

Garden of Daydreams

You are the garden in which your thoughts take root. You are the sum of your thoughts, moods, and inclinations. Think of them as flowering plants rooting in your subconscious. The purpose of this visualization is to give you some idea of the extent of this garden, what nourishes it, and the role you can play in how this garden grows.

This is Lincoln Stoller of MindStrengthBalance dot com speaking a piece called Garden of Daydreams. Garden of Daydreams is a hypnotic induction that requires your full attention. Do not listen to this piece if you are driving a car, operating machinery, or doing anything that requires your attention.

Begin by settling into your body; get in touch with how you're holding yourself up and which parts of you are experiencing different forces. Notice where your weight is resting, on the soles of your feet, your legs, and your seat, your back, your arms, or your head.

Notice how the weight of your organs rests inside the cavity of your body. The weight your spine carries presses on your pelvis and you can trace the weight of your body, bone by bone, stacking up your vertebra until you reach your shoulders where it branches off, like a cross, to support the weight of your arms like a scarecrow.

At the top, your neck stacking above your torso, and atop that you balance your head, held in place by a splay of muscles descending from your skull, spreading out like guy wires from a cell tower, anchored to your back and shoulders.

From the top of your head you look out the windows of your eyes as a visitor behind the face of the Statue of Liberty. Motionless, resting, imagining the landscape in front of you even if your eyes are closed; as if you lived here always, as if this was where you never left and everything has to come to you, in through your eyes.

Let's do something about that. Let's get in touch with your larger world, down to its roots where things actually start. If your eyes are open, close them, and if they're closed, then imagine closing them.

Let yourself step back from vision and take your eyes off-line. Let your attention rise up to the crown of your scalp, as if you had climbed into the torch of the statue of liberty, up that narrow ladder that leads up the arm, and now you're looking out from the highest and most detached part of your being, and let yourself go.

Float up farther, up above the crown of your head, up into the deep, dark sky of your outer consciousness. Take a breath. Inhale... exhale... and relax out of your mind, out of your vision or scene, away from the weight of thinking or the busyness of sensation.

Imagine you are a car and you just ran out of gas, and with a few sharp chugs your mind shudders and comes to a halt. That's all: you're still on the road to somewhere and all your mental stuff is still around you. You've stopped moving forward and you have the sudden realization that you don't have to. You don't need to move any more, assembling your thoughts one track at a time in front of you as you reach the end of each.

You've coasted to a stop and now you can look around, and you can look in another direction, not forward or backward but inside, going under the hood, and deeper than under the hood. Inside the thoughts that keep running, inside the order that things seem to fall into, relaxing into less form and a looser order.

I'll count you down to get out of the world of thinking, feeling or seeing your way out of the construction of your mind and your identity, down to a level of being and feeling that lies below.

FIVE, being on the side of the road, sitting in the car of your mind that has just run out of gas.

FOUR, lifting into a larger view of where and who you are, in a landscape of the world as you see it.

THREE, allowing this whole scene to dissolve, slough off and fall away like a stage after the set is removed.

Down to **TWO**, just being in yourself, residing in the heart, feeling the beat of your heart, settling into your emotions.

And **ONE**, becoming aware of a broad and dimly lit landscape of possibilities populated with memories growing from aptitudes and insights.

Relax and release, sway your mind's attention to settle down through your body, past the base of your spine, down through your legs, past your feet, into the earth. Held by the larger sense of your calm self. You cannot touch this sense of self, but it surrounds you like a womb.

Let this be a garden that you have not tended. Imagine your eyes have been so blinded by the realities of the every day that you've been night-blinded to the moonlight of the deeper realities of the possible, a sound stage on which the spotlights of daytime reality are aimed and attached. The backdrop of who you think you are has been chosen from an ancestral wardrobe chest of possibilities.

In this garden things are planted: ideas, memories, and emotions, and they all can grow, but not everything grows and not everything is planted. What grows are the things that are nourished, and you play a big role. You are the source of air and water, and unconsciously you are the energy for these ideas. They are not energy for you, you are energy for them, and they grow in you and they form your personality, a personality of forests and gardens, rivers and streams, mountains and canyons, brambles, caves, and fields of wildflowers.

