

For a while the news of the demigods and the revealing of Sileya's age really bothered him, but the farther he walked the more the thoughts slowly melted into the back of his mind. Just when they had almost completely receded, Dillon remembered a meditation his dad had taught him after a rough couple of weeks when nothing seemed to be going his way.

His dad had told him that one often holds onto the negative ten times longer than the positive, and we eventually fail to see all the good things that are happening. This forces the subconscious into a state of despair and depression that can be difficult to erase, even after our consciousness moves on. However, his Dad had said, the inner smile meditation[^] was just the medicine needed to bring one's perspective back to a healthy state.

After doing the meditation technique just once at home, Dillon had had to admit that he did feel better. In fact, things had seemed to start going his way the moment he woke up the next day.

Dillon knew that if he tried to forget about the demigods and Sileya's age, they would continue to bother him until he had dealt with them. He wondered if he could do the inner smile while walking.

Dillon continued to keep pace with Sileya and Matt while concentrating on maintaining a steady breathing pattern. Unlike seated meditation, it was unwise to try and slow down one's breathing for faster-moving meditations. Instead, it was better to keep a consistent rhythm and maintain an active flow of oxygen. He counted his inward breath, and then exhaled the same count. He repeated this for nearly ten minutes before starting the inner smile.

On his next inhale, Dillon imagined a very small, pink ball perched at the very back of his tongue and slight above his throat. As he exhaled, he held onto the small ball to maintain its size. On the next inhale, he drew in one positive thought; in this case he pictured walking with his mom and dad along the California aqueduct. The warm thought collected in the back of his throat, making the pink ball slightly bigger. When he exhaled, Dillon again made sure to maintain the size of the ball.

He continued with thoughts of his friends, surfing, bringing home his report card, flying over the poppy fields with his dad, and much more. The pink ball was the size of an apple before he turned his attention to positive thoughts about the demigods and Sileya.

For the demigods, he knew they could do no damage without a mana field, and there was still time. It was much better to know that the future was in peril, and not that it had already happened.

For Sileya, age should not matter, especially on this planet. He thought about the color of her eyes, her beautiful neckline, and the lips he hoped to taste. Dillon held all of this at the back of his throat, and swallowed before inhaling. He allowed the warmth of the pink ball to slowly travel down to his stomach. On the next inhale he let the ball explode throughout his body, and instantly felt the calming energy relax him.