



JACOB MANSFIELD

THE ART OF BEING HERE



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I never set out to teach breathwork, movement or mindfulness. For a long time, I was just trying to find my own way, searching for a sense of peace, a feeling of belonging, something real in a world that often felt too loud and too fast. It wasn't until I slowed down, spent more time in nature and learned to listen; to my breath, my body and the quiet moments, that things began to change.

Now, I share what I've learned, not as someone who has it all figured out, but as someone who understands what it's like to feel lost. My work is about simplicity, presence and remembering what's already within us. The Art of Being Here isn't about fixing yourself or striving to be something more. It's about learning how to come home to yourself, just as you are.

*In a forest so wide, where the tall trees grow  
Lived a bear and a bird, with hearts that glowed  
Bear was strong, paws firm on the ground  
While Bird was light, as he flew all around...*

Taken from "The Bear & The Bird" by Jacob Mansfield

CHAPTER ONE  
FEELING LOST IN THE WORLD



Have you ever looked around and thought, I don't belong here? Not in a dramatic, movie-moment kind of way, but in a quiet, lingering way, like you're watching life happen from the outside, wondering if everyone else got a handbook that you somehow missed.

People seem to know how to play the game. They chase the things they're supposed to chase, say the things they're supposed to say, and look content doing it. Meanwhile, you feel like an outsider, trying to figure out why none of it makes sense.



I've felt that way for most of my life. For a long time, I thought the problem was me. That I just needed to toughen up, care less, stop looking for meaning where there wasn't any. But no matter how much I tried to go along with things the way other people seemed to, something in me resisted. I wasn't built to move through life on autopilot. I needed depth. Meaning. Realness.

Maybe you do too. Maybe you've spent years trying to fit into a world that feels too loud, too fast, or too disconnected. Maybe you've been called too much—too sensitive, too intense, too quiet, too distant. Or maybe you've just never quite found your place, like something's always been missing but you can't put your finger on what.

But here's the truth: nothing is wrong with you.

If the world feels overwhelming, it's not because you're broken—it's because you feel deeply. If you struggle with shallow conversations and surface-level living, it's not because you're failing at life—it's because you crave something real. And that craving? That's your guide.

For me, I always found that clarity in nature. Whenever life felt too heavy, I'd step outside, walk among the trees, listen to the wind, watch the sky shift. There's something about being in nature that strips everything back. The world slows. The noise fades. And suddenly, the things that felt impossible start to make sense again.



*That's because nature remembers what we forget. It doesn't try to be anything other than what it is. The trees don't rush. The river doesn't fight its current. They just are, existing fully in their place, without question.*

I held onto this idea for a long time without realising why. It first came to me as a story - a simple tale about a bear and a bird, two beings who longed to be more like each other. Bear wanted to fly, to be weightless and free like Bird. Bird wanted to be strong and steady like Bear. They spent their time wishing for what they didn't have, never realising that their own gifts were just as special as the ones they admired in each other. It wasn't until much later that I realised this story wasn't just for children. It was for all of us.

We live in a world that constantly tells us to be something else... to be more, to be less, to be better in some way. But real peace comes when we stop chasing what we think we should be, and start embracing what we are.

And that's what this book is about. It's not about throwing everything away and escaping to the mountains (though I won't judge you if that's your plan). It's about learning how to find peace where you are. How to navigate the noise of life without being consumed by it. How to stop being trapped in stress and overthinking, and start living from a place of clarity and calm.

And it's simpler than you think.





## P A U S E & B R E A T H E

Right now, take a deep breath in through your nose.  
Hold it for a second. And then let it go, slowly.

Do it again.

Breathe in... acknowledging exactly where you are.

Breathe out... letting go of the pressure to have it all  
figured out.

You are here. And that is enough.

