLE, STALWART, HEAD OF FAMILY, QUIET, CHATTY ETC. ONCE YOU HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW THE TREE A LITTLE, THANK HER/HIM, THEN TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO ANOTHER TREE, PLANT OR BUSH. JUST LIKE PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES, SEE IF YOU CAN PICK UP ON THE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES OF THE TREES AROUND YOU. WHEN YOU ARE DONE, THANK THE TREES AND THE SPIRIT OF PLACE FOR HOSTING YOU.



Invitation 25

MOVE LIKE THE WIND

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

FEEL THE AIR AROUND YOU, THE AIR GOING IN AND OUT OF YOUR LUNGS AS YOU BREATHE, THE AIR ON YOUR FACE, YOUR ARMS AND HANDS. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

WHAT QUALITIES CAN YOU PERCEIVE? WHAT ARE THE SCENTS YOU CAN PICK UP?

NOW IMAGINE YOU ARE THE WIND, OR BREEZE. WHAT DO YOU FEEL LIKE? WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO, AND WHY? HOW IS THE WIND MOVING?

SOFTEN YOUR BODY AND MOVE LIKE THE WIND AS YOU FOLLOW THE PATH IN THE DIRECTION THAT IS CALLING TO YOU. CHANGE DIRECTION WHEN YOU WANT TO. HOW DOES THE WIND INTERACT WITH ALL THE BEINGS IT BLOWS THROUGH AND PAST, AROUND AND OVER?

BE THE WIND.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, THANK THE SPIRIT OF THE WIND AND THE NATURE AROUND YOU FOR THE FUN YOU HAVE SHARED TOGETHER.

Invitation 26

SUNSET/SUNRISE

GO TO A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU. IF YOU CAN, POSITION YOURSELF TO HAVE A VIEW, OR PARTIAL VIEW OF THE SUNSET OR SUNRISE. STAND WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, YOU CAN WALK AROUND IF YOU LIKE, BUT SLOWLY. SUNSET AND SUNRISE ARE TIMES OF TRANSITION AND CHANGE.

OBSERVE THE SUNSET/SUNRISE, NOTICE THE SUBTLE CHANGES IN COLORS AND TEXTURES, NOT JUST OF THE SKY, BUT OF THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE. NOTICE WHAT BECOMES MORE VISIBLE, OR INVISIBLE, HOW THE SOUNDS, SMELLS AND TEMPERATURE CHANGE, THE FEEL OF THE AIR, THE VANISHING OR INTENSIFYING OF COLORS.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR OF THE BIRDS, ANIMALS AND OTHER CRITTERS THAT LIVE IN THAT PLACE, AND EVEN OF THE TREES AND PLANTS NEARBY.

ALSO NOTICE HOW YOU FEEL DIFFERENT AS YOU TRANSITION FROM DAY INTO NIGHT, OR FROM NIGHT INTO DAY.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, OFFER GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY BLESSINGS THE MAGIC OF NATURE HAS BROUGHT TO YOU.

Invitation 27

THE EXPANSIVE SKY

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

LOOK AROUND FOR A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN LIE SAFELY AND COMFORTABLY ON THE GROUND AND HAVE A VIEW OF THE SKY ABOVE. THIS CAN BE A GRASSY AREA, A BOULDER, OR EVEN A WIDE AND STURDY FALLEN TREE. IT ALL WORKS AS LONG AS YOU FEEL SAFE AND ARE ABLE TO RELAX. NOW LOOK UP AT THE SKY AND OBSERVE WHAT IS GOING ON UP THERE.

USING YOUR BREATH, LET THE SKY FILL YOU UP. BREATHE IN THE EXPANSE OF THE SKY, AND BREATHE OUT ANYTHING THAT FEELS CONSTRICTING OR LIMITING. KEEP THIS UP FOR A WHILE AND, WHEN YOU ARE DONE, COME TO A SITTING POSITION SLOWLY, THEN STAND UP.

