

Meditative Story Transcript – Meditation 4

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ROHAN GUNATILLAKE: I've been thinking a lot about sleep recently. My 2-year-old has finally settled down into a palatable pattern, and I'm relearning the simple pleasures of long deep sleep. I've always been a decent sleeper, but I do know that it's a big issue for so many people. And in fact probably the biggest reason people turn to mindfulness and meditation.

So in this special episode I'm going to focus on sleep. So I would also recommend only listening to it when going to sleep. Because, y'know.

As it happens, we heard from our listener survey that many of you like to listen to Meditative Story as you prepare for sleep anyway.

As a new added benefit for members, we'll be releasing a companion audio experience to Meditative Story called Sleep Song. I like to think of Sleep Song as a new bedtime experience. We've created it because so many of you love the original music we compose for the podcast. Our composer Ryan takes the beautiful melodies from each Meditative Story episode and custom creates soundtracks that settle your mind, allowing you to wind down. Then, as you shift into sleep, Sleep Song transitions into more abstract musical washes and tones that drift in and out of focus – essentially becoming a dream score. It's one of the benefits we've created for members, which we offer for \$99 a year. So please head to meditativestory.com/member to sign up and become a member. We'll be adding new Sleep Songs every month.

Okay. So speaking of Sleep. Out of all the meditations I've designed over the years, this is the one I get asked about the most. And I call it "Fade."

And what we're learning to do is quiet our mind. Since quiet minds and good night's sleep are best friends.

Let's start by just enjoying lying here. Your body supported by the bed. Know that you are totally held by the bed, with no effort from you at all. Nice and supported. Nice and cosy.

And for the start of this meditation we'll actually open our eyes. Even though it's dark, just keeping our eyes gently open. Not looking at anything in particular. This is the first sense we'll fade out.

We've looked at so much today. So many things have come into these tired eyes. So they definitely deserve a break. Just relaxing your eyes. Relaxing the area around the eyes. Thankful for all the work your eyes have done today.

And as slowly as you want, closing your eye lids. Fading out the sense of sight into comfortable darkness.

Fading out our sense of sight. Nothing else for it to do tonight.

Now to our ears and our hearing. Noticing what you can hear. Sounds near and sounds far. Night time is normally much quieter than the day, but it still has sounds.

The sounds of the room, the sounds of the house, the sounds of outside, the sounds of your body as it breathes, the sounds of this episode.

Just paying gentle attention to the sounds around you. Just receiving the sounds. No need to do anything. Sounds, whatever they are, just arriving as you lie here in bed. Relaxed. No sound more important than another.

And the way we'll fade out sound is to do something clever. Instead of listening to the sounds, see if you can notice the silences between sounds. Allowing the quiet of the outside to quiet the inside. Tuning into the silence between sounds. Tuning into the silence behind sounds.

Paying attention to silence. Gorgeous silence. Fading out our sense of sound by resting with silence.

Now to touch. Fading out your sense of touch. And doing that by paying attention to where in the body you can feel relaxation and warmth. And just resting there.

Maybe noticing the warmth of the bed. The soft rhythm of your breathing. And just letting the body and the breath fade down. Taking your time. Letting the fading take as long as it needs to. Being patient and just resting with what feels most restful right now.

So with all our senses turned down, we'll finish with thought. Treating thoughts in exactly the same way we did sound.

Noticing any thoughts that arise. Not going out to get them. But just lying here and receiving them. No one thought any more important than another. Just thoughts arising and being received. No need to hold onto them. No need to give them any energy. Just receiving them.

And we can let them fade out in the same way we faded out sound. Noticing the gaps between thoughts. Giving more attention to the gaps than the thoughts themselves. Tuning into the silence. Lovely silence. Letting silence fade everything down.

The silence between thoughts. The silence behind thoughts. Fading down thinking. Letting thinking go to sleep as well.

Fading out. Sight faded. Hearing faded. Touch faded. Thinking faded.

Thank you and sleep well.