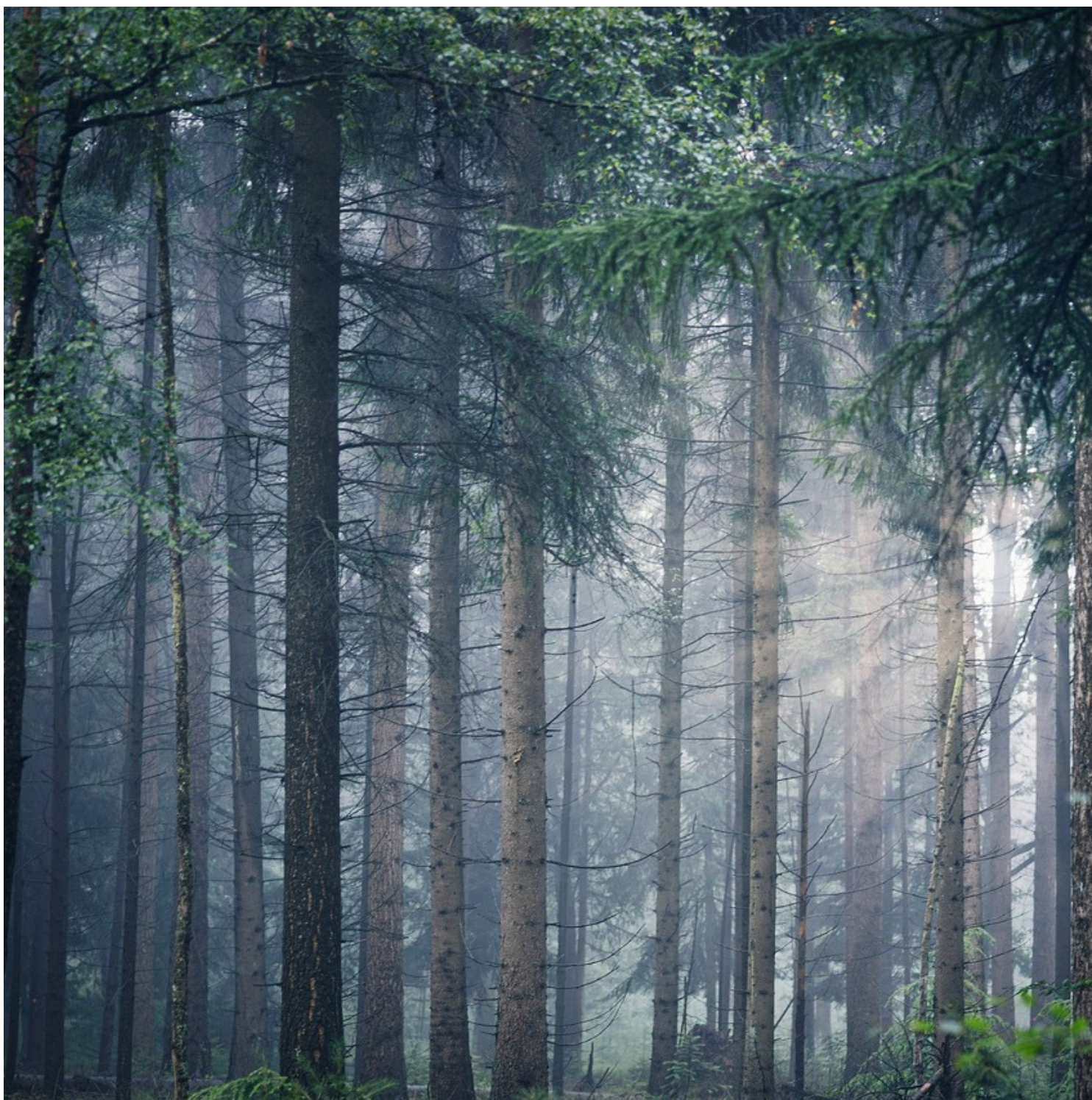


*Bear looked up at the stars so bright  
Longing to join Bird in his elegant flight  
"If only I could float as free as the air  
And soar in the sky without a care"*

*And Bird would watch Bear, solid and wise  
Wishing he had Bear's strength and size  
"If only I could stand so sturdy and tall  
And feel the earth's pull, never to fall"*

CHAPTER TWO

WHY THE WORLD FEELS  
TOO MUCH



Ever wonder why life feels like an unrelenting game of survival, even when you're just trying to reply to an email or have a conversation with your boss? Why the smallest stress can make your body react like you're being chased by a lion?

Well, here's the thing... your nervous system didn't evolve for this world.



