

Slow Down, Dive Deep

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SUMMARY: In this session we will explore the delights of doing more with less. We'll take time to enjoy slowing down with restorative yoga, meditative singing, and deep engagement with a little bit of text.

GOALS:

- Participants will understand the value of spending more time doing less
- Participants will have several new ideas for activities that allow folks to get a lot out of doing less

AUDIENCE: The programming will be aimed at teens, but the core concept and practices can be adapted for any age.

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Text: *Tefilat HaDerekh* by Kohenet Ilana Joy Streit (provided below)
- Depending on which restorative yoga poses you do, you might also need props for those. If the floor surface isn't soft, then you'll need yoga mats also.

SET-UP: It would be good to have enough space to spread out for the yoga. Depending on which poses you're doing, you might need walls or something else that folks can prop/lean their legs on. Also, it is best for the yoga poses to have a soft surface (or at least mats if not).

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:15 – *Introduce concept by going straight into text study*

- 00:15-00:25 – Step back to identify the gifts of the core concept (delving deeply, doing more with less)
- 00:25-0:40 – Practice concept with restorative yoga and singing
- 00:40-0:45 – Close with quick idea share

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:15 – Introduce concept by going straight into text study

This session is all based around the idea of doing more with less – keeping things simple so that we can:

- a) get more out of something by engaging with it deeply rather than moving onto the next thing
- b) find a kind of rest and relaxation that can come from settling into one thing and spending time with it (and especially how that kind of setup can help with making prep easier for staff).

All the activities below will revolve around that.

To delve straight into that, participants will be welcomed into the space by immediately dividing up into *chevruta* and studying our core text:

Tefilat HaDerekh by Kohenet Ilana Joy Streit:
may I breathe as I go
may I breathe with each step
may breath guide me
may I arrive more with each breath

Questions for discussion:

- How do you feel when you breathe deeply? Do you ever realize that you're holding your breath or breathing shallowly? If so, what usually causes that?
- What might Kohenet Streit's blessing help us to do? Why does it matter to move through the world with breath?
- What do you think it means to arrive more? How might each breath help us to arrive more?
- The original *Tefilat Hederech* (travelers' prayer) is about asking for various protections so that we travel and arrive safely. How does this prayer hold onto that idea? How does it diverge?

00:15-00:25 – Step back to identify the gifts of the core concept (delving deeply, doing more with less)

When we come together as a large group, we'll discuss the core concept of the session.

- Why is this valuable?
- What do we get from spending more time delving deeper into smaller amounts of content?
- How can that help with the stress of program planning?
- How does it work better for some neurodivergent learners (and work less well for others)?
- What are some of the experiences that participants have had before that made them want to slow down and delve deeper?

00:25-0:40 – Practice concept with restorative yoga and singing

For the next 15 minutes, we'll do a few different "slow down, dive deep" practices, each of which will be versions of activities that often move at a faster pace:

- Singing: Often, song sessions are filled with lots of songs, each one often including multiple verses and lots of words. We'll be singing a song that has only a few words and repeats continuously, making the experience into more of a chant – its lyrics are “I am a wave, make me a sea. I am a spark, make me a flame. I am a seed, make me a tree. I am a stone, make me a mountain.”
 - Any short, simple song can work for this! A niggun (wordless melody) works great, or any song with no more than a few phrases.
 - The main thing to remember with this is that you're trying to keep singing that one song for longer than you normally would – even singing it for 5 minutes will create some new depth and spaciousness. Notice what feels different about repeating a song for a while and settling into it rather than singing a lot of lyrics or moving on to a new song every 2-3 minutes.
- Restorative yoga: We'll learn about the practice of restorative yoga and how it functions differently from flow-based yoga practices. We'll then do 2-3 restorative poses ourselves.
 - Restorative yoga is made up of poses that don't require the participants to hold themselves up, build strength, or move from one pose quickly into the next. The point is to arrange your body into positions that help to stretch it in new ways by releasing it as fully as possible. Some of those poses can be done with just one's body and the ground, but most poses do require some sort of prop to help support your limbs in the posed configurations.
 - This site explains more about the practice and offers several poses (with props): <https://chopra.com/articles/restorative-yoga-the-basics-5-poses>.
 - This site has a series of poses that don't require props: <https://www.yogajournal.com/poses/types/restorative-types-of-yoga/7-ways-to-do-restorative-yoga-when-youre-traveling-without-props/>
 - There are also lots of YouTube videos with various no-prop restorative sequences.

After each activity, we'll take a few minutes to share how it felt.

0:40-0:45 – Close with quick idea share

To close, we'll do a quick share of other ideas that participants have for additional “slow down, dive deep” activities – anything where they can:

- a) carve a smaller slice of something than they normally would and/or,
- b) spend longer doing it than they might have otherwise.

We'll also share where in the camp space and schedule folks are most excited to try this out.

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

- Note on the choice to start the session in *chevruta*: this is a great way to handle having some folks come on time while others might be late, since you can usher people straight into the activity as they arrive. Folks who arrive on time will get more minutes in their *chevruta*, while folks who arrive late will get less, but you don't have to waste any time at the beginning waiting for a quorum or have to re-explain anything or re-introduce folks as others arrive.
- Additional note on where/when these activities can be used: these can be great choices for anything where you're trying to encourage a slower or more restful pace – Shabbat activities, *tfilah*, activities at rest time, bedtime rituals, etc.