

Synthesis: A Poetic Exploration of the Integral Model Investigating the Interconnected Strands of Mindfulness in Our Educational Landscapes

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Abstract

As a researcher, I am seeking a mode of inquiry that would allow for a reflection on mindfulness and the role it plays in curriculum and learning. Needing to merge my personal voice with the diverse educational landscape, I found that poetic storytelling allowed me to “present possibilities for understanding the complex, mysterious, even ineffable experiences that comprise human living” (Chambers, Hasbe-Ludt, Leggo, & Sinner, 2012, p. xx). Using first-person auto-ethnographical narrative as a research methodology and the Integral Model as a theoretical framework (Wilber, 2000, 2006, Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli, 2008), the interconnected strands of mindfulness are synthesized within the four quadrants of the model. Self, Science, Storytelling, and Systems are components of mindfulness that together formulate a holistic understanding as “integral theory weaves together the significant insights from all major human disciplines of knowledge, including natural and social science as well as the arts and the humanities” (Visser, 2003).

Keywords: education; narrative inquiry; qualitative research



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In the Beginning—Seeking a Portal to Mindfulness

I required an exploratory process as a catalyst to understand the complexities of mindfulness in curriculum and learning. Poetry is considered, by poet researchers, as a way to present data. (Faulkner, 2009). As a researcher, poetry offers me a portal to bring my human experiences into the data, moving through the circles of understanding and focusing on the present moment in a search for Self and an increased awareness of the Other (Smith, 1999). In essence, poetic inquiry creates a space whereby the poet can embrace personal experience to create something that is universal and applicable to the greater human condition. Richardson (1998) considers poetry useful when one experiences epiphanies in fieldwork that show humanity allowing us to “find ourselves in poems” (p. 459). It is a way to narrate a particular life experience where free spaces are cleared for contemplation, allowing for new experiences where “lives can be shaped with some graciousness and mindfulness” (Jardine, 2012, p.11). Poetic narrative inquiry allows for creative open space, where, as a poet/researcher, I can enter into a different mode of knowing. It is juxtaposition to the frenzy of our daily educational contexts. Poetic narrative inquiry allows for sacred, often silent space of circular movement to open, presenting new perspective and possibilities. Within this interconnected and spiral web, ideas and images evolve and flow based on the patterns and melodies of the poetic verse.

*Mindfulness or Mind Full a juxtaposition of ideologies
A state of peace and wellness allowing for freedom to breath
Or an overflowing organ filled to capacity and about to burst at any moment
Spilling years of knowledge stored deep within the inner caverns
Exploding into a mass of quivering nothingness leaving only the remains
Of a mind seeking silence, solitude and open space to dream*

*Hurry up and learn your lessons, ponder all your books, memorize the notes
Fill in the blanks and find the answer, no time to take a second look
Mind full, mind busy, mind consumed with reaching the pinnacle of the mountain
Only to find at the top one is teetering precariously to remain balanced
Before plunging off the edge screaming, dropping deep into the abyss of deep darkness that
suffocates the spirit, the very breath of life itself*

*Inhale, exhale
Inhale, exhale
Listen to the slow and steady breath that mirrors the dance of the heart
And pay attention to the real lessons to be learned*

*The Integral Model, four interconnected quadrants encompassing the whole
The inner and outer realm of possibilities
The I, the we, the it, and the its
Finding multiple pathways and perspectives to the world*

*Mindfulness
The inner I, the deep cavern of the Self we seek to explore
As we walk along the path to wisdom searching for the deeper meaning*

Finding time to figure out who we are, seeking the portal to the Self

Mindfulness

The outer it, the physical body and the brain

The breathing, living physiology of the physical being

Neurons firing and wiring, building interconnected pathways in the mind

The science of learning, the science of building the brain

Mindfulness

The collective, we the world of community that we all are part of

My story merging with your story as we all seek to understand

The stories of Self, the stories of Others, the spiralling spirit of stories

Swirling, spinning, synthesizing together into a kaleidoscope of colors

The story of who we are and how we came to be at this time, at this place

Binding us all together in our common humanity, our common quest

Mindfulness

The complex system or the Its, that all of us are part of

All part of the interconnected system of which each individual part

Commits to creating a critical component of the incredible whole.

