

## **Cherish Being Still And Feeling Calm And Content**

*Breathing in, I calm body and mind. Breathing out, I smile. Dwelling in the present moment I know this is the only moment.*— Thich Nhat Hanh

When the frenzy is over and spring or summer is not quite here, why not follow in the footsteps of nature when the silhouettes of trees stand strong and sturdy, composed with a sense of inner peace, calmness and integrity as they rest and recuperate before the onset of spring. The storms may come and go and the branches may bend backwards but the tree continues to compose itself with inner strength and calmness.

Often we hold the misconception that we can only experience calmness through inaction. However, as soon as we create the intention of bringing calmness into our daily activities, then our experience of the day, including conducting those mundane chores can become very different. So instead of rushing around, why not try the following strategies to have a calm and content time.

- ◆ **Completely Focus on the Task.** Whether you are washing the dishes or polishing the floor or chopping vegetables, try to still your mind by completely focussing on the task at hand, noticing how much cleaner items become or how beautiful vegetables can look and focus on the sense of achievement and completion that goes with that. Doing any task with intention and focus can enable you to have a sense of calmness and stillness within.
- ◆ **Totally absorb yourself in an activity.** Do something that you enjoy such as gardening, sewing, knitting, cooking, making jam, reading, listening to music, savouring a cup of tea, watching raindrops, watching clouds come and go, watching birds in the garden or park, painting or yoga. Or just stop still for a moment and look at a beautiful picture or photograph or touch a lovely piece of fabric. Just stopping for a moment, doing something that you enjoy and focusing on it completely can help to remove all other thoughts from the mind and give you that sense of inner calmness immediately.
- ◆ **Imagine your calm place.** Another simple way to connect to the calm and peaceful place within is to imagine yourself in a beautiful, peaceful environment. Maybe it's watching a sunset, or sitting in a beautiful garden, or walking along the bank of a river and watching the water flowing past, or standing on a beach watching the waves breaking gently on the shore.
- ◆ **As well as visualising and seeing the colours, the shapes and the beauty around you, use all of your senses;** hear the sounds, feel the gentle breeze in your hair, smell the fragrance of the flowers, or taste the salt on your lips. The more senses you use to imagine these environments, the more powerfully, you can connect to the feelings of calmness.

- ◆ So why don't you stop right now, and take a deep breath and breathe out slowly. Now allow yourself to create that peaceful image, whichever image works best for you, and use all your senses to enable you to fully experience that peace. You can use this image of a calm and content place as an anchor to help you to connect to those feelings of calmness whenever you wish. The more you use the anchor the more powerful it can become.
  
- ◆ **Create a peaceful environment.** A few simple changes can make all the difference to how calm and content you feel. Spend a few minutes, right now, and write down a list of a few simple ways of how you could create more calm in your environment, maybe in your home or at work. A few simple ideas that you may wish to consider are:
  - Clear your desk
  - Have some fresh flowers in the room
  - Place a picture on the wall, or a postcard on your desk that reminds you of peace
  - Light a candle
  - Play some peaceful background music
  - Clear out some old books from your bookshelf to create some space for new books, or objects or photographs or just simple space that you enjoy.

The birds are beginning to sing aloud again so enjoy the sounds of nature as you enjoy some inner calmness throughout February.

“Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.” ~St. Francis de Sales