



# SPIRITUAL WISDOM OF TREES | SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

## SESSION 1: CRACKING OPEN

*So gaining wisdom has a lot to do with a willingness to get dirty and maybe a little beat up, to be vulnerable and willing to soften our shells, to pay close attention to that which is growing inside of us that's trying to poke through, find fertile soil and take root, so that we can become what we are meant to be. (Beth Norcross)*

### Reflection Questions

- 1. What did you notice, particularly in your body, as you felt the tree's vulnerability?**
- 2. Are there times in your life where you have been cracked open? If so, are there any lessons you might keep in mind from that time?**
- 3. If being cracked open and vulnerable can lead to growth and insight, why do we avoid it so? Do you notice anything that you might be avoiding right now? Do you feel called to explore that further?**
- 4. What assists you in holding a stance of openness?**
- 5. Do you sense that there's a communal or societal opening going on in which we are called to participate?**

### Intention

To develop an open posture towards the wisdom we receive from trees and to identify a particular tree that will be our teacher for the duration of the program and beyond.

### Description

Begin this practice by wandering in a wooded area close to your home -- your yard, a local park perhaps -- any place that's convenient for you to visit on a regular basis. Walk slowly. See if you can synchronize your breath with your steps.

As you wander, pay attention to the trees around you. Begin to notice the differences and similarities between them. See if there is a tree that is particularly attracting you, calling you to notice her. Ask the tree if she would be willing to be your teacher for the next several weeks or beyond. (If you prefer, ask Spirit, or other names you might have for the One, to teach you through the tree.) Over the course of this program, spend as much time with your tree teacher as you can. Notice her, and get to know her. See her, listen to her, touch her, smell her. You might try to engage with her with a different sense each day. You might recall the growth process from the video and see where she is in that process.

In the video, recall the story of the acorn village. After the scruffy acorn told the little boy that our destiny is to open to becoming a spreading oak tree, we heard the little boy ask: "How do we become that?" The stranger responded: "I'm not quite sure how it all works, but it has something to do with being all broken up and going into the ground."

Sit quietly now with your tree teacher; perhaps lean against her trunk. Breathe slowly with her as she absorbs carbon dioxide and gives you life-giving oxygen. Focus only on your breath and her breath. Allow thoughts to come and go -- swept away with the breeze. See if you can feel the many ways that she has become open and vulnerable in her life, from the moment her seed fell to the ground. Spend some time with her in her vulnerability.

End your time with gratitude for all that she has given you and to other forest creatures and ask what you might give to her. Return to this tree as often as you can during the six-week program and beyond.