



Human Layers Meditation

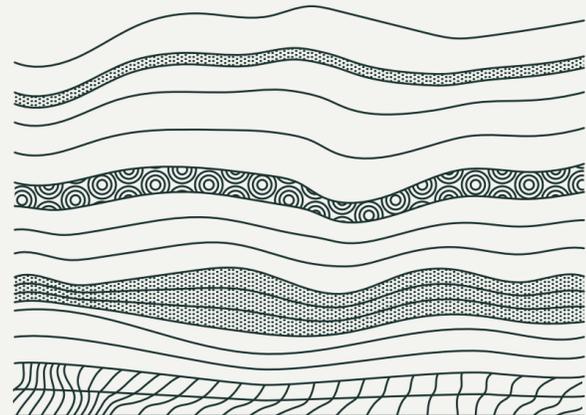


This Human Layers practice has been created to help you connect with future generations.

It can be done in person or online and with as many people as you wish.

We recommend one person takes the role as narrator of the experience.

Human Layers can be done in 15 minutes, or more slowly over the course of an hour, depending on how you pace the reading and the kind of final reflection activity you choose.



The Practice

Ensure you are in a quiet place where you have space to move a little forwards and a little backwards.

Stand and make yourself comfortable.

Take a breath.

Arrive.

Relax your shoulders, and let go of any tension you feel in your body.

Feel your breath moving in and out.

Notice the support of the ground beneath you. Feel fully present in this moment.

And now, let's begin...

Bring to mind someone you feel warmly towards of your grandparents age. They may or may not still be with us. It might be a grandparent, a great aunt or uncle or another older person. Think of one of their qualities that evokes warmth in you... It could be their smile, something that made them laugh, their hands...

Now, take a step backwards one step. And, as you're stepping backwards, you're stepping back in time...Now, imagine that person at 40...How was that quality that evokes warmth for you present in them then? Take a moment to connect with them in the past...



Now step back one step in time again...And this time, imagine you're at that person's ninth birthday. How was that quality that evokes warmth in you present in them back then?

What do they look like?

What are they eating at this ninth birthday party?

When is it- it could be in the 1920s or thirties, maybe a bit earlier, or a bit later....

Where in the world are we?



Imagine yourself walking over to the window and, for a moment, turning your back on the party. What do you see outside of the window? What's the world like back then? How are people getting around? How are they communicating with each other? Take a moment to drink in the world back then.



And now come back into the room and drink in this ninth birthday party of the person that you care about.

And then take your leave. Step forwards one step, through generations...Step forwards another step...

Now you're back in the present day.

Take a moment. Breathe. Let go of that older person.

Feel the ground beneath your feet. Take a deep breath in...and out.



Now, think of a small person who you feel warmly towards. It could be a child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or the offspring of friends. Think of one of the qualities that evokes warmth in you. It could be their smile, the things that make them laugh, their hands...



Step forwards one step. You're stepping forward in time... Imagine that person at 40. How is that quality that evokes warmth present in them then? Take a moment to connect with them in the future.

Step forwards another step... moving through time again. It's now their 90th birthday.

They're sitting around a table being celebrated by their friends and family. They're laughing.

How is that quality that evokes warmth present in them at 90? Does the same thing make them laugh? What food do they love? Stay in the warmth of the party.



When is this party happening? It is probably around the end of the century, say 2095, or the start of the next one 2105... Maybe a bit earlier, maybe a bit later. Imagine yourself walking over to the window. For a moment you turn your back on the party... What do you see outside of the window? What's the world like? How are people getting around? How are people communicating with each other? What is the world like in the future?



Now turn your attention back to the party room... There's a framed picture of you on the table. The person you care about, who's celebrating their 90th birthday is tapping their glass and asking for everyone's attention. They raise their glass and toast. They're thanking you for something you did that helped shape their world for the better. What are they toasting you for? Stay in that moment, taking a few deep breaths to connect to your legacy.



Now, take your leave. Step back one step through the generations. And, step backwards again, arriving back in the present.

Take a moment with your eyes shut to land back here.

Feel the ground beneath your feet... Take a deep breath in and out...and slowly open your eyes.

You've just time traveled about 200 years and crossed six or seven generations. How did that feel?

Closing

Allow time for participants to arrive back in the room and share reflections of their experience. This can be done by journaling, or splitting into pairs to discuss, or reflecting as a group.

This practice has been created by Ella Saltmarshe & Hannah Smith.
It is inspired by the work of deep ecologist, Joanna Macy.