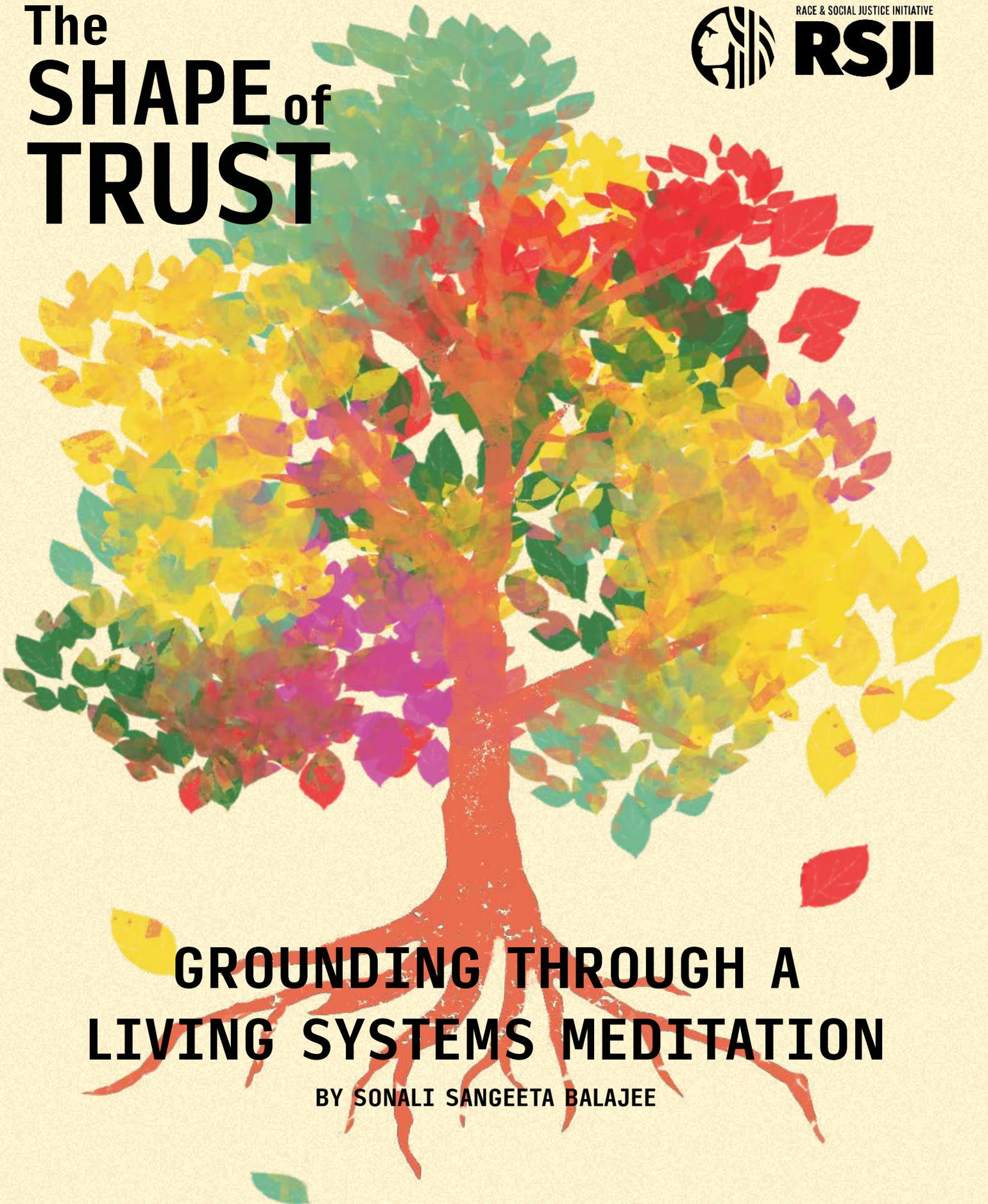


The **SHAPE** of **TRUST**



RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

RSJI



GROUNDING THROUGH A LIVING SYSTEMS MEDITATION

BY SONALI SANGEETA BALAJEE



WHAT

A guided meditation with writing and drawing components to ground participants in their internal resource of interconnection with the greater whole of all living systems. This meditation uses the [Our Bodhi Project](#) Frame guideposts Beloved and Bestill. This grounding activity asks participants to connect with what they love and seek to protect, using their own inherent wisdom as living systems. Engaging with living systems is a liberatory strategy that emphasizes health, wholeness, and love. It integrates our various ways of being, and frees us from being too much in our heads and intellect.

