

NATURE CONNECTIONS



Nature Connections awaken us to the natural world. They open our senses and guide us toward a more intimate relationship with Gaia.

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Opening the Senses

Find a comfortable place outdoors. Center yourself. Open your senses to the world around by following these prompts.

Hearing: With eyes closed, pay attention to the sounds in your environment. Begin by noticing sounds at a distance. Do you recognize what they are? Next, bring your attention to sounds closer to you. Spend time just listening. Finally, pay attention to vibrations within your body. Can you hear or imagine their sound.

Smell: With eyes closed, become aware of smells in your environment. Notice the scents in the air. Can you identify them simply through scent?

Sight: Open your eyes slowly. Notice all that is around you. Continue to be quiet and contemplative. Be sure to look up toward the sky. Look down at the ground and then around. Do this slowly. Simply take it all in with curiosity.

Touch: Take a short walk. Touch the surface of the leaves, stones, water or anything else in your environment. Feel the ground under your feet. Feel the wind on your face and the sensations in your body

Taste: Find an apple or another piece of fruit. Slowly and consciously place a piece in your mouth. Begin to notice how it tastes and how your tongue responds.

Take at least 5 minutes to eat the apple and to be aware of your visceral response to it through all your senses.

Give thanks to the apple, the tree, the sun, water and all the elements that went into creating this piece of fruit so that you can enjoy it

End with an expression of gratitude for being alive.

3 Nature Connections:

1. Opening the Senses
2. Who Shares this Land with You?
3. Extraordinarily Beautiful



Who Shares the Land with You?

Stand at the threshold of your front door. Take a deep breath. Center yourself.

Now, cross the threshold and simply notice what is around you. Do you experience any sensations? Are there any tastes or smells in the air? Is it fully peopled or are their other beings? Notice who flies by.

Look down. Who is present? What trees companion you on this land? Who lives in the trees? What insects, birds, or animals do you see, hear or experience in this shared space.

Walk around your yard or sit quietly and observe your surroundings for 10-15 minutes. What do you see? Notice who shares the land with you. Listen to the sounds. Who (person, wind, insect, animal) do you hear?

Record your experience in your journal or through the arts.

The creator speaks through the rocks and stones and singing moon and the great breathing mountains. Everything is alive, living spirits of our ancient ancestors.

-Anasazi saying



Extraordinarily Beautiful

Find a natural being that you consider quite ordinary. Perhaps it is a twig, a bone, or a pebble. Sit with it or hold it in your hand. Gaze at its ordinariness. Just see it as it is.

Now look again. Begin to notice its natural beauty. Spend time with this being, gazing at, touching, and appreciating its beauty. Do this for five minutes

Ask yourself: What happened to allow me to see the seemingly ordinary as beautiful? How did this experience shift my relationship to this Being and to the natural world?

Record your experience in your journal or creatively through the arts, poetry, or photography.

Adapted from Deena Metzger, *Writing for Your Life*