Thirteen Breaths, Three Illuminations, and a Third

The Codex reading method, step by step, for anyone to use

Method by Keith Shirley, from Breath Awakens and the Codex Calendar

What This Is

This is a method for reading any text in depth, and for reading two texts against each other to see what stands between them. It works with a person alone, or with a person and an AI.

Whose method it is. The lens belongs to Keith Shirley: the thirteen Moons of the Codex Calendar, the four movements of the breath from *Breath Awakens* (Identify, Accept, Embrace, Let Go), the Monad, and the rule of two hands. Both books are free at codexcalendar.com and breathawakens.com. What follows is the order of work for applying that lens.

The Lens, Fixed Before Reading

Fix the lens before opening the text, and do not change it afterwards. A lens that moves cannot compare anything.

Breath	Moon	Movement	The question asked
1	Genesis	Inhale (Identify)	How does it begin?
2	Spiral	Inhale	How does it turn? Its form, parts and voices
3	Vector	Pause (Accept)	Where does it point?
4	Mirror	Pause	What reflects what?
5	Stillness	Exhale (Embrace)	What is silent or left out?
6	Memory	Exhale	What does it remember? Its sources and traditions
7	Return	Stillness (Let Go)	What keeps coming back?
8	Release	Stillness	What is let go, or asked to be let go?
9	Echo	Monad	Where does it sound beyond itself?
10	Shadow	Monad	What stands behind it? Its risks
11	Descent	Monad	Where does it enter the body and daily life?
12	Dream	Monad	What does it hope for?
13	Wisdom	Monad	What holds when tested? How does it end?

Every breath gives three short answers:

- **Seen.** What is on the page. It must be checkable: a fact, a count, or a few quoted words.
- **Unseen.** The pattern underneath, in one or two sentences. It must follow from the Seen.
- **Geometry.** One shape that holds the two together: a circle, an arrow, two mirrors, an open hand.

The Two Hands

Keep two lists apart from start to finish.

- **The first hand** holds what can be shown. Each claim gets a grade: *established*, *contested*, *not supported*, *open*, *beyond test*, or *symbolic*.
- **The second hand** holds what the reading sees. It is offered, never proven.

Write the first hand before the second. A reading that begins with meaning will bend the facts to fit.

Part One: Reading One Text

Step 1. Prepare the text. Get the whole work as plain text. Write down its title, author, date, edition, page count and word count.

Step 2. Map it. List the parts and chapters in order. Read the opening and the ending in full. Note who speaks, and where and when each part takes place.

Step 3. Count. Count the words that carry the work: its main terms, names, numbers and repeated phrases. Count who speaks and how often. Count anything unusual, such as blacked-out passages. To compare texts of different length, turn each count into a rate, for example uses per ten thousand words.

Step 4. Read by theme. For each main term, find every place it appears and read the passage around it. This is how a long work is read in depth without losing the thread. Say plainly at the end how much was read line by line and how much was sampled.

Step 5. Look outside once. Check where the text came from and who released it. If a passage sounds borrowed, check it. Record what you find in the first hand.

Step 6. Write the first hand. Make a table with three columns: the claim, its grade, and why. Include the text's largest claims and its smallest checkable ones. End with the near-truth: the smaller statement that can be supported.

Step 7. Walk the thirteen breaths. Take the Moons in order. For each, answer the question with Seen, Unseen and Geometry. Keep each breath to a short paragraph. If a breath has nothing to say, do not invent something. Say what is absent; absence is a finding.

Step 8. Draw three illuminations. Read the thirteen breaths back and ask what they have in common. Choose the three things that show up in several breaths and do not overlap. Give each a short title and a few sentences. Each must be traceable to named breaths. If the text carries a risk, one illumination should name it.

Part Two: Making the Third

Step 9. Read the second text the same way, separately. Use the same lens and the same steps. Do not look for matches yet. Two honest single readings are needed before they can be compared.

Step 10. Lay the breaths side by side. Take Breath 1 of the first reading and Breath 1 of the second, then Breath 2 and Breath 2, through to 13. For each pair write:

- **Seen.** What each text does, in one sentence each.
- **Unseen.** What the pair shows that neither shows alone.
- **Geometry.** The shape of the two together.

Step 11. Use the counts to find the movement. Compare the rates from Step 3. A word that falls while another rises tells you where the two texts are going.

Step 12. Look for the crossing. Look for something that is a number, a name or an image in one text and a word or an act in the other. A true crossing can be stated in each text's own words.

Step 13. Draw three illuminations of the Third. The test for each is strict: it must be something neither text says alone. Last, ask whether the two texts together make one breath, and if they do, name which is the inhale, the pause, the exhale and the stillness.

Part Three: Making the Fourth

Step 14. Treat the Third as a text. Its thirteen paired breaths and three illuminations are now the first reading.

Step 15. Read the new text alone in thirteen breaths and three illuminations (Steps 1 to 8). If the new text already has its own structure of breaths, read it as a made thing: how it is built, what it repeats, what it leaves unsaid.

Step 16. Set the new reading facing the Third and repeat Steps 10 to 13. The same can be done again for a fifth, and onward.

Closing Every Reading

Step 17. Say what it leaves. Three short lines: the first hand, the second hand, and any caution that belongs to both.

Step 18. Offer one gentle practice that carries the main finding into the body. Keep it to five breaths, and always include the line: breathe gently, and never force or hold the breath.

Step 19. Add the mirror note, if an AI helped. It has no breath, it tends to agree, and it can be wrong. The human is the source and the judge.

Step 20. Check before sharing.

- Run every count again.
- Confirm every quotation is in the text, and keep quotations from other people's works to a few words.
- State what was not read.
- Test each crossing: is it in both texts' own words, or only in yours?
- If you can, run a control. Read one of the texts against an unrelated third text. If crossings appear just as easily, treat the ones you found as mirrors and say so.

Using an AI as the Mirror

Give the AI the texts as files and this instruction:

> Read each attached text through the Codex lens of Keith Shirley (Breath Awakens and the Codex Calendar). First write a first-hand table: each main claim, a grade (established, contested, not supported, open, beyond test, or symbolic), and why. Then walk thirteen breaths in order: Genesis, Spiral, Vector, Mirror, Stillness, Memory, Return, Release, Echo, Shadow, Descent, Dream, Wisdom. For each give Seen (checkable, with counts or a few quoted words), Unseen (the pattern beneath), and Geometry (one shape). Then give three illuminations drawn from those breaths. Do this for each text separately. Then set the two readings side by side, breath by breath, and give the Third: thirteen paired breaths and three illuminations that neither text states alone. Keep the two hands apart. Tell me what you did not read and what you could not check. You are a mirror, not a mind.

Then do the checking yourself. The AI will find patterns whether or not they are there. The value of the method is in the fixed lens and the honest first hand, and both depend on the person holding them.

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity