

Seeing Deeply - Guided Insight Meditation Exercise

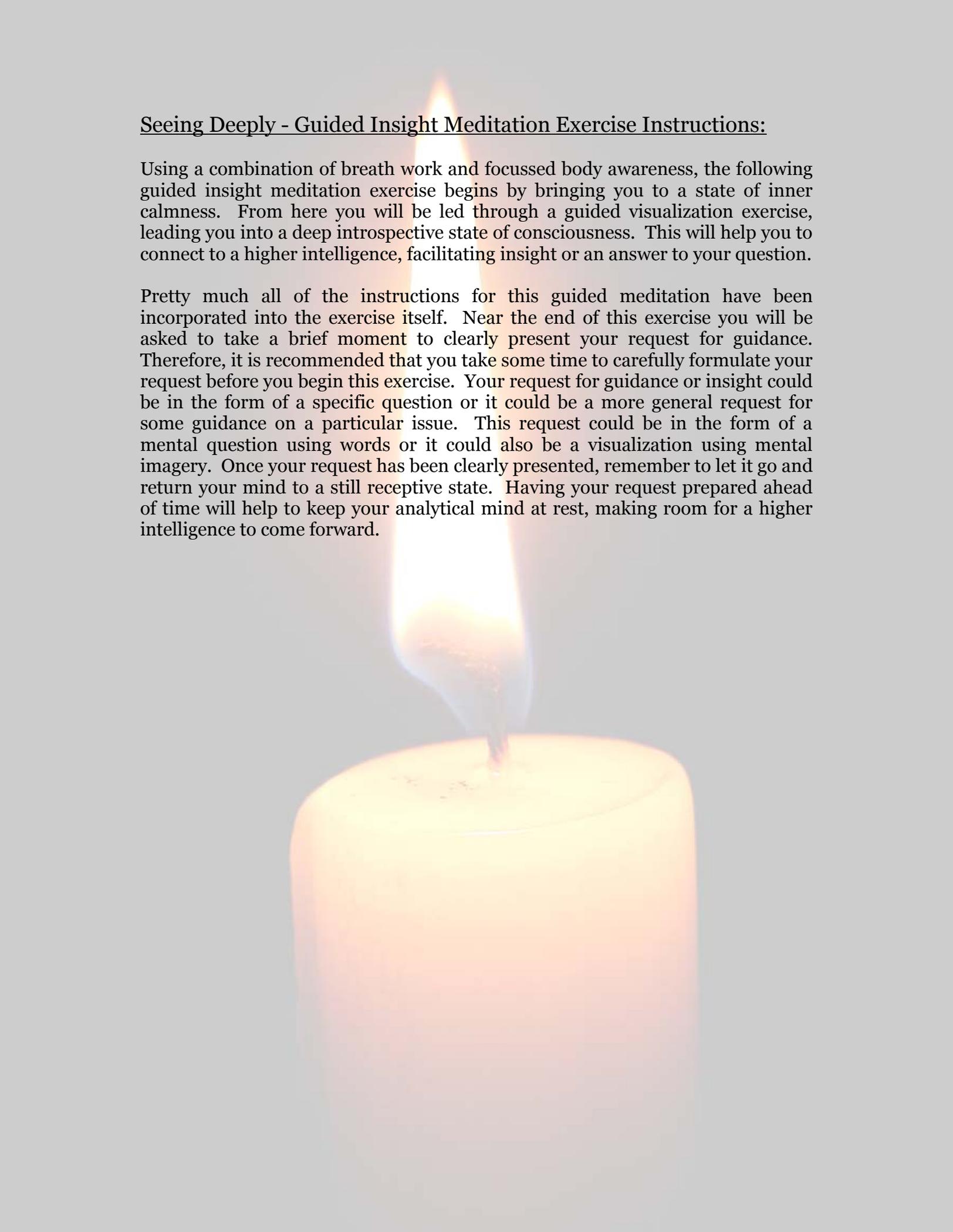
An Introduction to Insight Meditation:

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” - Albert Einstein

Insight Meditation, or Vipassanā in the Buddhist tradition, has been described as an introspective process through which we gain insight into the true nature of reality. Vipassanā has often been translated as ‘clear seeing’ or ‘seeing deeply’. Vipassanā Meditation is one of India’s most ancient forms of meditation and has been used as a tool for self-transformation and spiritual awakening. Essentially, insight meditation can be described as a form of spiritual guidance. Insight occurs when one is able to present a request for guidance on the backdrop of pure consciousness. In this respect, when one is able to surrender a question or a problem to a higher intelligence and then put your mind into a state of detached observation or introspection an answer or some form of inner guidance (Insight) will occur. When an answer or inner guidance does emerge, you will be left feeling confident, calm, and at peace, knowing without a doubt, that this insight has come from a place of infinite wisdom.

