



RE-WILD

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GUIDE FOR YOUTHWORKERS

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Guide for Youth Workers

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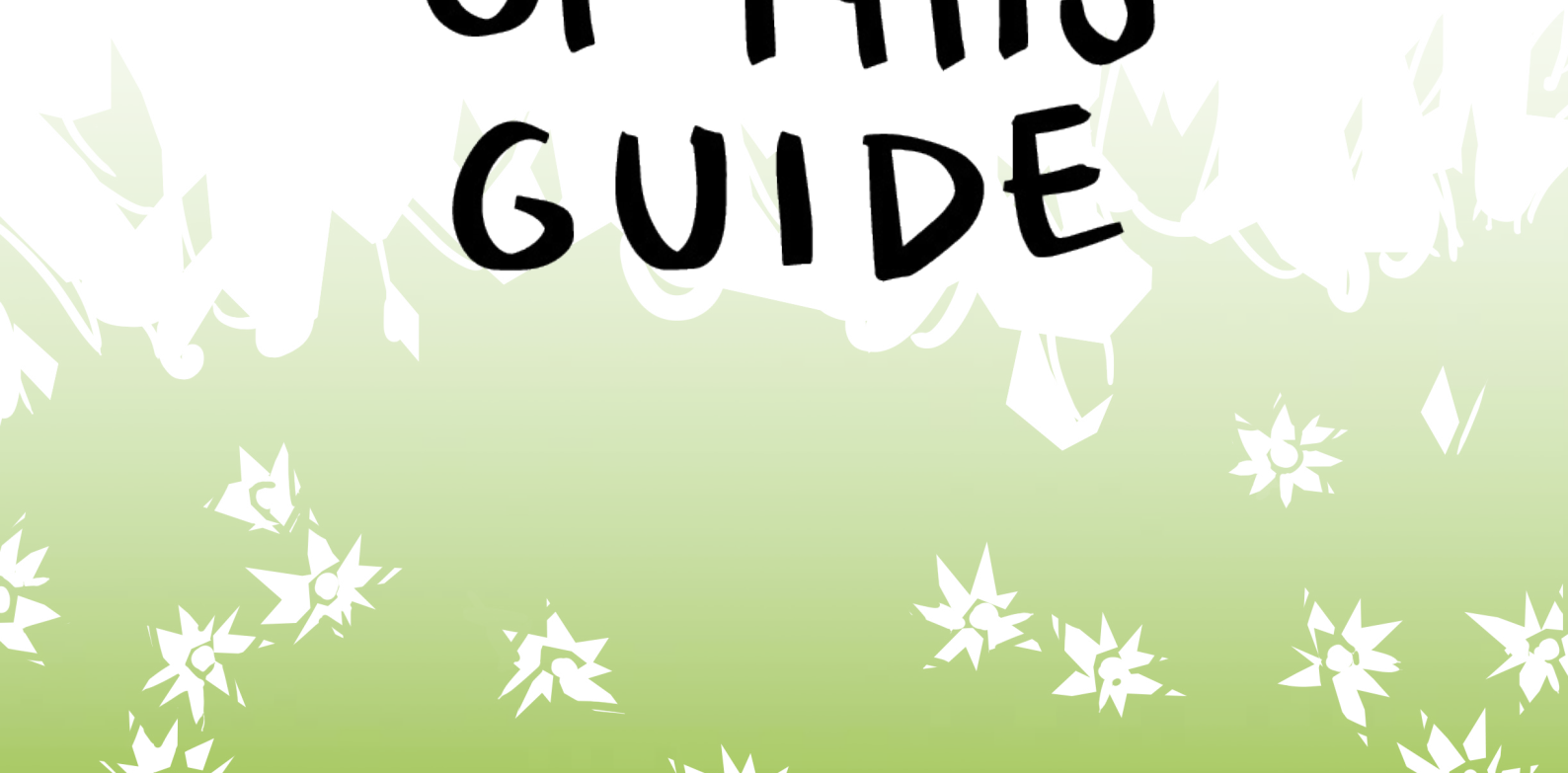
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| | |
|--|----|
| I. Intro | 1 |
| II. Tips for youth workers | 9 |
| III. Nature-based methods | 13 |
| 1. The Art of Doing Nothing | 14 |
| 2. Altar of intentions | 16 |
| 3. D.I.Y. recycle - upcycle notebook | 19 |
| 4. Free Writing | 22 |
| 5. Constellation poetry | 27 |
| 6. Colour your emotions | 30 |
| 7. The Weather Within | 34 |
| 8. Walk to the spring | 37 |
| 9. Fallen leaf | 40 |
| 10. Around the fire | 45 |
| 11. Positive gossiping | 47 |
| 12. Four Windows of Knowing | 51 |
| 13. Drawing touch | 54 |
| 14. Fix the drawing | 57 |
| 15. A trip to your safe space | 59 |

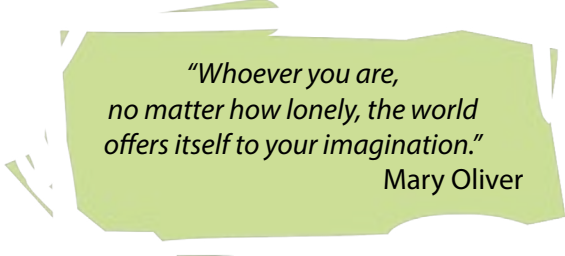
| | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| 16. | Under the Old Tree | 63 |
| 17. | Who am I? | 66 |
| 18. | In dialog with autumn | 71 |
| 19. | Mirror me nature | 75 |
| 20. | My inner animal | 78 |
| 21. | Building a Hearth | 83 |
| 22. | Mirrored Landscapes | 89 |
| 23. | 4 elements land art | 96 |
| 24. | Befriending shadow | 98 |
| 25. | Stories of Nature | 101 |
| 26. | The map of Wholing | 106 |
| | IV. Youth in natural settings | 125 |
| | V. More Opportunities | 129 |
| | VI. Closing words | 133 |

THE STORY OF THIS GUIDE





Re-Wild Connecting Youthwork to Nature



*"Whoever you are,
no matter how lonely, the world
offers itself to your imagination."*

Mary Oliver

What is nature connection?

