

*the practice of*  
**Intentional  
Rest**

what does it look  
like to prioritize  
rest?



**Roots of Resilience Theme Packet October 2024**

## WELCOME

Welcome to the 2024-25 Meaning Making theme year focused on the Roots of Resilience! Over the next eight months we will explore practices which can help to ground us in the midst of our current challenges, personal, social, and global. Each monthly packet will offer questions, practices, quotes, and much more; consider it an invitation to explore the theme at your pace, taking from it what you need. As you shape the service on the theme - or write an e-news article or post on social media - you will find images, quotes, meditations and music to help you.

We begin with the practice of intentional rest - in the midst of many demands and changes, what does it look like to prioritize rest? As a UU minister, I find fall to be the busiest time with congregational life at full speed, so at first I found it hard to imagine prioritizing rest at this time of year – surely that’s for June! And it’s those kind of unthinking assumptions (no time in the busy now, I will rest later) which we want to challenge this month - it’s a good and necessary thing to rest even in the midst of activity - to refresh and restore ourselves briefly and often.

In general, mainstream western culture encourages busy-ness, glorifies productivity and action. It can feel like we are all buzzing worker bees, always busy, always trying to be productive, to do something useful, to the point of exhausting ourselves. The great pause of the pandemic revealed the limitations of busy culture, just how exhausted many people had become, and raised up the value of intentional rest. It is counter-cultural to protect and value your downtime, to challenge those deeply ingrained narratives.

This month I encourage you to reflect on what kinds of restorative rest you need, and how it feels to take time for yourself without expectation. Reclaim your time, reclaim your body and give yourself the gift of simply being. Even bees enjoy resting in the sunshine!

Blessings,

*Fiona*

Rev. Fiona Heath

### **The Practice of Intentional Rest**

In the midst of many demands and changes, what does it look like to prioritize rest?

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# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When you think about prioritizing rest, what arises for you?

What messages about taking time to rest and relax did you receive during your childhood?

How has your understanding changed over the years?

If you had a time in your life when you had abundant rest, how did that feel for you? What did you value about that experience?

Later in the packet you will read about seven types of rest, which stand out to you and why? Are there some types which you regularly engage with? What are you missing? What stops you from prioritizing that type of rest?

Doing those deeply unfashionable things—  
slowing down, letting your spare time expand, getting enough sleep, resting—is a radical act now, but it is essential.  
- Katherine May  
*Wintering* (2020)

Rest  
isn't a reward  
for work; it's part  
of the work.

Leesa Renee Hall,  
inspired by Tricia Hersey's Nap Ministry

Rest is not idleness,  
and to lie sometimes on  
the grass under the trees on a summer's day,  
listening to the murmur of the water, and  
watching clouds float across the sky, is by no  
means a waste of time.  
John Lubbock *The Use of Life* (1895)

The page is decorated with illustrations of pink flowers and green leaves. The flowers are located in the top right, middle right, and bottom left corners. The leaves are located in the middle right and bottom left corners.

# PRACTICES

## Creating an achievable plan for intentional rest

Reflect on how you presently get rest in your life. Do you want more? Are you satisfied with how you get rest? Do you want to try something new? After spending a few minutes considering this, make a simple plan for the coming period of time. You decide what would be supportive to you: that day, the next few days, that week, that month. Make it an achievable plan, not a big leap. Take small movements towards it.

Not sure what you might want to do? Here are some ideas to get your imagination going:

- Take a few moments each day while waiting for something (like a kettle to boil, or waiting in line at a store), and just be present without making plans for the next thing.
- Take 5 minutes to stare out the window and just breathe.
- Decide to get to bed 15 minutes earlier that night or that week.
- Lie down for 10–20 minutes when you feel tired. Try to just focus on being present to how you feel (rather than thinking about what comes next or what just happened).
- Before a meal, pause and breathe, light a candle, and be present to the food and drink before you. Eat mindfully, being aware of what you are taking in.
- Lie down and feel the connection you have with something larger than yourself: the earth; a higher power; your loved ones. Allow yourself to feel the connection and rest in it.

Try out your plan. Be compassionate with yourself as you go. Get curious about what helps you act on your intentions and what gets in your way. (If it helps to make some notes as you go, to learn from the process, please do.) Adjust your plan as you go.

You may decide to do this practice with a friend, spouse, as a family together. Whatever seems like a way that is supportive and not a 'should.'

Remember: the dominant society is built on speed and busyness. To take time to rest, whatever plan you come up with, is countercultural. You are on a longer arc of change. You are not in it alone.



