

I am going to have us reflect upon our shared values by doing a guided meditation. In this digital age with an overload of screen-time, I encourage you to take this opportunity to rest your eyes, breathe, and vision together for a few minutes.

I invite you to find a comfortable position. Perhaps you are sitting with your feet planted on the ground, perhaps you are lying down, or maybe standing up. Whatever is comfortable for you. Feel the weight of your feet and your body grounding you and rooting you to the place where you are.

You are welcome to close your eyes, or find a spot on the wall, the floor, a piece of art, or out the window, to softly focus your gaze.

I invite you to notice your breath. Is it deep or shallow? Is your pulse quick or slow? Notice the rise and fall of your chest, your diaphragm, belly as you breathe in and breathe out. Notice the sensation of air filling up and leaving your lungs with each inhale and exhale. To be able to breathe, fully and deeply, together in this moment, is not to be taken lightly.

Breathe in openness, hope, and healing. Breathe out anchored beliefs and complacency.

Notice any tension that may be present in your body. Is your jaw clenched? Is your neck or back aching? Is your brow furrowed?

Try to breathe spaciousness and relaxation into those places where you may feel tension. Perhaps your mind is racing with a mounting to-do list. For a few minutes, without self-judgement, try to refocus on your breath and body and let your thoughts gently float away. The to-do list will be there waiting for you later. Try to practice gentleness and self-compassion with whatever may be coming up for you in this quiet moment.

Rooting ourselves in this space, looking inward to our breath, our state of mind, and the sensations of our body, we can begin to offer gentleness and compassion outside of ourselves. It is from this place that we can reflect upon our shared values.

We believe that all people have the right to live their fullest potential in environments that allow them to grow and thrive.

We believe in treating all people with dignity, care, and respect.

We believe in working in full partnership with community.

We believe that knowledge comes in many forms, and from many places in our society.

What would it look like for all communities to grow and thrive? To be treated with dignity, care, and respect? To have their knowledge honored?

Take a deep breath in, and a deep breath out. Notice the sound of your breath, the temperature of the air as you inhale, how it's cooler when you inhale and warmer as you exhale.

We will name our history, seek reconciliation, and be intentional.

We will work to dismantle racist and unjust policies and practices that impact public health.

We will listen closely, communicate openly, seek understanding, and practice inclusion.

Allow yourself to imagine a just future, free of racism, free of oppression, and free of suffering. One where all are well, where there is listening and understanding. What does that place look like? Can you imagine it? This is the world we are building toward.

Breathe in freedom, breathe out pain. Breathe in possibility, breathe out constraint.

We will lead with evidence, transparency, empathy, and love.

We will innovate, and look for nuance. We will balance research, reflection, and action.

We will try, fail, make progress, and try again. We are imperfect, and we are committed. We remain open to the messiness of working toward justice and healing.

Breathe in love and empathy. Breathe out perfectionism and self-doubt.

We value integrity, equity, and justice.

We value humility, curiosity, and creativity.

We value our unique differences and our commonalities.

Imagine a world where we center justice, equity, and creativity in all that we do. Where we celebrate our points of connection, as well as the places where our paths and stories diverge and converge.

What would it be like to feel celebrated and seen for all of the beauty and uniqueness that you bring to the world and this work?

Breathe in curiosity and humility. Breathe out judgement and hurt.

Continue to breathe for a few more moments. Consider the journey that we have just been on, and the one we will continue to take together. How do you feel? Did anything open up for you? Are there places that may be more open, where they were once tight? Are you waiting for this exercise to be over? (it's okay to laugh). Wherever you are at in this process is just right.

Take one more deep breath in, and one more breath out. If you've been still for the last few minutes, start to return some awareness to your body, maybe by wiggling your fingers, stretching out your wrists, doing a couple of shoulder or neck rolls.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to envision our values together. If a couple of people would like to share what that was like for them, what might have come up, I welcome your feedback.