According to the Buddhist tradition, Vipassanā Meditation is often practiced as one of two poles (Stopping & Seeing). Following this tradition, Samatha Meditation (Stopping) is often used as a preparation for Vipassanā Meditation (Seeing). From this perspective, both Samatha and Vipassanā are necessary to gain insight into the true nature of reality, Samatha working to calm the mind and Vipassanā working to reveal how the mind was disturbed to begin with.

The main focus of Samatha Meditation is to help calm the mind and to strengthen concentration, thereby allowing the work of insight to occur. Calming the mind and strengthening concentration is typically achieved through meditation techniques focused on sustained attention (E.g. focusing on the body or breath). Insight occurs through contemplation and reflection. The art of contemplation or reflection should occur quite naturally, when one has reached a state of inner calmness. It is a form of centered awareness where you are not caught up in analyzing or thinking. When you are truly in this state, Awareness is Present in its bare form, watching your thoughts and noticing your feelings as they arise, without analysis or judgment. When you are able to step back and watch the thinker, as opposed to being completely absorbed by your thoughts, insight will occur.



Seeing Deeply - Guided Insight Meditation Exercise Instructions:

Using a combination of breath work and focussed body awareness, the following guided insight meditation exercise begins by bringing you to a state of inner calmness. From here you will be led through a guided visualization exercise, leading you into a deep introspective state of consciousness. This will help you to connect to a higher intelligence, facilitating insight or an answer to your question.

Pretty much all of the instructions for this guided meditation have been incorporated into the exercise itself. Near the end of this exercise you will be asked to take a brief moment to clearly present your request for guidance. Therefore, it is recommended that you take some time to carefully formulate your request before you begin this exercise. Your request for guidance or insight could be in the form of a specific question or it could be a more general request for some guidance on a particular issue. This request could be in the form of a mental question using words or it could also be a visualization using mental imagery. Once your request has been clearly presented, remember to let it go and return your mind to a still receptive state. Having your request prepared ahead of time will help to keep your analytical mind at rest, making room for a higher intelligence to come forward.

Seeing Deeply - Guided Insight Meditation Exercise Transcript:

Welcome to your Guided Insight Meditation Exercise.

Let's start by sitting in a relaxed manner with your back straight. Take a few moments to settle in, making any adjustments to help with your comfort. Now, close your eyes and let your body settle into a relaxed still posture. Become one with the stillness around you, motionless and at peace.

Now, take a deep slow breath, feeling the air as it passes in through your nostrils and down into your lungs. Exhale, feeling the air leaving your lungs and passing out through your nostrils. Take a few moments and continue to breathe in this way, making sure your focus remains on each inhalation and exhalation.

Now, take a few moments to notice what is going on inside your body at this moment. Do an overall scan and just notice how your body is feeling. Notice any areas where you might be feeling stress or tension. Just bring your awareness to these areas and gently let go. Relaxing deeper and deeper...

