

Creating Moments That Let The Earth Teach

The title for this article came from an assignment I completed as part of an introduction to Ecopsychology course with Project Nature Connect.* The coursework focused on being in nature with open senses and then translating these sensory perceptions into words. It was quite amazing as the group went through a series of simple exercises which significantly increased our appreciation of ourselves in creation and as this connection grew a transformation took place enabling us to counteract feelings of powerlessness, increase motivation and be completely inspired through this natural education process. In the face of environmental devastation and seeming human indifference to our crisis situation it is encouraging to learn that nature-connected senses are part of our inherent being which just need to be brought forth, developed and encouraged and that thinking from a nature centred perspective truly has the potential to change the world!

Nature displays supreme and true intelligence. This intelligence is in all of nature's ability to live, grow, play, interact and respond in accordance with its divine purpose. Within the whole web of life it seems that it is only humans that have forgotten how to do this. Most of what we think we know and congratulate ourselves for knowing is actually pretty useless information. If I do not know how my body works, what herbs to use for health, how to prepare nutritious life giving foods, how to plant and nurture the soil, how and when to harvest and other such basic life skills then I really know nothing of value and, personally speaking, if I do not live in accordance with my true nature then I live a lie. All of life's lessons can be found in the nature within and around us, everything we need to know is available if only we take the time to look and listen. Nature's intelligence fills my heart with praise, love and an intense desire to conserve, protect and share her goodness so here I offer some of my nature connected experiences, lessons and blessings.

Surrender

Each time I bathe in the sea I love to float on my back for extended periods. It is such a sweet surrender as I release all tension and worries and in turn receive a relaxed freeness and complete serenity. When I watch others trying to float for the first time (and remember when I first tried) they are so tense and it is this stiffness and fear that prevents them from enjoying the experience and successfully floating. Once they trust that the sea will support them it becomes so easy. It is so interesting to see that in the water the more we relax the more we are supported and the more we let go the more we are held up! This natural law is transferable to other life situations - the more we fret and hold tension the harder it is for things to flow and for the Divine to support us. When we surrender, trust completely and hold faith we are always supported, lifted and carried onwards in life.

Community

The power and effectiveness of harmonious community is always illustrated so clearly to me by one of the smallest creatures – ants! Watching a troop of ants crawling, you will notice that no matter how fast they are moving or how busy they look they always greet each-other! They stop and touch all who pass them from the opposite direction and I wonder about the purpose of this – maybe they are passing on information about a food source, next plan or simply engaging in friendly community manners. Whatever the purpose I'm inspired to a higher level of friendliness with my fellow passers by as I walk my path. But perhaps the thing that impresses me most about these tiny insects is how through working together in co-operation they are able to create huge and magnificent architectural structures thousands of times bigger than themselves. I once took a photograph of an amazing ant's nest, which enveloped a sizeable portion of a tree trunk. I now use this image as the background display for my computer desk top to always remind me how great things can be achieved when work is done collectively as a unified group for a common purpose and goal.

Cycles of Life

Exploring at the end of my garden I was attracted to a tree branch with tiny, tiny new green leaves not bigger than the letters on this page. As I examined I noticed along the branch a spiral of leaves each one larger and different than the next. The second size were also bright and vital – a more vibrant green with pale red edges. The next size up were a very bright green, they felt so smooth and were bursting with energy. After these the leaves were much darker and thicker, a few had started to get holes in or had

pieces missing whilst others although aged were still looking healthy in their maturity. I saw within this plant the whole cycle of life from birth, babies, toddlers, children, adolescents, young people, middle aged and the elderly. As the older leaves neared the end of their lives on the branch it was clearly visible that some had reached maturity in a better state than others. Whilst each leaf may not have a conscious choice available as to how it weathers a storm we as humans have much more power to take care of our health and wellness throughout our lives so that although we will inevitably grow older we can still retain our health, remain in good physical shape and be in good working order until the very end of our earthly days.

Changes

I sat on the veranda in the darkness of night watching streaks and bursts of lightening silently illuminating the sky. Amazing! The clouds and the sea were lit up in the frequent sparks of light and it was an incredible show of drama and action. The next morning I awoke to look out in the same place to see a beautiful big rainbow stretching its arc across a clear and crisp, bright blue sky. What a difference the day makes! I realise that everything changes, all has its place, purpose and time and that there is joy to behold in each experience.

Perspective

I skipped down to my little herb garden one day to see if the basil plants were producing seeds. As I stooped down to examine the tiny flowers I could see a whole lot of insect activity occurring amongst the petals. There was a bee collecting pollen from the small buds and it appeared so 'cute' with a little sack on its legs to collect its bounty. It sucked out the juicy nectar and looked to be having a really good time whilst also being hard at work. There were so many tiny creatures all actively engaged in their personal business I felt like a giant who had caught a glimpse of a secret world. I thought to myself "if all that activity is going on in one plant in my garden just imagine what these little beings are up to the world over. We are so big and move so fast we forget that we are sharing this earth with thousands, millions of other communities who each have their purpose and mission." I gained a new insight into the world of nature and gained a deeper respect and appreciation for all of the other creatures we share this ecosystem with.