# PRACTICES


Creatively engaging as a way to rest

Our brains work very hard in the dominant culture and the other parts of us need time to pause and connect. Look at a few options of how you might want to do something creatively fun and engaging that is doable - start small.

This month choose one option (do more if you want to). Try it out. Notice what helps make this possible and what gets in your way. Be gentle with yourself. (If you even just think about doing it and move towards it, consider that a success!)

You might:

- Spend time colouring with the colouring sheet provided in this theme packet
- Choose a song you find moves you and set everything else aside and just listen to it - see what arises in you
- Move to music in ways that make your body happy (whatever your ability) - moving just for the pleasure of it
- Let something inspire you and write about it - one sentence, a 2 line poem, a small drawing (or even some coloured lines on a page)



You were not just born to center your entire existence on work and labor. You were born to heal, to grow, to be of service to yourself and community, to practice, to experiment, to create, to have space, to dream, and to connect.

Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*.

# The Bookshelf

Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto by Tricia Hersey (2022)

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/60382737-rest-is-resistance>

Rest: Why You Get More Done When You Work Less by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang (2016)

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/29502354-rest>

The Art of Rest: How to Find Respite in the Modern Age by Claudia Hammond (2019)

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/51115322-the-art-of-rest>

Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times by Katherine May (2020)

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/52623750-wintering>

Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age by Katherine May (2023)

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/61355268-enchantment>

Tranquility belongs to a long list of shadowy essentials to which our culture pays lip-service, but to which we are mostly oblivious, among them, rest, sleep, silence, stillness and solitude.

Christian McEwan

On Creativity and Slowing Down (2011)

# With Children

Yogi Superhero Time to Rest by Anna Smithers 2020

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/55975143-yogi-superhero-time-to-rest>

Youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCAtwSMyl\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCAtwSMyl_M)

A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles by Thich Nhat Hanh 2008

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13590614-a-handful-of-quiet>

Giving Thanks by Jonathan London

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2753052-giving-thanks>

## Longer reads online

From Braver/Wiser, poet and activist Atena O. Danner on reclaiming rest:

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/rest-will-heal-us>

From Psyche Magazine (on-line): How To Rest Well by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang

<https://psyche.co/guides/how-to-rest-well-and-enjoy-a-more-creative-sustainable-life>

From Brevard Health Alliance in Florida:

<https://www.brevardhealth.org/blog/why-you-should-prioritize-intentional-rest/>

# Singing

#86 [The Prayer by Shelley Denham Jackson](#)

#352 [Find a Stillness by Carl G. Seaburg](#)

## Soulful singing

Make space for mindfulness and joy in your body and your life – join Rev. Wendy Luella Perkins and the Soulful Singing community online, daily 9-10 am Eastern and Thursdays 7-8:30 pm. Click here for details:

<https://www.wendyluellaperkins.com/soulfulsinging.php>

# Music online

## Apple Music

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/rest-life-single/1593190533>

## You Tube

<https://youtu.be/nENorl4rWeU>

## Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/track/2ml6ugCsDyUiGane8eAfZ0?si=ce31c81b03b848be>

# In Focus: 7 Ways to rest

Watch or listen:

From TED Talks “How to be a Better Human” by Sandra Dalton-Smith

<https://ideas.ted.com/the-7-types-of-rest-that-every-person-needs/>

Ted Talk ‘The real reason why we are tired and what to do about it by Sandra Dalton-Smith’:

<https://youtu.be/ZGNN4EPJzGk?si=wHovEDg-l2iPhgZV>

George Stern’s recap of Sandra Dalton-Smith’s work:

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/george-stern\\_if-sleep-is-the-only-kind-of-rest-you-get-activity-7210251430530617344-zEuN/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/george-stern_if-sleep-is-the-only-kind-of-rest-you-get-activity-7210251430530617344-zEuN/)

One day I hope we can all deprogram from the lie that rest, silence, and pausing is a luxury and privilege. It is not! The systems manipulated you to believe it is true. The systems have been lying and guiding us all blindly to urgent and unsustainable fantasies. We have replaced our inherent self-esteem with toxic productivity.

Tricia Hersey, Rest is Resistance (2022)

Many of us are going through life thinking we have rested because we have slept but in reality we are missing out on the other types of rest that we need. The result is a culture of high-achieving, high-producing chronically tired burned out individuals. Many of us are suffering from a rest deficit because we do not understand the power of rest. Rest is the most underused, chemical free, safe, and effective alternative therapy available to us.

