

SOUND WALK: WALKING SOFTLY

with Layla Feghali



RUNNING ORDER

0:00	Introduction & Preparations
3:24	Stage 1: Softening Becoming Present
25:09	Stage 2: Experiencing Walking Softly Outside
39:36	Stage 3: Deepening Co-creating From Home

SCRIPT

Introduction & Preparations

Timestamp: 00:00 (section length 3 minutes 24 seconds)

My name is Layla Feghali, I will be your guide through this experience called '*Walking Softly*'. Through this time together, you will be invited to enter your softest body, your poetic and non-linear mind, the gentle and sensual ways that you relate to and connect to the world around you. You might consider doing this from your neighbourhood, the places you walk everyday or going to a park nearby or a natural forest or anywhere that you feel relatively safe and comfortable disarming yourself and entering a soft kind of space.

If you are unable to physically leave your home for any reason, you may also follow this experience through imagining the things that will be guiding you through your mind's eye. You can do that through imagining yourself in a natural habitat that's familiar to you, a family garden, a place that you've lived, a neighbourhood that you remember, any kind of environment that you feel close enough to that you can visualise in your mind's eye or just imagining a place that exists only in your own spirit and mind and visualising based on whatever comes up when you close your eyes.

Through this experience I will invite you to take time to feel into the spaces you are a part of as well as your own internal landscapes. Please feel free to pause the recording to take time and go at your own pace at any part and resume when you feel ready.

Please also note that this experience will occur in 3 different stages:

the softening, the experiencing, the deepening.

For the first stage, please note that you will start at home or somewhere quiet and comfortable before actually taking your walk.

For stage 2, we will be walking softly outside. At that point, you may consider leaving one headphone in your ear, and the other out of your ear, allow yourself to immerse in the natural sounds of the environment you are in to support the connections we will be cultivating.

The third stage can be completed when you return home or in hours, days, or even weeks after our walk together.

Let's get started...

STAGE 1 Softening | Becoming Present

Timestamp: 03:24 (section length 21 minutes 45 seconds)

How soft can we become?

Our first steps begin before we leave the home. We will take some time to thaw out together. To welcome our supplest selves, our sensing bodies.

Get ready, in whatever ways that you need to do to take your walk. Put on your shoes, the clothes that feel comfortable to you. Get your water bottle, a hat or sweater, all the logistical practical things you need to be ready to walk out the door. You may also consider bringing a camera, and some small kind of offering made of natural materials such as a small handful of your favorite tea or some flowers from your garden. We will have these things ready nearby so we don't have to think about them beyond this moment.

Once you're ready, find a comfortable place, on your front porch, or in your home, or perhaps at the beginning of the trail, if you've decided to leave your neighborhood to have this experience. Take a moment to sit down or lie down or be in whatever position feels good to you. And just soften your eyes or close them. Once you feel settled and comfortable in whatever position you've chosen, just take a few moments to feel the natural rhythm of your breathing. The tempo of your own rising and falling chest. Just notice it, allow it. Our breath is our first connection to the plantcestors. Our first point of relationship, alive in every moment, every second. We breathe in the oxygen that they create for us. Feeling into this connection, allowing it to support you, soften you. How does your breath feel different when being conscious of this connection? Plantcestors. Plants are our ancestors, our predecessors, the medicine, food, and breath of our lineages since the beginning of our time on this earth. Epitomized in these simple automatic breaths. Allow yourself a moment to take this in. Feeling the intimacy, the memory inside this relationship, as you observe the natural dance of your breath and all its connections.

Allow your breath to carry you deeper into the sensations of your body. Scanning your tissue and muscles, your blood, your bones, your feelings from the top of your head to the tip of your feet. Slowly, taking time to notice, to arrive. No need to alter or change anything - simply witness yourself. Become present to what is.

Notice the state of your thoughts, your feelings. What physical sensations are present right now? What areas of warmth or coolness? How about the sounds and the smells? Allow your senses to take up more space for this time. Feeling them fully. Notice areas of pain or constriction, allowing your breath to sweep through them. Notice areas of spaciousness, registering the details of how it feels. Notice areas of tension, inviting yourself to soften and release them, let gravity hold them for you.

Leaning into gravity for a moment, into the places where your body is making direct contact with the earth or the solid surface underneath you, allow yourself to let go into these places. Letting your body become heavy, soft. Your bones to become loose. Your pelvis, your spine, your legs and feet. Breathe, with all this plantcestral oxygen, through your muscle and cells into these places of contact with the earth underneath you. What does it feel like to let go into these solid places? To allow yourself to be held, sink in closer to this relationship with the physical dense earth. Imagine yourself loosening, softening even more. Settling deeper and deeper through the layers of your own muscle and tissue and that of the soil, rock, and moisture of the quiet dark earth somewhere beneath you.

