

Meditative Story Transcript – Rohan Gunatillake Meditation: The ritual of becoming

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ROHAN GUNATILLAKE: We do the long drive down from Scotland to the south coast of England for the holidays. We couldn't do it last year but this year we manage it, starting on the long straight highways, then the beautiful historic towns, then the winding country roads and rolling fields. Staying with my in-laws, it's such a pleasure to be here. The kids are in bed, I'm here in the ground-floor office space and the rest of the house is just in the sitting room chatting. And it's really dark outside. Mid-winter dark, yes, but also countryside dark. No light pollution. The village where I am is just a string of houses, the nearest town twenty minutes drive away and not that big. All of which means the night skies this time of the year are amazing. On a clear night like tonight the stars are so sharp. I just came in from looking at them outside, arching my back to drink it all in, full body.

So we're at the edge of one year and almost in the next. A year. The time it takes for me standing here on this ridiculously beautiful planet to go all the way around the sun and back to the same spot. And as I look up at the stars it blows my mind every time, as I'm sure it does for you, that I am looking back in time, my image of stars hundreds of years old. They might not exist now for all I know.

Let's use this image of the night sky as a way to soften. Allowing the body to be soft, any tension able to leak out into the vastness of space.

We can put a glass of hot water into the ocean and quickly enough it will disperse its energy and cool to be like its surroundings. Space is vaster still, so any tightness we are holding can be released, yes, upwards into the sky but also in all directions since endless space is all around us, full of stars. An infinitely expanding container, able to take whatever we release into it.

The holiday season is a time of celebration. So let's celebrate. Putting aside any notes of doubt or feelings of 'I haven't done anything meaningful this year,' click through your memories of the last year and let me know one of your greatest successes of 2021. It could be something small, reading a whole book for the first time in ages or something big like you know something big, it doesn't matter. What does matter is that bringing it to mind lightens the mind, lifts the heart, lifts the corners of your mouth.

You did really well.

It was awesome.

You're right to be proud.

We have something to celebrate too. Meditative Story recently put out its 100th episode. And while that number can feel like an arbitrary one to note, it does feel like we've been on a journey,

perhaps not as significant as going all the way around the sun and back, but significant. The team is super humble and didn't want to make a big deal about it, but I do. Being the host of Meditative Story, it might appear that I do a lot of the lifting, but the truth of it is that I really don't. There is an incredible amount of super technical and super intricate work that goes into each episode, and so I want to celebrate that. Celebrate my team, only a couple of whom I've met in person, but all of whom I feel close to. And proud of.

Alongside celebration, this is also a time of year for reflection. Yin and yang. Two sides of the same coin of time and space. So now that we are energized with our celebration let's choose something to let go of.

2021 has been one of those hasn't it. So as we transition into the next, let's do that with some lightness. And that means letting some things go.

Face soft.

Chin up.

Chest open.

Hands open.

What do you intend to let go of?

What will you leave on this side of the threshold?

What name will you write on this slip of paper and drop into the fire?

I have a friend called Jason who lives out in Melbourne in Australia. Hi Jason, if you're listening, which you probably are.

Jason is a very singular human. He's just so very Jason.

And one of the many remarkable things he does is what he calls his ritual of becoming.

As an antidote to the tedium and inevitable self-judgement of New Year's resolutions he invites those in his community to choose one word.

One word that serves, in his words, as a fuzzy contextual beacon that, if you should wander off track – and you will wander off track – will pull you back in line with your intention.”

When I typically ask you to bring something to mind, I tend to say that the first thing that comes up is the right thing. But I'm not going to say that here.

Take your time. Take the next few days with this idea of your word for the year. Let it be something iconic. You might have it ready for new year's day, or it might take a week or two. Make the opportunity so it might emerge, like a gorilla from the bush. Or Alpha Centauri from behind the clouds. Or if it suits you better, make it a project, diving into a thesaurus, into poetry, whatever.

Take your time.

Majesty. That's my word by the way. Ma-jest-y. My ritual of becoming. One word as an intention for the year.

Thank you Jason.

And thank you.

And most of all, thank you to the Meditative Story team. Here's to 100 episodes, and I look forward to seeing you as soon as possible.

Till then, be well.

And happy New Year.

Take care now.