Well, simply put, it is the felt, embodied feeling, that you are part of something greater than yourself. You are part of this web of life that encompasses you.

Yet to work with such a complex/simple idea in youth work, we need a more concrete strategy. From our experience of working with youth and youth workers alike, we have come to view nature-connection as a multi-faceted process that has three pillars:



Connection with oneself;
Connection with other humans and community;
Connection with other living, non-human beings.

All three of these pillars need to be addressed in working with youth. In this way we can support the development of a strong, resilient, active young person that invests in working towards a more beautiful world. In this world wildness (inner, communal and outer) is an important part of healthy communities and rich abundant lives.

Nature is not only a place we go to on weekends or visit on a free afternoon. Nature is all that surrounds us. We as humans, both individually and as a species, are part of nature, just as every other being is. We belong to an ecosystem and contribute to it. That ecosystem is part of a larger bio-region. The bio-region, in turn, is part of a complex living organism we call Earth. This Guide is meant to kick off a process in which we begin to feel this sense of connection with the other living beings around us. This includes other humans, and our communities and the wild beings that we share our home with.

Young people are becoming increasingly distant from nature and natural processes. In this age of advanced technology and over-reliance on cellphones, a rewilding of humans is truly necessary. It is essential for the healthy development of individuals and communities. This is a process that can significantly help us grow up healthy, face everyday challenges, and accept the uncertainty, insecurity, and impermanence of life. It can help us accept ourselves and our inner reality, find our place in a group, community and in our environment. Rewilding supports the growth of responsible adults who contribute to the health of our ecosystems.

So what “re-wilding” can bring for ourselves and for our surroundings - for community and people of all ages? What is rewilding for us, for our organisations and for the work we do? What do participants need and want? What is nature connection? Do we think about nature, how do we feel it? How do we communicate with it and how much are we willing to invest into this relationship?

Many questions.

Some answers about nature and connecting to nature came through the implementation of outdoor activities. Whether with peers, during trainings, in organised sessions or free time, and while facilitating activities for young people.

Rewilding process offers us an insight into ourselves while mirroring nature and being mirrored by it. It is based on two developmental models of American psychologist Bill Plotkin. These models explain developmental phases and healthy growing as a natural process. Like any growing and declining circle that we can find in nature and ecosystems. Bill Plotkin’s Eco-centric Developmental Wheel offers an explanation of the general needs and tasks for each phase in human life. It puts ECOlogy in the center of human development, rather than EGO that is prevalent in world societies nowadays. The second model, the Wild Mind Map of the Human Psyche offers a framework of how to work and develop our inner capacities, gifts and strengths to be active citizens of the living web of life.

Rewilding is a process. It starts with a small spark of awareness. Maybe as you are watching a stunning sunset, or when by the river you might get taken by those waves, or in a workshop where for the first time you feel that nature is not just a place to visit. Rewilding is a process that starts now, and it will continue to deepen for the rest of your life, and the lives of the people you are working with. We, the authors of this Guide, hope that the activities, ideas, suggestions and tricksterish proposals contained within will be a first, simple step in this process.

You can use these methods and activities as stand-alone workshops, or combine them to create a one-day experience, a weekend camp, or a youth exchange lasting seven days or more. Or anything else that your wild creativity invites you into. The methods are arranged from simple to complex and are designed to be user-friendly for any youth worker.



The Authors

This guide was developed by three European NGOs working together to rewild youth work.

Human and Tree

Human and Tree is a NGO working in Bucovina region of Romania, in the small city of Siret. We are actively engaged in the youth field for the last three years and work towards rewilding the land and hearts of the people in the wider region. The activists from Human and Tree use nature-based practices, storytelling, professional trainings, support groups, and experiential nature-connection workshops. Through these, they bring a much-needed wilderness to youth, children, and adults alike. Our work is deeply inspired by the Animas Valley Institute founded by Bill Plotkin, by Coyote Mentoring approach pioneered by Jon Young and by the dreaming land itself which we, as nature-based guides, are in constant conversation with.

The current project team is composed of Ramona-Diana Ghimpu, Daniel-Liviu Oros and Alin-Alexandru Tudosa. All three have directly contributed to the building of this guide to rewilding, under the gentle and fierce guidance of Alexandru Giurgea, the project manager, trainer and initiator of this project.





(jpn. "harmonious garden") is a Croatian organisation that works with vulnerable young people, implementing activities of the martial art of Aikido, and other aspects of far-eastern culture and arts. It helps young people to thrive and build mental health resilience, develop self-confidence, and connect to themselves, others, and nature in a healthy, sustainable and conscious way. The Re-Wild project opened a space for sharing knowledge and exploring new ways to connect with oneself and the world around. It gave participants the opportunity to discover, explore, and develop healthy social connections through nature-based activities.

Three youth workers from the Aiki En organization participated in this project: Maja Pušić-Čerić, Andrea Doračić, and Karlo Kostadinović. They honed their competencies in working with young people. Some of them improved their skills, and some started their work with young people for the first time. All took a step further in their growth and connection with the environment and nature.





