

Some thoughts on reconnecting with Nature and simple activities for you to try.

Experience is the best teacher, because an experience consists of many different ways of knowing. On your next trip to a natural area, a park, your backyard, or with your favorite potted plant take a notepad with you. Walk quietly in this area, or be with this natural attraction, and note the multitude of thoughts, feelings, and actions you experience.

Write down the variety of diverse signals, tensions, and sensations you experience while in the moment with a part of nature: colors, sounds, motions, desires, forms, breathing, joy, images, temperature, appreciation, thirst, wind, exertion, etc. Then examine your list and note that our ability to experience the world through so many senses is part of our biological inheritance that we too often take for granted.

Each natural sense is Nature speaking to you through an attraction relationship or energy. Each sense evolved in you to keep you connected with your rejuvenating origins in Nature. The water in your body is part of the replenishing waters of the planet; you sense their disconnection as thirst. The oxygen in your body is part of the replenishing air of the atmosphere; you sense their disconnection as suffocation. Natural sensations are communicating attraction relationships.

Over the aeons, through the multiplicity of natural senses, our mind and body have developed as part of Nature's self-organizing, perpetuating, regeneration system. These natural senses exist throughout our body and remain alive for our entire lives if constantly used. They are Nature connecting with itself through you. These senses connect us to Nature, but they will atrophy if they are not exercised.

In the Euro-American educational system many of us were schooled in, we were told not to trust our senses. They'll lead us astray, make us appear foolish -- the senses are deceptive.

The senses are even said by some to be illusory. But by ignoring the senses we are ignoring a major portion of who we truly are.

To overcome our separation from Nature we must also return to a sensory way of knowing. Our bodily senses bring us into contact with the breathing Earth around us in every moment. If we don't understand our interdependence and relationship to Nature, it is because we have disconnected our senses from their source. Dismissed them as irrelevant. Forgotten their significance.

The senses, such as breathing and eating, are our most intimate connection to our source of life. If we ignore our senses we imperil our own lives and the health of the Earth that supports our lives.

You can learn to trust your feelings. You can validate that your senses work by validating that you can hunger, taste, thirst, touch, smell, hear, and see as well as feel suffocation, pain, temperature, pleasure, gravity, distress, community, and perhaps most importantly, love. Even those senses that we would label "negative" are natural attractions telling us that in this moment we should be seeking more positive attractions elsewhere.

Softly stroke your cheek and say, "Feeling is being."

When you laugh say, "This feeling is real."

Pinch yourself and say, "I feel, therefore I am."

Continue with these reality checks until you can honestly say, "Feelings are experiences; sensations and feelings are facts; sensation makes life worthwhile."

Write down what you think your life experience would be like if you didn't have feelings and sensations. Would you be a machine? A container of soulless words? A mathematical equation?

You are a sentient being. All sentient beings deserve to have good feelings, for in Nature good feelings indicate ongoing survival. To gain these good feelings, sentient beings trust how they feel and they act to sustain those feelings that are most comfortable.

Your natural sensations and feelings are important to your survival because they call your attention to the entities or situations that aroused them. Learn to trust and understand your sensations and feelings in order to gain their guidance. They are Nature.

Neither scientists, politicians, religious leaders, nor educators invented sensations. Nature did. When you experience sensations and attractions you experience Nature in action.

A vital way to more fully know any sense or feeling is to put it into words. When you discover a natural feeling or sensation, write it down and discuss it with someone else. This is a very important step. It connects your educated rationality and language senses with your other natural senses. In time, this enables Nature to speak through your heart, thoughts, and voice. It will heal the separation between your body, mind, and spirit as well as their connections to Nature. It will bring you back

into the healthy balance that Nature has meant for you to be in.

Those of you who are attracted to sharing your reconnecting with nature experiences, please let either Allison or Dave know, and you can join our on-line discussion and support group. This will allow you to share your reconnecting with Nature experiences in a safe and supportive environment, and allow us to stay in contact with each other in between our classes or the other in person meetings we'll be offering here in the community.

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions." - Oliver Wendall Holmes