



Practicing with a Plant Ally: A Guided Meditation: Exploring a Question from within the Web of Life

by Santacitta Bhikkhuni

The following guided meditation was adapted from an exercise in the ‘*Introduction to Community Climate Action Training*’ of the Pachamama Alliance in 2023. I was surprised by the immediacy of rapport which became apparent through this practice and touched a true sense of kinship with my plant partner. This exploration is best done sitting outside close to a plant or tree or you could do it also inside, with a potted plant as a practice partner. [Here](#) is a link to a video and [here](#) is a link to an audio recording of the meditation or you can draw on these written instructions for a self-guided practice.

Start by settling into your body through attending to your breath and becoming aware of the sense of gravity, which pulls you gently towards the Earth. As your system becomes more settled, imagine sending roots down from your seat or your feet into the ground beneath you. Sense these roots finding their way into the rich soil underneath where you are sitting. Allow them to go deep and with the in-breath, breathe up the vastness of the Earth - the stillness and the peacefulness of her powerful presence.

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Now take some time to notice where you are sitting right now with the plant ally or plant teacher you will be engaging with during this practice session. Take a few long, deep, full breaths – allowing your exhale to be just a bit longer than your inhale. As you breathe, feel into the interconnection of yourself with all that is alive around where you sit, and, in particular, with the being you are engaging with for this practice. Attune to the connection that you are cultivating through your undivided attention to them.

Become aware of your observations, as well as other ways of being in relationship that are more subtle. There may be new ways of being in relationship that are emerging between you and your plant companion, that you may not be fully conscious of yet. If you are sitting outside, notice also what is emerging among the other beings situated in this place. Notice the depth of interconnection and interrelatedness through which understanding, insight and guidance passes, that we are often not aware of consciously.

Take a few moments to attune to your senses. Noticing anything visually that you may not have noticed up to this point, or anything else that may have shifted since you began the practice. (From this point on, you may do the practice with eyes open or closed.) Attune to your sense of hearing and notice any ways that this being's presence is reflected in the soundscape, including the awareness of the ways sounds may be out of the range of human hearing.

Then, attune to your sense of touch, and if it is accessible, perhaps gently approach and touch the being you are interacting with, or just imagine what it would be like to touch this being. Allow your awareness to include ways of perceiving this plant being that are within your immediate understanding, as well as those ways that might be intuitive and others that might extend beyond your current range of perception - so that this range of perception may unfold and expand, as you carry this engagement forward.

Now, as you inhale, breathe the next breath into your whole body, into all your cells, and into your tissue. As you

breathe, continue breathing this experience into your intuitive faculties, your inner eyes, your inner ears, your heart and your hands.

As you inhale, imagine that you are opening the receptors of your whole being, in your gut, your spine, your feet, your roots – breathing in deeply all the observations that you are making – the conscious perceptions as well as the subtle impressions.

And as you exhale, allow all that you are picking up on, to settle more fully into your being, into your bones - and then with a few more breaths – simply continue on like this:

- On the inhale, focus on opening to and receiving insight, understanding and guidance from your plant relative.
- And on the exhale, let all that settle in, let it soak in, invite it to deepen, allow the connection with your plant partner and your attentiveness to that connection to deepen even more.

Allow spaciousness for this connection within you, as well as between you and the biosphere in which you are discovering yourself to be embedded. As you exhale, simply allow everything that is here for you to deepen and settle.

Now I am going to offer some incomplete sentences for you to complete as spontaneously as possible. Simply sense and feel into opening as you inhale, into receiving the subtle data flow in connection with your plant companion and complete the following sentences. There is no need to push for anything in particular - you could also be aware of an absence of connection in this moment and allow that to be as it is. You might want to pause and take some notes after each sentence or at the end of the practice.

- The heart of the question that I have brought here today is
- As I have engaged with my question and my plant

partner, the most prominent physical, energetic and emotional sensations and feelings for me in this encounter are

- As I place my awareness and attention on whatever sensations or feelings are most prominent for me – what I am noticing is ...
- If this feeling or sensation could offer an answer to my question right now - what it would say is ...
- If this sensation could speak to the plant being I am engaging with in this practice - what it would say to this being is
- And what I sense this being's response to me is
- And, my own response to that is
- The guidance I sense this being is offering in relation to my question is

Now take a moment to offer your full attention to whatever is emerging for you in this exchange - breathe into your whole body and sense the interconnectedness between you and this plant being and your community - extending in a multiplicity of ways and directions throughout the web of life.

Here are a few more sentences for you to complete:

- The essence that I am carrying forward from this exchange in relation to my question is
- How this relates to my desire and vision to support the regeneration of our planet through my actions is
- In this moment I am grateful for ...

Sit with all that has emerged for you during this session and sense into what has changed in you, since you have sat down for this practice today. Allow it to permeate your body and being, as you are learning to work with expanding your range of perception into areas of life that are calling us at this time of eco-cultural unraveling: the unraveling of an old narrative of conditioning, which is opening us into new ways of seeing

ourselves and the world, and thereby revealing our next step on the path.

Feel into what you can bring to the web of life at this threshold-time, as more of us are beginning to understand that the Earth needs our cooperation to regenerate and bring forth new life. Our time on the planet as an adolescent species is coming to an end and there is no way back. We are asked to become conscious of ourselves as full participants of a living intelligent Earth.

And now, sense into the aliveness at the center of your chest which animates your whole body and all of life around you. That subtle hum of aliveness is a vibrancy we can be aware of. Please take some time to be with that and return to it over and over again.

This subtle hum of aliveness connects us to the urge to evolve - an expression of that aliveness - and a deep heartfelt wish to support the beauty and integrity of this amazing web of life for future generations. Allow that vibrancy to ‘in-form’ you by attuning to it with your whole being. By listening and resonating, we are opening ourselves to creativity and innovation, outgrowing what Freud calls “repetition compulsion,” the traumatic reenactment of the past, and becoming mindful of the needs of the future. Our ability to respond to future generations is increasing, as we are actively opening ways of being for the next generations to inhabit.

In closing, please take a moment to offer gratitude or an intention to your plant partner, based on what was revealed to you through this practice. It might take the form of words or a simple gesture – and then let the spontaneous expression of your gratitude or intention bring you out of this practice, carrying with you the essence of what you have received today from the work with your plant ally.

Now take a couple of deeper breaths, feel your body again and try not to lose the inner connection with it, as you slowly open your eyes (if they were closed) and orient yourself to where you are.

Thank you for engaging in this beautiful practice.