Sandra Dalton-Smith

# 7 types of rest

## Physical Rest

### Signs you need it:

- Lack of physical energy
- Get sick often
- Have pain and soreness



### How to get it:

- *Passive:* Have a sleep routine, get 7+ hours each night, nap when needed
- *Active:* Breathing, massage, yoga

## Mental Rest

### Signs you need it:

- Lack of mental energy
- Feel a mental fog
- Snap or get irritated easily



### How to get it:

- Block times for deep work without distractions
- Listen to music
- Meditate

## Emotional Rest

### Signs you need it:

- Excessive worrying or anxiety
- Self doubt, insecurity
- Overwhelmed by other people's drama

### How to get it:

- Avoid comparing yourself to others
- Therapy
- Remove emotional drains, like toxic relationships



## Spiritual Rest



### Signs you need it:

- Lack motivation
- Feel helpless, hopeless, or trapped
- Decreased satisfaction

### How to get it:

- Practice gratitude daily
- Volunteer or seek out purpose-driven tasks
- Practice your religion

## Social Rest

### Signs you need it:

- Feel alone
- Are detached from family and friends
- Feel drained by the people you're with

### How to get it:

- 1:1 time with someone who fills you up
- Space from anyone who drains you
- Join a group or club of like-minded people



## Sensory Rest

### Signs you need it:

- Feel eye fatigue or strain
- Sensitive to loud sounds
- Can't smell or taste as well



### How to get it:

- Take time away from all devices
- Change whatever bothers you: dim the lights, lower the music
- Briefly close your eyes

## Creative Rest

### Signs you need it:

- No free time in your day
- Struggle brainstorming
- Can't see the awe in nature



### How to get it:

- Take big (vacations) and small (30 minutes) breaks
- Spend carefree time outside
- Read, dance, go to shows

Image credit: From George Stern, Leadership and Lifestyle Newsletter:

<https://www.leadershipgs.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/posts/george-stern-if-sleep-is-the-only-kind-of-rest-you-get-activity-7210251430530617344-zEuN/>



# October Printable

A Colouring page for all ages (on the next page)

There is no right or wrong way to colour -- grab some felt pens or pencil crayons and choose the colours that appeal to you. There are lots of adult colouring books on the internet and in bookstores.

Stan Rodski, author of *The Neuroscience of Excellent Sleep*, emphasizes the importance of taking mini-breaks throughout the day, giving the brain time to rest and reset. In his research, he found that even a short 5-7 minute colouring break could make a significant difference, reducing the impact of stress and improving focus and creativity.

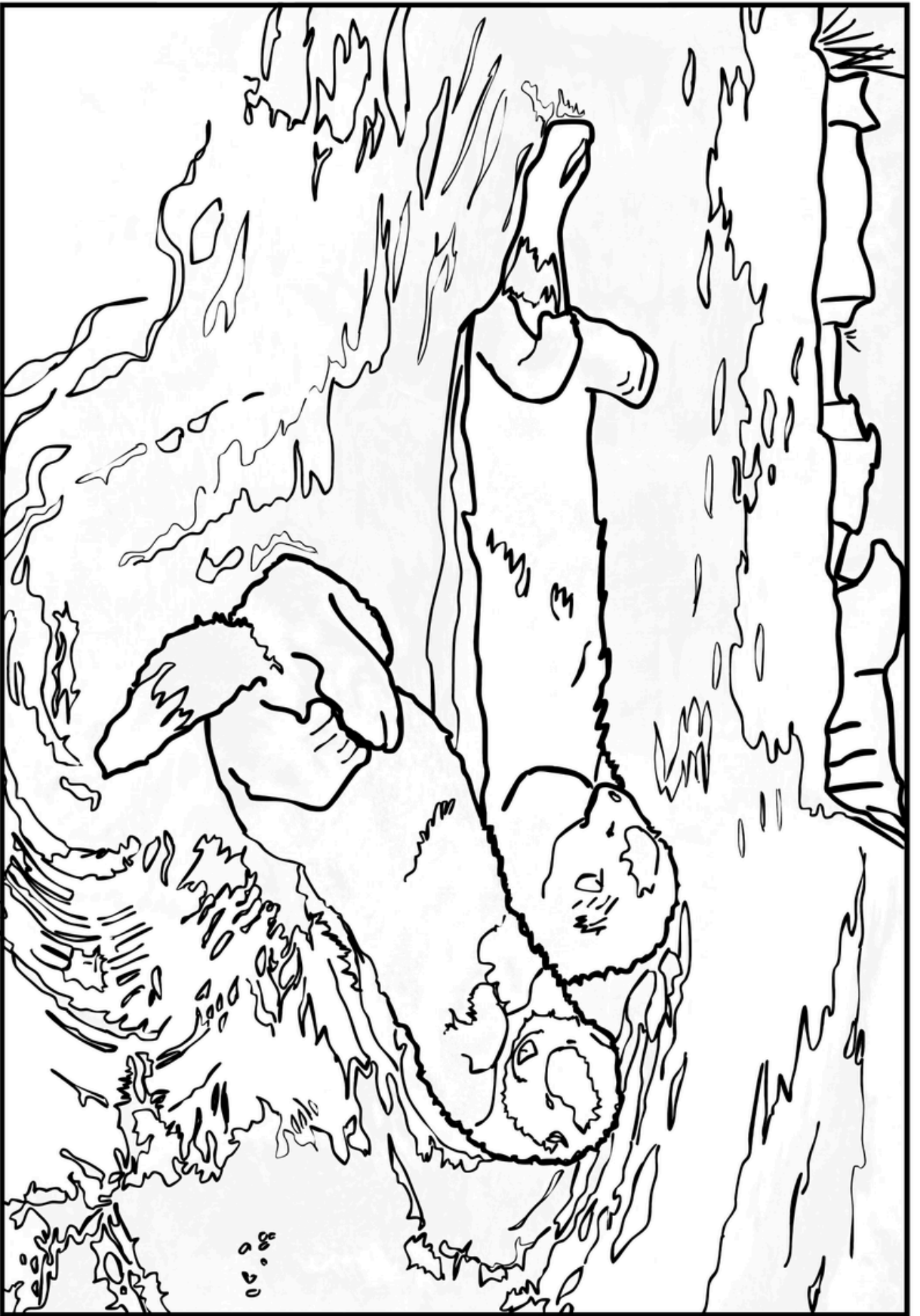
Rodski shares some of his research -- written in plain english for laypeople -- on his website, <https://www.colourtation.com/science>. Enjoy!

