

# WRITING THROUGH THE CHANGES

*We have arrived at Vinotok, with our culminating practices for the Autumn Equinox.*

## WEEK 3: BANISHING & BECKONING

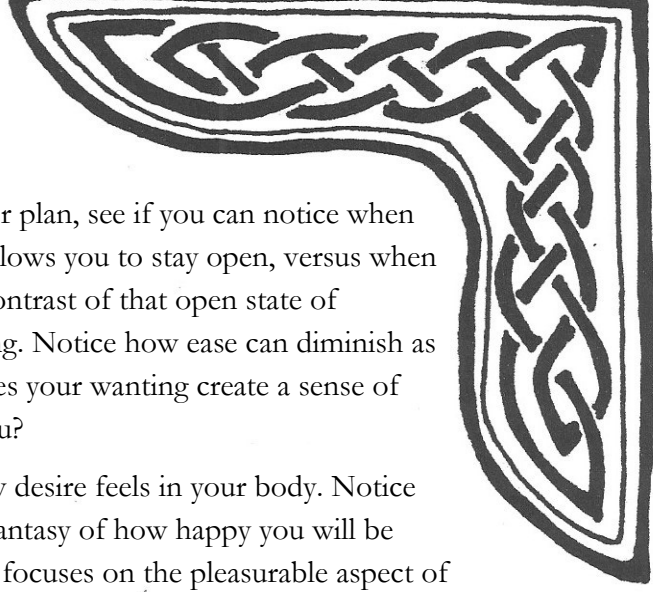
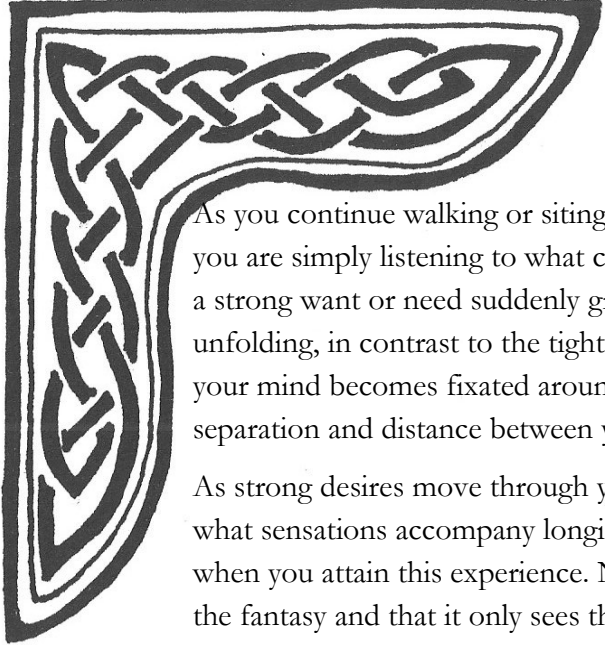
***Finding your place:*** Take this opportunity to unplug from technology. Get a special notebook or journal to write in, and a pen to write with. Leave your cell phone at home. Reserve a chunk of time so you can be contemplative and slow. Walk out to a spot in nature in an easy saunter, as far as you can go in the time you've allotted. Find a tree to lean against, a rock to sit on, a stream to sit by, a meadow to sit in. Take a deep breath, settle in.

### Meditation

**Unfolding into Simplicity:** The power of mindfulness, to be present with anything in our experience, provides space and clarity. It allows us to be less caught up in, or bound to, painful longings and desires, which in turn makes way for us to experience contentment, just as we are.

In this meditation you'll spend an undetermined amount of time outdoors without any particular agenda. The more open a canvas, the easier it will be to see when a desire takes you away from the simplicity of each unfolding moment. As you use this practice to work with your desires and impulses, it's important to remember that desires will arise endlessly and are not a problem in themselves. We only suffer when we become attached to having our desires fulfilled and when we get caught in the belief we need to satisfy every desire in order to be happy.

Begin by walking mindfully, meditating on your breath or simply being present in the moment until you begin to feel relaxed and at ease. As you walk, notice whenever a desire arises in your body and mind—for instance, a wish to soak your feet in the stream, to see the view from the top of the hill, or to lie down in the soft grass. Many desires are harmless responses to an alluring call from the rich natural world; it is fine to follow these. Heeding your desires to connect with nature can help deepen that connection, much like responding to the call of a loved one or to the Beloved. Wholesome desires, by definition, lead to more ease, happiness and peace. Unwholesome desires only lead us into more desire, craving and unsatisfactory states of being. In this meditation, begin to notice the difference between wholesome and unwholesome desires—between those that bring joy and those that only bring further anguish and more desire.



