



Mary Slocum

Introduction to RAIN



The RAIN Practice

“Do not try to save the world or do anything grandiose. Instead, create a clearing in the dense forest of your life.”

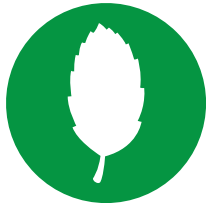
* Martha Postlewaite

Presence sets the stage for RAIN.

When we are lost in the forest, we can *create* a clearing simply by pausing and turning from the incessant busyness of mind to become aware of our moment-to-moment experience. This awareness is presence. When distressing thoughts, difficult emotions, cravings, and even pain are present we can use a mindfulness tool called RAIN to help us be with and process what is happening.



R is for Recognize: The first step. Simply recognize what is going on inside of you. Ask, “What’s happening inside me right now.” Leave behind judgment. Bring your curiosity: “Hmm, isn’t that interesting.”



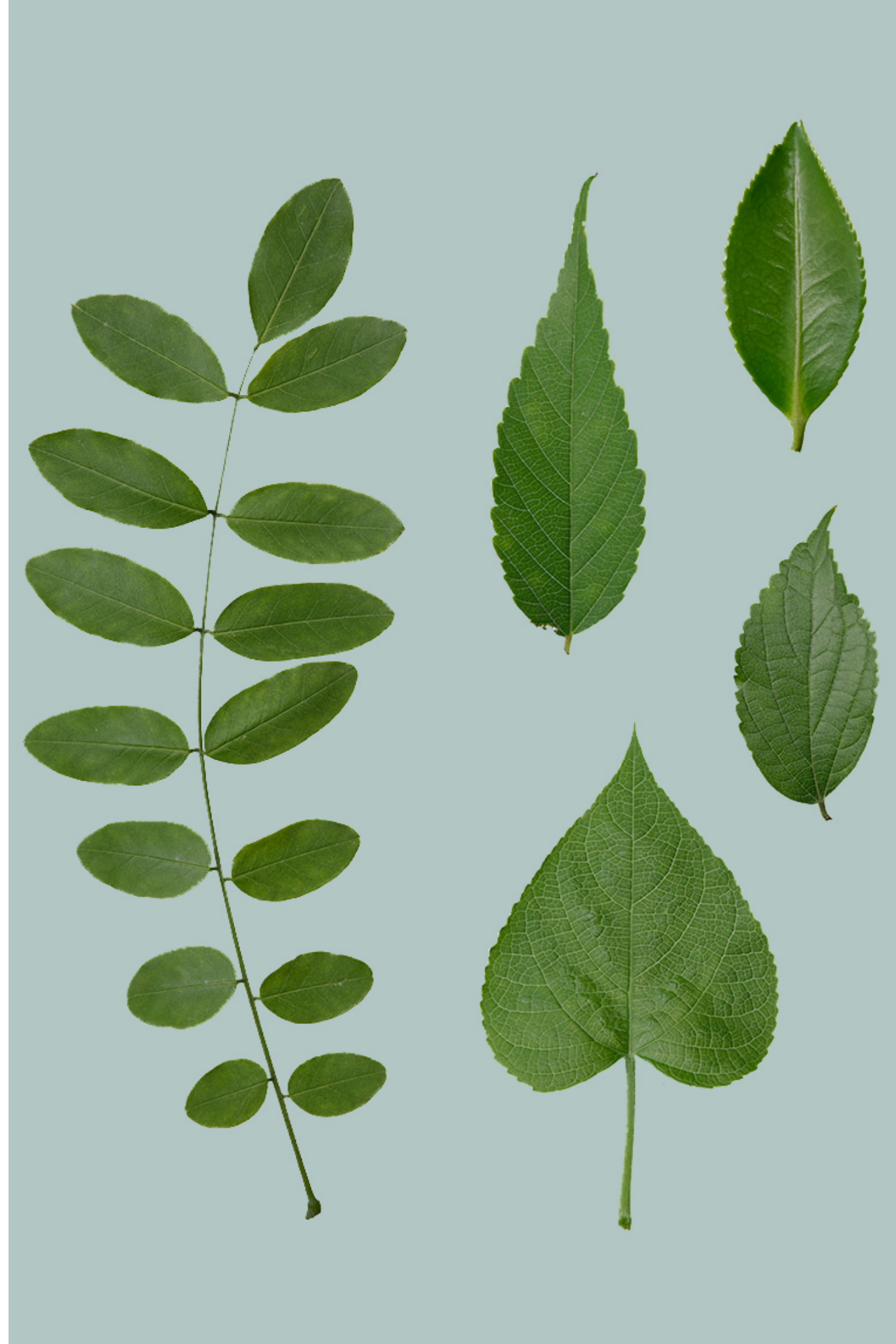
A is for Allow: Breathe. Ask, “Can I be with this?” Can I let this be here?” No running away. No hiding. Invite spaciousness and openness to accompany you. As you keep them company, allow thoughts, emotions, feelings, and bodily sensations to be here just as they are right now.



