

One-Minute Centering Prompts in the Forest

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Created by **Emily Sigman '21MF/MA**, the 2021 Forest Crew used these centering prompts to provide a moment of reflection, stimulate non-linear thought, and foster a more emotional and intuitive connection to the landscape while in the field.

All are welcome to use these prompts to experiment in outdoor centering.



During a hot summer, the 2021 Forest Crew cools off in a shady stream at Yale Myers-Forest as they survey the first stand to be marked for thinning.

1. Find a tree upon which you can comfortably rest your back. Notice the quality of your vision. Close your eyes and witness the interplay between your body and the tree. Rest here for one minute. Open your eyes and again notice the quality of your vision.
2. Focus your eyes on one spot on the ground. Notice what you can see. Relax your conscious mind but keep your eyes focused on the same spot. Notice what begins to come into your vision. After one minute, reflect on what you learned.

3. Close your eyes and pay attention to what you can hear. Try not to identify individual species or attribute sounds to a specific source. Instead, focus on your proximity to the sounds. What is the closest sound you can hear? What is the furthest sound you can hear? How do all of the sounds combine in your ear?
4. Find a safe place to lie down. Look up at the canopy. Let your eyes relax and witness the movement of light.
5. Find a safe plant to touch. Ask the plant if you may take a leaf or twig. If the plant says yes, take a leaf or twig and crush it in your hand. Make a cup with both of your hands and inhale the scent of the plant for one minute. If the plant says no, say thanks anyway.
6. Hug a tree for one minute.
7. Ask a rock for advice. Listen to the answer.
8. Move intuitively towards anything in the forest: a tree, rock, shrub, insect or any other being that attracts your attention. Ask that being what is needed here. Listen to the answer.
9. Imagine that you are water. Where and how will you move through this forest?
10. Say thank you to everything you can sense over the course of one minute.