**Deep Visualisation**

Here now. Picture in your mind a campfire you have seen, from a time when you have felt safe and happy and connected. See the fire, see it clear, have no fear. See deep into the heart of the hearth to the flame in the hot coals. See it dance, see the rhythm of it flickering. Feel the heat on your hands and face. Rub your hands together, make them hot, then rest them on your belly just under your navel. Rest them warm on your belly and feel the heat there.

Picture and feel the campfire in your mind. It is a real thing, this image. It exists, but where is it? Is it in your brain? No, it is in your mind. But where is your mind if not just in your brain? Imagine for a minute that your mind is not trapped only inside your skull; that it can move around your body. See the campfire in your head, crackling yellow and red. Feel the heat of it reach your face. Now try and move it down, that image, see it move and feel the warmth of it move, down your face and past your chin, down your neck and to your chest, see it and feel it move down past your liver, down over your stomach to you lower belly area.

Hold the image of the fire right there in your belly. It is not in your head now. Your mind is more than your brain and your sight is more than what your eyes provide. Your mind’s eye can see the fire there in your belly. See it, feel it burn. There is a power there, in your belly. This is your big power. It has energy, warmth and a rhythm, just like the fire you are seeing there with your mind’s eye. Feel it under your hands, burning bright. Now blow it to burn brighter.

Take a slow, deep breath. Blow it gently out through lips that are almost closed, the way you blow on hot coals to make them glow. See the coals crackle and spark. Your hands are protecting the fire in your belly. See it as you breath in again slowly and blow right into the heart of the hearth fire. Breather in, breather out, see the coals glow and the flames flare. Keep breathing in and out now, fanning the flames. The air from this place, as it enters your lungs, is leaving small pieces of itself behind that enter your bloodstream and race through it to every part of your body. Those pieces are like sponges, mopping up tiny pockets of poison, poison left behind from a thousand sad feelings, bad memories, toxic events and attacks and accidents and damaged lands, stolen places, stolen things, corrupted waters, murders and massacres, fences and blocks and assaults and insults and injuries and hidden histories. Let those poisons be mopped up by the little sponges of air in your blood, let them be taken in those sponges all through your body and back to your lungs, moving back from liquid to air and blown back out through your mouth and nose. Blow the badness out, let it leave you and disintegrate in the air, rise up far above and blow away on the breeze.

The poisonous things leave behind dry areas, damaged areas, in your body. Imagine all through your limbs and torso and head, all this dry and crackly dead grass, snapped branches and grey, papery leaves. All this scrubby trash is blocking you mind from moving freely around your body. See the fire there is your belly. Blow again on the hot coals, gently, seeing them glow and feeling the heat. Blow again, harder this time, and see the sparks begin to spiral up from the fire as you blow. Blow again, harder, and make the sparks fly further from the flames, fluttering upwards into the dry, dead grasses laying thick under your ribs. See them land there, settle in the feathery fronds, smoking softly in wisps that wind up through the itchy snarls of grasses and sticks on layers of leaves. See the tiny flames flare and climb and spiral and spread, and a sparrowhawk swoops in, wings in the rhythm of the flames, to take one of the smoking sticks in its talons, sweeping off inland to droop it smouldering in the knotted undergrowth of your chest. The fire forms a long line burning across your torso, dancing the same rhythm as the fire in your belly, bright yellow flames that burn briefly and not too hot, leaving soft, cool ash that crumbles into the soil, your flesh, and nourishes it, and will continue to nourish it each day as the dew drops fall and settle an sift inwards.

The line of fir spreads upwards. All the scars and injuries and brittle patches left by damage and loss and abuse are being swept into the fire and made into soft charcoal and ash, swirling together like crow and white cockatoo feathers. Soon it will spread to your throat, then your eyes, then your ears, then your hands. See the flames and smoke and feel the heat and hear the crackling and snapping through your ribs, your collarbones, your neck and throat, mouth and chin, nose and cheeks, eyes, forehead and scalp, ears, shoulders, arms and elbows, forearms and hands all burning and the smoke billowing out through your fingers and high into the sky. Dry, damaged areas are all made clean and new and warm and light. The fire spreads now, from your hands, past the campfire hearth in your belly, flames leaping across from your fingers to your hips, burning through the dry grass there and on through your loins and buttocks and thighs. The fire has a rhythm—feel it dance in your legs. Your knees pop and crackle as they go up in flame, your shins and calves, your ankles and feet, until smoke billows out of your toes and high into the sky, leaving you light and clean and new. Dew drops fall and cool everything down, dampening the ashes and soot and soaking it into the ground where heated seeds sprout and begin to take root. Country is becoming well. You are Country. You are becoming well.

Think of somebody you love unconditionally, no matter what. If you can’t do this you need to stop now and go take care of your life. If you can, picture that person in your mind and let yourself feel that love for them, feel it like a sensation coming over you. Keep seeing the image of that person and feeling that love, then picture them in a special place. That place will be somewhere outdoors that is special to you both, a place where you have shared joy and love together, where you have connected deeply with the land and each other. See every part of the landscape around you, the plants, trees, dirt or stones. See the person you love holding a big bucket of water. They tip it out onto the ground. They follow it where it flows, but let it ignore any civilised or synthetic barriers. Follow them, the loved one and the water, and pay attention to the way the water moves on the ground in that place, where it goes, where it stops, where it sinks. Feel the love for that person and then stretch out with that feeling, and feel the same sensation for that place. Let your love move all across it, through it and into it, the same way rainwater would if it fell there right now. Feel that love spreading all over that Country. Where do you feel it in your body? In your chest, head, belly? Is that all? Is that feeling just inside you, or does it go further? Can you feel that love outside yourself, a long way off, in that special place? It is right there, a part of you and a part of the one you love, a feeling, a part of your mind and spirit, right there in that place. Can you feel it?