The many strands of the system that synthesise together to create the whole

Mindfulness

Interconnected quadrants of Integral thinking

Interconnected strands of different perspectives that encompass

The vibrant strands of our educational landscapes

The multifaceted whole of curriculum and learning seeking always to find

“a heart of wisdom” (Chambers, Hasbe-Ludt, Leggo, & Sinner, 2012)

and an open space for “pedagogy left in peace” (Jardine, 2012)

The personalized poetic approach to understanding permits poetic research to emerge as a process to improve the understanding of our human condition. Poetic inquiry does not require a black and white interpretation but brings one into a space that allows one to embrace the essence of what it means to be human (Faulkner, 2007). In sharp contrast, the factory model of education, emerging in the late 19th and early 20th century, “provided an accessible, uniform model of education that met the needs” (Friesen & Jardine, 2009, p. 4) of the industrial society it served. This system demanded compliance, following the doctrine of efficiency under which “students and teachers are not required to be thoughtfully engaged in teaching and learning” (Friesen & Jardine, 2009, p. 11). The individual gifts and talents of learners were largely ignored as the system strove toward standardization. In response to this standardization, learners fought back to find their own free space within which to learn and to grow. However, “free spaces are rare and hard won, and learning to live well within them is hard work that requires stillness, generosity and perseverance” (Jardine, 2012, p. 8). Poetic inquiry presents the possibility of stillness to be present and to ponder the vast complexities of human life. Creating this space calls for poetry to act as a “special language” a language that researchers want to access when they feel that other modes of representation will not capture what they desire to show about their work (Faulkner, 2005).

As a poet, and as a storyteller, I am seeking to locate myself “in a rapidly growing network of contexts, including family, neighborhood, community, profession, school and society by sending out resonances from one embodied and personal location to other embodied and personal locations” (Hasbe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, 2009, p. 4). I am searching for the interconnected strands of the tapestry of human life. Below, I summarize the organizational framework of the Integral Model that allows for this connectivity:

<i>Upper left – Mindfulness and Self (I)</i>	<i>Upper right – Mindfulness and Cognitive Learning Science (It)</i>
<i>Lower left – Mindfulness and Storytelling (We)</i>	<i>Lower right – Mindfulness and Systems (Its)</i>

Each quadrant of IM allows for a different perspective of mindfulness to emerge. Much like the process of poetry, the use of the IM allows different interpretations, perceptions, and voices to be heard with regards to the research question. The research methodology and the framework present complimentary perspectives to explore multiple ways of knowing and being in the world. The rest of this paper will look specifically at each of the four quadrants of IM in a combination of prose and poetic inquiry in a spirit of multiple perspectives, interpretations and ways of encompassing this journey of human living.

Mindfulness and Self (Upper Right Quadrant of the Integral Model—I)

Hence began the journey to understand the Self through poetic inquiry. I seek to use my personal experience of my roles as teacher, mother, academic, and human spirit to create something that is universal or generalizable to allow the readers see the work as if it were their own (Furman et al., 2007). I inquire to uncover the mysteries of the Self through understanding my own story, as Atwood (2002) suggests, “to enter the darkness and with luck to illuminate it and to bring something back out to the light” (p. xxiv). I believe that “autobiography is a way of living in the world” (Leggo, 2012, p. xviii) and that poetry is “a way to tap into universality” (Faulkner, 2007, p. 17). Through the deep exploration of my own personal experience, I hope to find the key to understanding my experience in a deeper, more profound, and transformative way.

*When I was just I little girl
I contemplated with care of all the vast possibilities of what I could be
Doctor, lawyer, dancer, dreamer. The world of art and science blended into my final destiny
Into the essence of my biology, my psychology, coursing deep within my spirit
How I would discover all of the possible permutations of who I am
How that would shape my dreams, my desires and my destiny
When I was just a dreaming, daring, dauntless, little girl*

*When I was a teenager, studying in school, following all the rules
The waters became murky, the paths overgrown with thorns and the possibilities
Endless yet somehow limited in their design and structure as I strove to understand
As I struggled to comprehend and critique all the complex combinations of who I am
They told me that is not possible, you cannot think that way and poetry is not science
Poetry is not a way to understand complex logic and ideas*

*You must think the way we require you to and take your place in the assembly line
With all the others. Take your place, follow the rules, don't question, and don't think
When I was a teenager*