It was built for a very different time. A time when the dangers we faced were real, immediate, and often involved teeth. When we first arrived on this planet, we weren't sitting in traffic or scrolling through endless bad news—we were in caves, in jungles, around fires, constantly assessing whether the rustle in the bushes meant dinner or we were dinner. And our bodies, being the miraculous survival machines they are, adapted accordingly.

The problem? That same survival system is still running the show, even though the threats we face now look very different.

## THE BODY'S ALARM SYSTEM

Your nervous system is like an overprotective security guard that hasn't been told the war is over. Its entire job is to scan for danger, sound the alarm, and keep you safe. It doesn't know the difference between a life-threatening event and your phone buzzing with an unexpected message from your boss.

To your body, stress is stress. Whether it's a tiger outside your cave or an unread email titled *Can we talk?*, your nervous system reacts the same way.

You might feel your muscles tense, your breath get shallow, or your heart speed up. Maybe you go straight into fight mode; snapping at someone or feeling a wave of frustration. Or maybe you freeze, zoning out, unable to respond at all.

And because most of us aren't fighting off wild animals anymore, but instead dealing with a thousand small pressures every day, our nervous system gets stuck in stress mode. The danger never fully passes, so our bodies never fully relax.





## THE POWER OF NATURE TO RESET

If the modern world is constantly pulling us into stress mode, then where do we go to remember how to breathe?

Nature.

Think about the last time you stood in a quiet forest, by the ocean, or on a hilltop overlooking the land. The way everything slows down. The way your body softens without you even trying. It's not a coincidence, it's because nature moves at the pace we were designed for.

*The wind doesn't rush. The rivers don't second-guess their direction. The trees don't resist the seasons. When you immerse yourself in nature, you're stepping back into a rhythm your body remembers. A rhythm where you are not constantly on edge, but simply here.*

There's a reason Bear and Bird lived in the forest. Nature has always been the place where we return to ourselves.





## B R E A K I N G T H E C Y C L E

Here's the good news: you don't have to live in this constant state of alert. You can retrain your nervous system. But first, you have to recognise when it's running the show.

That tightness in your chest before opening an email? That's your body preparing for battle.

That moment of zoning out mid-conversation? That's your system shutting down to protect you.

That urge to check your phone for no reason? That's your nervous system trying to escape.

*The key is learning how to switch gears. And it starts with something so simple, it's almost ridiculous: your breath.*

## P A U S E & B R E A T H E

Let's try something different this time. Instead of just slowing the breath, we'll use ocean breath: a grounding technique that mirrors the sound of the waves, steady and rhythmic, like the tide.

Breathe in deeply through your nose, slightly constricting the back of your throat. As you exhale through your nose, create a soft whooshing sound—like the distant rush of the ocean.

Do it again. Long, steady inhale. Slow, controlled exhale.

Feel the way it anchors you. Imagine each breath is pulling you back into the present, like waves smoothing out the sand.

*Stress is real, but it doesn't have to own you. And this? This is just the start.*



## CHAPTER THREE

# NOTICING THE PATTERNS



*They each wished for what the other had,  
And sometimes that made them feel quite sad.  
They both felt a pull so quiet and deep,  
That whispered to them, even in their sleep.*

How many of us are living in that whisper? That quiet belief that we are somehow lacking?

We move through life carrying patterns we don't even realise we have; repeating thoughts, reactions, and emotions that have been with us for so long, they feel like truth. But before we can change anything, we have to start noticing.



Your body is constantly sending you signals, little messages about what it needs. But if you've spent years running on autopilot, it can be hard to hear them. The good news is, awareness doesn't have to be complicated. It starts with something as simple as pausing, breathing, and asking yourself: What's happening in my body right now? What thoughts are looping in my mind? Am I reacting, or am I responding? This is where we start taking back control; not by forcing ourselves to think positive or push through stress, but by actually tuning in and seeing what's happening beneath the surface.





## THE STORY WE TELL OURSELVES

Every moment of stress, frustration, or overwhelm comes with a story attached. Maybe it's the voice in your head telling you you're not good enough. Maybe it's the fear of rejection, or the pressure to always be in control.

For years, I let my own patterns run my life. I avoided conflict because I was afraid of confrontation. I let people take advantage of my kindness because I didn't know how to say no. I stayed small because I was convinced my voice didn't matter. And until I noticed those patterns, I couldn't change them.

