

# Introduction to Contemplative Practice



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• *A True Gift of Presence fosters Holistic  
learning*

# Agenda

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- Brief introduction to Contemplative practice
  - What are Contemplative practices ?
  - Why Contemplative practices within classes?
- Exercises that can be used in the classroom setting
- Silent pause- Integration

What is  
Contemplative  
practice?

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**Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been  
broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the  
depth of truth;**

**Where tireless striving stretches  
its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit;**

**Where the mind is led forward by  
thee into ever-widening thought and  
action**

**Into that heaven of freedom, my  
Father, let my country awake.**

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**Into that heaven of freedom, my  
Father, let my country awake.**

**Robindranath Tagore**



# What is Contemplative practice?

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Our nervous systems  
(along with our belly  
and heart brains) are  
always asking, “Are  
you with me?”  
[Porges, 2016]

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What is  
Contemplative  
Practice?

Educational practices  
that have an  
**“introspective,  
internal focus”** that  
creates **greater  
connection and  
insight...**”

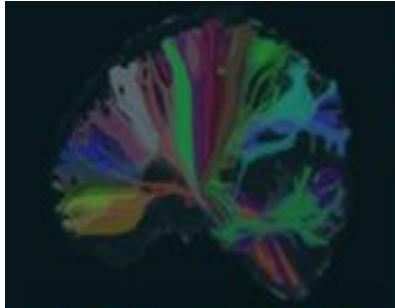
Barbezat &

Bush, 2014, p.5

Contemplation happens to everyone. It happens in  
moments when we are open, undefended, and  
immediately present ~ Dr. Gerald May

# Contemplative Practice

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## Our Heads

*What we've been thinking about and learning*



## Our Hearts

*What core values, beliefs and emotions are guiding us*



## Our Hands

*What action we are taking*





# Why Contemplative Practice?

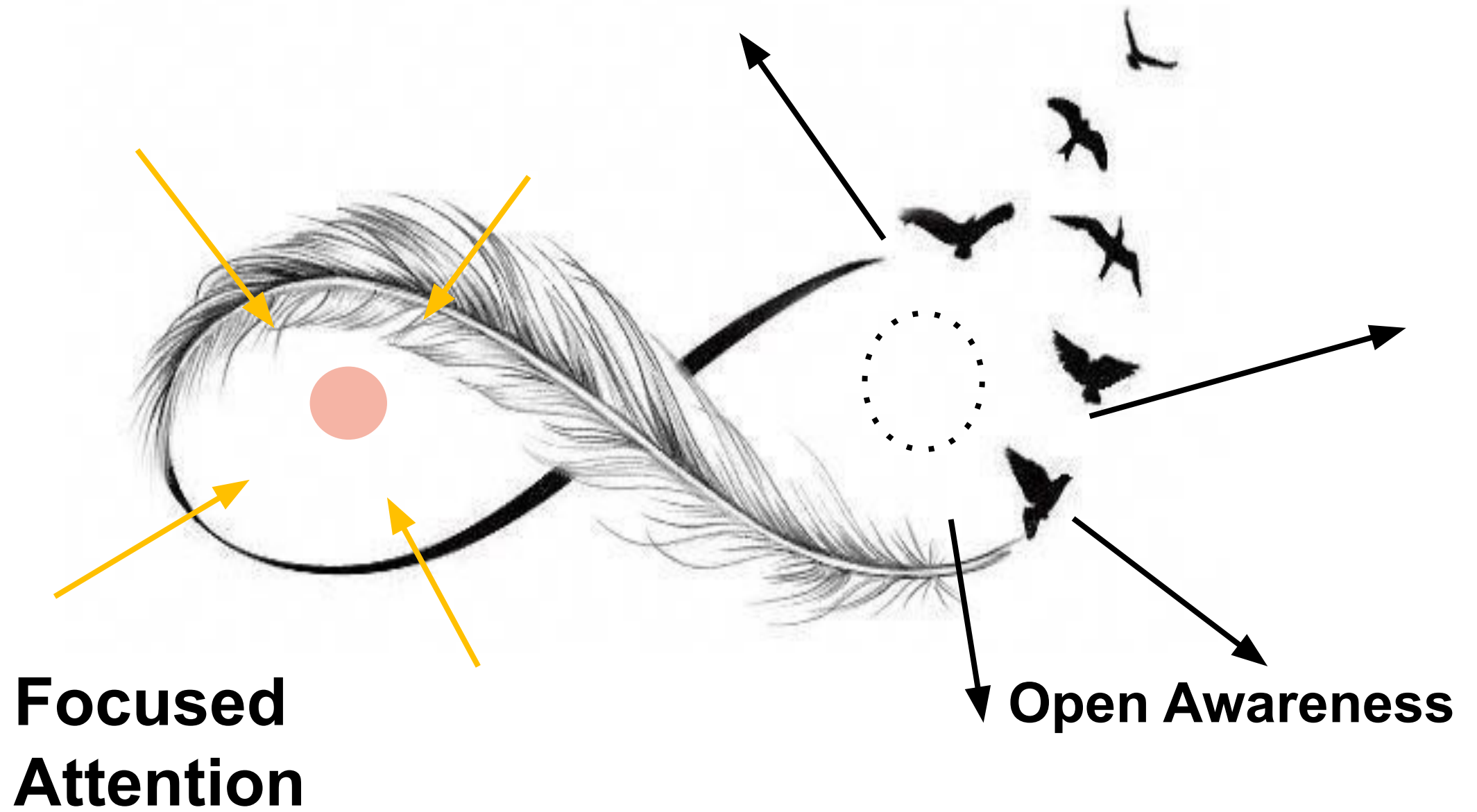
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- Contemplative practices place the students at the center of their own learning, shifting the balance of power
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# Why Contemplative Practices in Higher Education?

