

The Meditation

Find a comfortable position and allow yourself to settle. Let your hands rest comfortably. Take a slow breath in. And a slow breath out. Again. A gentle breath in. And a gentle breath out.

There is nothing you need to do right now. Simply be here. Allow your breathing to find its own natural rhythm.

Bring to mind a pattern that's been present in your life for a long time. Perhaps it's people-pleasing, perfectionism, overthinking, avoiding conflict, self-criticism, emotional withdrawal, or another pattern that feels familiar. There's no need to analyse it. Simply allow it to come into your awareness.

Now imagine that this coping mechanism is a heavy suitcase you've been carrying. Picture it clearly. Notice its size. Its weight. Notice how long you've been carrying it. Years? Perhaps decades? Imagine yourself standing with this suitcase in your hands.

As you look at it, remember what it contained. Protection. Safety. Acceptance. Certainty. Control. Whatever it was trying to give you, acknowledge that. Silently say to yourself: this helped me. This carried something important. This served a purpose.

Take a slow, deep breath in and release. And another.

Now notice something else. Notice the weight. Notice how heavy it's become. Notice what carrying it has required from you - the energy, the effort, the vigilance, the sacrifices. Ask yourself gently: what has this cost me? Allow the question to settle. Don't force an answer. Simply notice what thoughts appear. You may become aware of missed opportunities.

Unspoken truths. Unmet needs. Relationships that lasted too long or ended too soon. Or perhaps you simply become aware of how tired you feel, the tiredness that comes from carrying something for far longer than it was ever meant to be carried.

Take a moment to sit with that awareness.

Now imagine placing the suitcase on the ground in front of you. You're not throwing it away, you're not rejecting it, you're simply setting it down for a moment. Notice what that feels like. Notice the space that's created. Notice the relief, the possibility. As you look at the suitcase, silently say: thank you for helping me survive. Thank you for carrying what I needed at the time. Thank you for doing your job.

Take a deep breath and slowly release. Then affirm, I'm beginning to see what this has cost me. I'm beginning to

understand that I may not need to carry this forever. I am allowed to choose something different.

Let those words settle gently. You don't need to know what comes next. You don't need to let go today. You don't need to change anything overnight. You only need to be willing to see things clearly. Honesty is where freedom begins.

Take another slow breath in and a slow breath out. Notice your body. Notice the surface beneath you. Notice this moment. Know that you can honour what helped you survive without allowing it to define the rest of your life. You can now continue forward with more awareness, honesty, and compassion for the journey you have travelled.