I is for Investigate: Sense under the thought, emotion, and feeling and notice where in the body you feel it. In the throat? Chest? Belly? Or? Now note what it feels like: tight, sharp, churning, pulling, prickly, pressing and so on. When ready to go deeper, ask with curiosity, “What am I believing?” “How is this serving me right now?” “What is the worst part of this?”



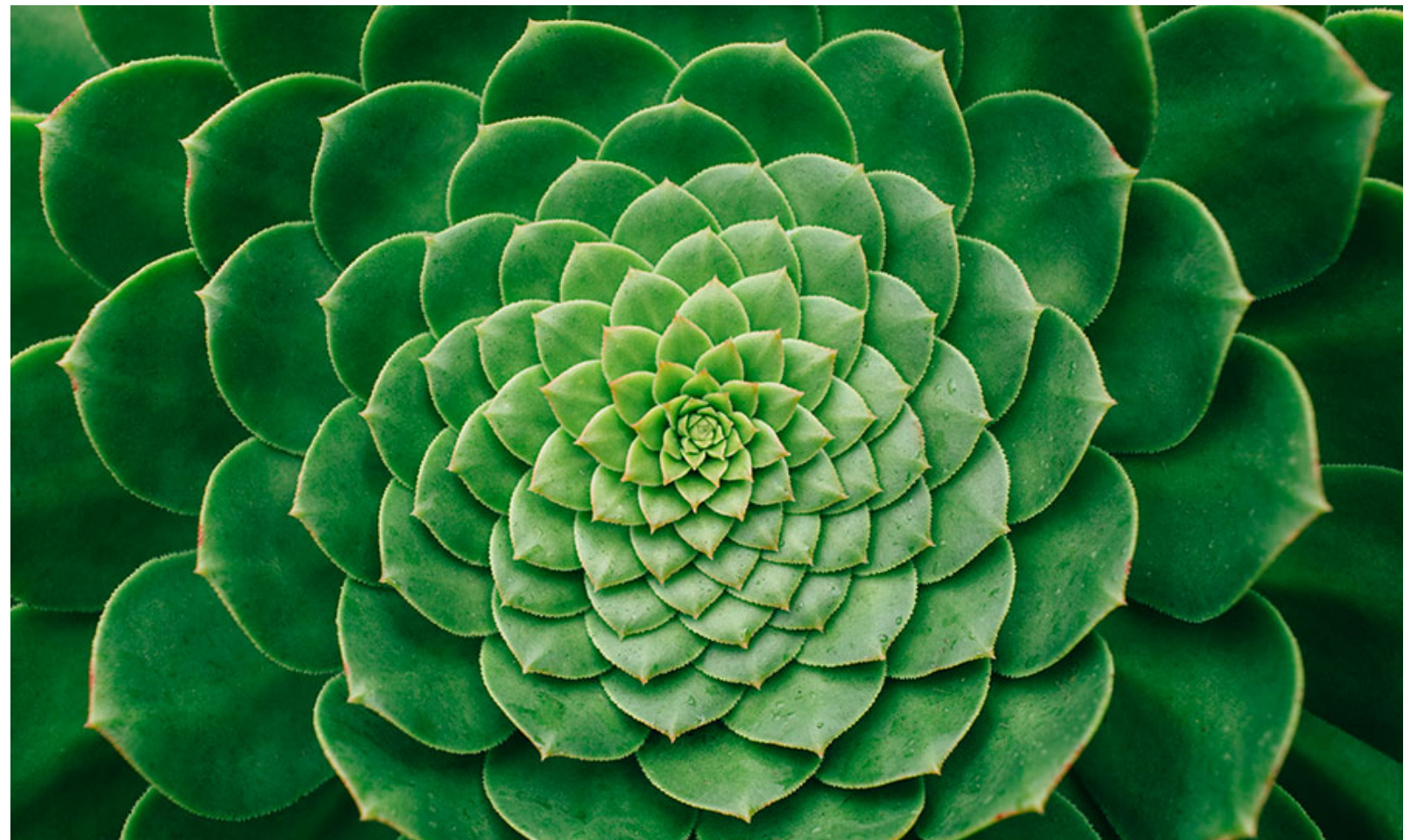
N is for Note/Non-identify/Nurture: Practice making a mental note of what you are experiencing. Remember, this is not who you are; it is a weather system passing through. If it feels right place a gentle hand on your heart. Gently say, “It’s OK.” Sense caring flowing from your heart to your whole self.