(RVP). Create the Environment Yourself, in English. This Latvian association is aiming to do so for around 20 years. And in this time they also re-evaluate what environment means. Many of their activities have been related to nature based education, to environmental awareness and protection. It has been done through building freakbikes, establishing a swap-shop, creating a community garden, promoting volunteering, and having countless local and international projects. Over the years, the NGO has increasingly worked with young people who need extra support—youngsters with learning difficulties, behavioral challenges, and young people in prison. Slowly, piece by piece RVP began to see a bigger picture. The disconnection from nature (our inner and also the one around us) had been leaving a strong negative impact on people’s psycho-emotional well-being. Complex situations require complex actions, but one of the most impactful approaches that RVP have discovered and started practicing over the past few years is the ecocentric approach. It offers amazing tools that can be used in various environments, with very diverse target-groups. Re-wilding has been happening to RVP on multiple levels - their representatives have gone through trainings, RVP educators are complementing their training courses with bits and pieces of ecocentrism, and now there is another tool that can help to promote and share these healthy and meaningful activities.

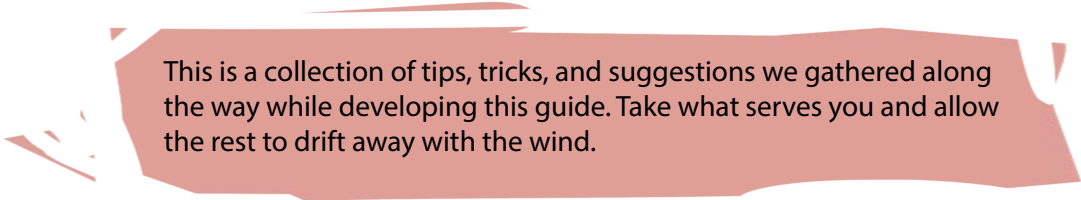
This guide was made possible thanks to educators such as Gloria Pascual, Linda Ulane, and Stanislavs Babins, and the work they do in international settings. They share common values and strongly believe that meaningful change begins with small actions and by creating the environment ourselves.





TIPS FOR YOUTH WORKERS





This is a collection of tips, tricks, and suggestions we gathered along the way while developing this guide. Take what serves you and allow the rest to drift away with the wind.

- All target groups are very different, with different needs and interests. The specific characteristics of the group you work with may also vary depending on the participants' ages.
- Adapt the timing, music, and all other details of the activities to your target group.
- If you feel that the estimated time for an activity, or for specific steps within it, is too short or too long, adapt the timing to the needs, developmental stage, and capabilities of the participants. Free writing can be adapted to the group's energy and engagement, allowing more or less time depending on participants' needs.
- When participants are engaged in an individual activity (such as writing, drawing, artwork, or journaling etc.) and you need to bring it to a close, it can be helpful to say, "Raise your hand if you need more time." If hands are raised, you can then give two additional minutes. This approach often makes it easier to stop the activity than simply telling participants they have one more minute.
- In guided imagery, you will usually find ellipses ("...") marking pauses in the text. It is important to take your time and move slowly—slower than you may think is necessary. After inviting participants to find a place, imagine something, or pay attention to specific details, allow three to five seconds of silence before continuing with the next sentence. For certain suggestions or instructions, you may also repeat them after a brief pause ("...") to give participants' minds or imaginations time to fill in the gaps. As a practice, you can record yourself guiding the imagery before the workshop and listen to it afterward to test the timing.
- This is not therapy, eco-therapy, or a form of healing. The activities may touch on emotions, challenging memories, or deep personal questions. However, this material is intended for youth workers, not mental health specialists. It is a self-development process that participants navigate at their own pace. Participants are responsible for how deeply they engage in the exercises, and you are responsible for ensuring that no one is pushed to do anything they are unwilling or unprepared to do.


- Everything is an invitation. Your participants have the right and responsibility to say “yes” and/ or “no” to the activities and experiences you invite them into, following this guide.
- Throughout the activities, avoid distractions from electronic devices and invite participants to do the same.
- The facilitator usually keeps track of time for activities. To help, have a timekeeper handy—preferably a wristwatch instead of a phone.
- From an eco-centric perspective, all beings and things are alive, intelligent, and have their own vitality and free will—trees, birds, rocks, rivers, ants, bushes, and more. When we wish to use or engage with any natural object or element, we take a moment to ask permission. If we move it, we return it to its original place afterward. This simple act of respect is what we call “nature’s good manners.”
- Using poems in nature-based youth work can be a powerful way to convey ideas or emotions and help participants get into the right mood or mindset for the activities. You’ll find some poems included in this guide. If you choose to use them, read each poem twice, go slowly, and allow it to land on participants by pausing in silence for a few moments afterward.
- “Popcorn style” sharing, found in some places in this guide means: “Whoever is ready to pop, pops” and then we continue until all kernels are cooked. Sharing is done in a random manner, but not speaking over each other and not asking permission to speak. But do invite all to speak, and in silences between sharings you may wanna repeat the guiding question.
- Throughout the guide, debriefing is included as part of each activity. In this section, you will find general debriefing questions as well as activity-specific ones. For more detailed guidance on debriefing, refer to this section.
- Council is a specific way of sharing/debrief that is thoroughly described here, in the sister handbook made by us, page 83: <https://aiki-en.hr/naslov-na/projekti/pan-flute/pan-flute-en/>
- Wandering is a key element of nature-based youth work and appears in many of the activities in this guide. To get a deeper sense of it, see the resource in the Pan Flute Handbook, page 109.





NATURE - BASED METHODS





The Art of Doing Nothing

What do we do when we do nothing? Is it possible to do nothing? What happens when we finally sit in silence and take a moment to rest? Do our thoughts become loud and hard to handle, or do we simply enjoy the stillness? Do we feel the urge to distract ourselves—grabbing a phone or filling the quiet with digital content—so we don't feel alone? How does it feel to resist that urge, to simply be present with the silence? The activity *Time for Myself* can help explore these questions and offer some insights.




