

Practitioner: Hi, Marcy.

Marcy: Hi. What a nice environment you have with those beautiful tulips.

P: Well, these were from a friend of mine, she had recently moved to New Orleans. My birthday was last Tuesday, and so she sent me those flowers, which was a nice surprise. And I ended up having them through the recent retreat I attended and some people thought that I had put them there just for the retreat. But actually, it just worked out as a birthday present.

M: Well, that's so nice.

P: Yeah, how are you?

M: Doing fine. How was your retreat?

P: It was wonderful in certain ways; it was wonderful, really, to be part of that. It was very hybrid. On Sunday - the retreat started on Saturday - my mom had an episode. And then on Monday, I got a call from her facility that she was going to have to leave her apartment and move to another part of the building. And so, I had to spend a couple of days just working with them about that and dealing with some logistics.

This morning I was at the center. We have just a few days to empty out her apartment upstairs because she's moving from two rooms down to one room where there's a nurse's station nearby. So that was difficult. She's not happy about it. She's a hundred and one.

I tuned in a little bit late for this call. Just before you tuned in, I had gotten a call from the nurse clinical leader that they think Mom has conjunctivitis so they were informing me about the meds. However, one thing that is so interesting about the retreats - and I think this was either the third or the fourth online retreat I've done since covid started - is that it was just very nice to, as you know, to be able to move in and out and to have that constancy of people sitting and meditating in the background. So I did have some really fruitful sessions. I felt calmer.

I've been sleeping better; still getting up. Last night I might have gotten up a couple of times, but I think my anxiety about getting up is subsiding. I'd been doing different Yoga Nidra tapes before the retreat and I find them calming, and doing one or two different ones has been helpful. They're so consistent with the wonderful guided meditation that you had sent to me with just getting your attention outside of your head and noticing parts of the body. Yours is just as wonderful as any of them are, Marcy.

M: Oh, thank you.

P: Anyway, that's kind of a recap. As far as techniques, one thing that I was doing quite a bit of was working with visual activation, inner and outer, and I was having some very interesting

experiences of a lot of flow in the inner visual space and, actually, at one point - I suppose some people would, if they weren't used to meditating, think this was a hallucination - but I had this one powerful session where I had my eyes open and I was seeing out in the room and things were very soft in that outer visual field, and I just started having a flow of different family members, long deceased, actually sitting in the chair in the room and then leaving and another one flowing into it.

That was interesting. When I talked to the retreat teacher about it, he said that he had often worked with both inner and outer visual activation simultaneously to really help with the dissolution of the outer. He said that he has focused on that quite a bit, he's done that in the past, and that's been a really good exercise.

And I had one session where - honestly, there are a lot of times when I feel spaciousness, and I work with spaciousness a lot - I had some wonderful peaceful, spacious moments. And then there was another time when I wasn't beyond the body, I was aware of the outer edges of my head, but everything inside just felt totally empty, and totally paper thin. It was interesting, it was such a delicate spaciousness, like it really truly was - it was very lovely.

And then I did a lot of focusing on emotional activity, which was helpful, because of what was going on in the background with my mom. When I saw her yesterday, she was so unhappy because she's not feeling that great. And she's now on medication. I have tried for a long time to keep her off of meds, but because she was having hallucinations and actually was acting out, finally, the doctor said she had to be put on Seroquel. She hit somebody last week, or on Saturday, that's when it came to a head.

M: Is that like an antipsychotic or something, Seroquel?

P: It is an antipsychotic. I've worked and worked with them at the center to try a lesser option because this has been happening for the last three or four months. And so at first we talked about, and she was on, Trazodone for a short amount of time, which is an antidepressant and can help with sleep, because her sleep cycle is just totally screwed up and she was leaving her room and wandering around and getting lost in the middle of the night. And she tried to enter someone's room, someone else's room.