*As I grew into adulthood, I acquired all of the answers and possibilities to a multitude of
thoughts
Yet the deeper complex question always remained submersed beneath the veil of consciousness
Who am I*

Who am I

WHO AM I

*River water tumbling over rocks in a bubbling mountain stream fighting to cut its own pathway
Dancing patterns through the jagged earth as water seeks direction through the fertile soil
Shaping the direction in often violent ways overriding the present path to unknown destinations
Driven by the power and force of the rushing rapids swirling in new and unknown patterns
Rushing, rushing, rushing*

Forcing a route to an unknown outcome for an unknown cause

*Children in classrooms following the systematic model training for the factory
Unlike the river they are not free to shape their own patterns and rhythms yet somehow still
Rushing to an unknown destination for an unknown cause on a race to nowhere
The river forces its pathway as children passively follow the route that is laid out before them
They are not free to explore, to follow their own breath and to understand
Who am I*

*Wake me up inside to recognize my heart and find the essence of my poetic Soul
Spirit comes tumbling out like the rapidly churning water of the river as it fights to find a path
Help me understand the complex thoughts that swiftly swirl in circles in my muddled mind
Interconnected circles of relationships that involve the Other and the whole of Mother Earth
Join me in this search for happiness, for health, for harmony and for holistic wellness*

*The process of becoming, to become, to be
Becoming the butterfly, undertaking the transformation and learning to take flight to the sky
To spread my wings and soar amongst the clouds while rooted deeply to the Earth
Breathing deeply as the world spins around me in a tapestry of interconnected synthesized fibres
As I find my voice, my poetic voice to illuminate the moment of discovery*

This process of poetic research allowed me to capture the essence of my experience and present it in a new and more assessable way (Faulkner, 2009). Hence my journey to understand myself began with a poem. Through this process of deep poetic inquiry, I began to feel an awakening. The Sanskrit word *upaya* describes the teaching style of one who is awakened to this state of being. Smith (1999) reflects,

in terms of contemporary pedagogy, we can see the way that *upaya* refutes any systematic approach to instructional conduct, making possible an opening of a much fuller range of expression on both the part of the teacher and the student. (p. 20)

Upaya is a sharp juxtaposition to the standardizing factory model in that “the interest of the [*upaya*] teacher is not to teach, in the usual sense of imparting well-formulated epistemologies”

(Smith, 1999, p. 20), but rather to strive to recognize and protect the unique conditions under which each individual student can find his own way. It is the mindful process of slowly awakening to an

understanding of how pedagogical confidences learned in one's teacher training may have only limited application in the face of any classroom's true complexity; and that dealing with that complexity requires not yet another recipe for control, but precisely the opposite, namely a radical openness to what is actually happening therein, in the lives and the experiences of both students and oneself, and an ability to deal with it somehow on its own unique terms. (Smith, 1999, p. 22)

This approach involves the willingness to face oneself and others in a mindful and heartfelt manner, recognizing that we are all interconnected strands of a vibrant and thriving learning community. It requires the ability to be silent, to be still, to face one's "heart of darkness," (phrase coined by Joseph Conrad, 1899), and to recognize one's fears and to begin the deep and complicated journey to self-awakening. To achieve this outcome, a teacher must take an inner journey, for, "to be a teacher...requires that I face my Teacher, which is the world as it comes to meet me in all of its variegation, complexity and simplicity" (Smith, 1999, p. 24). At this point one understands that the teacher's face is always reflected in the faces of others, and thus the teacher is one with all kind, recognizing the interconnectivity of all other Beings on our planet. Smith (1999) describes this process as, "facing those whose faces have been burned by the fires of life, seeing myself in them, I become more fully human, more open and generous, more representative of this real thing we call Life" (p. 24). It is this thing called life that we seek to understand in our educational contexts, that we try to represent through our curriculum as "the situated image of the live(d) curricular experiences of teachers and students" (Aoki, 1996, p. 418). Self-awakening is a slow process that requires time for consideration and reflection, and results in a loss of fear as "the teacher who is awake has recovered themselves from the snares and entrapments of the Self and Other thinking, now accepting all others in a way a very young child does, trusting the world as being the only world there is, engaging without fear" (Smith, 1999, p. 25). Self-awakening also involves the recognition of beauty, for, "when we can sincerely recognize the beautiful qualities of other people, it is very difficult to hold onto our feelings of anger and resentment" (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2009, p. 73). Someone who has awakened sees the beauty of life in each moment, and transcends fear. The awakened being is then in turn able to inspire this same type of insight in others, developing a type of wisdom and grace through poetic voice and open space. (Jardine, 2012)