Reincarnation

I saw first hand and participated in nature's greatest recycling scheme – the converting of trees back into soil. I sat by a 'dying' tree and watched how the decomposition process was creating dark rich fertile soil from it. It wasn't really death, more like a rebirth – yes the tree is literally being reborn and re-incarnated. "As it was in the beginning so shall it be in the end." As it grew from a seed it was given a home in and life from the soil. Now its life as a tree had ended it was returning to and becoming soil in order to nurture the emergence of another. Wow! It is a wonderful cycle, carefully designed by the Creator to constantly replenish and ensure life continues. I took part in this recycling event by taking a piece of bark and slowly crumbling it in my hands. Feeling its richness, I felt that the tree had called me to be part of the process, to feel connected and know that nothing dies it merely changes shape and is transformed to another level of being

Who am I?

As I have been more consciously aware within nature I have started to see all the interactions, the diversity and number of species, the way everything is part of the whole and fits together so well. I realise I am a part of this great diversity, part of the whole and I am here to celebrate this and become who I want to be, to co-create a vision of paradise and to express all that I am in all that I do. I am here to 'simply be me' just as the birds, the trees, the sun and the moon and all of nature is comfortable with itself just as it is. I ask myself – do you think the sun is worried what anyone thinks? You think the sun has good and bad days? I realised that the sun is the sun at all times, unconditionally expressing unconditional love, giving, nurturing and ever present. As the daily weather and seasons change the sun may sometimes feel either distant or too intense but despite our perceptions the sun remains constantly, unquestioningly itself. As I stay connected to nature I feel the miracle of it all - how the earth remains constantly circling the sun, the moon cycles our beautiful planet every month and heaven is dancing all

around us. Everything has rhythm, timing and place and as I gain a fuller appreciation of the delicate balance of life I also see how a lack of balance in one area has a knock-on effect on the whole. I feel I am here to assist repair that which has been damaged - the conscious awareness of the delicate 'web-string' connections that hold life together. I help to heal the broken pieces by radiating goodness in the same way the nature does unconditionally, by respecting diversity and difference and to fully be all that I am, aligned with and fulfilling my unique purpose. So who am I? I am a divine expression of the All Mighty Creator, I am a wonderful part of a wonderful universe. I am who I am - constantly evolving, expressing and elevating.

Appreciation

Our senses connect us to real life. They are enhanced through being in contact with nature. When I am still to observe and take in what is happening around me I realise how many sounds my ear can hear all at once, how many shades of colour my eyes can perceive, the joy in my heart from the calmness, serenity and feeling of being properly placed in Creation. Nature is God's blessed gift to us – a source of so much wonder and delight. To be immersed in nature makes me truly appreciate the existence and incredible intelligence of a Creator who designed and made this earth and all creatures so perfectly. In nature all things work in unison, harmony and collectively - everything is balanced and usable. Nature is a precious blessing and I give thanks for it all.

Overall nature has taught me how to stay in the moment, how to feel with my heart, to be calm and accept love.

The trees teach me to stand tall and breathe deep

The sea shows me that there is an ocean of abundance all around and that I am free to swim and float in it at anytime

The sky advises me to be expansive, to dream big and to clearly communicate my desires

The flowers tell me to bloom in fullness, display my beauty and share my radiance

The moon illustrates to me the different phases of life – there is a time to shine and a time to retreat

The rivers remind me to go with the flow of life and how to easily journey over obstacles that may be present along the path

The birds encourage me to take flight with my ideas and visions and see life from a higher perspective

The stars show me that the darkness is sometimes necessary to appreciate the light.

The rain educates me as to the power and life-force of water to heal, cleanse and replenish

The sun awakens my fire-power to be proactive, creative and energised

The herbs whisper to me secrets of their healing powers

The ever shifting clouds inform me that life is a process of constant change

Let nature teach you...

The wisdom of nature is available to us all at any given moment. Let nature guide, nurture, heal and teach you by using the following exercise:

Go to a natural area and allow yourself to be drawn to a place which most attracts you.

Silently or aloud ask permission to be in the area and wait to see what nature signifies to you. (It is usually very clear whether or not you are welcome).

If you are welcome to the area observe if there is a difference in how you feel or the area compared to before you asked permission

Sit quietly and observe what is around you, observe your sensations, allow any thoughts which are not in the moment to drift away

Focus on the natural attractions that surround you for as long as you desire

Breathe deep and describe your feelings by writing or drawing.

May you always be supported and guided by the wisdom of nature

Onelove

Terri Henry

Aug 2005

*More information about Project Nature Connect can be found at www.ecopsych.com