And so, anyway, it's just been inevitable. My mom has never taken medication. She's had one blood pressure medication when she started, when she was 92, and has been so healthy with just basic food. My mom was one of those original super women that you read about: she did it all. And that's one reason why she's still here. But seeing the decline, and seeing her unhappy, and articulating that she wanted to go back home - there's no family member there who can help her now, I've felt a lot of emotions about it. There's just a lot of emotion in the body. And sorting through her things, it feels odd, we still have to sort through part of mom's things now.

This is the fourth family member I've helped transition through to death, and with three of them, well, with two of them, I was with them in the last moments, and with one of them up until the last moment, and the main person taking care of everything. So maybe there's a message there. I don't know. Seems like I'm the family member who ends up being the person who helps people transition. So the practice is helpful in that way.

M: You sound really good. There's a shift from the last time I talked to you, a peacefulness and equanimity with how things are, a transparency and openness. We say equanimity, but we could also say acceptance, a being with how things are. It feels really beautiful to be able to be clear-eyed and have an open heart with the way things are at this time.

P: Thank you, Marcy. I feel that. I feel like I'm falling into equanimity more and more. I'm at a time in my life when things should be simpler and yet it's very complicated.

M: So they say, right? *[both laughing]*

M: All right. So would you like to practice?

P: I would love to practice.

M: What comes to mind?

P: I think any technique would be fine. There is nothing that's hitting me now that's particularly pressing. So I am going to leave it to you and your intuition.

M: Okay. What I noticed when you were talking was this impression of your family members that you saw on retreat and you had a blending of inner and outer visual activation. That struck me as well as the emotion that was coming up when you talked about your mom saying she wanted to go home. With all of that plus this equanimity, there seems to be - I don't even want to say resilience, which can have a connotation of a kind of like a toughness or a pull yourself up kind of a thing - more like a softening and expanded window of tolerance to opening to what's available about our experience that's less concrete.

It makes me think of maybe a short circuit in notice-everything, but moving through it, particularly, with a sense of not needing there to be any distinction between inner and outer. There's just see, just hear, and just feel, but particularly with the sense of there being no difference between inner and outer. That's what I have a feel for. Sound good?

P: Sounds good. Actually, it's very much in line with some of the other work that I was doing at the retreat. So it would be wonderful to extend that.

M: Alright, so let's see how it goes. You can probably hear my wind chimes outside as we settle in.

## **GUIDANCE**

**[An audio of the guided meditation is available on [marcyahn.com](http://marcyahn.com) in the same module as this transcript.]**

## **END OF GUIDANCE**

P: Marcy, that was wonderful. I got to a consistent, deep experience of expansion and contraction. That was lovely. Thank you so much. I loved it.

M: Good, I'm glad we got to talk again after your retreat. I'm happy for you because it sounds like you're in such a good place for navigating what you have to face right now, what you have to do.

P: I think I know what to do if I start fluctuating from that good place. I would say that the biggest thing I'm aware of is that I just don't have that PTSD-like feeling that I was having for so long after I was diagnosed with this pituitary problem. I do think things are settling down in terms of my coping. That's wonderful.

I see it's almost time. Going forward, I'm wondering about maybe meeting again in a month or so.

M: Sure, sometime near the end of May?

P: Yeah. Maybe doing another hour. I love the extended time, if you have it.

M: Okay. Great. Yeah. It's nice to practice together, right?

P: Yes. Absolutely.

M: And you really get to appreciate, I hope, how having so much experience that you have enables you to drop into something like that, and it makes sense, and you can do it, and you can get something from it. This kind of practice that we do, somebody might get in a hypnotic state if they listen to it, but they might not be able to really do it. It takes a lot of skill development to be able to benefit so much. It's such a nice time to just appreciate the practice we have, too. It's really wonderful that we can just put down those things anytime we want if we just remember that we can.

P: And just the freedom of being able to understand that you can drop that intention to really reach for clarity, because you are aware of the difference in inner and outer visual experience,

and you can feel the flow and see it distinctly without efforting about it, and the same way with the other two sense gates.

And you're just such a skillful teacher, Marcy. I really appreciate it.

M: Thank you.

P: Your voice lends itself well to this work, too, I thank you so much.

M: Okay, I'll see you soon. Bye.

P: Bye.