When we are mindful, we are purposely aware of our moment-to-moment experience with curiosity and without judgment. We turn from being on autopilot or lost in thought and emotionally reactive to experiencing what is here right now.

We are aware of our thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions without getting caught up in them or pushing them away. This ability to be self-aware is uniquely human. We can notice, accompany, and investigate while keeping some space between us, the observer, and what we are directly experiencing. As we observe, we notice that the feeling tone of our right-now experience may be pleasant, unpleasant, or even neutral; as we notice this we might say inwardly, “Oh, unpleasant thought.” or “Pleasant emotion. Isn’t that interesting.” At the same time, we keep a respectful space around what’s going on in the moment. We don’t push it away or say, “No,” to it or grab hold of it and get all entangled.

We also notice that our thoughts, emotions, and bodily feelings come and go, just as weather systems of intermittent clouds, rain, and sun cross



Our moment-to-moment experience is rich and intricate. This richness & intricacy is everywhere in nature, too.

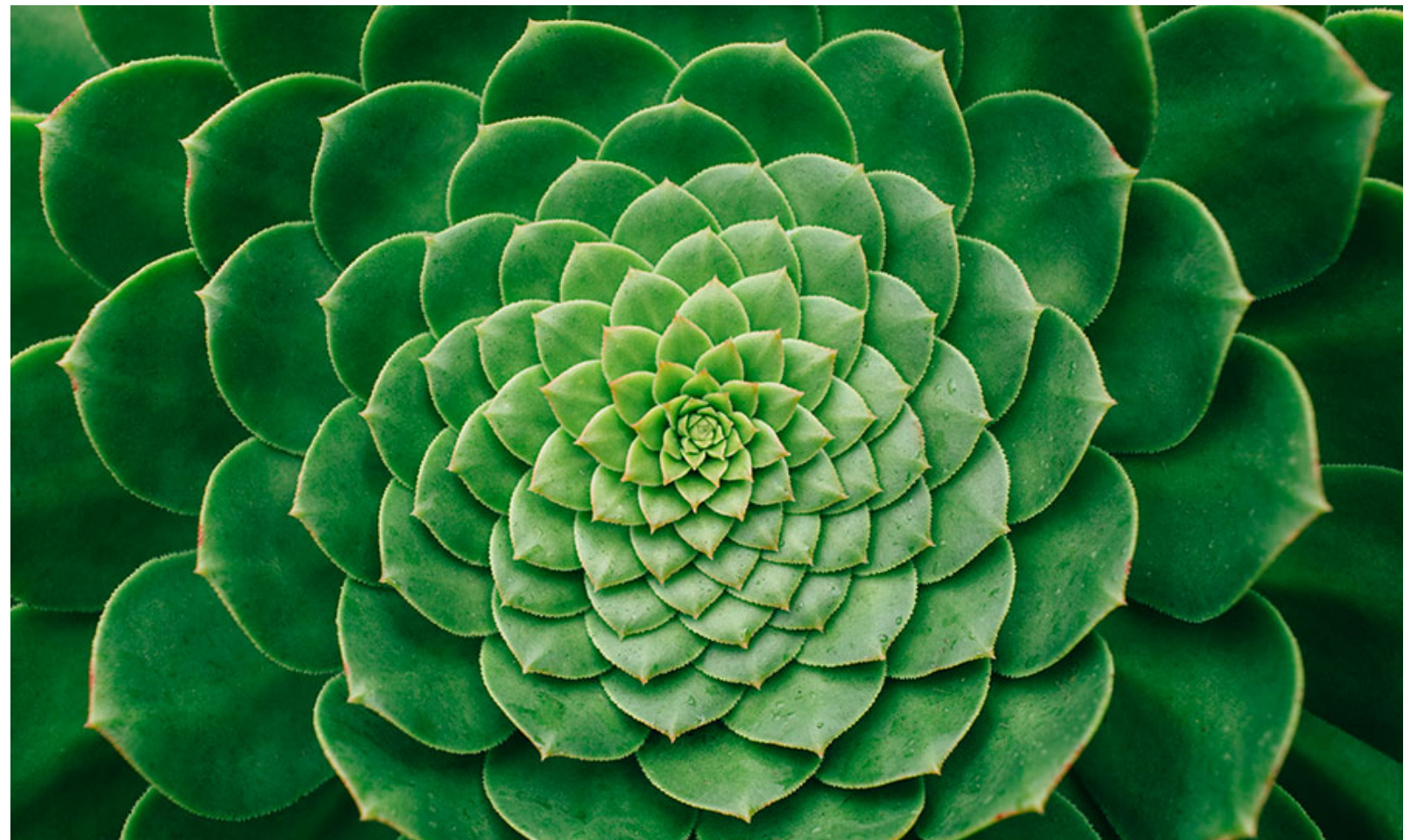
the sky or waves form, crest, and fall on the beach. This is truly amazing. As we notice how fleeting our experience is, we also realize how freeing this fleeting quality is. Sometimes, though, we notice that certain thoughts and feelings loop around and around like a whirlpool. Have you ever been swimming in a river or in the ocean and been caught in swirling water caused by opposing currents? The swirling water may feel