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- **Attention and Analytical Problem solving**
- **Integration and introspection**: students discover connection of the material with themselves and thus deepen their understanding of the material
- **Relationship & Resilience** : Compassion, connection to others, and a deepening sense of belonging
- **Reflection & Resilience**: Inquiry into the nature of their minds, personal meaning, creativity, and insight

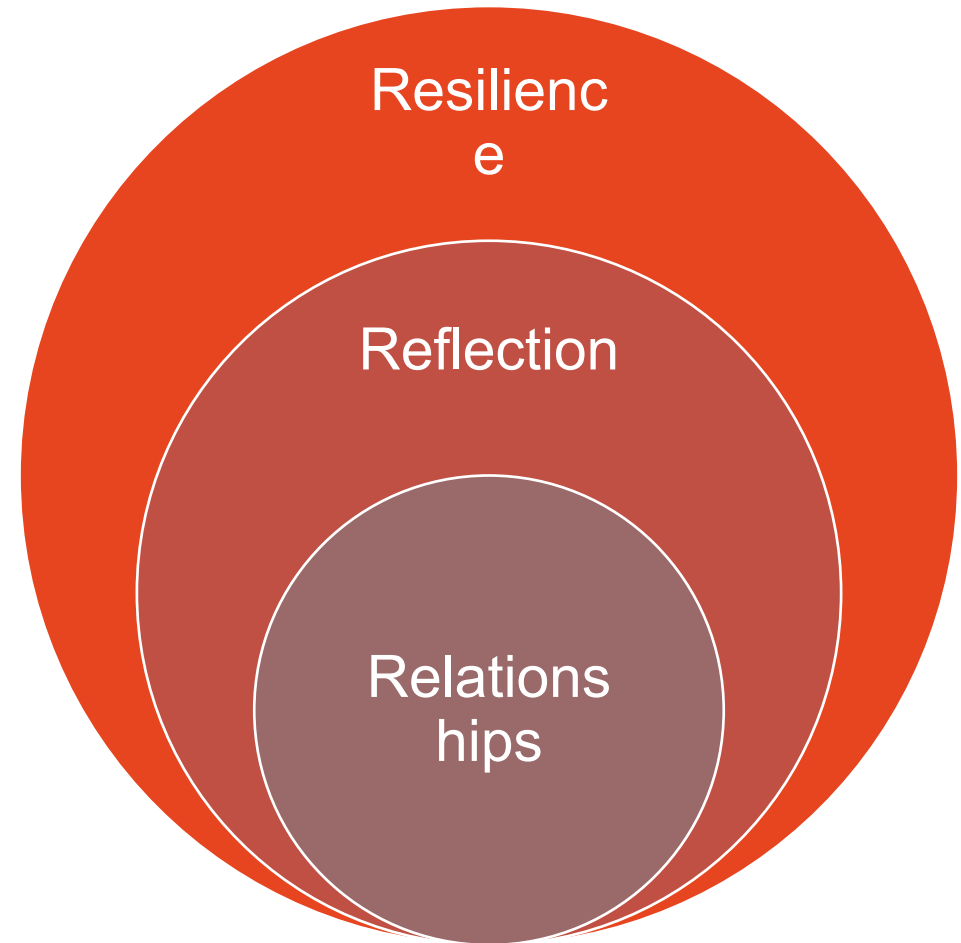


# Integration and Introspection

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**Attention**

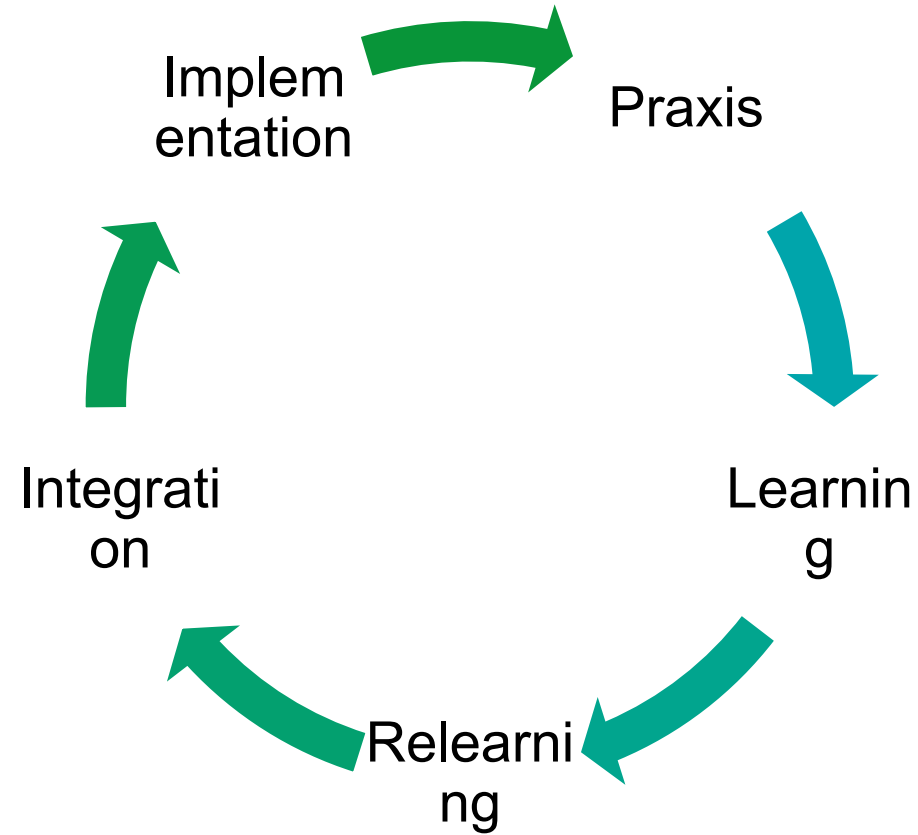
McGilChrist, 2018





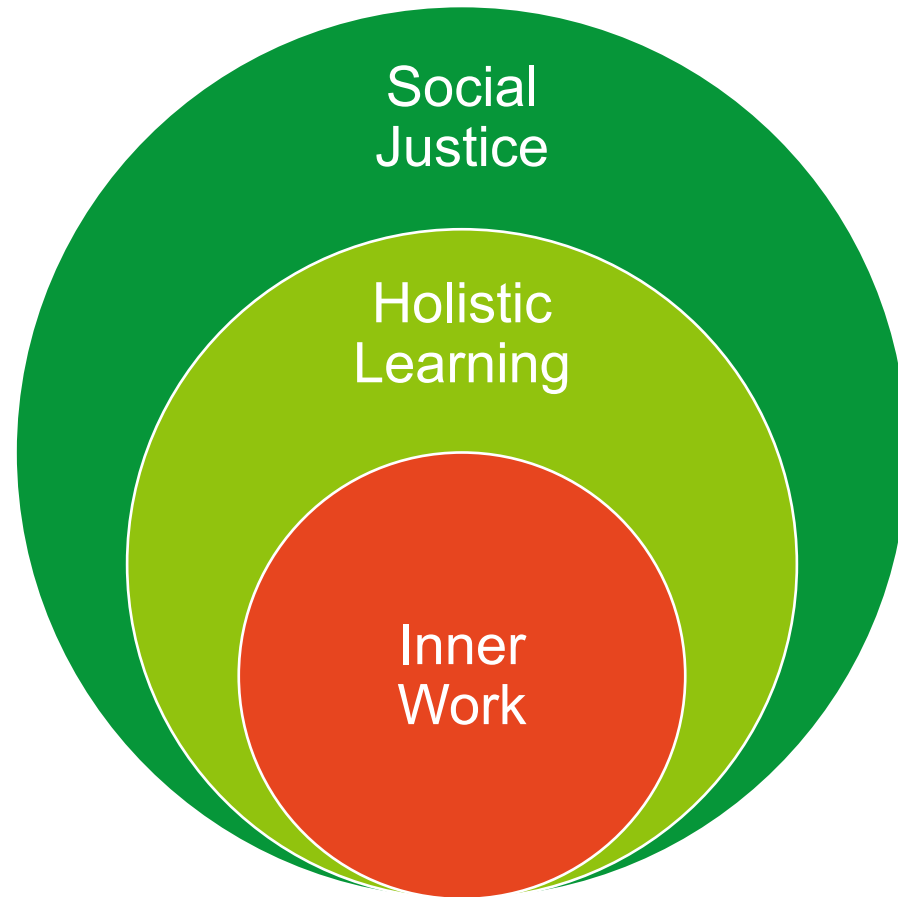
# Introspective & Inner Work

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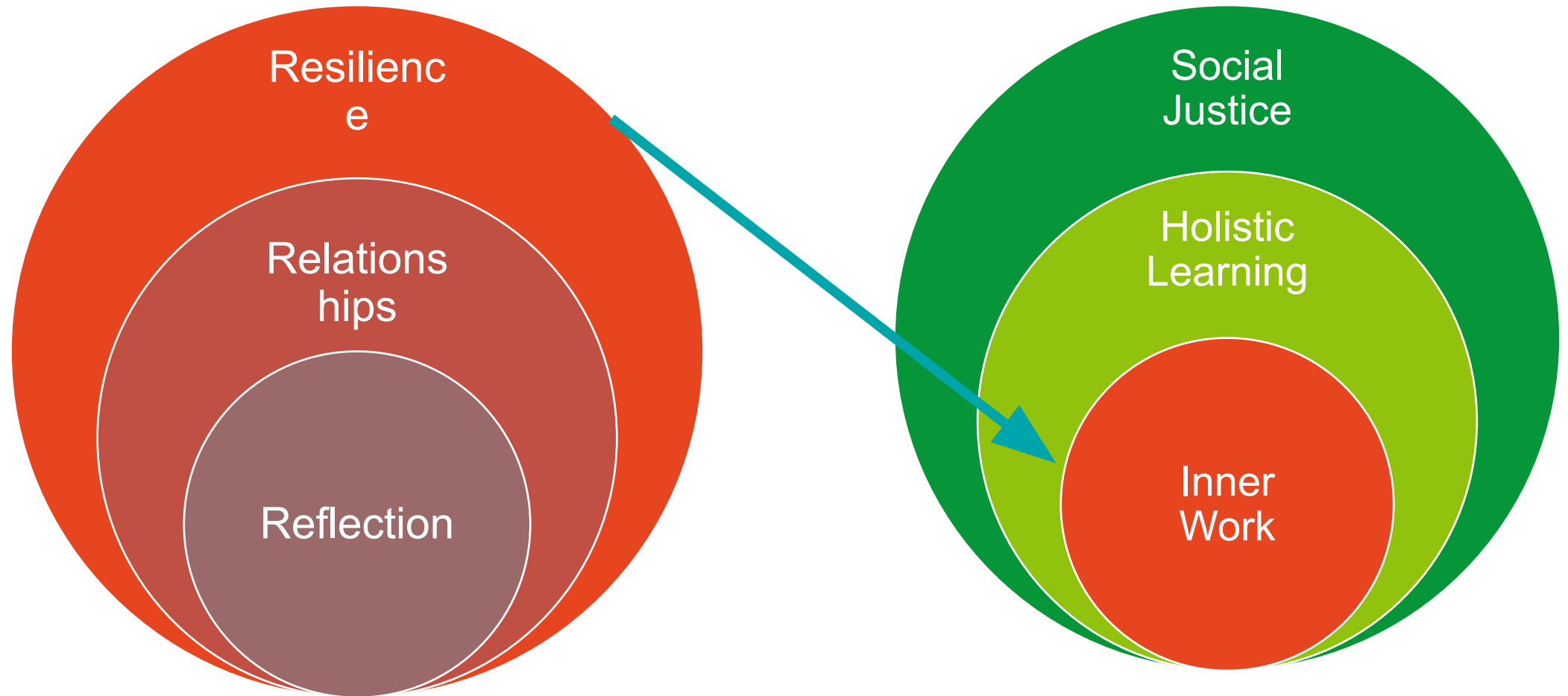
# Integration & Social Justice

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# Contemplative Practices & Social Justice

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**"Grace fills empty spaces,** but it can only enter where there is a **void** to receive it. We must continually suspend the work of the imagination in **filling** the **void** within ourselves." Simone Weill

Every object, well contemplated, opens up a new organ of perception within us."

