



A Walk in the Woods

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GUIDED PROMPTS FOR SEEING WITH SOUL

*Let's go for a walk.*

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Learning to practice the art of seeing and naming is a powerful way to use metaphor and imagination to represent our experiences and longings.

In this very simple practice you're invited to use your senses to explore nature as a window for the deep expressions of your soul.

## About language

Before we begin, let's talk about the words "walk" and "seeing." I use them here as a metaphor for exploration. So, you may want to adapt these ideas for your circumstances and life stage.

The ideas shared here represent ways of exploring ("walking") and identifying ("seeing"). But a long drive, moving along a paved sidewalk or boardwalk, or using the senses of hearing or taste may be more approachable for you.

## Nature as guide

So often, when at a threshold, experiencing deep changes or grief, we long for images to help us express what we're feeling. We carry within us deep longing and desire, but struggle to see, name and communicate it.

This practice helps to access images to carry with you – either in your phone, memory or sketchbook.



## A Walk in the Woods

Identify a place for you to walk that feels safe and accessible. Bring along a camera, if you'd like, or a sketchbook. Sometimes I walk with just my imagination and memory, wanting to stay present without carrying any tools or technology. There's no right or wrong way.

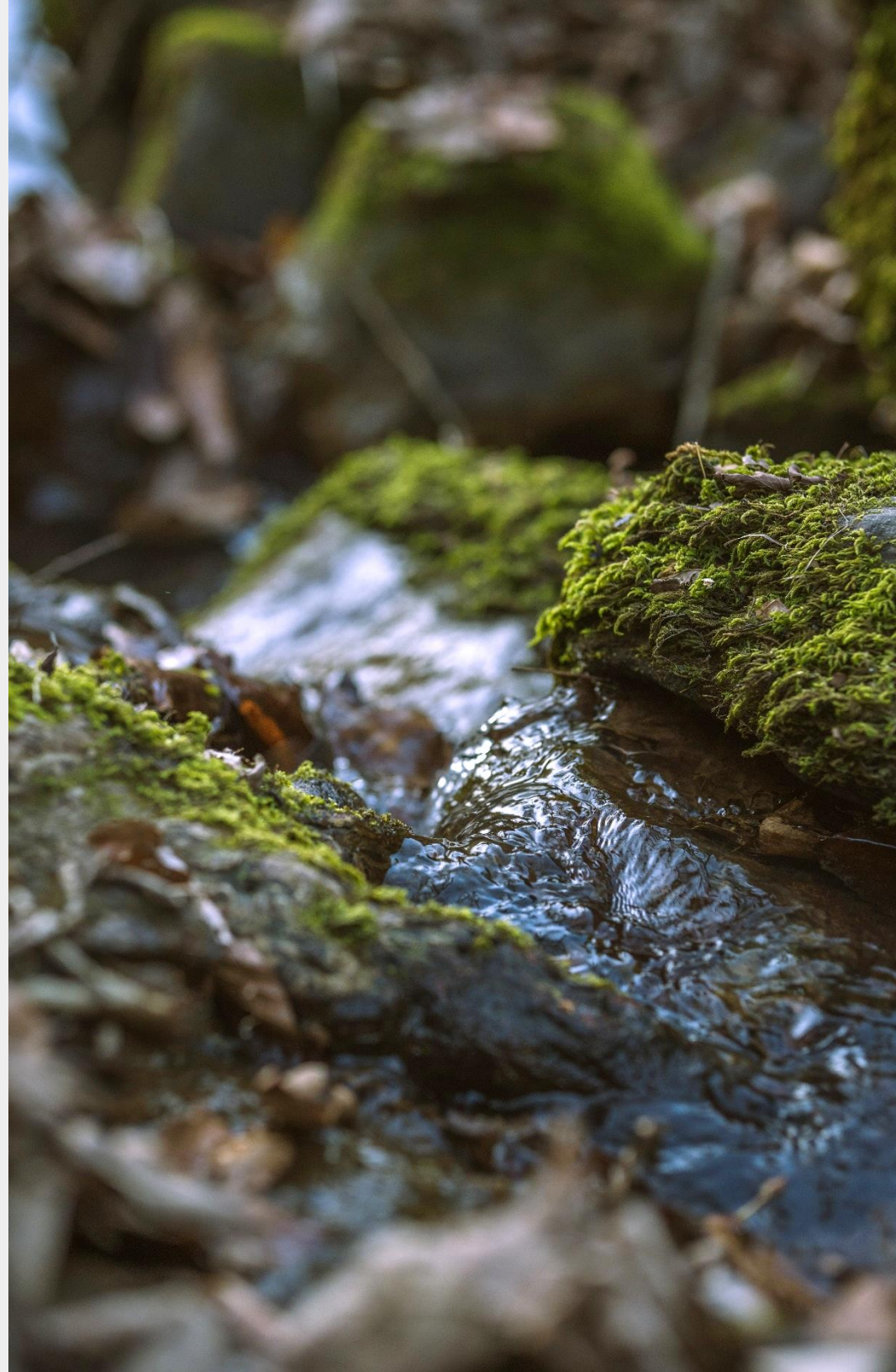
Set out for a walk at least 30 minutes long. Give yourself time to settle in, to let questions you're carrying rise within you. You may want to begin your walk reflecting on a difficult situation you're facing or a threshold you're experiencing (motherhood, midlife, children leaving for college, retirement).

As you walk, bring awareness to your body. Notice any tension in your limbs, tightness in your chest or back. Gently breathe through this awareness.

Walk at a pace that allows you to see your surroundings. Pause to take in your experience and ground you in your body. Look at your feet and at the sky. Notice any birds overhead and the wind through the trees. Move close to the forest floor.

As you feel more settled, begin exploring what you're seeing by reflecting on the following prompts. You may find some of these resonate with you or you have others that come to mind.

Use notes, take mental or photo "snapshots" or sketch what you see that symbolizes the prompts.





## Guided Prompts

Use the prompts that resonate with you or add your own:

Journey  
Threshold  
Death  
Life  
Power  
Containment/holding  
Unfolding

Belonging  
Creativity  
Strength  
Movement  
Breath  
Becoming  
Letting Go

## Notes and observations

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## About Judith Alfano, LCSW

Judith Alfano, MSW, LCSW is a therapist in private practice, both online and in the coastal communities of New Jersey. Her research and professional interests are spiritual formation, the integration of psychology and religion, and women's health and well-being.

Judith's therapeutic approach is deeply relational, grounded in psychodynamic theory and integrating narrative and somatic therapies, parts work and the wisdom of spiritual care.

Earlier in her career, Judith held key roles in marketing, HR and communications at organizations ranging from an established energy company to higher ed and a tech start-up.

She later transitioned to clinical mental health, working in multiple counseling centers where she supported those experiencing anxiety, grief and those impacted by trauma and abuse. Along the way, Judith explored other paths to join her community in healing and recovery.

One of those paths is cooking. Judith is interested in the intersection of cooking, spirituality and mental health, and completed a professional culinary program as well as continuing education courses in functional nutrition and integrative care for cancer survivors and those with chronic illness.