

Deep Time Meditation

Opening:

This practice is to reconnect us with Deep Time, our ancestors as the long lineage of life on this planet.

We are going on an inner journey together. Close your eyes or lower your gaze so we can go inward into our imaginations. I will lead us through this very slowly so that we can really feel into what our imaginations bring forward. At first, you may relate to this deep time story in a linear way, but remember the spiral nature of everything, including time, and let your consciousness bounce around naturally. Let the idea of YOU expand.

Take a few breaths and settle into the place in your body that feels most grounded. Bring awareness to your body. Right now, you are the Earth aware of itself.

Ring Bell

Guided Meditation:

Through time long, long, ago, you are born as the tiniest creature, microscopic, a Cyanobacteria. You rejoice in making your own food using water and sunlight.

Something revolutionary happens when you begin living inside other microbes, and in your harmony, you develop more abilities. Cooperating clusters of cells create Great Ancestor Sponge. Miles beneath the surface of the ocean, in her bluest depths, you have tiny pores in your skin that draw the water in, filtering nourishment. Water is your life. You set out and build the first reefs on earth. Then your body grows Worm-like and you begin to excavate the ocean floor. Along with your new burrowing lifestyle comes a more stout form of protection - a shell and spines. Over time, your back becomes rigid, and a spine allows you to swim and explore the vast oceans. Like Ancestor Fish, swim with bones in fleshy fins. As you slowly emerge from the salty water onto the rich soil of the earth, inside your drier body, small buds swell into lungs, you breathe oxygen from the air, and grow limbs and scales specialized for sun protection.

Looking up, meteors collide with Earth and volcanic eruptions release a cloud of ash that blocks out the rays of the sun. Walk with Woolly Mammoth, that emerges from the shadows with 10 foot long tusks, strong and resilient. With the glass-like wings of Dragonfly, hover and dart about, moving each of your four wings independently. Soar with Ancestor Bird that takes flight, floating above lush mountains. The air is very warm and moist. Feel your furry little body, about the size of a mouse, nuzzled against the soft earth, hiding in safety from enormous animals. You scuttle around searching for insects to nibble on. The plates of the earth slowly move beneath your tiny feet, splitting into many different land masses, separating you from your kin. But still your growth through time takes place together. An intricate web of relationships emerges, as beings move and migrate, forming the foundation for ecosystems, communities of life dependent on each other and their environments. Earth cycles in and out of glaciation, becoming a huge snowball covered with sheets of ice followed by bursts of warmth that thaw the frozen water and send it back across the land, filling valleys and carving out new patterns in the landscape.

Be still. You now have threads that anchor you near a crevice in the warming earth. Sit with Ancestor Moss as you absorb minerals from the rocks to grow and flourish, sending out spores so light to perfectly travel on the wind and through the waters. Your threads transform over time into roots that stretch deep into the earth, securing your stature and yet you remain flexible and sway in the breeze. You grow, regardless of hardships. A miraculous underground partnership with Fungi allows you to live almost anywhere, cover more ground and care for your offspring. The commitment to being rooted has made you creative about ways to harness energy. Settle into stillness with the Plant Ancestors and thrive on a network of sharing. Remember how it feels to truly belong to a place.

Extend your branches in all directions. Sometimes you grow so tall that it is like another world up in your canopy. You share life with many beings that can only live in your care. When you were a mouse-like creature, you climbed up into the canopy in search of insects. Over a very long period of time you develop a larger body, longer hair, and arms to swing through the jungle.

Curious of what is below, you climb down to the solid earth and discover the abundance there. Roam with Ancestor Ape through deserts, mountains, and deep forests. In time, a tribe sets out into the unknown, without the protection of fur, fangs or claws; to explore the world... but you have each other, friends and family, inventive minds and agile hands.

You learn to hunt animals and heal yourself with plants. It is clear that your survival is connected with the life forms around you. Sparks of creativity ignite in your imagination, and you sing, dance, tell stories, build shelters, and make art, weaving joy and pleasure through the community.

Circle up in ceremony, with the human Ancestors, take a seat on the earth beside them, as they enact a simple heartfelt ritual of knowing that there is no separation, that what we do to the earth we do to ourselves. They express gratitude and honor the earth with song, dance, chant, prayer, invocations, stories, offerings. Imagine sitting in ceremony with these first wild humans...



We journey with these ancestors through time, knowing that they celebrated good fortune, endured grief and survived through wars and pandemics, each one finding ways to adapt and care for each other.

What were the qualities, the gifts, that helped our Ancestors that we may bring forward, in our hearts, now?




With eyes still gently closed, you're going to make the transition back slowly, coming back into your own life, your body and spirit.

And consider, How much of you are you?

You are made up of elements of the earth that have been recycled for over 4.5 billion years.

All beings brought forth from the Earth live today in your cellular memory.

Notice, your hands resting in your lap, holding all the gifts of our oldest Ancestor, the Earth... 

Imagine in front of you, children, they belong to the earth, then imagine in front of them the grandchildren, and their grandchildren. Visualize all the gifts of the Ancestors pouring out of your hands into the future generations who will carry them forward.

What gifts do you offer? Maybe they are instincts that you have always had that have served you well, maybe they are qualities that you have worked towards your whole life, what do you bring forth with your whole body, mind and spirit today?

And now, we will gently return and slowly open our eyes, come back into the room, back to each other. Take a few deep breaths.

Closing:

This experience with Deep Time, this exploration of where we are and who we are, helps us to feel our deeply connected and boundless nature. Our present moment will always be more potent than we can know.

Let's put our hands together and bow to the ancestors.

Bow to the future generations.

Bow to each other.

We are Earth.

Ring bell to end

Bow

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Begin with "I am earth" and see what comes forward.
- Describe how that journey felt for you. Was there anything that surprised you?
- Explore your relationship with the earth, be honest about the complicated nature of cultural conditioning and how we work with that in light of our spiritual practice and Joanna's teachings.

REFERENCES:

Special thanks to Sylvia Di Blasio, a contributor to the Work that Reconnects, and her work "Harvesting the Evolutionary Gifts of All Our Ancestors," adapted by Constance Washburn <https://workthatreconnects.org/resource/harvesting-the-evolutionary-gifts-of-all-our-ancestors/>

<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/life-science/early-life-earth-animal-origins>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/biology1/chapter/the-evolutionary-history-of-the-animal-kingdom/>

<https://www.howitworksdaily.com/what-was-earth-like-during-an-ice-age/>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120201094923.htm>

<https://www.earthhistory.org.uk/recolonisation/first-plants>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9323002/>