You are the gardener, and also the designer of it. You get to tend and nourish this garden but, like the natural world, it's a higher nature that blows in the seeds and the spores that are in the air. Settle into your body, or something deeper than your body, the soil of this garden at the

center of your mind.

Listen to the garden and imagine what you can hear. Listen for the pulse that is your heartbeat, and you might hear it or you might feel it. You can better sense it in the small places, the quiet places of your wrists where it moves, or your fingertips where it pulses, or behind your eyes. Your pulse is not a sound, it's an ebbing and flowing of the noise, and there is noise in all of your senses.

The garden is in the noise, or beneath the noise. Find the noise, hold onto it, and then drop below it. This is the realm of your enervated imagination, where ideas pop up like mushrooms after a rainstorm. The water is your pulse, and the garden is fed by your circulation.

Everything breathes. Your ideas breathe, your emotions breathe. They breathe along with your lungs. Lungs exchange gases; ideas exchange energy, and your breath is more than air. Inhale... and exhale...

Watch the flow of your ideas. There are times when you're waiting for ideas and there are other times when ideas swirl, and yet other times when ideas arrive like the drops from a raincloud. Sit back and watch your ideas as they follow your breath. Let your mind talk without reflection; open the faucet of ideas.

You'll see, or feel, or hear the ideas coming in just as you relax into your exhale, and if you don't exhale, then the tension in your body holds back the ideas. Hold your breath and the flow of ideas stops. Those ideas flow around you, passing you by. To avoid ideas you don't like, hold your breath, as we do when threatened: we inhale sharply and hold our breath to stop our mind from running.

When we have ideas we'd like to release, we relax, sigh, and exhale. And when we're working on nurturing ideas we breathe slowly and evenly, raking the soil around the seedlings planted in our minds.

Open yourself to the flow of ideas. Take a full breath and feel the turn between inhale and exhale, like tossing confetti into the air, and down comes ideas, not full formed, maybe only whispers and intimations. Don't chase them, let them settle. Ideas from everywhere, reflecting the sunlight of experience from all angles, all possibilities.

Imagine you are in a rock and flower garden that extends wide around you. Maybe you see it clearly or maybe you just recall what it feels like. The garden sits in a clearing at the edge of a dark forest of tall trees. A rich and tangled forest full of lush growth that opens up to a high canopy overhead. You are surrounded by beds of flowers and deep green, waxy leaved bushes. The garden is alive and you are looking right along the line of the forest, which rises on your left.

As you look out over the garden, to your right there are open fields that descend gently into a wide open and rolling valley. The contrast is sharp and you can feel the difference in the light,

sound, and temperature.

On your left, the forest is quiet and still; on your right the breeze ripples through the grasses and the clouds mossy patchwork shadows across the valley.

You turn or sway to the left and inhale, facing the dark, cool, quiet forest. Let your mind soak up the cool, dark, depths, the multitude of leaves, twigs, and branches. The depth of texture, light, and sound.

Then turn or sway to the right, exhale facing the open, echoless, sun-filled valley. Let your mind soak up the bright, moving air, tumbling across the landscape, edging like the river rapids around the texture of the landscape.

Turn to your left, again toward the forest. Inhale it's layers of shadows, millions of leaves, and little glades and ravines, home and neighborhood to roving animals on the ground and air. Feel or imagine what rises in you, through memory or association, things experienced or stories told. If you were to sink all your attention into the forest, what would be your first feeling, thought, or sensation? Let it come and settle.

Turn or sway to your right, slowly exhaling into the open valley and feel the change as you move from feeling small in shadow to feeling larger overlooking the valley. As your breath escapes you, let your sense of being flow out with it.

Now, I want you to turn in your mind, rotating around 180-degrees to face what was behind you, and look, feel, or imagine that the forest is on your right and the open expanse of sky and valley is to your left.

Ground yourself momentarily, feeling the connection with your torso, legs, and feet. Regain your balance so you can again close your eyes, steady and solid, with forest and field having switched sides.