endless but it is not. It is actually moving. First we notice what is happening and the direction that the water is swirling. Then by going down under the churning water and swimming in the smooth water that flows downstream we can free ourselves. We haven’t changed the whirlpool. We’ve experienced it directly and put just enough distance between us and its churning waters to free ourselves.

So, too, when we get caught in looping thoughts and emotions we notice what is happening in the moment, “Oh, worry,” or “Thought.” Our self-aware observer makes some space around the looping to be able to directly observe it without being caught up in it or pushing it away. In this way we can be with whatever is looping just as it is.

The **RAIN** practice is liberating. Practicing RAIN trains and amplifies our capacity not only to be with our present moment experience, but to go deeper finding freedom and wisdom. We don’t need to be sitting in our formal meditation practice to do **RAIN**. We can do it anywhere and at any time.

Practice **RAIN** every day. Here’s the quick and simple version to start with. **Recognize** what is happening in the moment and relax. Be curious and **Allow** whatever is here to be here. **Investigate** where you feel it in your body (throat, chest, belly, and so on). **Note** what it feels like: Open, closed, tight, loose, stormy, calm, tense, flowing, and so on.



Our uniquely human ability to be self-aware allows us to observe and to be with our moment-to-moment experience.

Now, choose when you will do it. Do it after a routine that is already well established in your life. Once you have chosen a routine, always do **RAIN** after it. For example, after work, when you get into your to drive home. Or, after you have started the coffee brewing. Or, after you have put the kids to bed, or brushed your teeth.

You can even practice **RAIN** multiple times a day. Do it after a routine that you repeat several times a day. For example, after drinking water or coffee, after checking your email, after attending a meeting, after checking your social media stream.

Here's the recipe. After I [For example, drink water], I will practice **RAIN**.

I will: **Recognize** what is happening right now in the moment and relax into it. I will **Allow** it to be here with space and ease; and not push it away or get rigid and caught up in it. **Investigate** where in the body I am feeling it: Throat, chest, belly, head, back and so on.

Note what it feels like: Throbbing, pinching, spacious, prickly, tight, loose, tense, calm, and so on.

Now, celebrate! Yes, celebrate that you have done what you set out to do. Raise both arms to the sky. Say, "Yes!" Show your gratitude with a "Thank you," or a big smile. Choose something that warms your heart. This celebration comes from the heart, not the ego. You are not competing with yourself. You are simply opening yourself to now, to this moment right now.

Something amazing will happen if you practice **RAIN** every day. It will become a habit. Once the simple RAIN practice is well-established, you can deepen it by



By recognizing what is here, right now and allowing it, even if painful or unpleasant, we free ourselves from suffering. By investigating where we feel it and noting what it feels like, we know ourselves better.

doing the long form presented at the beginning of this lesson.

RAIN is a practice, like focusing our attention on the body or breath, that helps us to become more and more mindful of what's here now and to experience it mindfully with curiosity, loving-kindness and compassion.