

Section III - Expiration: An Opportunity to Let Go

FALL - Gathering Spaciousness

The ELEMENT of AIR

“When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.” – Lao Tzu

“We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the life that is waiting for us.” – Joseph Campbell

“The Tao Te Ching says, When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be. When I let go of what I have, I receive what I need. Have you ever struggled to find work or love, only to find them after you have given up? This is the paradox of letting go. Let go, in order to achieve. Letting go is God’s law.” – Mary Manin Morrissey

WEEK #36:

To BREATHE is to live embodied deeply connected to the Natural World

To breathe is to live embodied. Without this exquisite process going on day after day, year after year, moment after moment we would not be functional – we would not be alive! Trees help the planet breathe by turning carbon dioxide into clean, pure oxygen. Plants are considered the lungs of the earth because plants produce oxygen, which is necessary for all life, so in essence, since our lungs keep us alive and trees keep our lungs alive we can consider trees to be a part of our lungs existence. This is all part of the deep interconnectedness of all life.



Our lungs are quite amazing actually. Did you know that there are about 300 million alveoli in the adult lung? The alveolar sacs consist of many alveoli and are composed of a single layer of epithelial tissue. If these alveoli were pressed flat and spread out they would take up the space of a football field. That is, a football field (including the two end zones) is 360 feet long and 160 feet wide for a total of 57,600 square feet!

The alveoli are considered the functional or foundational unit of the lung. In the spaces between the alveoli of the lungs is elastic connective tissue which is important for exhalation. It is here, surrounded by pulmonary capillaries, that gases are exchanged and we are enlivened with every inhale and exhale that we take.

Our Earth is like the alveoli of the lungs – if she dries out she will suffocate. Without the stabilization of the natural order of things there will be no expansion, no breath, no life – no Breathing Spaces.

Could it be that we need to pay closer attention to the smallest and most foundational parts of our Earth’s processes, and our own, before we tackle the larger things? Take yourself out into Nature this week and breathe.

Quote of the Week:

“I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.” –John Muir, 1913, in L.M. Wolfe, ed., John Muir, John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir, 1938