



“Be” with an orange

When we slow down and “be here now” with simple things, we can experience the ordinary in extraordinary ways.

You can begin with something as simple as eating an orange:

- Notice the color, shape, and surface of the orange. Take three minutes (a full 180 seconds) to observe these characteristics in great detail.
- Now spend another few minutes feeling the orange with your eyes closed. Use your fingers, your forehead, your cheek, your tongue, and the back of your neck. Roll it between your palms. Throw it from one hand to another. (You might want to open your eyes for this part.) Feel its weight and mass. Squeeze it. Will it explode if you squeeze hard enough? What temperature is it? Warm the orange up on your stomach. Does it feel different now? Can you balance it on the top of your head? Will it roll in a straight line?
- Listen to your orange. No kidding. What is the sound of one orange peeling? Are you sure there are no sounds inside your orange? Just put it up to your ear and listen carefully. Will the orange make a sound if you squeeze it? Tap on it with your finger, then with a spoon, then with other objects that are nearby. Compare the sounds. How are they alike and how are they different? How else can you use an orange to make sounds? Will oranges of different sizes make different sounds?
- Without using any type of instrument or utensil, begin dissecting your orange. Will you start at the top, the bottom, or in the middle? How do you know which end is the “top”? Do you use your fingernails or your teeth? Can you peel an orange and keep the entire skin in one piece?
- Use the same strategies you used on the outside of the orange to explore the inside of the peel. The inside is a different color than the outside. Exactly where does the color change? Does it change closer to the outside or inside edge of the peel? How is the inside texture different from the outside texture? Exactly where does this change take place? How many different uses for the peel can you create?
- Now examine what most of us think of as the most important characteristic of an orange: its taste. What does a little piece of that white stuff that we usually try to avoid taste like? What would a whole bunch of it taste like? Put a slice of the orange in your mouth. Will it “melt”? What does it feel like under your tongue? With a slice between your tongue and the roof of your mouth, very slowly squeeze some juice out. Does it squirt, ooze, or do both in different directions?

And just think—we haven’t even begun to consider the growth cycles, chemistry, economics, nutrition, advertising, or politics of oranges. If we look closely enough, we might discover secrets of the universe hidden in a simple orange.

If you get tired of oranges—and have the courage—eat a bowl of cereal this way.