On your right, the forest is a sink of sound, and the spreading grass, blue sky valley on your left. And face that valley in thought or form and inhale it deeply. Its vast and open air, its flowing streams of light and cloud. Sun powered energy spreading out on your left. What ideas come to you now, inspiring the openness and sunlight?

As your lungs fill, now turn or sway right to face the forest, and hear or feel its low hum and crackle of things moving and growing up and around each other. Exhaling into the sink of the absorbing forest, feeling your breath hungrily inhaled by the forest. What ideas or feelings come to you when you invite thoughts in, as your right side leans toward the sky-filtering tree tops?

Rotate back toward your left, toward the valley and its grassy fields, small hedges and undulating landscape. Energy radiates from you into this openness, from your hands, head, and body as if you were a source of electricity. Notice the first thought, feeling, or memory and just

sink into it wordlessly, in whatever form comes or into the silence if it doesn't.

Pause and breath, inhaling and exhaling the rhythm of the valley, and synchronize yourself with this landscape. Empty mind, empty air, flowing currents of cloud and idea tatters shifting and slowly tumbling through your mind. Calm, quiet, and relaxed, letting ideas form like clouds, thick on a hot day.

Turn or sway back to the right, when it feels right, to sense a difference between these landscapes, and you, standing in a garden that is neither of them, but something of its own, cared for and cultivated, kept by effort from returning to the native landscape of its origin. Kept manicured and tended to be colorful and in bloom.

Imagine the forest as a forest of memories and possibilities, caught in the branches or growing among them. As if the trees were future possibilities seeded by history, rooting where there is light and water, connected through the soil, streams, and air to your garden of realities, the things you're tending to maturity.

As you breathe you sense the valley and its wildflowers, and its distant reaches where there are flowers, and flowering plants, fruits, and seeds brought by the wind and birds that find their way to your garden of possibilities. The valley provides the world of what's possible while the forest provides the sustenance and support. You are in the middle, in the space between.

Root your dreams in the garden. Catch them as seeds you've found and cultivated, or brought by other means. The soil of the garden is your grounding and possibility and you can choose what grows, fragile and exotic, or native and hardy. Vulnerable as an orchid or as tenacious as a rubber tree. As delightful as a peach or as laborious as a chestnut.

It's a dance, a pirouette, and celebration to be in the garden of hopes and inclinations, dreams and obligations. Gardening requires attention, you must be sensitive to the rhythms of growth. You must hear below the soil and communicate with the sky, like the trees do, conversing through their roots and seeding clouds to rain.

Take a breath. Inhale... and exhale... You are not just the gardiner, you are the garden. Not just the one who tends but the ideas that grow. You are the root and the flower, and the tree, wind, and rain. You see yourself as separate, but your roots of memory and stewardship extend beyond your sight and feel, drawing from long past and projecting into the future.

See or sense your mind as the garden shed, and the garden is your being. See or sense your ideas as the seedlings or the fruit, and the growing forces act in your emotions where the tree roots talk, and in your spirits where the air and sunlight mix.

Feel yourself becoming lighter and larger, thinner and more sensitive, diaphanous and transparent. Before you lose your form, reach out and grab a pebble or whatever small stone you find in reach, and it may be simple and plain, or crystalline and colorful.

As you turn from the physical to the ephemeral, pulling along with you the garden into its thought-form, the pebble retains its shape and image, color, and texture. Put the pebble in the center of your being, as your being swirls around this story. Let the pebble be your story, to connect you with the garden, a reminder that will jog your memory whenever you see an attractive stone.

You are a cloud, rising from the moisture of your garden, condensing into mist with the cool forest air, pulled upward by the sun beating onto the warm earth, floating over the valley, caught in the slipstream, gently massaged into the cloud alleys and thunderstorm thoughts of late afternoon.

The hum of the heavy air talking and the thinking of the earth talking back. Electricity pulled from the air and lanced to earth with a flash, a crack, and a rumble. The first drops of rain, as you come back. Three, two, one, and we're done.