

# **Yielding as an ecologically sensitive and somatic practice Final Script**

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## **Description**

These yielding practices are designed to anchor your perception of nature in your senses. They enable you to focus on different senses in the natural environment and observe the emerging relationships. Most practices in this Toolkit are available as recordings, which you can listen to through your device or headphones. However, to benefit most from the sensory immersion in a natural environment that the yielding practice advocates, we recommend that you read this script in advance, print it, and then go outdoors with this score as your guide. Take your time with each invitation: perhaps only try 1 or 2 of the practices at first. Repetition of the practices can be helpful in observing changing perceptual and experiential relationships with nature over time.

## **Preparation**

Apart from bringing the printed script to read while you're outdoors, you may also find it helpful to bring pencils, paper, a camera, a journal and any other art materials that might support your explorations.

This score can be practised in a variety of locations. The rural environment might offer a quiet space in which you can explore without interruption. A park or green space in a town or city might also offer a peaceful place to practice. Repeating the practice in different locations can offer rich and meaningful information. It is interesting to try these tasks in busier environments, with the knowledge that passers-by may try to interact with you, or comment on your practice. It is also interesting to consider what is included and excluded in the perception of the environments in which such practices can take place. Wherever you choose, ensure that you are comfortable and feel safe, and that you are not compromising the safety of others.

## **Practices: Yielding to the Earth**

### ***Receiving sound***

Work with your eyes closed. In your own time gesture towards the most prominent sound in your perceptual awareness. The gesture can be a body part moving towards the sound or simply point in the direction of the sound. When another sound becomes more prominent, then move towards that sound. Gradually, through accumulating gestures that move with the sounds around you, start to connect the gestures with breath and allow a small dance to emerge.

### ***Turning meditation practice***

Rest your eyes in your head and let the body move the eyes. In a duration that is ten minutes or longer, turn one full revolution on the spot. The movement of the feet will be incremental and very small, barely perceptible. Lead with the body and notice when the eyes begin searching. The intention is that the eyes follow the body (inspired by a practice developed by Min Tanaka). This exercise can be performed in standing or lying, where one would roll.

### ***In place***

Choose a place in which you feel safe and comfortable working with your eyes closed. Explore your place through weight, gravity, touch and movement, to notice textures, temperatures, soft places, hard places and how their body responds to place. Be still in your place. Notice the temperature of the air and the ground, notice your contact with the ground. Move slowly in your place. What is possible? What draws your attention. Use your hands to map the textures in your place, what can you touch and feel? Use another part of the body to repeat this exploration of texture.

### ***Micro-macro***

Using your vision, switch between focusing attention on tiny details to focusing attention on vast scales within the same place in a process of zooming in and out. Zoom out to the horizon and maintain the focus there for 2 minutes. Zoom into your left thumb and maintain the focus there for 2 minutes. What do you notice? Explore zooming in and zooming out on different focal points. This score is derived from an element of the Underscore, a contact improvisation practice developed by Nancy Stark Smith.

### ***Tracing the horizon***

Trace the horizon with your fingertips. Trace in as much detail as you can. From memory, draw the horizon on a piece of paper.

### ***Partner with an object***

Find an object in nature, such as a rock, a twig or a leaf. Explore its texture and qualities. Responses can be made through movement, drawing, or writing.

### ***Partner with a living creature***

Notice a living creature in the environment. Observe how this creature moves. Observe the qualities of the creature. Develop a response or a movement duet with them.

### ***Open score: Casting Glance***

This practice is inspired by Robert Smithson's idea of an artist's making process where he states that "I'm not interested in casting material but in art that is made out of the casting glance" (in Reynolds, 2000, p. 56). In this practice, follow your individual interest and forms connections to places, objects, images and whatever else draws your attention.

### ***Open Score: documentary impulse***

While in the landscape, you are encouraged to creatively document your experiences through the creation of movement forms, gestures, photographs, writings or film.

## **References**

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