Aims:

to explore one's inner nature;
to take a mindful break;
to connect to the one's state of being;
to raise awareness of compulsive actions.

Time: 60 to 90 min

Number of the participants: 4+ people



Activity step by step

1. Initiate a short conversation about “what do we do when we are doing nothing?” and “what do we do when we have a break?”;
2. Invite participants to spread out into the surrounding nature, finding a place that calls to them—to sit, lie down in the grass, or move gently as they walk for the duration of the activity;

3. Participants spend at least 15 minutes alone, without communicating or disturbing one another, exploring their inner nature in silence while “doing nothing”;
4. For contemplation during “doing nothing” use the reflection questions listed below (read them out loud before wandering, or you can print them for each participant);
5. Reflection in pairs, each participant shares for 5 min.
Questions for contemplation / reflection during (and after) the activity are:
 - What does “doing nothing” mean?
 - Am I doing something now or not?
 - How do I feel?
 - What would I like to do instead of doing nothing?
 - How can you use these insights of “doing nothing” in your daily life?



The activity can last longer if you feel the group is ready for it.

The activity can take place indoors or, preferably, outdoors.

When we hear the word “altar,” most of us might think of a Christian church, with a decorated, table-like structure at the front of the space. Altars have also been a common element in pagan traditions, serving as places to leave offerings to gods, spirits, or other beings people believe in. The term “altar” comes from the Latin *altare* (often associated with *altus*, meaning “high”). Therefore, an altar is typically a raised structure or a natural object—such as a stone, tree, or tree stump—used for various rituals. Similarly, in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, ancient Greek religion, and other belief systems, altars serve as spaces for ritual practices.

Over the centuries, this word has been used in very diverse settings. For example, a table with a mirror and various makeup tools can become a morning ritual space for people who not only take great care of their appearance but also set intentions for how they would like to feel during the day. Another example: a friend of mine has a grandmother who always started mushroom picking by visiting a specific place in the forest. There, she greeted the forest, and afterward she always found plenty of edible mushrooms. Or consider a kitchen table in the morning, with one special coffee mug with a puppy on it, a fruit bowl, or a newspaper. Early morning is a time when one can greet the upcoming day in silence and follow a small ritual of moving through its first steps. In my case, I have a shelf of dear objects—letters, drawings, stones, and figurines—that embodies safety and luck. Once in a while, I light an incense stick there. It is my ritual of grounding and remembering what is important to me.

Altars can take countless forms and serve many purposes. Do you have one of your own? Or perhaps there is a place you wouldn’t call an altar, yet it quietly holds your everyday rituals. A space where small, repeated gestures carry meaning. And if you don’t have such a place—what might it look like, if you allowed yourself to imagine freely? What would you place there, and what quiet rituals would emerge?

Linda



Altar of intentions

Creating a common altar can be an important step in establishing a safer space. It helps bond participants and offers a shared and clear ritual for opening and closing a workshop.

Aims:

to create an object that can support group regulation in ongoing workshops;
to have a space to share intentions and expectations for the activity.

Materials:

A candle, a base for the candle and various natural objects such as stones, dry flowers and leaves, branches, tiny bottles of water or sand, little figurines.

Time: 30 min, depending on the size of the group

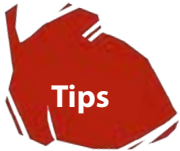
Number of participants: 5-30 people



Activity step by step

1. Ask participants what comes to mind when they hear the word “altar,” and invite them to share any daily rituals they practice;
2. Invite participants to reflect on their intentions for this workshop (or series of workshops, if it is a long-term project). Some possible questions include: How would you like to feel here? What would you like to learn? What would you like to experience?

3. Arrange the materials in front of the group. Invite participants to explore them and select the objects that best symbolize their intentions. One by one, they share their choices with the group and place the objects on the base where the candle is positioned;
4. After everyone has shared their intentions, invite the group to agree that when the candle is lit, the workshop begins and all focus is on the activities. When the workshop ends, the candle is extinguished;
5. You can also invite participants to reflect briefly on what it was like to build the altar.



Participants can collect the materials themselves while wandering through the natural space, if possible..

If an open flame is not possible, you can use electric candles or battery-operated LED lights.

In a series of workshops, a different participant can light and extinguish the candle each time.

You may invite everyone, individually or as a group, to set an intention for the workshop or meeting whenever you lit up the candle.

Find a safe place, or a box, to store the altar between meetings, as natural materials can be fragile.

If the word "altar" feels too loaded, you can choose another—platform, podium, shrine, or even a bowl or plate if the objects are arranged on one.

This activity is also suitable as a standalone experience for a group that does not meet regularly.



D.I.Y. recycle - upcycle notebook

This activity cultivates awareness of our connection to nature and sustainability. By reusing, recycling, or upcycling materials around us—giving them new life, shape, or purpose—we become more conscious of the resources in our environment. It sparks creativity, encourages out-of-the-box thinking, and helps us discover new solutions to old problems—all while having fun. Creating our own notebook also fosters a sense of ownership and accomplishment. We are far more likely to use and value something we've made ourselves than a notebook bought or given as a gift.

Aims:

to practice the Do It Yourself skills;
to recycle;
to raise awareness of sustainability.

