



## Meditation through Deep Rest by Caroline

My first experience of Deep Rest Meditation was on retreat with Jaya and Gemma of Open Dharma at the foot of Arunachala Mountain in South India. The ashram was not a quiet place and loudspeaker music from the nearby village started before dawn, but I experienced a personal and communal spaciousness and silence that was very moving. I was curious about all the cushions and mattresses that people arrived with. At that time I identified with being a meditator who could sit still for hours, travel light and lie down on a hard floor.

Lying down to meditate was not a rule but the encouragement and I remember a lot of internal negotiation because although I loved the kindness of lying down, I somehow felt it was the easy option.

And maybe it is ..... so deep is the programming that tells us, or told me, that there is benefit in striving, that transformation only happens when things are hard. It was a revelation when I truly allowed myself to rest back and spread into a quietude deeper than the noisy ashram and deeper than conditioning.

Meditation does not need to flow out of a particular posture but at least we could allow ourselves to experiment. For me and many there is a particular atmosphere that comes with lying down that grows meditation. It may be the place where our body is most relaxed, where it is harder for the controlling mind to dominate, where there is less of 'me paying attention' and working hard to hold the mind still, where our awareness can be as fluid as experience actually is, where we fall in love with meditation.

Because most of us have so much accumulated tiredness we may well fall asleep when we lie down to meditate. Opening to this as a possibility is probably more beneficial than meeting lots of aversion because we are trying not to. The states between waking and sleeping are very fertile and probably much closer to genuine meditation than trying too hard.

Meditation is about settling deeper than our conditioning, softening around the habit energy that tells us there is something wrong, something we need to change, contracts and isolates us. Life is vast but our conceptual perception can become very narrow. Meditation is not about becoming a better person but a process of uncovering our natural wisdom, tenderness, clear seeing and dignity which opens new doors. It does not protect us but allows us to step into the heart of life, meet all we may have been resisting. It both opens and strengthens us, connecting us with trust and a sense of belonging within the vastness and mystery, so that we can live a life that is precious, however and for however long it unfolds.