The truth is, most of the things we struggle with aren't happening in the present; they're habits built from the past. But the moment you start recognising them, you can start choosing something different. And one of the best ways to break a pattern? Step outside.



## NATURE AS A MIRROR

Nature has no resistance to what is. It doesn't get stuck in cycles of doubt or overthinking. It moves in harmony with what's happening now. A tree doesn't hold onto autumn, wishing its leaves hadn't fallen. It doesn't hesitate when spring arrives, second-guessing whether it should bloom. It follows the rhythm of the world around it, trusting the timing of things.

*When we step into nature, we step into that rhythm too. We breathe differently. We slow down. And in that stillness, we start to see ourselves more clearly.*

If you want to notice your patterns, go outside. If you want to hear what your body is telling you, sit in the quiet of the trees. If you want to remember who you are, watch the river move; always flowing, never clinging to the past.



## P A U S E   &   B R E A T H E

Take a moment now. Close your eyes if you can. Breathe in slowly, feeling your chest expand. Hold for a second. Exhale even slower, letting your shoulders drop.

Now, let's try something new. This is Bumble Bee Breath, a simple way to quiet your thoughts and bring balance to your energy.

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in. As you breathe out, gently hum, letting the sound vibrate in your throat.

Do this a few times, feeling the sensation in your chest and head. The vibration calms the nervous system and clears mental fog.

If your thoughts feel too loud, this is a way to soften them.

One night Bear climbed on to a ledge,  
High on a hill at the forest's edge  
"I'll leap and I'll fly, just like my friend!"  
But Bird swooped in to bring his plan to an end

"Dear Bear," said Bird, "You belong to the land  
Your strength is a gift, so steady you stand  
If you were like me, always high in the sky  
You'd miss the ground, where your true roots lie"



CHAPTER FOUR  
CHANGING THE STORY



The way we experience life isn't just shaped by what happens to us; it's shaped by the story we tell ourselves about it.

Two people can go through the exact same situation, but their experience of it can be completely different depending on what's happening in their mind. One sees rejection, the other sees an opportunity to grow. One feels like a failure, the other sees a lesson. The difference isn't the situation itself, it's the story wrapped around it. And most of us? We don't even realise what story we're telling.

## T H E N A R R A T O R I N Y O U R H E A D

Think about the way you speak to yourself, especially when things go wrong. Do you tend to be understanding, or do you criticise yourself? Do you assume people have bad intentions, or do you give them the benefit of the doubt? Do you see obstacles as proof that you're not good enough, or as challenges to move through?

Your mind is always narrating your life, turning every experience into a story that shapes how you feel. If that story is harsh, negative, or full of fear, life will feel like a battle. If that story is kinder, more open, more accepting, life will feel lighter.

The good news? You get to change the narrative.

## R E W R I T I N G T H E S C R I P T

If you've been telling yourself the same negative stories for years, it's not easy to just flip a switch and suddenly think differently. But you don't have to force yourself to be positive, you just have to question the story.

The next time you catch yourself in a spiral of self-doubt or frustration, try asking:

Is this story true, or is it just a habit?

What's another way to look at this?

Would I speak to a friend the way I'm speaking to myself right now?



*Most of the time, the version of reality we believe isn't fact, it's a perspective. And perspectives can shift.*

And when it feels too difficult to change the story in your head...

Step outside.