Materials:

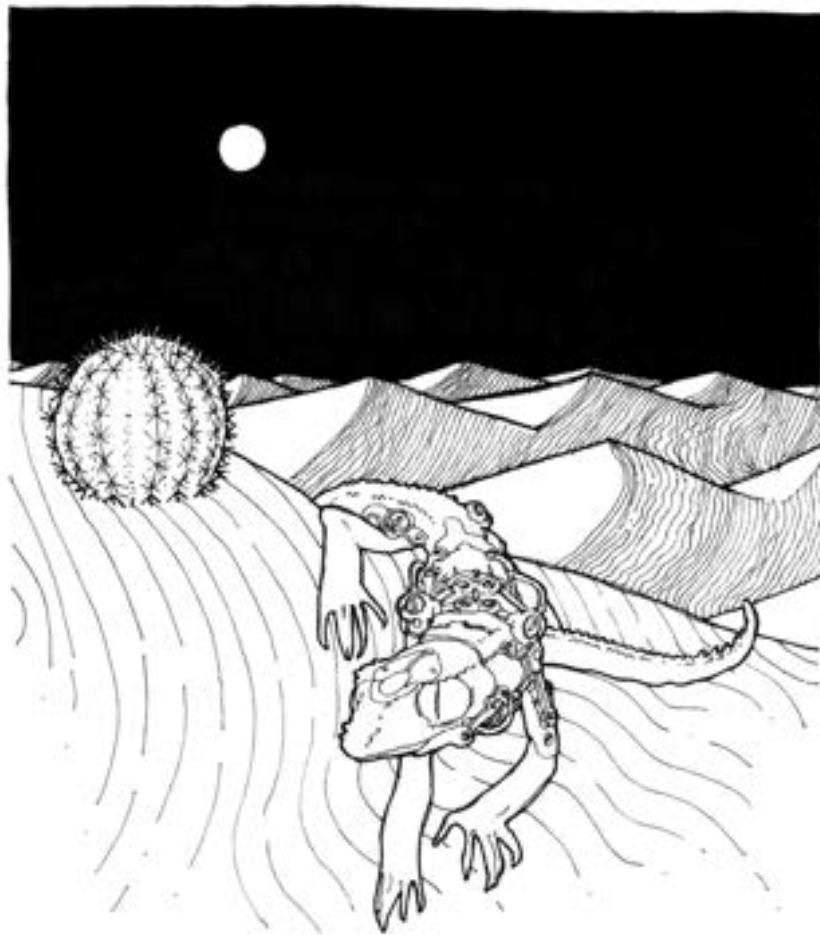
waste paper from, paper hole puncher or piercer, scissors, few meters of string for binding (slightly stronger thread, wool, or thin twine), thick blunt needle for needlework or several pieces of thin wire (for threading); pens for personalizing it, drawing something as a reminder, and writing the name on the notebook.

Time: 45 to 60 min

Number of participants: 1 - 10 people



1. Work together with participants at the same time, explaining small details in the process as needed. The details of the process are:
2. fold waste office or printing papers in half,
3. make holes in the middle of folded papers on the line formed by folding them,
4. prepare the string for binding by cutting a large piece of it,
5. bind the papers into a notebook by threading the string through the holes,
6. personalise the notebook with your name, drawing, sign, and other personal reminders that makes you feel good.
7. During the process, discuss recycling, upcycling, and sustainability with participants in a relaxed, conversational way. Encourage brainstorming, idea-sharing, and reflection on how sustainability can play a role in daily life.
8. Reflection: sharing in a circle about the experience. Useful questions:
 - How do you feel about making your own notebook?
 - Is there something else from your environment and your “home garbage” that you can reuse and upcycle?
 - What will you write in your notebook?



I have nothing to write I have nothing to write I have nothing to write I have nothing to write I have nothing to write I have nothing to write, nevertheless, I don't always have to know in order to create, and sooner or later, this brings me somewhere.

Free writing is a simple yet highly effective tool for a variety of purposes. In the form of “morning pages,” it is used by writers—and not only writers—to warm up for writing or to overcome writer’s block. Therapists also recommend it for processing intense emotions or connecting with deeper, unconscious levels of the psyche. As youth workers, however, we don’t go quite that deep. I use free writing as a warm-up exercise in my creative writing workshops. I have noticed that it helps participants arrive in the present moment and also quiets the inner critic.

This is usually the first task I give to the guys in prison where I do my youth work. They’re not very happy about it, and yet they also like it. We tease each other about it—it has become our ritual. I tell them that if they have nothing to write, they can simply write: *I have nothing to write I have nothing to write*, until something comes up. There was one guy who, at the end of every session, handed me a page filled with these words *I have nothing to write*—for weeks, for months—always smiling, as if challenging me, as if proving the silliness of my task. And yet, he kept coming back each session. It went on for more than half a year, until one day, at the end of the session, he handed me his page, and I noticed something different. He didn’t give me his usual mischievous smile. After everyone left and I had organized my materials, I took a quick look at his page. The beginning was as usual, the same old mantra, but in the middle, something had changed: *I want to visit Gauja National Park with my mum again*. I broke down at that moment. All the walls he had been writing for me, all the walls he had built to feel safe, revealed a window. A small one, but still—he had opened it for me, giving me a glimpse, through this annoying, wonderful task of free writing.

Linda



Free Writing

This simple task, which can be done almost anywhere and at any time, can serve as a warm-up for other activities. It is also an excellent tool for reflection after longer or more intense activities.



Aims:

to support the participants to arrive here and now;
to tune down the inner critic;
to focus on a topic;
to explore more unconscious processes of the mind.

Materials: paper and pens

Time: from 5 minutes upwards

Number of participants: 1-40 people

Activity step by step

1. When participants are given paper and pens, invite them to find a comfortable place and position for writing;
2. Introduce them with principles of free writing:
 - The writing doesn't stop. If you don't know what to write, you can write "I don't know what to write" or repeat the first sentence etc.;

- Write in your comfort language;
 - The grammar is not important at this moment;
 - Don't edit yourself;
 - The text doesn't have to make sense;
 - The text is not meant for reading out loud;
 - Don't think about the time, you will be warned when you slowly have to end;
3. Provide participants with the beginning of the first sentence. It can relate to the activity, the topic of the day or workshop, or even be a line from a randomly chosen poem;
 4. Set a time for writing. If this is the participants' first experience, five minutes is usually enough. Give them a warning as the time is about to end;
 5. Ask participants to re-read their text and underline three words that catch their attention, feel important, or are surprising. They can then choose to share these words with the group;
 6. Reflection. It is always interesting to have a discussion after the process:
 - How was it to write for so long?
 - Did it feel long for everyone?
 - How was the flow of the writing?
 - Were there any moments when your mind went blank?
 - Does the text make sense?
 - What are the current emotions?
 - And what is this task about for you?