Mindfulness and Cognitive Learning Science (Upper Right Quadrant of IM—Its)

As my thoughts went inward to the Self, I began to contemplate the implications for the learning sciences and the neurosciences. As a poetic researcher, I knew somehow that my entire body was involved in this transformative process of Being and knowing. Siegel (2011) reflects, "the neural networks around the heart and throughout the body are intimately interwoven with the resonance circuits of the brain" (p. 167). Poetry is a portal that allows for cognitive understanding, creativity, impact, and the evolution of the story (Baldwin, 2005, p. 64). It is a way to merge the art and science of learning to understand the complex interconnection between the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical realms that compromise human living. Poetry is a portal to

personal wellness and social interconnectivity that allows us to weave together seemingly disconnected strands into a synthesis of human life and experiences.

Emotional, social, cognitive and physical

All interconnected parts of a complex whole

The primitive brain struggling for survival and seeking a solution

To bring the mind into a state of empathy and compassion

A complex cognitive labyrinth with multiple pathways and possibilities

The roadways remapped and reworked depending on the diligence of the designer

Teachers as designers of learning, designing the landscape in unique and innovative patterns

Allowing the seeker to follow the pathway that inspires and motivates each individual driver

We are based in our biology but subjected to our expanding environments

And the complex dance that results forms the basis of who we are and who we will become

Reading, writing and the evolution of the brain

What brave new world of interconnected pathways of wisdom lies before us

The brain shows remarkable plasticity

Evolving and shaping its pathways through a multitude of ways

No longer static and unchanging

But a dynamic interconnected system dramatically impacted by the world around it

Higher levels of thinking, higher levels of consciousness, higher and higher

We circle and we spiral into an interconnected web of the components of the whole

Holistic learning encompasses the complexity of each unique brain

As special and as individual as the snowflakes that slowly dance their way from the sky

Our emotions are intertwined with our learning as our heart and spirit speak

In a language that allows for creativity to emerge in a powerful and emotional process

The poet takes us deeper into the play of language, creating mosaics of word

Which bring us into an emotional realm that touches the heart and

Forcing us to be present and live in the current reality

Stress can strike down the entire system breaking the body and the mind

We need to take a few moments, a few deep breaths to steady the mind

Inhale, exhale and trust the process of the breath

To heal the body, mind and soul

Explore the complexities of the interconnected pieces

Synthesize the interconnected strands of our educational landscapes

We are interconnected beings and the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical must not be separated; As Immordino-Yang and Damasio's (2007) point out, "recent advances in neuroscience are highlighting the connections between emotion, social functioning and decision making that have the potential to revolutionize our understanding of the role of affect in education" (p. 3). The most recent developments in cognitive neuroscience (Davidson et al, 2012; Damasio, 2010; Doidge, 2007; Ramachandran, 2011; Sousa, 2010, Immordino Yang & Damasio, 2007; and Siegel, 2010) show that the plasticity of the brain allows for the creation of new neural pathways, thereby resulting in new learning. The brain, once thought static and

inflexible, shows evidence of remarkable adaptability and flexibility, and we now understand that teaching significantly impacts brain function. As our understanding of the flexibility of the brain increases, so must our pedagogical process evolve in response to our new understanding of the cognitive labyrinth. The neural pathways are complex and not the same for all brains, given that “all human behaviours are based on multiple cognitive processes, which are based on the rapid integration of the information from very specific neurological structures, which rely on billions of neurons capable of trillions of possible connections programmed by genes” (Wolf, 2007, p. 10). We are based in our biology but subject to our environments, and the complex dance that results forms the basis of who we are. Understanding the complexities of the mind is instrumental to the holistic development of the individual and of society. As Csikszentmihalyi (1993) reflects, “If we don’t gain control over the contents of consciousness we can’t live a fulfilling life, let alone contribute to a positive outcome of history. And the first step to achieving control is understanding how the mind works” (p. 29).

