# A Tree Meditation

Take a couple of minutes to get settled and get in touch with uour breathing. Just focus on the physical sensations of breathing, as each breath is drawn all the way in and all the way out.

[2 minutes]

Now that you are settled in this present moment, try to picture in your imagination, a full grown, mature tree. It could be a tree you know well or one from your imagination. Maybe it’s a mighty woodland oak or an apple tree in an orchard or a willow by a stream. You can choose the tree that is most comfortable for you.

[20 seconds]

Whilst visualising your tree, feel how it is in harmony with the surroundings. Trees are truly rooted in the ground which nourishes them; they both give to it and receive from it, and belong to the earth.

[10 seconds]

Perhaps take a closer look at your tree. Is it in leaf? A vibrant spring green? Or an autumnal kaleidoscope of colours?

[10 seconds]

When there is no breeze your tree will be still, held in equilibrium with the sky and ground. Placid and unmoved; cleaning the air; taking in the sunlight.

[10 seconds]

When a breeze picks up the leaves flash and dance, separate yet choreographed somehow; like a shoal of fish moving in the warm current. The branches move to the complex tune, dancing with the rhythm of the wind.

[10 seconds]

And the sun slows sinks, it lights the upper branches of the tree with an orange glow.

[5 seconds]

After the sun has gone down, if the night is clear and the moon is full you can still see the tree in the silver light of the moon.

[10 seconds]

In winter the tree is bare, etched against a blue white sky, steady in the snow. And yet its life is strong, flowing through its limbs and branches, new leaves are waiting for the Spring their time.

[10 seconds]

So as you sit here with your breath take this image of a tree and try to bring it within yourself. Try and sense your being merging with your tree and becoming one with it. So that you are held in awareness, in this moment, just like the tree is rooted in and held by the earth.

[10 seconds]

Get a sense of being with the tree. Breathing as the tree. Feeling its body as your body. Feeling rooted as it is rooted.

[10 seconds]

Allow your mind and heart to be receptive to each moment. Sensing every movement, every breeze, whatever comes near, just as the tree does. Or perhaps simply to be still, just as the tree can be.

[10 seconds]

The tree experiences each moment. Moments of complete stillness, when the air is still and calm. Moments when the wind is swirling and strong; a challenging rhythm or a vigorous dance.

[10 seconds]

As you sit here observe the energies of your own mind and heart. The fleeting thoughts and feelings which come and go. Those impulses and reactions, which like gusts for wind shake the tree only to pass, leaving the tree as it was before.

[10 seconds]

Notice the effect of your thoughts and feelings. How do they affect the leaves of your tree? Do they disturb the branches? Do they swirl you about, in turmoil and chaos? How do you feel about this? Isn’t that part of being a tree? Being subject to the wind and the weather.

[5 seconds]

It might be possible to identify with your tree more deeply. Beneath the bark the sap still flows, subject to only gentle movements, even when the branches are in turmoil.

[5 seconds]

Through your mindfulness practice, in the same way as the tree you can be in touch with your changing thoughts and feelings whilst still remaining in contact with yourself below the wind and rain of our thoughts. Your tree is a reminder of the tree of the steady life within ourselves. You might find this image useful in your daily mindfulness practice and everyday mindfulness. You might use this image to empower yourself and perhaps to guide you actions.

[10 seconds]

So stay here for 7 or 8 minutes more, until you hear the sound of the bells. Try to embody the qualities of the tree. Affirming your ability to hold in your awareness all the qualities of yourself, of your mind and body. Just as the tree is held by the earth and yet moves with the wind and the weather. Moment by moment, here and now.

[8 minutes]