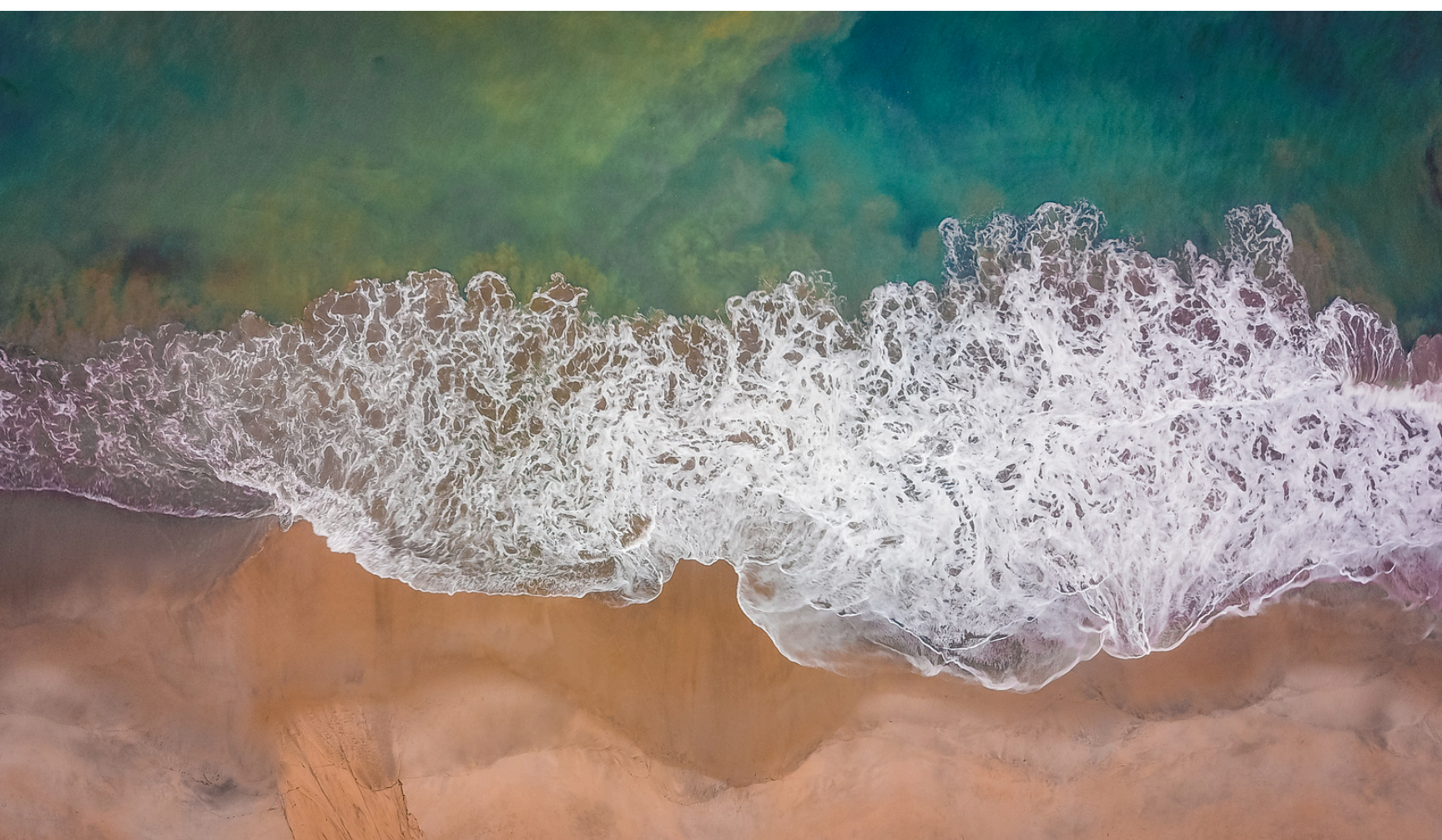


## LET NATURE TELL YOU A DIFFERENT STORY

When you stand beneath an ancient tree, it doesn't question its worth. It doesn't wonder if it's growing too slowly or if it should be doing more. It just grows; steady, rooted, trusting the process.

*When the tide rolls in, it doesn't fear being pulled back out. The ocean moves in cycles, knowing that everything returns in time.*

When the seasons change, nature doesn't resist. The leaves don't cling to the branches, terrified of letting go. The snow doesn't fight the arrival of spring. Everything moves as it's meant to, without force or struggle.





What if we lived like that? What if, instead of resisting every change, we trusted that we were exactly where we needed to be?

We spend so much time clinging to our thoughts, believing them without question, when the truth is, thoughts are just passing weather.

*You are not the storm;  
you are the sky it moves through.*





## P A U S E   &   B R E A T H E

Take a moment now. Close your eyes if you can. Breathe in deeply, filling your lungs. Hold for a moment. Now exhale slowly, releasing tension.

This time, let's try Sighing Breath—a simple way to let go of mental weight.

Take a deep breath in through your nose. As you breathe out, imagine you're standing outside on a cold morning, watching your breath form soft clouds in the air. Let it be long and audible, like a sigh of relief. Do it again. One more time.

