

MSB-Fractal Thoughts

This is Lincoln Stoller of Mind Strength Balance speaking a piece called Fractal Thoughts which is about how thoughts build out of each other and how you can lead the direction in the chain of thoughts. Do not listen to this piece while driving a car, operating machinery, or doing anything that requires your attention.

Start here, by relaxing. With your eyes open recall an image from your childhood where you were climbing on a jungle gym. Recall how you looked up to see a set of bars set against the sky and that disorienting feeling of looking straight up and then down. Up at the steel bars, and then looking down at the scuffed and beaten dirt just below them.

You look up to place your hands for the climb up to the crossing rungs, and you look down to see where to put your feet. And you look up again to move your hands, and down again to move your feet.

Take a deep breath and slowly fill your lungs. There is a tension in your breath as you anticipate the exertion of making your way across the monkey bars. You've reached the bars. You lean out and grasp the first bar, high over your head, and you swing out, legs dangling and your feet in the air. Your body swings. Your other hand reaches for the second bar and now you hang from both shoulders.

Feel the weight of your body on your hands, the strain in your fingers, the extension of your elbows, and the weight of your body pulling on your shoulders, like a stretched water balloon, hanging like pizza dough.

Remember, as best you can, how you could hang then, when you were young, and how your body feels about hanging from your arms now. If it seems like too much, and it probably does, lighten yourself so that it feels easy. You've been on a huge diet and lost sixty pounds and you're as light as a feather. Now you can hang from one arm or the other, just like you could many years ago. It's no strain at all.

You move hand over hand, easily walking your hands across to the middle of the monkey bars, and you decide to let go. You're tough, you're light, you're strong, and you let go. For a moment you're weightless and the world begins to move, and you can't remember what you saw or felt as your weightlessness throws off your sense of direction.

An instant later, you land on both feet, braced and planted, balanced and steady. Solid and stable and now breath... inhale and exhale...

Now you're on a diving board, in a bathing suit, at the deep end of a pool, as you can remember you were when you were young. The board vibrates under your feet and you feel its resilience, springy and stiff. Remember how you had to judge your steps, moving with the rhythm of the board or else it fights you.

Your whole body bounces with the frequency of the board as you step forward, toward the end with increasingly heavy footfalls, one... two... three... You come to the end of the board and you've timed

it just right, with each step lifted higher. The board launches you up and forward, and you go up and up, up to a point where you feel you're at the peak of your trajectory and again you feel the weightlessness.

Relax your mind and thoughts and let that feeling last. You're floating in the air and your body has no weight at all, and now you stop time, right there in the air. The feeling lifts your arm pits as your arms are no longer hanging. And your legs can move freely, as they no longer have your weight on them.

Relax, the pool is gone, the ground is gone, the situation is gone, it's only you floating. Weightless and floating. Take a breath. Inhale... exhale...

Think of an issue that weighs on you. Something that annoys, irritates, or upsets you. It might be minor, like a comment someone said, or it might be major, like an injury that's never healed. From your calm and weightless state recall an image of this situation that weighs on you, and recognize some especially difficult aspect of it. Let's call this the heavy issue and the image has the somber weight of a scene that's never felt welcome.

Look at the picture of the heavy issue in your mind and consider yourself there, to be in the picture, and look around. What's around you? What is the day like? What is the air like? Are there shadows, are there surfaces? Are you inside or outside? Is there anyone around and, if there is, what sort of feeling do they give you? What's your feeling of the whole situation?

Maybe it's a seized-up feeling, or a bitterness, or a fear. Focus on that feeling until it becomes like a knot, a pain, a burn, or a pinch. Or maybe it's an emotion of sadness or sorrow. A feeling, an emotion, something that's pierced you. A heavy feeling and a heavy issue.

Let the pictures or images fade. Relax and take a breath. Inhale... exhale... and return to weightlessness, floating, with only this feeling, just this discouraging feeling. You can hold it like a thing, soothe it, wrap it in cool cloths if it is hot, or warm cloths if it is cold. Hold it outside you like the problem that it is. Like bad weather or a car that won't start.

Focus on this feeling, just the feeling and not the situation: how it makes you feel, what is the emotion? Call up your own sense of yourself in the presence of this feeling. How does this emotion make you feel in your body? Create a new picture that just represents this emotion, built of other memories, deeper and older memories. Perhaps thoughts you've had or emotions you've felt. Other situations that conjure up or may once have caused feelings similar to this, or maybe deeper in your heart or mind. A deeper source of the original issue.

