

Most of these exercises are more effective when practiced outside, though you can do them inside if there is space and windows.

Aimless Wandering

Allow yourself to wander outside without a goal or object to observe. You can walk anywhere, cross the road to the school (be careful), walk to the lower parking lot, walk around the church inside or out. If something catches your eye, you can stop and “be with the object”, observe the space around the object, the background, the detail of the object. Can you directly observe without comment or judgment? Keep walking and stop again when you are drawn to look.

The Four Directions or Joining Heaven and Earth

For this exercise it is good to be in an open field or an area with space all around you. Stand on the earth. Face east. Feel the space above your head, behind you and all around you, feel grounded on the earth. Now look straight out to the east, observe the light, shadows, whatever is in your field of vision. Relax your gaze, let go into the space. Now take one-quarter turn to the right and face south. Repeat the exercise. Take one-quarter turn again to the right to face west. Observe the colors in the sky, the shadows, bright reflections, various shapes. Relax. Turn to the north and repeat the exercise. Return again to the east. Feel the ground under your feet, the sky above. Feel your energetic presence that joins heaven and earth.

Soundscape

Wander in any direction. At some point, stop. Close your eyes and listen. Can you just let go into the sound without figuring it out, labeling, or beginning a string of associations? Can you let go of like and dislike? Wander again. Perhaps find a place to sit down and listen directly to sounds as they arise and dissolve. Is there silence in between the sounds? Or is there always some sound occurring?

Negative space

Pick an object to observe. Hold your mind to the object for a few minutes, now relax the gaze. Place your attention on the space around the object. Now solidify the space around the object and let the object become empty. Then relax your observation and just rest.

Gaze of the royal monarch

Stand or sit with open space in front of you. Body upright: good alignment of head and shoulders. Turn your head to the left as far as you can. Gaze out. Very, very slowly turn your head around to face front and then to the right side. Let your eyes gaze outward without fixating on anything. Avoid grasping objects with your eyes. Look out as if you were the royal monarch surveying your kingdom. Feel your own strong presence and **just be** without project or goal.