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Read Carefully – Lectio Divina

‘The art of *lectio divina* begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply, to hear "with the ear of our hearts" as St. Benedict encourages us in the Prologue to the Rule.’¹

Lectio divina literally means “divine reading” and is a meditation style that has been practiced in the Christian faith for hundreds of years. For a long time, it was preserved primarily in the monastic tradition. More recently, *lectio divina* and other forms of meditation have come back into the mainstream both in religious and secular practice. *Lectio divina* is very different from the other reading methods that we will discuss this term (e.g. speed-reading, the Socratic method, hermeneutics, critical analysis, inductive reading, etc.) While these other methods focus on logic, critique, induction, or other “active” modes of analysis, the discipline of *lectio divina* increases the internal silence so that the truth of a text can be heard more clearly.

In the monastic tradition, *lectio divina* is practiced by moving into a physically comfortable position where you can feel relaxed. You should relax your breathing into deep, nourishing breathes. You will also want to quiet your mind. This is not done by actively shutting down or fighting thoughts or feelings. Rather, the quieting is accomplished by letting go. If done in a group, the text is read three times for three purposes. Move to a place of stillness and feel the words wash over you.

1. Listen for a word or phrase that resonates for you.
2. How does the text speak to you today?
3. How does the text call you to action?

¹ <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>