Goethe





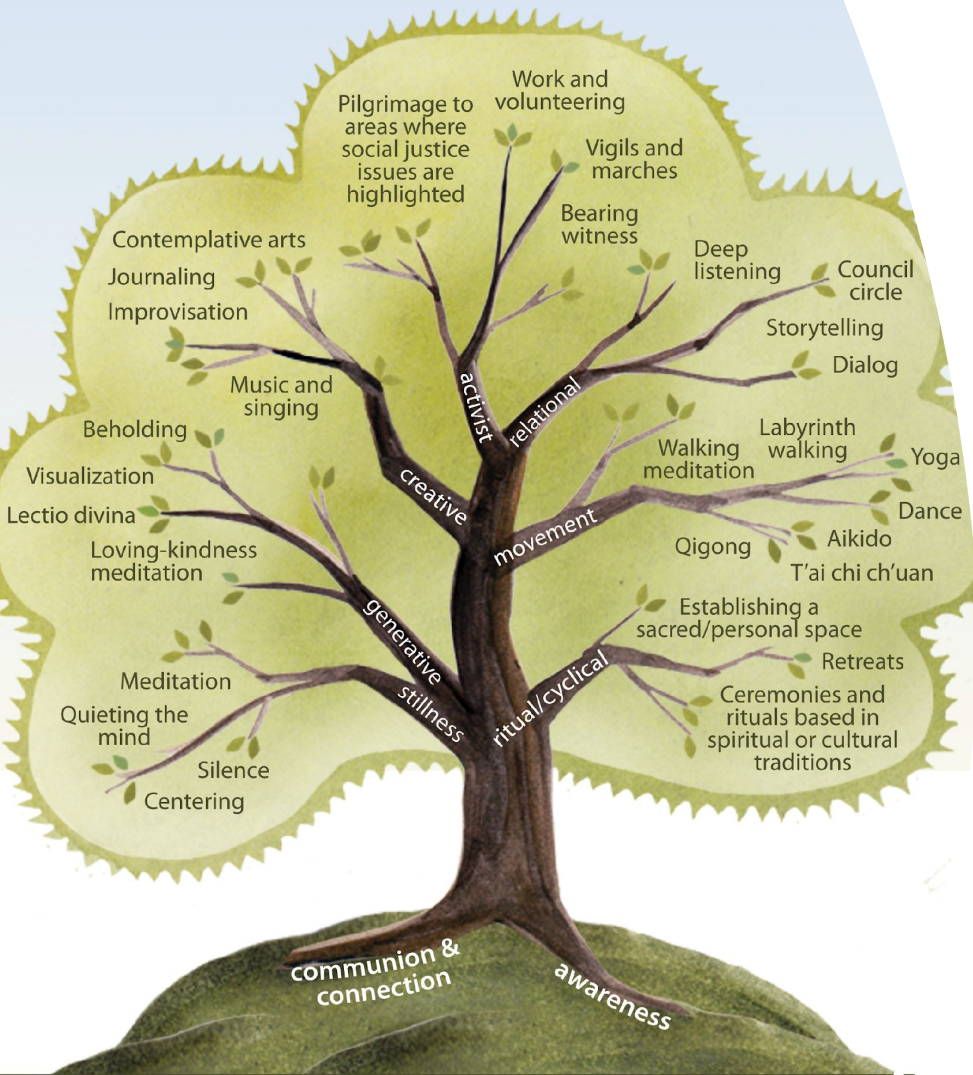
“If I let myself really understand another person, I might be changed by that understanding. And we all fear change. So as I say, it is not an easy thing to permit oneself to understand an individual,”

"To open one's spirit to what is going on now, and discover in that present process whatever structure it appears to have..."

We think we **listen**, but very rarely do we **listen** with real understanding, true empathy. Yet **listening**, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change that I know."