Feel the way it softens something inside you. Let go of the weight of the story you've been carrying.

*Sometimes we get so caught up in what we think is missing that we forget to see what's already there.*



*So they sat together, under soft moonlight  
Watching the fireflies dance in the night  
And Bear felt his heart, so strong and true  
And the earth's steady rhythm shining through*

*Bird looked at Bear, his friend so dear  
And saw his own beauty, gentle and clear  
He didn't need size, he didn't need might  
For he had the gift of graceful flight*

CHAPTER FIVE  
LIVING THE PRACTICE



It's one thing to understand all of this in theory. It's another to actually live it.

You can recognise your patterns. You can question your thoughts. You can even tell yourself a new story. But unless you bring it into your body; unless you feel it, breathe it, move with it... it won't fully sink in.

The real work is in how you carry yourself through the world. How you respond to challenge, how you shift when stress creeps in, how you return to presence over and over again.



## WHERE ARE YOU LIVING?

Most of us spend our lives in our heads. We replay the past, predict the future, and exist in a constant loop of thinking, analysing and planning. But real peace isn't found in the mind; it's found in the body, in the present moment.

The next time you feel overwhelmed, instead of asking Why do I feel like this?, try asking Where am I?

Are you trapped in a memory, reliving something that has already passed?

Are you racing ahead, worrying about something that hasn't even happened yet?

Or are you here, in your body, fully experiencing what's happening right now?

*The more we practise being here, the more we realise that most of our suffering isn't happening in the present... it's happening in our minds.*

## NATURE AS A REMINDER

Have you ever watched the way birds settle into the sky? They don't fight the air, they let it hold them. They adjust, they move, they trust. Even in the strongest winds, they tilt their wings and let the current carry them.

Rivers don't panic when they meet an obstacle. They don't freeze in place, wondering how to get past. They find a way around. They shift and carve their own path, not by force, but by persistence.

We often feel like we have to fight our way through life; controlling every detail, resisting change, forcing things to happen. But what if we didn't? What if, instead of resisting stress, we softened into it? Instead of bracing for impact, we learned to move with what's in front of us?

*Nature doesn't resist itself. And when we stop fighting every shift, neither do we.*

## MOVING WITH LIFE

Our emotions aren't meant to stay stuck inside us. Just like the wind moves through the trees, just like the river keeps flowing, our feelings need to move.

If you're feeling anxious, let your body shake, literally. Animals do this instinctively after experiencing stress, releasing the tension so it doesn't stay trapped inside them.



If you feel heavy, go for a walk, stretch, run or stand barefoot on the earth. Move in whatever way feels natural.

If you feel disconnected, use your senses. Touch the bark of a tree. Run your fingers through water. Feel the sun on your face. Presence is something we experience, not something we think about.

*The more you let life move through you,  
the less it will weigh you down.*





## P A U S E & B R E A T H E

Take a deep breath in.

As you exhale, roll your shoulders back. Shake out your arms, your hands. Let go of any tension you're holding.

Now, let's try Box Breathing; a simple way to bring the mind and body back into balance.


Breathe in through your nose for four seconds. Hold for four. Exhale through your mouth for four. Hold again for four. Repeat.

Feel your breath settle. Feel your body return to itself.

*The practice isn't in knowing...*

*The practice is in being. In breath. In movement. In presence. In learning, again and again, how to come back to yourself.*





*And there in the stillness, they both could see  
They were each as they were meant to be  
Bear was the earth, solid and kind  
Bird was the sky, free in his mind*

Taken from "The Bear & The Bird" by Jacob Mansfield

CHAPTER SIX  
THE ART OF BEING HERE



After everything, it all comes back to this: learning how to be here, in this moment, as you are.

Not fighting against life. Not chasing something in the distance. Not waiting for the perfect conditions to finally feel peace. Just being here; fully, openly, with whatever is in front of you.



For Bear and Bird, the struggle was never really about flying or standing strong. It was about believing they were missing something. It was about thinking that peace, happiness or contentment existed somewhere outside of themselves.

But it was never outside.