Mindfulness and Storytelling (Lower Left Quadrant of IM—Its)

Our early relationships are significant to how we narrate the stories of our lives and how our minds develop in infancy and childhood (Siegal, 2011, p. 167). Our mind and our stories are tightly connected and critical to the acquisition of wisdom as an individual and as a community, for stories are, “the living encyclopedia’s of a culture—carrying and preserving the collected knowledge and customs of the community” (Abram, 1996, p. 104).

*Understanding our personal stories and the complex connections allows new perception
Of the tales of our lives creating an interconnected community of humanity sharing stories
Not something to be calculated, measured, assessed and evaluated
But a personal journey to one’s own heart and then back to the heart of another*

*Language as an interconnected, interwoven system of symbols, spirit, and breath
A web-like structure that binds, weaves and encompasses all of humanity in the plot line
Exploring the Self, connecting to the Other, discovering the essence of the Universe
As we gather around the metaphorical campfire and seek the warmth of the light*

*Our personal autobiographical texts uncovered and explored as we seek the solution
To live together in a harmonious interconnected community encompassing many voices
Of those who tell the stories, spinning the web of life that encompasses us all
And those who listen carefully to the voices enveloping them*

*Understanding all of those spiralling, spinning stories
And the role that they play in the physical, the emotional, the cognitive and the social
Social circles, social stories, songs sung from the souls of those seeking solace
Our narratives, our spirit, our sense and our Self*

*Seeking our stories, to share the essence of our spirit
Uncovering the complex questions of humanity and exploring their common ideologies
Understanding what is that lies at the core of our own Essence
And that of the Other
Allowing for the coming together in a celebration of story*

Language is an organic, living system consisting of interconnected strands of words and concepts that encompass the system as a whole: “The web like nature of language ensures that

the whole of the system is implicitly present in every sentence, in every phrase” (Abram, 1996, p. 83). Often, in educational contexts we break language into separate parts. This separation of the parts results in a disconnection between our cognitive, emotional, and physical beings as well as a disconnection from our environment. Using our language to share our stories allows us to bring the disconnected bits back into their wholes, facilitating the formation of community. As Kabat-Zinn (2013) reflects on this life connection,

Poets and scientists alike are aware that our organism pulsates with the rhythms of its ancestry... Our very bodies are joined with the planet in a continual rhythmic exchange as matter and energy flow back and forth between our bodies and what we call “the environment.” (p. 39)

Through the use of different modes of language, we can see common strands that interweave and connect in unexpected ways, revealing a complex and interconnected narrative of life. If we pull and unravel a strand of the pattern the integrity of the whole is forever compromised. We must search for a new type of science, rooted in the ancient tradition of storytelling, to understand the whole of the pattern in our schools, our learning organizations and our lives.

Mindfulness and Systems (Lower Right Quadrant of IM—Its)

In combination with an understanding of the Self, there is a need to understand the system within which one is an interconnected strand. As Wheatley (1992) ponders, “in our organizations we are at the edge of this new world of relationships, hoping the new charts are true, still fearing that if we follow them, that we will fall off into nothing” (p. 33). In the face of this fear, one needs to find a method for exploring the complexities, a more unified theory based on stories and the variety of possibilities present in stories for comprehending this complex process of human living. (Leggo, 2012, p. xix.)

*I live within a complex system of interlocking pieces each one connected to the other
If I pull on one solitary single strand the tightly woven tapestry of synthesized strand
Rapidly unravels leaving only the tattered and frayed remnants
Of what was once a beautiful and vibrant work of art of an interconnected community*

*We are part of an interconnected web of life, each fibre and strand
An integral interconnected part of the whole
Our personal perception providing only one small part
Of a greater cycle of being and becoming*

*Who are the stakeholders? Who is involved in this process of understand human life
As we work together to find a better way
Remember the rule of kindergarten, holding hands and tightly bound
As we work to find a way to step forward, and then back*

*Interconnecting spirals encompassing the massive complexities of the Universe
Spinning, spiralling, swirling upon each other in random patterns of movement
That result in something of a remarkable radiance, the merging shadows of the human story
Something that binds us all together in a complex dance of movement and growth
A symphony of synthesized sound resulting from blending voices of the whole*

