

Easing Into Sleep with Linda Smith from Duke Integrative Medicine

Find a comfortable position

For the next few minutes, I invite you to experience a gentle way of easing into sleep.

So your task right now is only to listen as you begin finding a sense of comfort.

You might start by noticing the support beneath your body, allowing your muscles to soften and let go.

You might feel that support all the way down your body from your face and neck, into your back, chest and belly, down into your arms and legs and into your toes

As I begin to lead you in a period of deep relaxation, you might also prepare yourself mentally. Some people do that by thinking of a time when they felt extremely comfortable. When they felt cocooned by covers or something snuggly. Other people do that by remembering a place where they were safe and comfortable, where there was nothing asked of them at all. Just a sense of peacefulness and well-being. So, however you choose to prepare yourself, it's just nice to notice how the mind has access to so many wonderful relaxing sensations and memories.

How the mind has the ability to support muscles unwinding and the breath easing comfortably and effortlessly.

Tucking in to that soft, supportive space into a position of ease and a deeper state of relaxation. And that state of relaxation is such a nice place to be, such an inviting opening into rest.

As you rest, you could imagine yourself somewhere with the beginning of a sunset. You may notice how the light changes, you might notice how the colors begin to paint the sky and it's fascinating as you watch the sunset just how much you can become absorbed into it's incredible beauty. It's restful to notice how the colors are blending from one moment to the next. How the pinks and oranges with this moment may become purples and blues of the next. The whole unfolding of the sun setting and your job is only to watch and become absorbed. And it's such an interesting process. You can't speed the sunset. You just have to experience it as it unfolds, softly and gently.

Just allowing yourself to be there, easing comfortably and thoroughly into this moment. As you become gently cocooned in this image of a sunset it's nice to remember that deep inside the body and mind is rest, just watching as the colors change and begin to fade into night.

In a moment, I'm going to be quiet and during that time your mind can make whatever associations that are most helpful to you to support your sleep and allow you to become fully absorbed in the setting sun.

The mind is able to find just what is most supportive and what part of this most resonates as a way to support you even more deeply than you would imagine. Knowing that the sunset happens every day. It's nice to know that you can choose to watch it whenever you wish. Breathing in, breathing out gently, softly as you rest.