

Spoken meditation - Meeting your inner child.

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I have not used this meditation with children, yet, though I am sure that it can be easily adapted for older children. But definitely do not use it with children whom you know have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences.

I have adapted it myself from the book *The Chakra Project* which I use sometimes in my adult yoga classes.

Essentially it can be about finding out what loving yourself can feel like, how do we even imagine doing that? There's so much written about this thing 'self love' and you might think, as I did, that this seems all very self indulgent! We are all too busy with our mission to love everyone else in our lives. I started by likening it to the words my mother used to say to me, "Respect yourself, as if you don't, know one else will!" as my mini and I zoomed up the road on a Saturday night in a glittering boob tube, white jeans that looked like they had been painted on and heels that I would abandon as soon as the DJ started James Brown! Oh the 70s! But a lot of self love is that, reflecting back at yourself with affection, and knowing that all you have done has brought you to the person you are now; yes, even things you have permission to laughingly regret... we all have a few! If we strip away some of the years of layers?

The sacral chakra is related to the vibrancy of the colour orange, and as we begin we can focus on this vibrant colour in all its ways, pumpkins, citrus fruits, marigolds, sea urchins... anything! We feel it deep in our low belly and it is associated with emotional health, creativity and a feeling of vitality. I am no expert on the chakras and not the biggest believer in alternative healing. However if it feels good, enjoy for a few minutes?

The reaction in my classes has been quite mixed and emotional, perhaps even powerful, to this meditation. You'll understand why. But they all liked it very much nonetheless. I would play some ambient music, and after you finish, wait for a minute or two before bringing people back to being properly awake.

If we begin this visualisation by lying down and holding our hands over our lower belly, just under our navel, and breathe into this area, letting your exhale be long, gentle and slow.

Talk through a gradual physical relaxation, beginning with the toes and working upwards, remaining mentally alert if you like, but letting your body feel heavy and soft.

Take your mind back to the place you lived as a child, choose one preferred home, if you had a few.

Look at the outside of this place, and notice the things that you might identify as a child, near by trees or gates, paths. Places you might have played or sat dreaming of the life not yet lived. Then you notice your front door..... Are there any features that you remember?

You are an adult here now, there is no one at home. You walk to the door and knock. You wait, and maybe your mind is starting to fill with apprehension. There is no need. Relax.

The door is opened by a small child. You look down at the child's head of hair, soft and bright, you see the your hands, chubby and smooth. This child is you. Just as you look affectionately at other people's little children or at your own, now you see yourself. Its your little hand, your hair, your childhood clothes. What are you wearing, can you see your little young legs, muddy maybe, and your shoes?. There is no hurry, make a picture of yourself, perhaps based on happy memories or helped by photos.

Look at yourself with the love a child expects. This little child hasn't lived yet. They eyes are open innocent and are truly happy to see you. The child recognises you.

The door opens and you are invited in. There is no one else there, this is all about you. It is not about any other memories. The child takes your hand and you feel how little and soft they are. You move towards the first room, lets say the kitchen. You notice your favourite foods on the shelves, foods that you enjoyed. Look around and notice the floor, curtains and china. Whatever you remember. Just like seeing familiar old friends you are happy to see these things again.

You move to the living area, and you might see books you loved. Go to a shelf and see the things there. The things that you liked or fascinated you. You smile at the child and your smile is returned. You might remember the furniture, pictures, the colours and the smells of the room. Move your eyes slowly, to take it all in and to help you remember the things that were important to you. Perhaps you don't share your parent's taste and are glad to look away. If there is a view from the window, go over and feast your eyes on the familiar view outside. This could be anything from a garden to an open city view. We all lived somewhere different. Your view is special to you.

Holding your child's hand you move to another room. This might be your own bedroom. Here you see the things that formed you. Your favourite toys, think carefully, just two or three. Are there any books that were special to you, there they are. Do you remember what your bed was like. Just your bed, just your things. What colours and smells fill this room? Perfumes, clothes. Slow down and see your place of comfort.

Now you return to the front door, it might mean going down stairs or along a hall way. Still holding hands. You might begin to fear letting go of this small warm hand. Look at this child, so deserving of all the love it will receive. Remember that in this little bed you grew.

You open the door, you let go of the hand. The child moves first and leaves the house. Waiting for you. You close the door. You are happy to leave, there is no one else there now that you are leaving.

Now you take the child's hand, and you walk away together, away from the home, down the street.

This child has always been living inside you, it never left, although you thought it might have!

You are the same person, the DNA, the character, personality and features. The many layers of life might have buried you. The things you enjoyed, you probably still do. Time has altered how you look, but you are still this same child.

As deserving of love.