As you continue walking or sitting still without any agenda or plan, see if you can notice when you are simply listening to what calls your heart and what allows you to stay open, versus when a strong want or need suddenly grips your mind. Feel the contrast of that open state of unfolding, in contrast to the tighter, narrow state of pursuing. Notice how ease can diminish as your mind becomes fixated around satisfying a craving. Does your wanting create a sense of separation and distance between you and the life around you?

As strong desires move through you, bring attention to how desire feels in your body. Notice what sensations accompany longing, perhaps the belief or fantasy of how happy you will be when you attain this experience. Notice how the mind only focuses on the pleasurable aspect of the fantasy and that it only sees the positive, pleasing attributes of whatever it is desiring, rather than the picture or reality.

If you can, stay present with those desires, being mindful of the feelings, sensations and thoughts associated with them, without acting to fulfill them in any way. No matter how difficult it may be to resist acting on the desires, the longings will begin to fade of their own accord at some point. As you learn to watch your desires come and go without doing anything to fulfill them, you'll find you can naturally return to the place of ease. Simply staying present

with your desires without taking action to realize them will demonstrate that you are not enslaved to your desires and that you can achieve peace without having specific desires fulfilled.

Practice this meditation for half an hour or more. See if you are any clearer about how to distinguish between desires that bring peace and desires that provoke a certain agitation and discontent with the moment. If you have observed many desires come and go without following them, pay attention to how that feels. Does it lead to a sense of ease or freedom? As you go back into your daily life, you can try to deepen your sense of peace by continuing this practice.

When you return home, notice the first desire that arises and see if you immediately get caught in thinking that you need to fulfill it before you have even had time to register it. Then, check in with yourself about whether this is really something you want to do, and whether it is a healthy thing to pursue. Being mindful of the ebb and flow of desire allows us to live less at the mercy of the endless desires that pour through every mind and heart. It also opens a door to finding a sense of peace in a world addicted to fulfilling every desire. It is the joy of renunciation.

- Adapted from *Awake in the Wild* by Mark Coleman

## Prompts

***Finding your voice:*** *As you respond to the prompts following the meditation, don't worry about grammar, punctuation or writing rules—just let it flow. Write thoughts as they come to you, without any editing or judgement. Take time to stare at the clouds, the water moving by, the leaves in the breeze. Ponder. Consider. Contemplate. For these kinds of prompts, it is best to write until you have no more to say about the matter.*

**Banishing:** Think back to your journaling practices from the last few weeks. What needs to be banished in your life? From this world? Think about all the things that do not serve you as an individual, as well as the things in our modern society that keep us from living our best collective lives, do not honor our values of the earth, community

and diversity. Write these on a piece (or pieces) of paper that you will rip out of your journal to burn in your own personal fire.

**Beckoning:** What is it you want to see in your life moving forward? What do you want to see in the world? What is the best vision you have of both? Draw it in. Paint the picture of your ideal life. Begin in the personal, then extend out into your community, the nation and the world.

**Actions & Adjustments:** What adjustments or direct action must you make in your behavior, thought patterns, physical practices, areas of focus, etc. to assure you are getting rid of those things you banish, and pulling in more of what you beckon. How are you actually going to make these desires manifest?

## Practices

1. If you are in Crested Butte, place your grumps in the Community Grump box. While there will be no public burning, your grumps will be transformed. You may also burn your grumps in your own personal backyard or campfire. Please note your county's particular fire restrictions at this time. In Gunnison County in particular, no fires are permitted on public land, except in approved and designated fire rings such as at a campground.
2. Make a headwreath! Visit [www.vinotok.org](http://www.vinotok.org), then the "Pilgrimage" tab, then the "Green Man" archetype for specific instructions on creating a headwreath. It's a perfect opportunity to wander around in nature slowly, writing grumps, and beckoning your future.
3. Make a Straw Grump! If you'd like to burn your own grumps in your own personal fire, visit [www.vinotok.org](http://www.vinotok.org), then the "Pilgrimage" tab, then the "Ancestors" archetype for directions on building your own Straw Grump to attach your grumps to and burn

**Happy Vinotok!**

**Happy Autumn Equinox!**

**Here's to bringing gratitude, balance & reciprocity**

**back to our world**

**Personally ... and globally ...**

*For more on Vinotok's  
Stoking the Internal Fire practices visit  
[www.vinotok.org](http://www.vinotok.org)*



*For more on author & educator  
Molly Murfee visit  
[www.mollymurfee.com](http://www.mollymurfee.com)*