Feel into this relationship between your body and the earth. Your body AS the earth, always touching, always connected. What does this feel like inside of you? What parts of your being become free-er, softer? What parts of your being resist? Take inventory of everything you experience, not needing to alter - just observe, taking a moment to scan your body again. Becoming available to the sensations, smells, sounds, feelings inside and around you that are affecting your experience of this exact moment

Are there parts of your body that would like to move? Take a moment to move even deeper inside yourself, feeling into the currents of blood and water inside your own body. What do they sound like? Feel like? Are you able to sense into their ebbs and flows, the directions of their movement? What memories, lineages past and future flow down the rivers of your own body? Feel the ways each of your cells and organs are connected through these internal waterways. The life-giving power of your own blood and waters.

Allow yourself to become supple like water. Are there parts of your body that desire to sway or move? Allow yourself to do so freely. Let your limbs heed the natural pulses, rhythms of the currents inside you. Feeling every sensation, allowing every curve, for as long as you desire.

Notice the warmth generated as your blood moves in these ways, allowing yourself to come to a stillness. Re-center in the ocean of your heart - where all these rivers meet inside you. Feeling its rhythm, absorbing its heat and light. The sunshine of your inner constellation, beaming, touching everything. Returning to the pace of your breath with the plantcestors once again. Its rise and fall perhaps now in a new rhythm. Sense all the crevices of your body, your feelings, noticing once again how they have shifted or stayed the same.

Allow all this energy to fill the space inside of you as you hold your own heart. Heeding its senses, allow all this feeling to settle into your feet. Reminding them to be soft, allowing them to release into the ground beneath you as gravity does its work.

And from this place, open your eyes, allowing them to remain soft, gently gazing at the place where you are. Let your body become a compass as you pick up your things and walk out the door in preparation for the next stage.

STAGE 2 Experiencing | Walking Softly Outside

Timestamp: 25:09 (section length 14 minutes 27 seconds)

I invite you to be a bit slower than usual. Pausing whenever you need to. Reminding yourself to stay soft. Keeping your eyes in a gazing place, a receptive gentle state that not only sees but senses. Feeling as you go.

Perhaps your feet will determine a direction that's familiar to you, a habit that your body knows because it's one that you follow over and over again. Or perhaps your body will desire to go a different way. Heed its guidance with each step.

As you take your first few steps outside, pause for a moment to take in this new landscape. With your gazing eyes, and your feeling body, take a wide glance at where you are. Become part of the weather. Let it fill you, merge with you, noticing the sensations of how it feels, the texture, the way it moves in your body, the way it compels you. Look at the color of it, the color of the atmosphere around you taking in and noticing all the shades of all the colors around you. Perhaps there are colors of buildings, perhaps signs, perhaps concrete and asphalt. Perhaps

green in many different hues. With your soft gazing eyes, look into the horizon of where you are. What colors do you see with soft eyes? What shapes? How do your soft eyes allow you to perceive in a different way than usual? Do you notice things you had not seen before? Observe it all with your body, all your senses. Slowly, drawing your vision and senses in closer to the colors and shapes immediately surrounding you. Walk and notice. Walk and feel.

Allow your feet to move in the direction that compels you. Towards any shapes, colors that call you. Smells and sensations. Just being with the place as you move through it.

Are there any plants nearby? Allow yourself to move towards any green areas that are beckoning you. Softly, with all your senses experiencing your encounter. In your mind, you may even speak to the spirit of the place, introducing yourself, asking for a plantcestor who would like to connect with you. Follow your feelings, listening, heeding with your body towards a plant that draws your attention. A potted plant, a plant in a sidewalk crack, a tree in the middle of the forest - any plant that calls you.

Take a moment to be near this plant. Stopping a few steps away from it just to watch it first. Noticing its colors, shape. Observe the way that it moves in the atmosphere. Notice the terrain it's in. Just admiring it. Notice how you feel in its presence. Approach it slowly, with reverence. In your heart or out loud, introduce yourself to the plant, sharing about your intention to connect with it, and asking for permission to be with it for a while. If you brought tea or water with you, or have a song in your mind or blessing, you can offer it to the plant as a gift. A symbol of reciprocity, friendship. A gesture of connection. Follow the feelings inside your body. If you feel drawn closer to the plantcestor, accept the invitation to deepen at a closer distance. What do you notice as you come closer? Observe the plant's state of well being. It's fruit, flowers, leaves. It's seeds or branches. Do you notice any animals or insects near it? Does the plant appear to enjoy sunshine, or hide in the shade of others close to it? Does it grow low to the ground? Creep and crawl into the spaces around it, reaching for connection to what cohabitates? Or does it shoot straight up towards the sky, guzzling warmth and light? Observe the personality of the plantcestor - what it's appearance evokes in you. Reflects. Do the shapes of its flowers or leaves remind you of anything? If you are confident that the plant is not poisonous, gently touch its leaves. Put your face close to it and smell it. Take a moment to notice how your body feels, your spirit responds as you connect to this plantcestor. What is the state of your emotions, your thoughts?