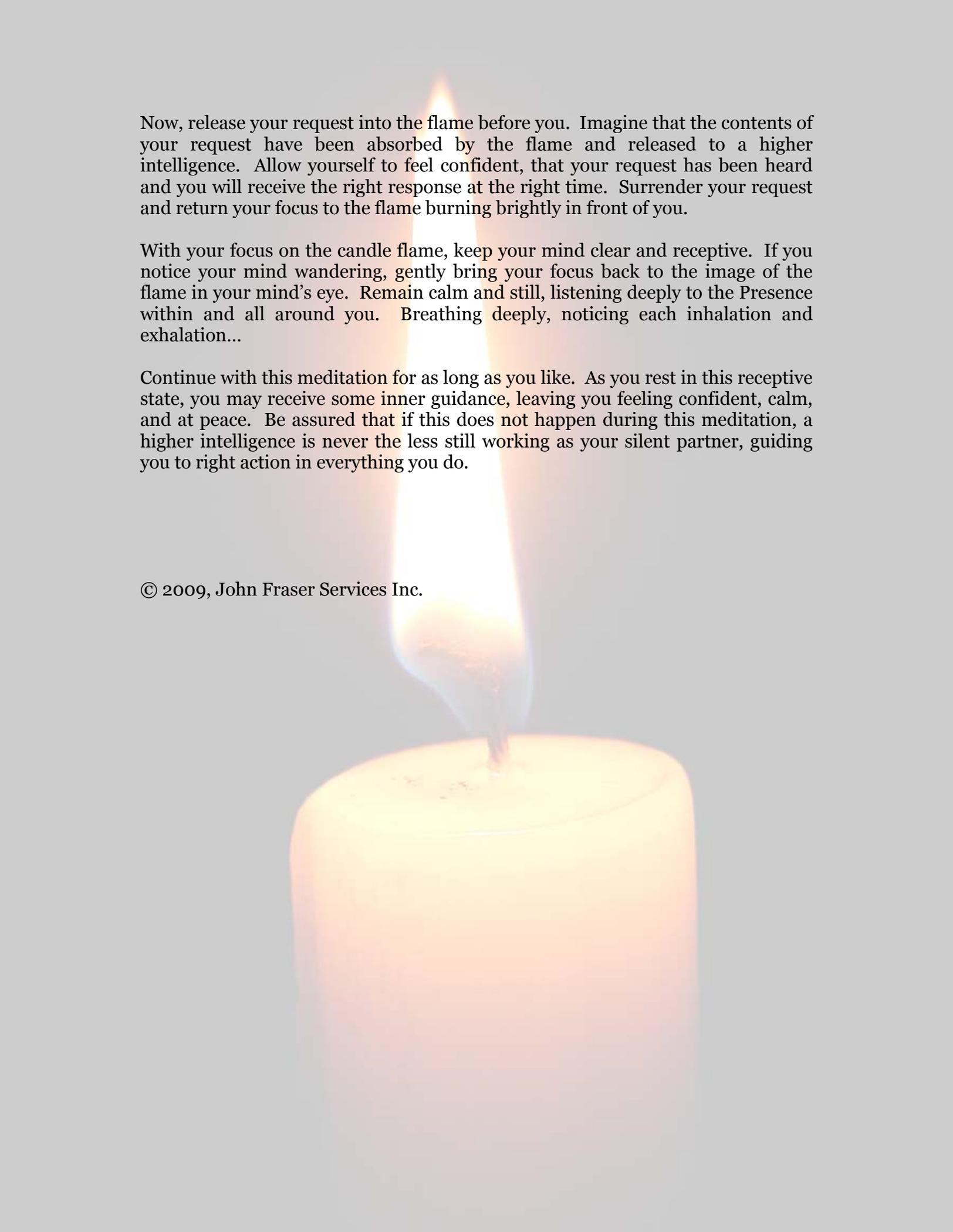
You now feel very calm and at peace, completely in tune with the present moment. As you continue to breathe, you notice a powerful Presence within you, gently guiding you to an even deeper inner calm. As you allow this Presence to permeate your entire body you begin to feel open and alert.

Now, with this Inner Presence as your guide, imagine a vast expanse of sandy desert stretching out all around you. A gentle warm breeze blows across your face and you notice the sand lightly drifting across the desert floor. The warm sand washes over your feet, connecting you to the earth, helping you to feel grounded and centered.

This comforting breeze now gently begins to wash away the sand, revealing a large white marble stone lying beneath you. This perfectly flat and smooth stone forms a large square around you. As the last remaining grains of sand are brushed away from this smooth surface, the breeze dies down and the air is now completely still and calm.

A strong Presence surrounds you and wells up from within. Sitting in front of you, shimmering like a mirage, a white marble altar begins to appear. As this alter slowly begins to take form, you notice a candle resting on the top, burning brightly. As you gaze at this candle you sense an infinite wisdom looking back at you.

With your focus set intently on the candle flame in front of you, take a brief moment to clearly present your request for guidance, gently letting the words or images pass across the screen of your consciousness.



Now, release your request into the flame before you. Imagine that the contents of your request have been absorbed by the flame and released to a higher intelligence. Allow yourself to feel confident, that your request has been heard and you will receive the right response at the right time. Surrender your request and return your focus to the flame burning brightly in front of you.

With your focus on the candle flame, keep your mind clear and receptive. If you notice your mind wandering, gently bring your focus back to the image of the flame in your mind's eye. Remain calm and still, listening deeply to the Presence within and all around you. Breathing deeply, noticing each inhalation and exhalation...

Continue with this meditation for as long as you like. As you rest in this receptive state, you may receive some inner guidance, leaving you feeling confident, calm, and at peace. Be assured that if this does not happen during this meditation, a higher intelligence is never the less still working as your silent partner, guiding you to right action in everything you do.

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