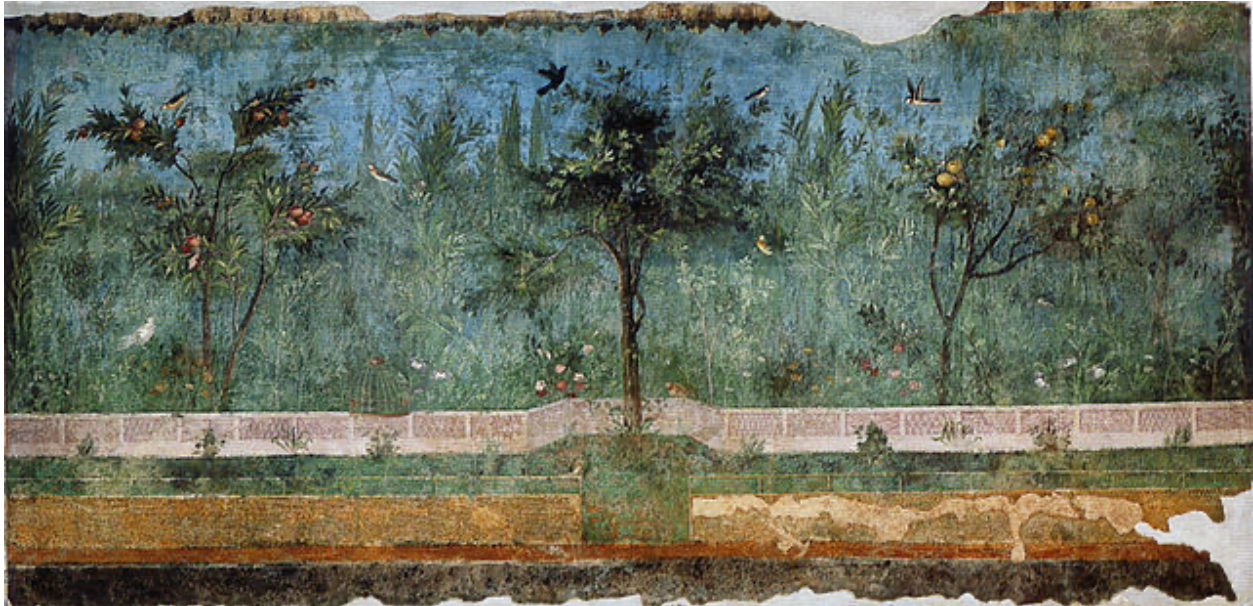


You Want Presence? Savor Your Breath!

Presence comes in a lot of different shades. But one thing is the same for anyone with notable presence: they learned how to control (or stop) all the busy-ness and experience their Being—*deeply and profoundly*. That ability goes very far toward finding wisdom...and living there.



Fresco from Villa Livia at Prima Porta (c 50 BCE), Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme

Here's a beautiful exercise to stop all the anxious, nervous need to be busy and rediscover the intensely sublime joy of being alive. In a way, you will be able to experience yourself for a few moments as a single, composite entity—not you in one of your many roles or facets or moods, but you in the singularity of your Being. Once you get this, you can do it anywhere, anytime, and it will only take 20 seconds.

This music exercise will help you experience the deep, regenerative relaxation of skin-breathing that lets you absorb the vegetative bounty of the earth. You'll feel a surprisingly profound oneness with the planet's life force and the overwhelming multiplicity of manifestations of that life force. Like the frescoes of Livia's triclinium (dining room), you can feel that you participate in the sweet beauty of our planet's bounty.

While the majority of our oxygen intake is through the lungs, your skin breathes as well—a type of osmotic exchange. That osmotic exchange (that goes on all the time) holds a secret key, a reminder and a relief, that we belong here. With all our faults and fears and joys, we are blessed with being part of the cosmic dance of life.

But to feel this—to feel your skin silently, almost secretly, breathing—you have to stop moving, stop fussing, stop needing to fiddle with your phone!

You will also be able to experience your lung-breathing in a conscious way.

Ottorino Respighi, [Pines of Rome, pt 3 – Pines of the Janiculum](#)

Arturo Toscanini, conductor, NBC Symphony Orchestra, 1953 (*start at about 9:10*)

Whatever music service you use, find this performance because it's perfect for the exercise. Listen to the full 3rd movement – it's about 7 minutes long.

Sit, with your eyes closed. Relax! Breathe slowly, deeply. As you inhale, imagine you are inhaling the generosity of the planet. Then exhale your appreciation.

Feel that silent, secret skin-breathing as well. It's usually easiest to imagine this happening on your forearms.

And imagine seeing anything you want that's vegetative—a lush, relaxed, late-afternoon in the summer with a soft, cooling gentle breeze that's more the feeling of the air around you is breathing, too!

The frescoes pictured above were originally in the triclinium (dining room) of the villa of Livia Drusilla, wife of Augustus Caesar. The lush, but elegantly soothing, frescoes covered all four walls of the room, and enveloped her guests in an almost magical world. The music and slow breathing of this exercise should do the same for you! But be careful that you don't get lulled into a drowsy daydream. That won't help your presence.

Instead, keep consciously inhaling the generosity of the planet and exhaling your appreciation.