As human beings, we are part of an interconnected web of life, each strand woven and linked to the next. As a result, each action we make causes a reaction in the whole. Each interconnected strand is a part of a much larger system, yet often we remain unaware of this interconnection and instead mistake our personal perception as the only valid viewpoint, our own personal understanding of our world shapes the way we see and view things. Thus, the differing perspectives that exist between individuals give rise to different meanings and modes of understanding. Our ontology shapes our epistemology. This is also true of the way we understand our learning organizations, and our roles within these complex systems. To fully understand the diverse factors involved in these interconnected systems, we must think critically, and set aside the time and space necessary for mindful contemplation. Poetic inquiry opens a pathway to find that space in a deep and personal way, and then connect our own experiences and learning to the greater human condition. Autoethnography is, “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). The combination of these two research modes allow for critical thinking about the factors that affect the eventual outcome of these systems. There is then space created to allow for the understanding of different perspectives, resulting in new ideas to emerging and fresh considerations to be given breathing room. Poetic autoethnographic inquiry allows us take that deep breath, and savour the process of reflection, understanding and interpretation.

Synthesis

I seek a research portal that allows for reflection, connection, creation, and transformation space. Autoethnography allows for the study of Self, writing about my individual experiences of family, work, schooling and society. Poetic inquiry allows me to study the Self as means to enlarge my understandings and offer a different interpretation on those experiences. Autoethnographic poetic inquiry as a research methodology, combined with the theoretical framework of the Integral model, has given me an ability to explore the role of mindfulness in curriculum and learning in an interconnected and creative process that explores multiple possibilities and perspectives. As Hirshfield (1997) reflects on poetry as a research tool, “each time we enter its world woven and musical invocation, we give ourselves over to a different mode of knowing; to poetry’s knowing, and to the increase of existence it brings unlike any other” (p. vii). This combination of autoethnographical poetic research and the Integral model allows for a synthesis of the complexities involved in the exploration of the role of mindfulness in curriculum and learning. As Wilber (2008) states, “we have always sought a way to connect with deeper truths, to achieve well-being and harmony, and to realize our highest potential” (p. 1). Harmony involves understanding our complex systems and our role within them. Our educational landscapes are a vast but interconnected terrain that we must journey through together, synthesizing the parts back into one vibrant tapestry of human life.

Our connective educational landscape

Encompassing many strands tightly woven to create a complex whole

Different perspectives and possibilities swirl around a colourful sea of diversity and ideas

All seeking to find the solutions to complex issues that encompass our common humanity

The Integral model exploring perspectives and possibilities

I, It, We, Its

All forming a unique lens for understanding the complex concept of mindfulness

*Of exploring the interconnected pieces of the whole from a variety of perspectives
To discover all the interconnected patterns of the lavish landscape of life*

Mindfulness and Self

Mindfulness and Cognitive Learning Science

Mindfulness and Storytelling

Mindfulness and Systems

Pieces of our interconnected educational landscape that seek to understand the whole

Seeking to understand the slow and steady breath

That unites us all with the gift of vibrant and vivacious life

Mindfulness and Self....

Seeking the deep caverns of our soul where the unexamined life lies dormant and waiting

Is an essential part of the landscape [that] one needs to navigate as one nears the crossroads

On the road to mindfulness an a pedagogy left in peace (Jardine, 2012)

Mindfulness and cognitive learning science.....

Exploring the physical body and the complex science

That takes us into the cognitive labyrinth of the mind with multiple pathways and possibilities

The twisting, turning, ever changing pathways that evolve and morph to create

The holistic human beings we all become

Mindfulness and stories.....

Listen to the stories that unfold around you

Connecting the emotional, the physical, the social and the cognitive

Complexities of our vast and diverse educational landscape

Connecting all the pathways on the journey to awe and awakening

Mindfulness and systems....

Complex systems with multiple perspectives and possibilities

Working together to bring us to a place where we can see the beating of the heart

The heart of wisdom that guides us to a mindful place of peace

Where all can learn to breathe and breathe to learn

Mindfulness.....

Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale

Listen to the pattern of the slow and steady breath as it guides us to our inner Essence

Take the time to slow down and pay attention to the routes and possibilities

That are opening before us in this connective educational landscape

With its crossing and intersections where we all gather

To share the stories of the journey of our lives

Inhale, exhale

What route shall you take, what pathway will guide you to find the way

Travel safe on this journey to mindfulness as you go deep into your soul seeking a spirit

And at the end of the journey the paths will all intersect and merge

As together, we all find our way home.

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