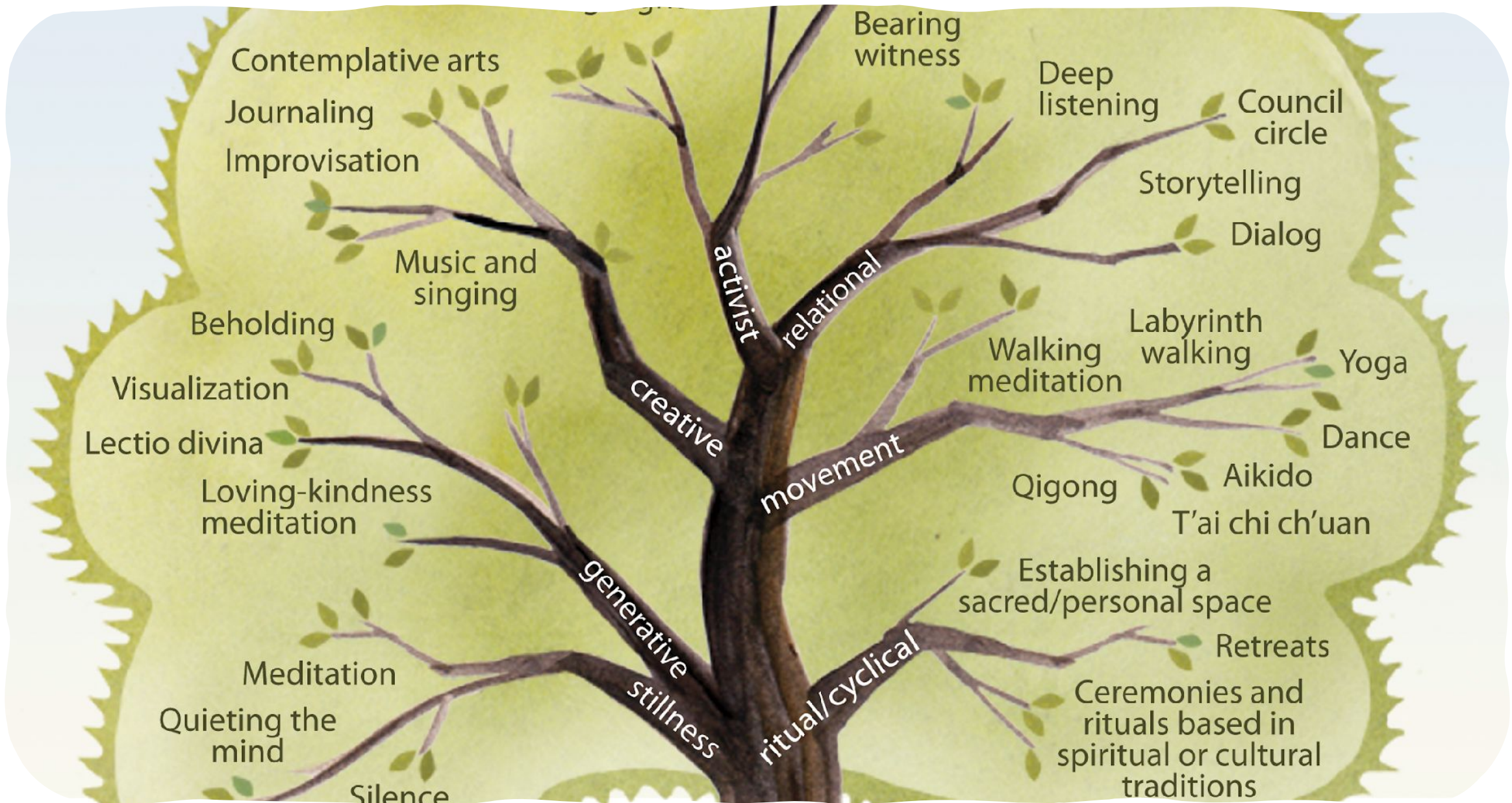
**Carl Rogers.**

## The Tree of Contemplative Practices



# Contemplative Practices/ Exercises





# Activist Practices

[Pilgrimage to areas where social justice issues are highlighted](#)

Work and Volunteering

Vigils and Marches

Bearing Witness

# Creative Practices

[Contemplative Arts](#)

[Improvisation](#)

# Relational Practices

- [Council Circle](#)
- [Dialog](#)
- [Deep Listening](#)
- [Storytelling](#)

# Ritual/Cyclical Practices

- Ceremonies and Rituals based in Spiritual or Cultural Traditions
- Establishing a Sacred/Personal Space
- [Retreats](#)



# Movement Practices

- [Labyrinth Walking](#)
- [Walking Meditation](#)
- [Yoga](#)
- Dance
- [Qigong](#)
- [Aikido](#)
- [Tai Chi Chu'an](#)

# Stillness Practices

- [Meditation](#)
- Quieting the Mind
- [Silence](#)
- [Centering](#)
- [Journaling](#)

# Generative Practices

- [Lectio Divina](#)
- Visualization
- [Beholding](#)
- [Loving-Kindness Meditation](#)



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“The one thing you can’t take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one’s freedoms is to choose one’s attitude in any given circumstance.” ~Viktor Frankl