Before the activity, make sure the pens are working and that there are some extras available. It's important that participants don't have to stop their writing process, for example, because of a faulty pen.

Make sure participants are truly comfortable. In recent years, people have been writing by hand less and less, so they tire more quickly. The most comfortable way to write is with the hand, from elbow down, fully supported on the table.

If you have the opportunity to practice this task regularly, gradually increase the writing time—it can easily go up to 30 minutes. The longer participants write, the more interesting processes emerge on the paper.

You can invite participants to put down their pens when they finish writing, so you know they are done.





Constellation poetry

This creative writing task supports the participants inner reflection. It also invites people to practice and challenge their creativity. If facilitated with the right attitude, it can bring much fun to the group.



Aims:

to boost creativity;
to make connection with nature, especially in spaces where nature is not available;
to become aware of one's inner strengths.

Materials: paper, pens

Time: 1 hour

Number of participants: 1-30 people



Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to draw four large dots (or stars) and eight smaller dots (or stars) anywhere on a blank sheet of paper;
2. Next, invite participants to connect the stars with lines, making sure that at least one small star comes between each large one. This is how they create their own constellation;

3. Then invite participants to write their strong, resourceful, or mature characteristics, abilities, or skills as the names of the four large stars. Each star should have one name—for example, brave, humorous, flexible, family, or kind;
4. The small stars are named based on associations with the large stars they are connected to. For example, if a small star is linked to a large star named “jokes,” the small star’s name might be “laughter,” “sparkling,” “yellow,” or whatever comes to mind for the participant. Some small stars may be named based on associations with two or more already-named stars. Encourage participants not to overthink it, but to go with their first associations. Invite them to be playful and enjoy the process;
5. After naming all the stars in their constellation, invite participants to imagine a natural place that represents their strength or inner resources—perhaps a waterfall, snowfield, mountain, ocean, oak tree, or forest. If anyone finds it challenging to choose a place, gently provide some examples (see Tips) for inspiration;
6. Now it’s time to create the poem. The title should be the natural place or element each participant chose in the previous step. The rules for the poem are: include all the words from the constellation (the order doesn’t matter), write at least eight lines, and most importantly—have fun and be playful;
7. After everyone has finished, provide space for participants to share their poems if they wish;
8. Questions for debrief:
 - How was it to name the stars and write the poem?
 - When was the last time you played with associations/language?
 - What does your poem tell?
 - How does the story of the poem reflect the story of your life/current events/your inner world?



Writing poems can sometimes feel intimidating. Remind participants that the poem doesn't have to rhyme and that, in this activity, the process is more important than the result. It can help to read examples of free-verse or playful poems to show the diversity of poetry. Also, emphasize that the poem doesn't have to be "good"—this gives participants freedom to let go of inner expectations.

The final version of the poem can be written in or around the constellation. In this way, participants create a textual artwork as the outcome of the activity.

Consider offering colorful paper or even poster-sized images of natural elements as surfaces for drawing the constellation.

Here are some ideas for strong places and small inspirations for participants who aren't sure what to write.:

- Volcano (the impressive power that makes the deepest core substance erupt)
- River (neverending movement; rhythm; signs that are left behind; music)
- Meadow (abundance and diversity; home; many homes)
- Desert (mysterious and charming; place that has gathered the most durable animals and plants)
- Melting ice (the music of spring; so many beginnings; the power of change)
- Cliff (edge, change of colours, end or beginning, how was it created?)
- Vineyard (berry-shaped sun; promises of celebration; order; rhythm)
- Ocean (the biggest organ of the planet; still so much undiscovered)



Colour your emotions

We live in a world marked by disconnection, beginning with disconnection from ourselves. Many psychological challenges arise from our inability to recognize the emotions we experience, leaving us unsure of how to respond to them. This activity aims to address this issue by starting with the very basics.



Aims:

to connect with the emotions;
to learn basic human emotions;
to help participants identify and become aware of their current emotions;
to learn how to process emotions through art/colours.

Materials:

A4 papers, colour crayons or pastels, printed copies of *Emotions Wheel* by Glenn Trigg.

Time: 1 hour

Number of the participants: 2+ people



Activity step by step

1. Begin the activity by introducing the topic, explaining that participants will be exploring and recognizing their emotions and expressing them creatively. Ask each participant to take a sheet of paper and three different colors of crayons or pastels, and place them in front of them;

2. Ask the group to name emotions, letting them answer in a popcorn style (spontaneously without following a specific order or asking for permission to speak);
3. After hearing some responses, explain that there are six primary emotions, from which many complex emotions are derived. Invite participants to guess what the six primary emotions are (happy, sad, surprise, disgust, anger, and fear). As a hint, you can reference the Disney movie *Inside Out*;
4. After identifying the six primary emotions, give each participant a printed copy of Glenn Trigg's *Emotions Wheel* and allow them a few moments to explore it;
5. Ask participants to focus on their own emotions and guide them into a brief exercise to help them connect with their feelings. Invite them to close their eyes and pay attention to what they are experiencing. Remind them to continue breathing slowly and steadily, in and out. You can use the following guiding text:

