

Tuning into the Power of Nature

What have you learnt about life and yourself since the Pandemic really began to get a grip in March? One thing I have definitely learnt is how important it is for my wellbeing to go out into nature on a regular basis – ideally at least once a day for at least an hour. Now I know that the month of November may not be the best month for long walks in nature, but even if we cannot get out in nature as much, we can still tune into its beauty simply by bringing the qualities of a mountain, tree, river, ocean, sun or moon into our mind as we meditate.

Having tuned into the power of nature pretty diligently for many months now, I would like to share with you some of the strengths I have found by tuning into various aspects of the natural world.

First of all, I have noticed how comforting it is to stand under a large old tree with a big canopy. There is one tree in particular on – appropriately enough - Pine Road in Didsbury that has just been magnificent all year. I think it is a copper beech, but I am useless at identifying trees. Anyways, when I stand for a moment or two under this particular tree, I always feel as though it is sheltering, protecting and supporting me unconditionally. So I am sure it does not mind if I stand under it for a minute or two to breathe in its essence so that I can borrow its rootedness, strength and flexibility.

But I have not just benefitted this year from tuning into one particular tree. A cornucopia of trees, particularly those bordering the River Mersey, has given me so much joy all year. I was thrilled when they one by one burst into their spring colours. I then loved how they turned darker and fuller as spring rapidly turned into summer. Now I am marvelling at how they are turning orange and red and happily losing all their leaves as the winter approaches.

What I have learnt from all these ever-changing trees is that there is absolutely no point resisting change. Change comes constantly and so quickly. It seems like only yesterday that the trees were putting on their leaves and already they are losing them again. I wish I could be as sanguine as a tree about all the changes in my own body as time rushes forwards, but at least I now have a wonderful model to follow.

Next, I have loved walking along the River Mersey this year and I have spent quite some time just sitting by the water's edge and tuning into the qualities of running water. We may give a particular stretch of water a specific name, but the truth is that the water flowing past us is never the same twice. So again, nature has been teaching me to let go and to flow with all the changes in life rather, than trying to cling to the bank of a fast flowing river with my broken finger nails.

The River Mersey seems pretty moody. One day, it looks blue and serene, but the very next day after a night of heavy rain, it has turned muddy and turbulent. But does the river get upset by its ever-changing moods? I don't think so!

So again, I am trying to be less like me and more like an ever-flowing river. Of course, my mood can change from day to day. One morning, I can wake up feeling full of the joys of spring and the very next day, I can wake up feeling quite down or even depressed. But just like the river, I know that I am much more than my ever-changing, superficial characteristics. If I sit for a while, deepen my breathing, and then tune into my core, I find that at the very heart of my being there is a still, calm centre of loving awareness that never changes, whatever my internal weather.

Now as well as tuning into the River Mersey itself, I have also loved to spot so many birds enjoying their life on the river. As some of you already know, the absolute highlight for me was having a drop-dead gorgeous kingfisher pose on a rock right in front of me a few weeks ago. But I have also enjoyed watching herons, Canadian geese with their goslings and ducks with their fluffy, brand new ducklings. What have I learnt from tuning into all these different birds? Well, funnily enough, I have learnt the most from the ducks - who are certainly not that exciting in terms of spotting rare wildlife! But I have noticed that ducks often seem to quarrel with one another, yet after a quarrel flares up, it soon subsides again, as the ducks give themselves a really good shake and then settle down peacefully as though nothing at all has just happened.

If only we humans could learn from the ducks. Because our human brains are now so sophisticated, we tend to brood on a negative event for hours or even days on end. Maybe we should try 'shaking our feathers' after experiencing a moment or two of anger, or a brief argument with our partner or child, so that we can then return to a deeper inner peace that will really assist us to float calmly down the river of life.

Last but not least, I have to tell you about tuning into the awesome brightness of the sun. I don't know about you, but I have noticed that my heart always sings for joy each time a big golden sun rises up in the sky and turns the whole sky bright blue. I am not naturally a sunny type of person, but over many years now, I have learnt to tune into the properties of the golden sun in order to strengthen, brighten and empower myself physically, energetically, emotionally, mentally, and last but not least, spiritually.

We all know that the sun's light enables us to live on this beautiful planet, and I think that most of us are very aware of the emotional and mental benefits of bathing ourselves for a while in bright sunlight. However, in the final part of this month's message. I want to touch on the power of the sun as a physical representation of a much greater and higher spiritual light.

Sometimes during a particularly powerful meditation, I have felt my whole being flooded with an out-of-this world light that is both empowering and blissful - or dare I say, 'orgasmic'. Connecting to this spiritual light and gradually coming to know without a shadow of a doubt that it is real has slowly transformed my whole life for the better.

Having connected to an out-of-this-world light many times, I am no longer even particularly afraid of my body dying, because I know that whilst everything physical manifests, displays for a short while, and then disappears again, the light is eternal. At my very core, I am an integral part of this eternal light and so my true-self is also indestructible. I find this deep truth about life truly comforting - even in the midst of a horribly scary, and seemingly never ending, world-wide pandemic.

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