

Surviving Chaos, Thriving Through Times of Fear

A 20 minute guided meditation

By the River

You find yourself comfortably seated on a rock by a slow-flowing river. It is the afternoon, the temperature is just right. Your eyes are closed and you are enjoying the sound of the river and the birds in the trees. As you open your eyes, you are cheered by the blue sky and fluffy white clouds drifting by.



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You notice a small path through the lush vegetation to the water's edge. It is an invitation and so you stand and walk to the water. The water is crystal clear, and the sun is sparkling on its surface. You spend a minute in silence soaking in your serene surroundings.

Off to the right you find a wicker basket. A look inside reveals several paper boats and small glass jars. A small scroll tied with a red ribbon is the last item inside.

You unroll the scroll to find a short paragraph written in an elegant script:

"Truly you are infinite, beyond your knowing and imagination. Worry, Stress, and Fear are finite, small and dark. Pour them into the jars, and send them down the river. They are not needed, they are not resourceful. Thank them for the lessons they have shared. Wish them a safe and pleasant journey."

Intrigued, you hold one of the small jars in your palms in front of you. You visualize "stress" as a dark liquid filling up the jar. A long slow exhale completes the process, and already you feel lighter and less burdened. Picking up a boat you place the jar inside and you place the boat into the water. Quietly you say: " Dear Stress, I am grateful for the lessons you have shared, I release you. May you have a safe and pleasant journey." And with a gentle push, the boat drifts downstream and soon it is out of sight. You find yourself sighing and feeling even lighter.



Eagerly you return to the basket to repeat the process. With an empty jar in your palms you visualize "worry" filling the jar as a dark and murky liquid. With another exhale the jar is full and again you place the jar in a paper boat and send it down the river saying: " Dear Worry, I am grateful for the lessons you have shared, I release you. May you have a safe and pleasant journey."

One last time you return to the basket to fill another jar. Holding the jar in your palms you pour "Fear" into it. With a few mindful deep breaths, the jar is again full. Again you say as you push the jar laden boat into the river: " Dear Fear, I am grateful for the lessons you have shared, I release you. May you have a safe and pleasant journey."

You watch the last boat drift away. You feel light, calm and centered. Grateful for the river, the sunshine and what the future holds for you.

Looking upstream you decide to walk along the shore. In a short while you come upon a small rivulet, a small stream splashing down to join the river. You follow this stream and soon come across a small pool with the stream falling over a short rock shelf. Such a special place.

A beam of sunlight catches your attention as it illuminates a moss covered rock. Upon the rock is a wooden cup, a silver bowl and a small brightly colored stone. You pick up the cup and fill it from the water falling into the pool and return to the moss

return to the moss covered stone and sit in the beam of warm sunlight.

A cup of water has never been so refreshing and it fills you with great ease and peace as you drink from the wooden cup. When it is empty you set it aside. You pick up the bowl and place the bowl in your lap. You close your eyes. The sun is warm, and you invite serenity, abundance, wisdom, and compassion from the water, the sunlight and the beauty around you into the bowl and into your being. You are aware of the sunlight shining on the crown of your head, and you imagine your body filling with light as the bowl fills with serenity, abundance, wisdom and compassion. The bowl continues to fill with these qualities as your breath becomes even more silky smooth, deep and slow.

Breathe now...

The silver bowl is now full of the qualities that are so full of potential and opportunity. You hold the bowl against your body, and as you do, it dissolves and its content seems to go inside you. You understand that all the serenity, abundance, wisdom and compassion are now within you. You hold both your hands against your belly and you can see and feel those qualities integrate and permeate into your whole being. A smile appears on your face, indeed it seems like your whole body, every organ and every cell is smiling. And you breathe so effortlessly.

You look upon this very special place one more time, drinking in the beauty and peace. And you begin to wonder if someday you would like to return to fill your bowl again. It is then that you notice the brightly colored stone, and you know, you understand, that to return to this special place, all you have to do is call on the stone. With great gratitude you place the stone in your pocket.