"What emotions are there?... Where do you feel it in your body? Is it in your throat, in your chest, perhaps in your belly?... What colour does it have?... What shape? Keep breathing, as you hold that image inside your head... Slowly, as you keep breathing, start moving your fingers and toes as you start awakening your consciousness into your body in this room... Very slowly, at your own pace, open your eyes";

6. Now invite participants to take their blank sheet of paper and use one of their three crayons to represent each of the emotions they have identified. Ask them to draw the emotions on the paper, using shapes and forms as they imagine them. Allow about 15 minutes for this drawing exercise;
7. Afterwards, invite participants to create a small exhibition, arranging the drawings together in different areas of the room. Participation is optional—if someone prefers not to display their drawing, that is completely fine. During the exhibition, the artists remain silent about their own drawings, while the group is encouraged to share which emotions they perceive in each piece;
8. After the exhibition, create a space for a debrief. Ask them to sit in pairs or trios, and share about their process;

9. To conclude the activity, ask them to join back in the circle, and make a small debrief. Possible questions:

- How was the process for you?
- How easy was it to connect?
- What was challenging?
- How did the drawing part go for you?
- How do the reflections of the *public* during the exhibition make you feel?
- Can you relate to what you heard?



The text in quotation marks "" is a short guiding script. Feel free to adapt it to your own style, but take your time with it. It is important not to rush, allowing space for imagination to unfold.

If, after the connecting exercise, a participant mentions that they couldn't connect with any emotions, you can normalize their experience by explaining that in today's society it is very common to feel disconnected from ourselves and from our inner and outer nature. You can encourage them by replying something like: *"You might have been unable to connect with anything, and that may have led to frustration, right? If so—congratulations! You've already identified a complex emotion. What two emotions do you think make up your frustration? I invite you to draw them. Or perhaps you felt numbness—how would you represent that?"*

Link to printable Emotion wheel is here: <https://glenstrigg.net/emotions-wheel/>





Inside each person lives a shifting sky.
Cloudbanks gather behind the ribs,
winds of thought cross the mind's horizon,
and sudden warmth rises from the heart
like the morning sun burning through fog.

Most of this we miss,
moving too fast to feel
how our inner climate swells, cools, changes direction.

But when we slow down,
we notice that emotions are not states,
they are weather.
Passing frontlines.
Moving patterns.
Natural systems forming and dissolving
without our permission
and without requiring our control.

To track the weather within
is to watch the psyche breathe,
storm, soften, and clear
like the wild world it belongs to.

Daniel



The Weather Within: Tracking the Inner Climate Across a Single Hour

This activity guides participants into a gentle exploration of their inner states, encouraging expression and observation through metaphors rather than through thought or analysis.



Aims:

to cultivate emotional awareness through metaphors;
to explore inner shifts as natural patterns rather than fixed states;
to strengthen self-attunement and non-judgmental observation.

Materials: paper and pens (optional).

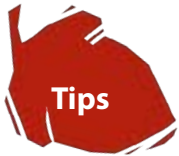
Time: 50–60 min



Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to find a comfortable spot in nature where they can sit or lie down. Ask them to observe the external weather—such as temperature, wind, and light—without interpreting or labeling it. Guide participants inward with the question: *“If your inner world right now was weather, what would it be?”* Offer gentle prompts such as storms, breezes, fog, pressure systems, quiet skies, or scattered showers;
2. Invite participants to track their inner weather for 10–15 minutes, noticing subtle shifts such as tightening, softening, rising energy, heaviness, clarity, or turbulence. Let them know they may write down or simply observe. You can adjust the duration—shortening or extending it—depending on the group’s attention span;

3. Invite participants to walk slowly for five minutes, as if moving through their inner climate system, and notice how movement influences the “forecast”;
4. Invite participants to return to their spots and sense whether their inner weather has changed, remained consistent, or expanded into multiple parallel conditions. Ask them to notice, in relation to their lives and current situations, whether they perceive any shift in their inner climate;
5. Gather the whole group and invite brief reflections, popcorn style, encouraging the use of weather metaphors rather than analytic explanations whenever possible. Possible debriefing questions:
 - What inner weather patterns did you notice, and how did they shift over time?
 - How did observing your emotions as weather affect the way you relate to them?
 - What inner climate tends to arise in you before you notice it consciously?
 - What might it be trying to teach or tell you?



Encourage metaphors rather than diagnoses. The focus is on spaciousness, diversity, and creative expression.

Participants may choose to draw a small “inner weather map” if it feels helpful.

This approach works well as a warm-up before deeper emotional work or threshold conversations.

The activity can also be done indoors.



Walk to the spring

When was the last time you were in silence?



Aims:

to connect to nature;
to explore the silence;
to explore nonverbal communication.

Materials:

water bottles (if you go to the spring)