***There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest.  
Use both and overlook neither. Alan Cohen.***

Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance....

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)





# floating

based on a photo by Cuyahoga

89° 50'

# Discussion Guide

## Welcome

welcome, names and check in, offer overview of this gathering to explore the theme (including time expectations):

The Practice of Intentional Rest - In the midst of many demands and changes, what does it look like to prioritize rest?

## Chalice Lighting

“I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles, in which vital and transforming events take place.” Rufus Jones, Quaker

## Covenant

Review the covenant at your first meeting. Does anything need to be refined or included?

- Speak as personally and deeply as we wish--or not. It is always okay to pass.
- Speak kindly about ourselves and others.
- Speak from our own experiences.
- Hold confidentiality. Share your experience of the conversation, not other people's stories.
- Listen respectfully. Avoid giving advice or asking probing questions about others' lives.
- Be aware of power differentials. Consider our own and others' identities and how these identities shape the impact of our contributions.

## Check In

Offer one of these questions or one of your own

How goes it with your spirit?

What's in your mind and heart today?

**continued . .**

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, and watching clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time. John Lubbock *The Use of Life* (1895).

## **Conversation**

This month we are exploring prioritizing rest and what that looks like in our lives.

People can offer their responses to the service, the reflection questions, their experience with one of the practices, or any of the theme packet contents. You may choose to begin with a go-round or simply let the conversation flow, making sure everyone has a chance to share. If there is a lull, let the silence sit for a time, then offer up a question to continue the conversation.

## **Optional Starting Questions**

What is surfacing for you when you consider the practice of intentional rest?

What stands out for you in learning about prioritizing rest?

## **Sharing Silence**

Before closing the session with the check out and chalice extinguishing, offer a minute of silence to give people a moment to process all that has been said and to share a time of quiet respite. This can also be done before starting the conversation, allowing people who process more slowly time to consider what is surfacing for them.

## **Leaving**

From this conversation about intentional rest, what resonated most for you, what are you taking with you?


## **Closing Words**

Extinguish the chalice

May we find ways to prioritize rest in the coming days. Blessings on us all.

We are in the habit of imagining our lives to be linear, a long march from birth to death in which we mass our powers, only to surrender them again, all the while slowly losing our youthful beauty. This is a brutal untruth. Life meanders like a path through the woods. We have seasons when we flourish and seasons when the leaves fall from us, revealing our bare bones. Given time, they grow again.

Katherine May, *Wintering* (2020)



It can be easier to believe resting is simply about retiring to your bed when you are tired instead of beginning the messy process of deconstructing your own beliefs and behaviors that are aligned with white supremacy and capitalism.

You must be committed to studying how training under the abusive teachings of dominant culture has you bound and limited.

This is healing work. This is justice work. When we are aligned against the ideas of the oppressive culture, we understand we didn't arrive on Earth to be a tool for a capitalist system.

Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*

Meaning Making Packets  
are created by a team  
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