

# SCHOOL OF CHILL

## Yoga Bill's guide to Candle Gazing

**IMPORTANT!** This activity requires adult supervision!

Age: 6+

Benefits: Calming, focus and quietens the mind

Intention: Candle gazing is an ancient practice going back thousands of years. There are 8 "limbs" of yoga, the poses (asanas) being the most well known, but 2 others are Dharana (Concentration) and Pratyahara (withdrawing the senses). Candle gazing introduces us to both, which is why it has such a calming effect on the mind and body.

**Stage 1:** An adult will need to light the candle for you who will take suitable precautions, such as making sure the candle is on a flat surface (such as the floor) which will not catch fire and nothing can fall into or onto the candle. You may wish to have a saucer or the like underneath the candle so whatever is underneath doesn't discolour. If you have long hair, you'll need to tie up into a bun so it doesn't come into contact with the flame.

The responsible adult will need to read this sheet to you for the first time you try this. *[Text in square brackets is not spoken.]*

Two really good poses for this are to either sit cross-legged (right) or in "Sphinx pose" (overleaf).

If the responsible adult wants to join you, even when you know what you're doing, let them, because you're not even going to know they're with you anyway.





**Stage 2:** Now we are in our favoured pose, gently rock from side to side where your bottom or tummy is resting on the floor. Begin to slow down until you are only just about moving until you are totally still. The only movement in your body is the rise and fall of your tummy as you breathe in and out.

If your eyes are closed, flicker them open so that you can just about see between your eyelids. Your eyelids may well feel heavy and your eyesight may be slightly fuzzy.

Now with that soft gaze, look at the candle. ...Notice what shape the flame is... Notice what colour it is.... Notice if there is any warmth from the flame..... Notice if there is any smell coming from the candle....

Close your eyes and imagine you can still see the candle. Remember the shape of the flame and the colour. *[Give them 20-30 seconds to recall the candle.]*

Now flicker your eyelids open a little, so your eyelids are heavy and you can only just about see between them.

Notice the colour of the flame- notice if it looks the same or if it looks different in any way... Notice if there is any movement in the flame.... Does the flame move at the same time as you breathe out? ..... How gentle can you be with that flame?... How soft do you need to breathe out for there to be no movement in the flame?....

With the flame barely moving or still, close your eyes again and imagine that candle in your mind. ....Recall the shape and colour of the flame..... Recall how it moved from side to side, and how slow it became..... Feel the warmth from the flame of the candle..... The shape..... The colour.....The shape..... The colour.

*[Let them silently recall the image of the flame. Leave them until they begin to fidget, then softly speak...]*

Slowly flicker your eyes open and notice the colour, shape and movement of the candle. Does it seem different to when you first looked at it? In what way is it different? - maybe it's darker or redder, brighter or dimmer?

How do you feel?

This is the effect of your practice.