NOTICE IN WHICH WAYS YOU FEEL DIFFERENT. BEFORE YOU GO, OFFER A THOUGHT OR GESTURE OF GRATITUDE TO THE SKY FOR HIS GIFT OF HEALING.

Invitation 28

THE SPACE IN-BETWEEN

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENTER INTO AN INVITATION. BEFORE YOU DO, NOTICE HOW YOU FEEL. THEN, BEGIN ANY INVITATION OF YOUR CHOICE, AND HAVE ANOTHER ONE, OR MORE, PICKED FOR YOU TO DO NEXT.

AS YOU COMPLETE THE FIRST INVITATION, PAUSE, AND SEE IF YOU CAN LINGER IN THAT IN-BETWEEN SPACE OF DOING ONE THING AND ANOTHER.

HOW DOES THAT FEEL? DOES THE NATURE AROUND YOU LOOK AND FEEL DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF HAVING JUST COME OUT OF AN INVITATION AND THE EXPECTATION OF ANOTHER ONE TO COME?

DO AS MANY INVITATIONS AS YOU LIKE, AND PAUSE IN BETWEEN TO ASSESS HOW YOU AND THE NATURE AROUND YOU FEEL. IF YOU HAVE ONE, THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO JOURNAL.

WHEN YOU ARE COMPLETE, OFFER A BLESSING AND A WORD OF GRATITUDE TO THE NATURE AROUND YOU FOR PARTICIPATING.

Invitation 29

IMAGING MAGIC

STAND STILL IN A FAMILIAR PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS.

SLOWLY LOOK AROUND YOU. ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THE TREES, PLANTS, BUSHES, ROCKS, CRITTERS YOU CAN SEE, AND EVEN THE ONES THAT ARE HIDDEN FROM VIEW. SEND OUT YOUR LOVE AND APPRECIATION TO ALL, THEN VOCALLY OR MENTALLY EXPLAIN WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO DO, AND ASK IF THEY WOULD PLEASE CO-CREATE SOME MAGIC WITH YOU.

LISTEN OR FEEL FOR AN ANSWER, THEN START MOVING QUIETLY AND SLOWLY, LOOKING FOR THE LIGHT, AND PHOTOGRAPHING WHATEVER CATCHES YOUR EYE OR INSPIRES YOU: FROM A WHOLE LANDSCAPE, TO AN INTIMATE SCENE, TO THE TINIEST DETAIL.

LET THE CONNECTION WITH NATURE GUIDE YOU, AND MAKE IT PLAYFUL AND FUN.

ONCE YOU ARE DONE, BEFORE YOU LEAVE, THANK ALL THE NATURE AROUND YOU FOR HOSTING YOU AND FOR PARTICIPATING.

Invitation 30

PROGRESSION INTO FALL

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, BEGIN ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF PRESENCE INVITATIONS. GIVE YOUR BODY A GOOD STRETCH, AND LOOK AROUND YOU. LATE SUMMER IS ALREADY BRINGING CHANGES, ESPECIALLY IN COLORS. TAKE YOUR TIME AND NOTICE THESE CHANGES. WHAT IS DIFFERENT FROM YESTERDAY, OR FROM LAST WEEK?

COLORFUL LEAVES ARE ALREADY FALLING. AS YOU SLOWLY WALK AROUND, MAKE A LITTLE GAME OF COLLECTING A VARIETY OF LEAVES OFF THE GROUND. DO NOT PICK FROM THE PLANTS, JUST PICK UP THOSE THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN LET GO. YOU CAN MAKE A LITTLE BUNCH FOR A VASE, OR A COMPOSITION, OR ADD THEM TO YOUR ALTAR IF YOU HAVE ONE. OR YOU CAN SIMPLY COLLECT THEM, ENJOY THEM, AND LET THEM GO AGAIN.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, REMEMBER TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE TREES AND PLANTS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION AND THE FUN.