A core aspect of the Bodhi Frame, the interconnection of living systems, can be found in countless Earth-based and cosmos-based traditions from around the world. This specific activity was crafted by Sangeeta Balajee, integrating her Hindu and Buddhist traditions with her health knowledge and awareness. This activity can be adapted for live, virtual learning.

Number of Participants

5-40. This activity works well in smaller groups and will require more time for larger groups.

Time

About 45 minutes. Timing for each step is flexible, based on the needs of the group and overall facilitation plan. Some suggestions are provided. Total time will depend on format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid), number of participants, and other factors such as where you want to focus learning and for how long. We expect that experienced facilitators will know how to adjust and limit time as needed.

This Activity Spotlight is a component of The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide by the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). For information on the facilitation experience recommended for those using the Guide, a glossary of terms, and tips to support collective health, wellbeing, and belonging – in particular of BIPOC – please download the Guide from the RSJI website.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

Connect to their internal sources of wisdom, care, love, creativity, health, and resilience inspired by human or non-human living systems.

Experience an embodiment of the [Bodhi Frame](#) guideposts Beloved and Bestill.

Engage in activating and fortifying connections with other living systems.



Participant Preparation

If you are facilitating online, ask participants to come to the session with blank paper and drawing implements such as pens, markers, or pencils.

Facilitation Materials

- If you are facilitating in person, bring blank paper and drawing implements such as pens, markers, or pencils.
- Facilitators should spend time with the [Bodhi Frame](#) guideposts Beloved and Bestill to better understand them and integrate them into the activity. Prepare some personal reflections to share with the group as needed.
- The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide, “Glossary”.

HOW IT WORKS

EXPLAIN / GET READY (2 min)

Before you begin, let participants know that they are at choice: some may have reasons why engaging in a guided meditation does not feel supportive and may even be harmful.

For a few healing and trauma-informed considerations, see the section in the Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide titled “Before you facilitate a grounding or centering activity”.

Invite participants to move into a comfortable position in which they can write and draw. They may go to different places in the room or, if online, may choose to turn off their video.

BREATHE / NOTICE (2 min)

Invite participants to be still for a moment, then put one hand on their chest and one hand on their belly. Ask them to notice their own breathing without judgment.

- What is its cadence?
- Are they breathing deep into their lower belly or are their breaths more short, into their chest or upper belly?
- Ask them to take slower, deeper breaths in which the exhale (out-breath) is longer than the inhale (in-breath), and to notice how this feels.
- Invite participants to move into a comfortable position in which they can write and draw. They may go to different places in the room or, if online, may choose to turn off their video.

HOW IT WORKS (continued)

IMAGINE / NOTICE / DRAW / WRITE (14 min)

Invite participants to imagine a living system they care about and allow it to come into their field of awareness. Share out loud that this means any living system.

- Give a few examples of human and non-human living systems, such as a loved one, river, animal, mountain range, plant, etc.
- Ask them to simply connect with their imagined system for a moment.
- Now ask them to imagine it at-ease and in-balance.
- Ask participants to notice all the qualities that their system is showing them about being at-ease and in-balance.

Emphasize that this is not about that living system experiencing perfection – ease and balance are also shifting states.

Ask participants to notice how it feels in their bodies to witness this living system they love at-ease and in-balance. What feelings do they notice in their own bodies? Write these down.

Ask participants to draw their living system at-ease and in-balance on a piece of paper. Let them know that there are no requirements or expectations for these drawings. They can be abstract, representational, symbolic, or in any way expressive of what they are imagining and feeling.

Invite them to add words that help show what contributes to that living system's ease and balance. Next, invite them to place what they wrote into some sort of flow. This could look like prose, a series of phrases, or poetry.

SHARE (5–10 min)

In pairs, ask participants to take turns sharing what they drew or wrote, other notable things about the living system they chose, and the experience of this activity.

SHARE (10 min)

Come back together as a whole group. Ask about 4–5 participants to hold up their drawings and read any writing.

ASK / CONNECT (10 min)

- What did it feel like to do this engagement?
- Did you have any realizations, openings, frustrations, or challenges?

- Are there any patterns across the sharings from this group?

Name for participants some connections to the Bodhi Frame guideposts Beloved and Bestill. Invite one or two reflections.