



Open Access Curriculum

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TITLE: Seed Dormancy Exercise

SUMMARY: A facilitator leads a visualizing exercise that explores the way seeds enter dormancy and sprout again decades or centuries in the future.

AGES: 10 and up

GROUP SIZE: Flexible.

SITE: A quiet space, indoors or outdoors. Participants can sit or lie down.

DURATION: 10–15 minutes

RESOURCE LIST/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL:

- [Judean Date Palm Methuselah, Atlas Obscura, by Aaron Netsky](#)
- [The 120-yr period for Dr. Beal's seed viability experiment, American Journal of Botany, by Frank W. Telewski, Jan A. D. Zeevaart](#)

LEARNING & EXPERIENTIAL OUTCOMES:

- Understand seed dormancy, germination triggers, and long-term survival strategies.
- Learn the physical structure of a seed and how its parts function.
- Appreciate ecological timescales and the resilience of plant life.
- Develop a deeper connection to nature through embodied visualization.
- Cultivate patience, stillness, and mindfulness.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Facilitator: Close your eyes and take a deep breath in... and out. Feel the weight of your body pressing into the ground or the floor. What lies between you and the soil? The surface pressing up on you begins to melt away, and you begin to slowly sink. If you are indoors or on a human-constructed surface, imagine yourself sinking below that hard, impervious layer. It melts away, and soon you are sinking into the earth. Let your breath slow, let your muscles soften. Imagine that you are no longer human. You are a seed.

(pause, breathe x 2)

Your seed coat encloses and protects you, dry and firm, somewhere in between skin and shelter. The interior of your body is mostly endosperm, a store of nutrients and calories. Also present in this inner chamber is your embryo: a miniature, undeveloped form of the plant you will be, containing immature stem, leaves, and root. You are small, but full of potential. Try to sense your hard seed coat, your dense endosperm, and your delicate embryo.

(pause, breathe x 2)

Picture your seed-body nestling deep in the soil. Quite deep, at least a few inches and maybe even several feet. Around you, the earth is dark, cool, and protective. The world above is distant. Sounds are muffled. You rest in stillness, suspended in time.

(pause)

There is no rush. No need to move, to grow, to change. Just rest.

(pause)

Feel the slow rhythm of the soil's temperature—cooler in the winter, warmer in the summer. Cool, warm, cool, warm. The years tick by. Tiny creatures move around you, fungi threads its way past. You are surrounded by something vast and vibrant, but you wait.

(pause)

Decades pass. Centuries. The world above changes: trees rise and fall; rivers shift their course; buildings are constructed, torn down, and rebuilt; new species arrive; ecosystems change. But you remain, cradled in the earth, patient, and dormant.

(pause)

You sense the world through the soil—moisture, temperature, distant vibrations. You ever so slowly consume your endosperm, a few micro-calories per day, metabolism in slow motion. Barely making a dent.

(pause)

Breathe in... and out. Feel the deep, steady patience within you.

(pause)

Then, one day—there is a disturbance. Perhaps a fire clears the land or a construction crew opens the earth. Your seed coat is scratched or cracked.

You feel the warmth of the sun. Moisture seeps through your shell for the first time. The signal you have been waiting for. Your body, once so still, begins to wake.

Slowly, your seed wall softens, and your body swells as you absorb water. You stretch. You push out a tiny root, reaching downward. You ravenously consume all the nourishment from your remaining endosperm. You send a shoot upward, towards a world you have never seen.

As you break through the surface, light touches you for the first time. Your first breath of air.

The world is nothing like the one your parent plant knew. The plants around you are different, the landscape unfamiliar. But you are here. You are alive. And you are growing.

Breathe in... and out. Feel your increasing strength, your resilience.

For a few moments, sit with this feeling of emergence—of patience rewarded, of stepping into the unknown, the wisdom of waiting, the courage of growth.

When you are ready, wiggle your fingers, your toes. Bring your awareness back to your human body. When you are ready, open your eyes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What did you notice during the visualization? Were there any sensations or feelings that stood out to you? When were you most engaged? When were you bored? Why?
- How did it feel to experience time from the perspective of a seed waiting in the soil?
- What role do you think the seed's structure (like the seed coat and endosperm) plays in its survival? Can you think of a time in your life when something "protected" you or helped you grow in challenging circumstances?
- What does the concept of "deep time" mean to you in terms of both nature and your own life?
- In the exercise, you imagined stepping into an unfamiliar world after emerging from dormancy. How do you relate to the idea of change or transformation in your own life?



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