



WALKING PRACTICE: SACRED OBJECTS

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Intention & Invitation: The Sacred Objects Walking Practice is designed to help ground, connect, and move an individual or group into a more direct and present relationship to the natural world (right where you are). Its purpose is to engage/move the body, calm the mind, open the heart, and make oneself available to what the natural world wants to show you. Time spent, even for only 20-minutes a day, away from screens, artificial walls, and artificial speeds can do wonders to nourish the human journey. We are physiologically made to be more intimately connected to the natural world as we process and move *stress, clarity, joy, discernment, creativity, imagination, grace, tension, trauma, humility, pain, connection, wonder, and more* through our bodies and everyday experiences.

This walking practice can be a great tool for any team, group, decision-making body, family/romantic relationship, friendship, or on your own. Consider one or many of the following situations as possible scenarios where you might build in this practice:

- *Grounding, opening and expanding for hard discussions, confrontations and discernment* (before to center, break to process and move, after to heal and hold, all three to help hold gathering/meeting)
- *Creative brainstorming* (engaging imagination, opening possibilities, inviting nature in)
- *Healing and deepening connection to one another* (honoring things unsaid, honoring humanity, honoring mystery, honoring journey)
- *Healing and deepening to oneself* (accountability to stay true, showing up as all of you, honoring/awakening inner freedom)
- *Letting go and slowing down* (meditative practice to simply wind down, calm busy minds, realign to soul/self/planet/mission)
- *Breaking free and embracing color* (mirroring of nature as permission to take risk, to live free, to honor transparency and authenticity)
- *Ritual for Intention, Change, Transition* (colors, textures, and diversity in nature speaking to you/your group with permission, guidance, affirmation, patience)



Pre-Practice:

- **Location & Time of Day:** The best possible place and time is *whenever* it's easy to make it work. This practice can integrate into a short walk from one interior to the next if you're going from home to bus, office to carpool, building to bench... This could be right outside your home, your workplace, or a common public area. If you have some extra time, you might consider a large local, regional, or state park or a residential street with a good number of large mature trees. Consider something that is relatively flat so you can easily be present to all that moves within you as you notice and peer into nature. You might consider a path along a creek or river. Sunrise and sunset times are such ideal times to open up or wind down. The glow and movement of light can aid in laying thoughts and stress aside to be present to wonder, awe, and all that nature has to show you.
- **Duration:** At least 20-30 minutes.
- **Grounding:** Wherever you begin your walk, consider taking at least 2-3 minutes for breathing and grounding. If you are with a small group, you might need to simply facilitate invitation to take a few deep breaths – all the way in and all the way out. Inviting everyone (or if solo, yourself) to move from the mind, into the heart, and into the body. If you are in a group, you might offer a few prompts for people to feel the wind against their skin and their feet against/rolling on the Earth. Grounding before you begin walking can help you and others move with more presence, patience, and attention. Simple guidance can go a long way for personal and collective calming as fast-paced, consumer-centric culture crowds and violates our relationship to time and to the things that are (deep down) most important to us.

Walking with Sacred Objects: After you spend a few moments grounding, begin to slowly walk (or roll if in a wheelchair). As you ease into your movement, into your feet, into all that slowly passes by you, begin to observe the ground. Steer your eyes and attention to rocks, fallen sticks, and fallen leaves. If you are unable to catch the unique color, shape, or texture, take a few moments periodically to kneel down. Reach and pick up specific sticks, leaves, rocks, grasses, and pinecones (sacred objects). As you touch, see, smell and interact with each piece, be open and mindful around what stirs inside of you. What are you working through? What is causing stress? What dreams or areas of hope and joy begin to surface? Allow your emotions, feelings, senses, thoughts, and everything moving inside of you to reach into your interaction with each rock, branch, leaf or sacred object.

As you continue to move and notice, be extra attentive to what pieces stand out and speak to you. As you stop to hold or peer into the sacred object, try to connect what this colorful rock, rugged stick, or even broken leaf might be saying to you, to your specific emotion, or to what your team or group is working through. You might not have a specific thought or emotion that connect right away. That's okay too. You might just notice that this piece is capturing your attention longer than others. As you make these casual and possibly intimate connections, begin to gather a small collection. You can place things in your pocket or hold them in your hand. Be open to coming back to areas you walked by before to gather more of a certain object that especially stood out to you. Once you have your first collection, find a spot to sit or rest. Begin to place your objects into a pattern, a mandala, or any design that is meaningful to your process.* You might meditate on various themes, thoughts, or emotions as you place your objects. You might consider holding and honoring each object with a word, or words, or



deeper breaths as you lay it down. Maybe you are drawn to place them into the shape of a swirl? Maybe a line? Maybe a pile? Maybe it resembles fire? Maybe a question mark? Maybe nothing identifiable... allowing it to be truly scattered and undefined. Be open to continue your gathering and adding. Notice the texture of each object. Notice the details. Notice how they all come together. Notice their smell. Notice their wounds. Once you feel good about your collection. Sit with it, listen to it and let it continue speaking to your process. You might consider playing flutes or some of your favorite instrumental music to help hold your experience. You might also take a photo or sketch of your finished collection. As you close, consider placing both of your hands on the earth. Honor the soil, your experience, the gifts of nature. Walk away in gratitude and calm reflection, leaving your collection with the wind.

**If you are in a group, guide everyone in this way and consider having one large communal piece representing togetherness and shared experience. You might also have everyone create their own display to then come back to the circle and invite the group through their unique experience/process.*