Allow yourself to soften yet more. Simply witnessing, allowing all these feelings to transpire. Becoming even more sensual, more present to being with this plantcestor. Listening to your body, heeding your inspiration. How does it feel to be in this place where the plant lives and

grows every day? What does it feel like to be part of its place for a moment? Just take a moment to connect in the way that feels good to you. Whatever way feels right, possible, for the context you and your plant are in.

When you feel complete, thank the plantcestor for your time together, and take a picture to revisit this connection from home for our 3rd stage of work. Photograph the leaves, the flowers or fruit if there are any. Photograph up close and from afar.

Remaining soft, let your body once again guide you in the next direction. If you feel inspired to connect to other plants close by in this similar way, do so. If you feel ready to return home, allow yourself to be supple, still with your gazing eyes, present to your body, to this place and all its web of relationships, to all your senses until you have returned home.

STAGE 3 Deepening | Co-creating From Home

Timestamp: 39:36 (section length 8 minutes 53 seconds)

Perhaps your own home feels different in this soft kind of way. Looks different. Allow yourself to take off your sweater or your shoes when you arrive home and do whatever you need to nourish your body and arrive. When you feel settled, if you'd like to continue working with your plantcestor, now or at any time later in the evening, or that following day or week or even year, you may re-enter this soft space and allow yourself to engage in curious play. Look at the photos you took. Remember the feelings this plantcestor evoked in you. Choose a creative expression to interact with these senses and the spirit of this plantcestor once again.

Some ideas...

If you are inspired to move, you can dance and sway in a way that mimics this plantcestor, or in any way that your body is inspired to. What feelings arise? What shapes and stories? Allow your body to be a mirror for this connection, an avenue of communication and learning in relationship with this plant.

If you are called to draw or paint or visualize, you can draw this plantcestor or portray any colors, shapes and images that your time with it has inspired. What senses surface? What healing occurs?

If you would like to write, you can tell a story about your time together or write a poem for this plantcestor or whatever feels present with you since being in the aura of this plant. What meaning is unveiled? What inspiration comes through? What kinship is kindled?

You can stitch, or knit, or sing, or any number of ways to express and relate. To listen and respond.

Allow yourself to stay in the soft part of yourself as you engage these ways. Allowing your body to be the guide, the vessel through which you connect, create, communicate. Allowing your senses to be a revelation, a mirror into this plantcestral world, and their resonance inside your own being. Expanding into these softer, deeper parts of yourself, these more visceral primordial parts of yourself. Letting them be an authority for these moments of time - the oracles of knowledge and truth. Let these poetic parts of yourself take up space and teach you, show you whatever it is that the plantcestor may be sharing with you. What your time together has offered, unveiled. The nature of your own unique relationship.

Reading symbols and metaphors, learning through sensuality and emotion and relationship - it's this primordial ancient language, this deeper kind of knowledge, this feeling place that has intimate answers. A compass, a story, a truth you can return to for new layers, deeper layers, over and over again. It is a place that heals and re-members.

After being present with this plantcestor in these more embodied, intuitive ways, you may like to start learning about the plantcestor in more linear ways by looking it up in a book or on the internet to identify its name and categorization. Find out, are they native to the habitat that you found them in? If not, where do they originally come from? What is their relationship to the ecosystem you are both currently a part of? Does this plantcestor have a history of being consumed or used as medicine? What are the stories about them from their original places? Do they live harmoniously where they are? What are the colloquial names for this plant? How about the scientific ones? What do these names mean? You can look into folk tales, cultural uses, and ethnobotanical insights on the plantcestor. You can look into information about its preferred habitat, its growing patterns and needs, its role in the ecology it is a part of, how it reproduces, and any number of things.

You can look into the flower essence and the energetic uses of the plant if there is information on it. It's spiritual and ritual uses.

You can plant one in your own garden, learning from its patterns of growth. Learning about its needs and offering towards its life. Listening through each new cycle in this soft way we have cultivated today.

Are there things you learn in any of these linear and non-linear ways that reflect, resonate with your own experience of connection? With the time you shared personally with this plantcestor? Notice patterns, symbols, synchronicities. Allow all these different layers of relationship to inform you about the energy and gifts of this plantcestor, its personal relationship and message for you. Its reflection. You may choose to continue forward to unveil new layers, to deepen your intimacy and connection with this plantcestor anytime, or with any other plant or element or relationship in your life.

Walking softly is a compass towards Creation. Towards relationship and re-membrance. A call and response. A softening towards life inside and around us.

May you find clarity and guidance in walking softly, often. Re-membering the language of the senses and the healing of the earth through your own sensuality and embodiment. Ever blessed through the stewardship of gentleness, intimacy, and listening with your whole body. A mirror, a reverence for life. An eternal way through a transforming world.

End Timestamp: 48:29

Credits:

This podcast has been written and narrated by Layla Feghali, with production and editing by Halina Rifai