Look around you with your mind's eye and recognize the environment that surrounds this deeper feeling, this more personal and private emotion. Maybe it's something you don't speak about and maybe you don't think others would want to share or understand.

What does that environment look like? Is it light or dark, day or night? Is it contained in walls or out in the open? Are there details such as paths, or roads, corridors, or hallways. Are there things or people or some evidence of activity? Do you recognize a scene or situation as looking like a place you recognize? Let details emerge, and, to whatever extent they do, connect this setting with your feelings. Remember this place or this vision. Call it your questioning place.

Focus on the feeling of your own heart in this questioning place. Sense your body around your heart. Recognize the sensations of your arms and legs, hands and feet.

Tap your fingers against whatever they're resting on. Move them rhythmically. Move your toes at the same rhythm as you're tapping your fingers. Give yourself this sense of physical contact with the outside world, through your muscles and the sensations in your hands and feet. Enlarge your awareness with this connection with your body.

As you continue to tap your fingers and move your toes, speak to your body and say, "I love and support my body..." Say, "I love and support my heart..." Say, "I love and support myself..." Breathe and relax.

As you continue to tap your fingers and move your toes, speak to yourself and say, "I am built to live in the universe. I am designed to prosper. The universe naturally supports me." Breathe and relax.

Return to your questioning place and imagine the warmth of the sun penetrating the scene, and mist, fog, cloud, shadow, or darkness pushed away. Imagine the questioning place now on a clear day, under a clear sky, with a warm sun. Imagine the situation with elements that are growing, perhaps plants or people. You're aware of a positive, nurturing energy. Let this image settle and quiet.

Let this image penetrate to the level of feeling, so that you feel it as a positive emotion, so that you feel protected and connected to the earth. You feel positive, you are in a protective envelope. There is an organic, growing feeling. You can rest, with no tension. Calm, sustainable, and relaxed. Take a breath. Inhale... and exhale...

Return to the heavy issue as if returning to a dark maze or labyrinth, but now you move with light, and you move lightly, and you feel light. The ground is not so hard, as if it's cushioned on a living soil. As if it's penetrated by a living ecosystem of earth and roots, bacteria consuming and creating. A firmament that you can grow in.

Recall the heavy issue, the somber situation. That thing that annoyed, irritated, or upset you. See it now as a small, dark area, or maybe a shadowed area, more like a bruise or a blemish embedded in something living.

Imagine there is a sound, a low noise, the sound of microscopic things moving, arranging, catalyzing and composting. Or maybe it's a high pitched sound, or a faint crumbling sound. It's something on the edge of your perception but you can feel it in the background, through your feet, and in the air.

Your heavy issue is something not fully digested, something stuck in you. You can release it. Let it go to the world around it, to the microbes, mold, fungi, and virus to be reorganized, reprocessed, and repurposed. You can rest on the warm ground, the warm and vibrant ground, and you can let the organic processes of the universe work on your heavy issue.

The universe evolves creatures that can feed on anything—like lichens that can eat solid rock or the roof off your house. There are elements in nature that can soften your heavy issue, to create cracks that are opportunities that will open for you.

You're floating above the heavy issue, and the heavy issue is on the horizon, in another dimension, composed of other thoughts, aggregated from thoughts that settle like sediment or coffee grounds in old and tired pictures.

The heavy issue is separate and it casts no shadow. You have connected to the earth and to your energy and opportunity. You breathe the rich air of self-appreciation. You cannot remember what it feels like to be anything but strong, and confident, and comfortable.

And now you're in the air again, falling from the still point at the peak of your dive. Below you is blue water, shimmering and shaking with small waves and currents in the sunlight. Silently and slowly, like a feather you fall into the water which makes a "gloop" sound as it receives you.

The sensation of chill rushes around you as silky water engulfs you. You hold your breath as the clear blue liquid splashes with the sound of clap over your head and a vibration of bubbles courses over you skin, lifting you back to the surface.

You pop up, bobbing and buoyant, back to the piercing rays of warm sun, back to the rich air. You are shocked back to awareness, swirling currents brushing the hairs on your goosebump skin. With a clarity of mind, a sense of space, self-contained, floating weightless again, in the water. 3... 2... one, and your back.