

LOVING, KNOWING, AND GROWING

Growing with Rick Hanson: Part 3 Meditation

So now what I'd like to focus on is a practice of calm strength. And in this practice, I'll take you through the full HEAL framework, including the optional step of linking. When we get to linking, as I'll remind you, if you get hijacked by anything that's problematic for you, just drop it and rest only in what's beneficial for you here. And then if you want, you can come back to that material a little later.

So calm strength, I think is a key resource for safety. Like many other resources, we can draw upon it to meet our needs for satisfaction, for example, to help ourselves keep going in the face of disappointment and difficulty, or tap into calm strength as a resource if we need to assert ourselves with other people. So it's a wonderful resource that you can use in a variety of ways. So let's begin.

So if you can, in this moment, tapping into a sense of relaxation and calm in your own body, taking some long exhalations, maybe deliberately having a sense of peacefulness coming in, or tranquility.

As we grow traits inside, such as calm, and relaxation, and tranquility, it becomes easier to access them as states and to evoke or call up them as experiences in a wonderful positive cycle.

We grow traits from states, but as we grow traits, they foster states of that inner resource and then we can internalize that fostered state to reinforce a trait in a wonderful upward spiral. So you can be with a growing sense of calm and even bring in a sense of strength. Feeling a certain vitality in your body.

Maybe bringing to mind a time that you felt both calm and strong, even if there was some intensity mixed in, or simply a time you felt strong. Perhaps outdoors, exercising, standing up for another person, maybe sticking up for yourself. Not aggressive posturing, genuine strength.

And once you're having an experience of calm strength, there and could be different flavors of this experience, that's fine, if your mind wanders for a few moments and just bring it on back, that's fine, once you start to have a real sense of calm strength now, let's move into installing it by enriching and absorbing it.

So I'll offer all eight of the prompts, briefly, for enriching and absorbing, and it's OK if some of them are more meaningful to you. So first, duration, stay with the experience of calm strength.

And see if you can increase its intensity. Helping yourself feel even calmer, more tranquil. Helping yourself feel even more capable, even stronger. Even more able to endure. Feeling this in your body. And maybe shifting your body to be more in the posture of calm strength. Exploring different aspects of this experience. That might be fresh or novel to you. Or approaching the experience of calm strength with a kind of "don't know" mind.

What's this like?

And you can be aware of what's personally relevant for you in feeling calm and strong.

And now absorbing. Intend to receive this experience into yourself. You can simply have a sense of intending to give yourself over to calm strength, so that it kind of inhabits you increasingly from the bottom up. You can intend that.

You can give yourself permission to be in relationships more. Family. Work. Resting in calm strength.

You can sense that the feeling of calm strength is spreading in your body like water coming into a sponge. Maybe like warmth spreading in you.

Being aware of your back. Sense of calm strength coming into your back. And last, you can be aware of what feels good about calm strength.

What maybe is reassuring about it, comforting, to know you are strong.

It feels pleasant about being calm and peaceful.

And then as we move from enriching and absorbing into optionally linking, if you want, while staying mainly in touch with feeling strong and calm, if you want, you can bring to mind something, and I suggest not too extreme, something mild to moderate, that you're worried about, or anxious about.

And keep the sense of calm strength very much in the foreground of awareness, while off to the side small, in the distance is that, I'll call it, anxiety, that worry or fear. You can begin with simply

the idea of whatever it is you're worried about. So it's like you're feeling mainly calm and strong and of to the side of awareness is the idea of that threat, that thing you're worried about.

See what it's like to simply be aware of two things at the same time. More deeply, you can have more of a sense of the feeling of the anxiety, a sense of the worry, but still, calm strength is mainly what you're aware of.

And then if you want, you can have a feeling of calm strength sort of rippling out to, or contacting the worry. Perhaps bringing reassuring perspectives to it. Perhaps a sense of soothing and easing, you know, the feeling of "We're going to deal with this. Maybe we've got work to do, but we're going to do what we can."

You might have a sense of in the worry is something young, something vulnerable, that this feeling of calm strength, and even the wisdom in it, can touch and gradually sink into. Sometimes people imagine a wise and nurturing part of themselves being comforting, murmuring words of wisdom and comfort to younger parts of themselves.

As a kind of bonus, if it's real for you, you might have a sense of receiving calm strength into the places or layers in you that have been worried. And if you don't have a sense of that, that's okay. But some of these people really do get a sense of this. All right.

And then as we finish up here, let go of any worries. This is how to complete the link step. Let go of anything negative and rest just in a simple sense of calm strength.

Good. You did it. It was good.

Come on back. As with other things, it's OK to continue feeling rested and calm strength, even as we're more active here moving out of that guided practice.