Invitation 31

MAGIC OF THE NIGHT

ON A CLEAR NIGHT, PREFERABLY DURING THE FULL MOON, BRING A FLASHLIGHT AND GO OUT TO THAT FAMILIAR PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU. IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, AFTER SUNSET OR JUST BEFORE DAWN WILL DO, AS LONG AS IT IS DARK. WHEN YOU FEEL READY, TURN OFF THE FLASHLIGHT AND BEGIN AS USUAL BY STANDING WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH, CLOSE YOUR EYES, AND TAKE THOSE FIVE DEEP, SLOW AND LONG DRAWN BREATHS. OPEN YOUR EYES, AND ALLOW YOUR SIGHT TO ADJUST TO THE DARKNESS. HOLD VERY STILL, AND NOTICE WHAT YOU CAN SEE, HEAR AND SMELL. WHAT DOES THE AIR FEEL LIKE? CAN YOU DETECT ANY PARTICULAR FRAGRANCE? CAN YOU FEEL OR SEE ANY CRITTERS MOVING ABOUT? TAKE A FEW STEPS, MOVING SLOWLY AND QUIETLY, AND SIMPLY LOOK, LISTEN AND SMELL. HOW IS YOUR FAMILIAR PLACE DIFFERENT AT NIGHT? HOW DO YOU FEEL? WHEN YOU ARE DONE, BEFORE YOU LEAVE, THANK THE NATURE AROUND YOU FOR PARTICIPATING, AND ALSO OFFER GRATITUDE TO THE SKY, THE MOON AND THE STARS.

Invitation 32

PLEASURES OF PRESENCE

IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU, STAND WITH YOUR FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON THE EARTH, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TAKE FIVE DEEP, SLOW AND LONG DRAWN BREATHS. BRING YOUR FOCUS TO YOUR FEET, AND REALLY FEEL THE STRENGTH AND SUPPORT OF THE EARTH BENEATH YOU. NOW IMAGINE YOU HAVE ROOTS SHOOTING OUT FROM THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET, GROWING AND GROUNDING DEEP INTO THE EARTH. NOTICE WHAT THAT FEELS LIKE. YOU ARE LIKE A TREE, YOUR LEGS AND TORSO BEING THE TRUNK. FEEL THE SOLIDITY AND POWER OF YOUR TRUNK, WHETHER LITHE WITH YOUTH, OR THICK AND STRONG WITH AGE AND WISDOM. YOUR ARMS AND HANDS ARE LIKE BRANCHES, REACHING UP TOWARDS THE NURTURING WARMTH OF THE SUN, AND SWAYING IN THE GENTLE BREEZE. BIRDS AND SQUIRRELS ARE STOPPING BY TO VISIT. SOME LIVE IN YOUR BRANCHES. A CREEK IS FLOWING NEARBY, SINGING HER GENTLE SONG TO YOU. THERE ARE MANY OTHER TREES AND PLANTS AROUND YOU. YOU ARE PART OF A FOREST, AND YOU ARE ALL CONNECTED. THERE ARE ANIMALS ALSO LIVING IN THE FOREST: DEER, BOBCATS, MOUNTAIN LIONS... ALL SHARING SPACE WITH YOU. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE A TREE?

WHEN YOU FEEL READY, OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND YOU AS IF YOU WERE SEEING EVERYTHING FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I hope you have enjoyed these Invitations and are benefiting from this gentle practice. If you have downloaded this e-book but are unfamiliar with Shinrin-Yoku, you can find more information at this link:

<http://www.lifeoutofbounds.com/shinrin-yoku/>

If you have fallen in love with Shinrin-Yoku and are interested in training as a Forest Therapy Guide, you can find more information at:

<http://www.natureandforesttherapy.org>

If you would like to share your experiences, you can contact me at

info@lifeoutofbounds.com

*“May You be Happy,
May You be Blessed,
May You Prosper in All Things.”*

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