

# BREATHE

A spiritual care resource created by Kaseman's Spiritual Care Department



## The Four Elements

*(By Chaplain Donnel)*

Once there was a seeker of wisdom who sought knowledge on what specific actions one must embody to live a good life. This searcher or seeker of wisdom sat with a hermit, an old wise sage, a teacher full of spiritual wisdom.

“It’s easy,” the spiritual master said to the seeker. “Go to each of the four elements: earth, water, fire and air. Listen to what each element will say about what action you need to embody.”

So early the next day the seeker climbed on a solid rock, sat on it, and took a deep breath, and listened to what earth had to say: “My dear one,” earth said, “Trust the support of the solid earth underneath you, and allow yourself to release your burdens. Let go of your anxious thoughts and know that I am always holding and lifting you up. At the same time, stay rooted in fertile dark earth. Be in good relationship with the dirt of the soil, which provides the nutrients that you need to grow, flourish, and thrive.”

After receiving the blessing from earth, the seeker sat on a sandy beach facing the largest body of water, the ocean.

Then water spoke to the spiritual seeker: “As you ride the highs and lows of waves of life’s storms, breathe - stay in the present moment. Like the river, go with the flow. Learn to embody fluidity, so you can adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of your life. Hold things lightly. Do less holding on.”

Then at the end of the day, the sun set. The cool evening air came, and the person felt the cool breeze. The air spoke these words: “Integrate lightness within yourself, so you can rise like air. Embody ease and freedom by being open to new wisdom. May you be open to receive, yet open to let go.”

Finally, the darkness of night came. The seeker of wisdom gathered some wood and built a fire. The light of the fire said: “Do that which kindles love in you. Move towards your inner fire, your sacred purpose, your passion, your bliss. Let my light provide you with clarity and guidance in what you do. And remember that through love, fire is pleasing light.”

The four elements spoke together to the seeker: “Integrate the wisdom of all four elements. 1. Stay rooted; Trust the solid ground beneath you. 2. Learn to flow like water. 3. Like air, instill in yourself lightness and freedom.” 4. Kindle the fire of love within you and spread the light.

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## REFLECTION

Reflect on the wondering questions below with a friend or colleague by taking turns in answering each question. Make sure to do active listening with each other (echo back what you heard). As you listen, be in a space of openness and curiosity – avoid preaching and moralizing the story.

### WONDERING QUESTIONS:

- Which part of the story resonated with you?
- Which part of the story is about you?
- Which element are you most natural (or gifted) at?
- Which element(s) do you need to integrate for balance? So that you can thrive and flourish?

Remember, keep on sharing your stories. Keep on listening to each other's stories.

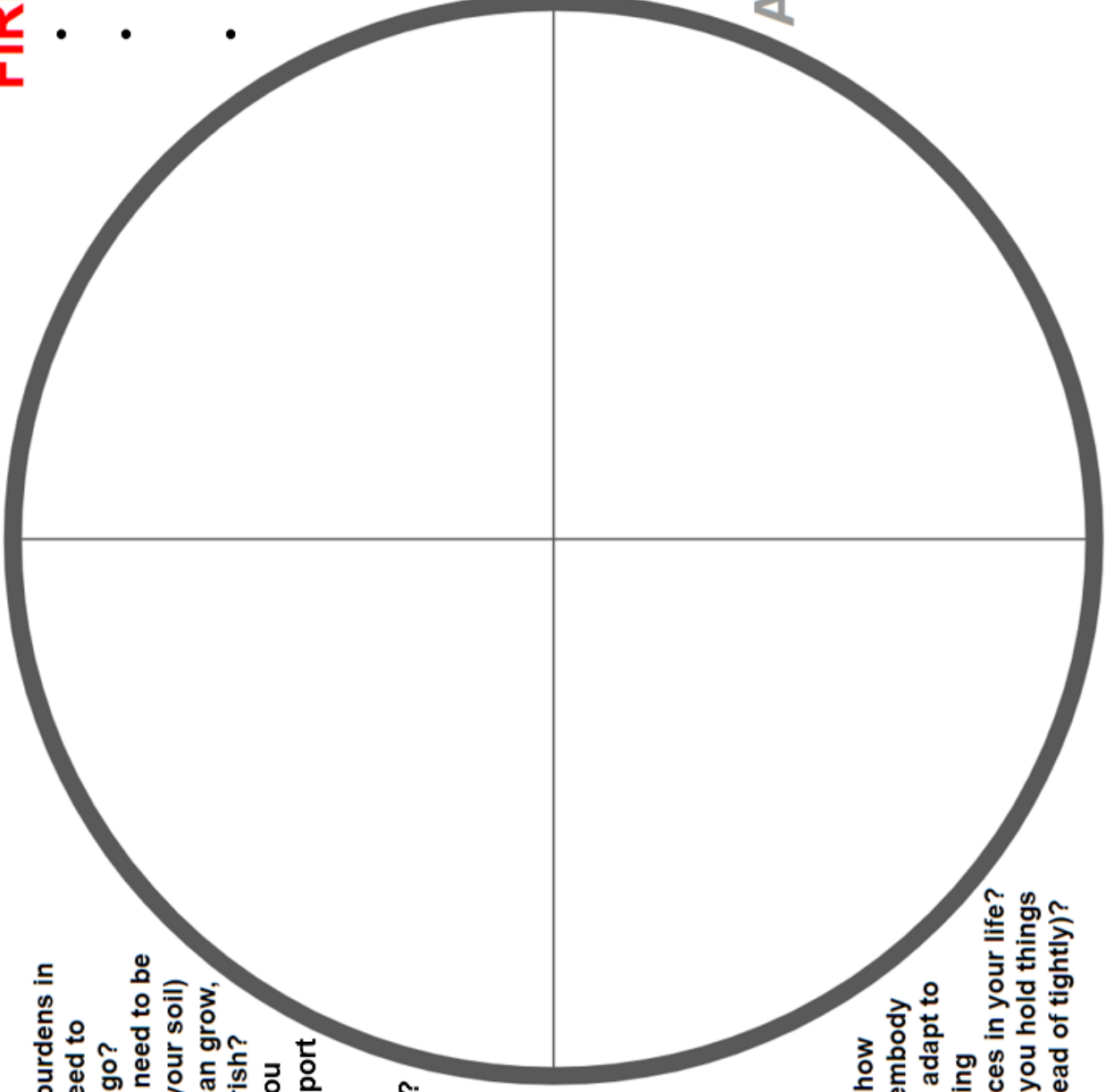
**INSTRUCTION:** In the space below (divided into four), draw/doodle/color/collage/write your answer to the reflection prompts under each element.

## EARTH

- What heavy burdens in life do you need to release & let go?
- What do you need to be rooted into (your soil) so that you can grow, thrive & flourish?
- How might you trust the support of the solid ground beneath you?

## FIRE

- What kindles love in you? (actions/activities, relationships)
- How might you move towards your passion and sacred purpose in life?
- How can you be in harmony with your anger? (i.e., value its gift in keeping you safe, but be mindful not autopilot into fight-flight, or freeze & fawn patterns)



## AIR

- Like water, how might you embody fluidity and adapt to ever-changing circumstances in your life?
  - How might you hold things lightly (instead of tightly)?
- How can you embody lightness within yourself so you can rise (like air)?
  - How can you be open to receive what you need, yet open to let go?