**Be Like a Tree**

Have you ever felt like a tree? One moment a sturdy shelter, a thing of glory, then in the next, a victim of buffeting winds, tattered by the storms of life? Branches (your emotions) split open from stress? Trunk (your heart) struck by lightning and ruptured to the core? Leaves (your actions) wildly tossed about. I know I have.

And, yet, I have also felt the towering strength of a tree within me; the solidity that is ever-present if I have a mind to notice it and to call upon it. In fact, when I think of a tree, or imagine myself to actually be a tree, I immediately feel more peaceful and calm, at ease with what life offers me. I sense we can all feel this way, taking nature’s lead by embracing a tree’s fortitude as our own.

Imagine yourself as a tree—a strapping oak, a flexible weeping willow, a majestic redwood. Pick one that suits your fancy.

Take a deep breath and place yourself in position as that very tree; your “root feet” firmly planted upon the earth. Imagine more feet roots spreading out and down, centering you in solid soil. Continue to breathe deeply and evenly. Notice how much more stable you are beginning to feel.

Take another deep breath and raise your arms (to the side or above) as if they are branches. Feel how they welcome the world, the breeze, birds that may come and land lightly upon your limbs. Feel your leaves being gently caressed by warm breezes. Notice how undisturbed, sensible, clear, and open you now feel. Relax. Enjoy the serenity and strength of your own beingness.

It’s a given, life is difficult. Unexpected storms will definitely come our way and when we are not grounded—without a strong root system—we will suffer even more. Let us consider that our inner peace practices are the roots that keep us solid and steady. The more we practice them the deeper they go, the more firmly rooted *we* are. Ongoing practice will continue to stabilize and strengthen you.

When we are actually doing stabilizing practices like these, it may not feel as if they are having any effect, but they will in time. We should not be surprised that one day, we may awaken to realize that we feel different, more sturdy and calm, better able to withstand whatever life presents us.

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