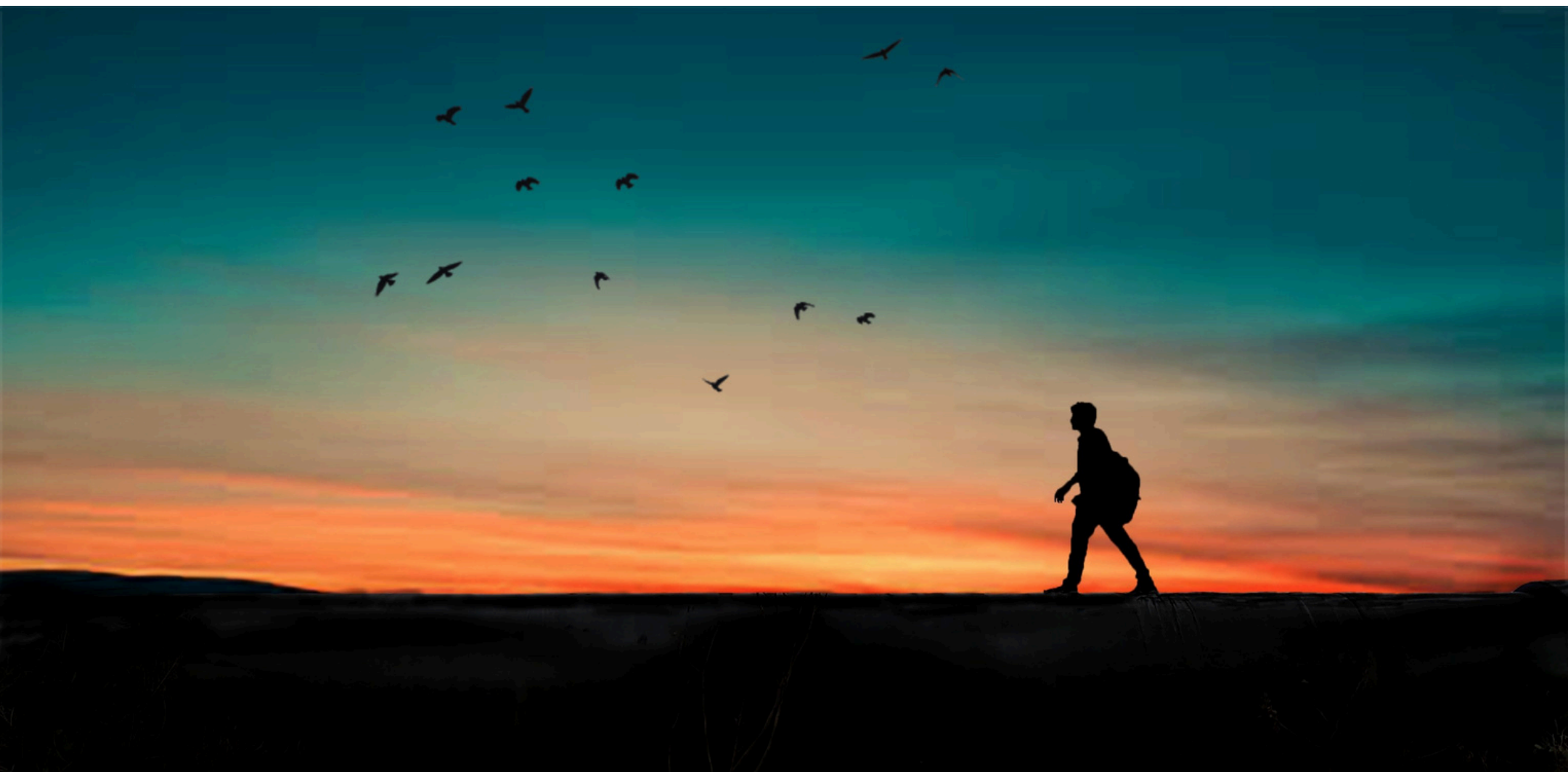
And it isn't for you either.

Bear stopped looking at himself as less than. He stopped believing he had to change in order to be complete. And as he did, something shifted.

Bird looked at Bear and saw him fully; just as he was. And in that moment, he saw himself differently too.

They had been enough all along.

And so have you.



So if you ever wish to be someone new  
Look inside, there's magic in you  
We're each like Bird, and we're each like Bear  
All with our own special gifts to share.

Taken from "The Bear & The Bird" by Jacob Mansfield