Holding on to that feeling, let the picture of your loved one and that place fade gently into the background. Slowly replace it with an image of the place where you are now. Not a room or a building—allow all that to be transparent. See the land, the ground, the waters and landforms around you and beneath you. Hold the feeling of love. Imagine where the water would flow if it fell on that ground right now. Let the love trickle out from you, lapping outwards in ripples or tinkling in streams through the earth, see it there all around you for that place, feel it in the place. Feel the place. Love the place. There may be wounds or sickness there in the land that make you sad, but hold that loving feeling because it is unconditional.

The love is not just a feeling in your body now, or in a distant place, or with another person. It is around you in the place where you sit, in the land, along with the feeling from all the old people who have been connecting the same way with that place for thousands of years. All the memories of those Ancestors are there. All your own Ancestors’ memories lie inside you in the same way, in your bones in every part of you, in your cellular memory. Mind and memory are real things although they can’t be touched, measured, proven or even seen. They exist, but not only in your brain. They extend out, to your body, to the land and your relations. Your mind is infinite and extends as far as your attention and love can go.

Mind, brain, body, land, loved ones—all these things are at the front of y our thoughts at once; they make you heavy. Your body and spirit sinking, thinking, heaviness moving deep through you. Eyelids heavy, closed; hand heavy on your belly, back pressed into the ground—skull, shoulders, feet, legs, all heavy. The feeling, the loving in the land and the love in your body are the same thing, you and the earth the same thing now, so you sink right into it. Feel yourself going through the floor or ground like it’s quicksand, but transparent, the land, you, sinking slowly into the dirt or sand beneath you. There are layers of rock and water down here, and you pass through them, sifted and cleaned by them as they pass through you, cooling you as you fall deeper and deeper into the dark. You are not afraid. You are not alone. You begin to feel that loving feeling again, only now it is not coming from you, but coming into you, flowing through you and around you. There is a warmth and a rhythm to it. A deep rhythm sounding deep, deep down. You sink further, faster towards the loving rhythm and the warmth.

You see a soft glow, closer and closer, warmer and warmer, the rhythm thicker, thicker and older and stronger and deeper than anything else. It is familiar, comforting, and so is the glow. The glow is from a fire, a hearth fire or a heart-fire with hot coals and you know it. You’ve seen it before. Could it be the sun? It is the same as the fire in your belly, the image in your mind from before, only it is massive. Its power is made of the same stuff as the power you carry in your belly, your big power. As you feel the heat and rhythm you sense the same inside you, beneath your hands, thrumming and glowing. It feels like a fish sniffing at a line, deep beneath the sea. It is faint but real at your fingertips, stirring deep in your belly. You know this. You remember this place, the earth you came from, the big mother that bore you. You’re home. Now that big hearth fire under the earth stokes your own fire, the fire in your belly, replenishing your power, filling you up with endless love and energy. It is clean, warm and pure, and lifts you up. You feel lighter, and upwards you go.

The glow disappears beneath you but the rhythm and flame remain in your belly. They propel you up, up, up, up through miles of heat and rock and cold and earth and more rock and sand and water and earth, up, up, up until you reach the place where your body is sitting or lying there in the world. But you can’t stop. You keep drifting upwards now, lighter than burnt leaves on the breeze, stirring and rising up, up, up through any ceilings or tree tops, up, up through any clouds and into a shining blueness that stretches as far as you can see all around. Up and up still you rise, as the blue becomes deeper, richer, darker. Soon it falls away beneath you and you are into a clear black infinity all around. The earth is far below and you drift on through burning stars.

The Seven Sisters are here, burning bright. All the hero Ancestors are up here, sky camp, watching you, blazing, that same fire again. Your rhythm is pulsing out to them; they are pulsing back, light washing through you in waves, stoking up that fire inside you again, blazing those coals, washing you clean and clear. Can your mind even extend up here, to the patterns in the endless night sky? Can your mind possibly perceive all of these stars, shapes, gaps—forms made by those gaps, the stories and morality and rich knowledge here, thousands of parts, all at once? Can it know every part at once? What it does hold for sure are the patterns created by all these parts. It sees objects pulled towards a space and knows what must lie there out of sight. It is able to see the swirl and stories and positions and angles and times and seasons all at once, to read the big patterns these show together and therefore make predictions and judgments about land-based events, phenomena, weather, ritual, the timing of all things in your life throughout each cycle of seasons, the longer cycles of generations and the even longer cycles of deep time and story.

What would it take to free your mind, allow it to see these big patterns again? All the Ancestors up here, they left their traces in the earth and waters below as well, and you carry those traces within, those memories and knowledges and deep, deep love. Those things wait for you, below. They tug at you, begin to draw you down. You are no longer light, but not heavy either. You are in balance, and you return to you place of love below. You are a point of connection between the earth and sky camp, so go, be that. You drop, plummet through stars and darkness and blue-black and deep blue and light blue and maybe clouds and water drops and tree tops and ceilings and then softly, softly, softly settle back down, down to earth, into the feeling of your place and your body, the rhythm that never stops, the fire in your belly, your power and the infinite potential of your mind, within and without.

sand talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World, pp 256-265