

## COURTYARD MEDITATION TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to the courtyard of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. This central space is filled with ancient sculpture, and surrounded by a living, breathing work of art: the garden. It is the heart and soul of the museum. My name is India Clark. I'm a life path mentor for creative souls, and the founder of the Wayfinder Institute, which I created to unlock the power of art observation and mindfulness to spark creative growth and wellbeing. Thank you for joining me for this guided meditation experience, designed to bring you into connection with yourself in this moment, and with this very particular environment of Isabella's courtyard.

You may be listening while you look at an image of the courtyard, or you may be in the courtyard in person. To begin, choose a view and vantage point that you like, and find a comfortable resting place, going out of your way to create comfort for your body so you can sit and listen mindfully over the course of the next fifteen minutes. Feel free to pause the meditation and begin again when you've found a comfortable place to rest.

Now that you're comfortable, support your body's alignment by lifting up straight through the spine. If it's comfortable to close your eyes, close them and if you don't feel comfortable, just gaze softly downwards. Let's take three deeper breaths.

Open your eyes and look into the courtyard. First we'll look at it as a whole, and then I will guide you to focus more on specific areas. Let your curiosity move your eyes around the space. Just looking. Just orienting into the space with no particular agenda. Mindfulness can be about enjoyment and curiosity. Just looking closely. Let your eyes land wherever they want to land, and stay as long as they want to stay, and move on whenever they're ready to move on.

Let your neck be soft. Let all the little muscles around your eyes be soft as you move back and forth between peripheral and directed vision. Just getting to know what's in front of you.

Now bring your attention inwards again by either closing the eyes or gazing downwards. Feel your connection to the ground. Feel the parts of your body that are touching surfaces that touch the ground, and notice the sensation of that contact. Notice the feeling of your weight in your

feet and seat. Notice how your body rises up through the air, through an aligned spine, with the crown of your head tall and your chin dropping slightly toward your chest. Bring your awareness towards any part of your body that's making contact with a surface or with your own body—arms against your sides, lips touching, eyelids touching. Just focusing on contact.

And then notice as well that there are parts of you not making contact, that are free to the air. Bring your awareness to the parts of you not touching anything and just notice what you feel. Breathing in and out at a natural, uncontrolled pace.

When you feel ready, open your eyes again and look into the courtyard. Notice where you see space, and where you see connection. Notice that all of the objects and living things in this courtyard have been placed here very intentionally. Where is there space and where is there contact? Notice your breath as you look.

Now, close your eyes and begin to deepen into the sensation of temperature on your skin. Scan through your body and notice any variations in temperature on different parts of you. Hot, cold, cool, warm...

And when you open and look again, now bring your awareness to variations in the courtyard of light and dark. Where is the light coming from? Where is the light falling? Where is it brightest and where does this concentrate the darkest shadows? What do you notice about colors, and textures?

Close your eyes again and come back into noticing your body, bringing your attention to the architecture of your bone structure that holds you up, like columns. Think about your bones and spine. Can you feel them? Notice the freedom, and flow that your bone structure allows you.

Now notice, what's alive in you. What does it feel like to be alive? Where do you notice that sense of aliveness in you? Is it in your breath? Can you feel your heartbeat? Can you sense the fluid moving through your veins? Noticing the parts of you that feel solid and still and the parts that feel open, spacious, and flowing. What is made of earth and what is made of air, light and water?

Open your eyes and come back to looking at the courtyard. What is made of earth and what is made of air, light and water? What do you see that's made of stone? What's alive?

Notice the architecture of the courtyard. And feel in your body how you are here and alive in this moment as you witness the combination of what is living and what is not living in the courtyard, and how they relate with and evolve around one another.

Do you see something you love? Rest there a moment.

Now, close your eyes one last time. Breathe deeply. Bring that thing you love into your mind's eye. What does it feel like in your body to see this, and love it?

When you're ready, open your eyes and as you begin to move on, move slowly. Bring your curiosity with you as you explore in the rest of the museum. Isabella designed it in a way that rewards close looking and noticing connections. Thank you for joining me for this experience.