Time: 60 to 90 min

Number of participants: 3+ people

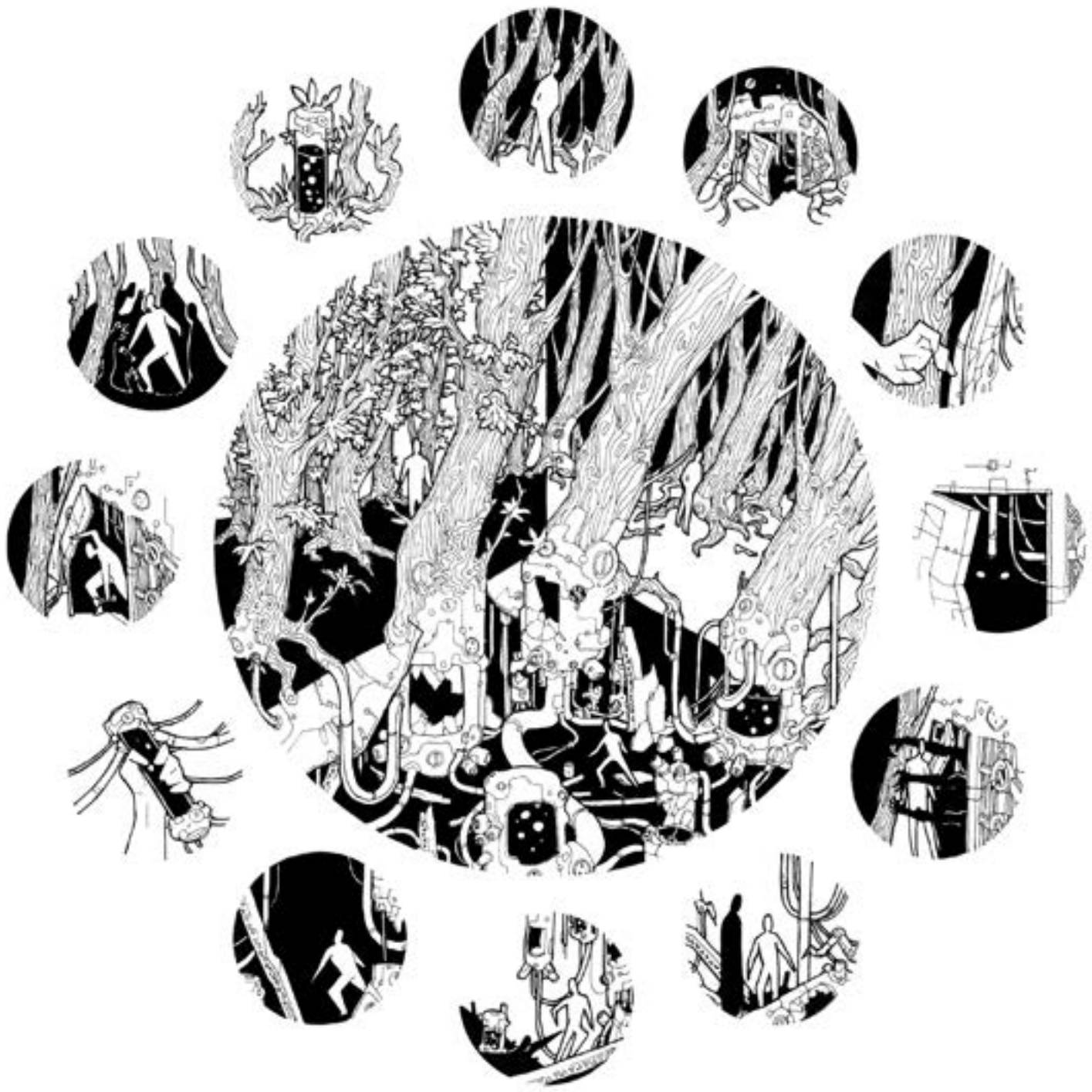


Activity step by step

1. Intro: invite the group to take a walk to a nearby spring, reminding them to bring their water bottles. If there is no spring nearby, you can take a walk in the woods, or in a nearby park—choose a location in nature suitable for this activity. The walk should take no longer than 30 minutes one way.

The invitation is to walk in silence, slowly, and to listen, see, and appreciate the nature around. Feel the ground under your feet, listen to the sounds, notice little details that catch your attention, and immerse yourself in nature. If participants need to communicate during the walk to the spring, the invitation is to do so using nonverbal signs and body language.

2. Before starting the walk, invite them to do a short activity called “5 senses centering”. It is a short exercise to get ready for a walk in nature. Invite the participants to open and activate their senses before the activity (for each step, give a long minute or two for participants to fully engage in this process):
 - a. “Observe and acknowledge five different green things around you”;
 - b. “Touch four different things around you”;
 - c. “Hear and acknowledge three different sounds”;
 - d. “Smell two different things”
 - e. “Taste one taste” (stay safe—avoid tasting unknown plants; instead you can pay attention to the flavor already in your mouth);
3. Activity - after the participants do the “5 senses centering” they take a walk in nature, fetch the water and come back to the site. They walk slowly and mindfully, in silence, respecting their own space and the space of others;
4. Reflection: in a circle the participants are invited to share the experience (either in the Way of Council, or simple circle sharing, or pop-corn style sharing).
Debriefing questions:
 - What did you do?
 - How was it to be silent in nature / in the group?
 - What did you discover about yourself in this activity?
 - How can you use this in your daily life?



Whispering Possibilities

On a quiet morning, in a city much like any other, a young girl sat at the kitchen table, prodding her cereal with a half-hearted spoon. She looked at her mother with narrowed eyes, skepticism carved deep in her forehead. “Why bother?” she asked. “You can’t just believe things that aren’t possible.”

Her mother, a woman who had seen worlds change and truths overturned, paused with her coffee midway to her lips. “You just haven’t practiced enough,” she said thoughtfully. “When I was your age, I made a point of believing impossible things, sometimes even before I finished breakfast.”

The girl raised an eyebrow, uncertain. Impossible things? Before breakfast?

But what her mother knew, quietly and deeply, was something profound and ancient: that change, real, transformative change, only appears impossible because we view it from the same familiar perspective that created the problem in the first place. Our minds prefer familiar roads, predictable routines, stories with endings we know. But true innovation, true leaps forward? They always start out looking absurd. Consider, for example, the humble bacterium billions of years ago, which one day found itself breathing oxygen, something unheard of, unimaginable at the time. This simple act, breathing, transformed the course of life itself. Or, more astounding still, the moment everything sprang from nothing—the universe igniting in the darkness of absolute impossibility.

In fact, impossibility has always been the catalyst of evolution and growth. Partnerships that shaped our existence: sun and earth, fungi and algae, bacteria and mitochondria, were once unthinkable alliances, unimaginable dreams that quietly changed the world forever. Today, our world faces its own series of impossibilities: endless wars, disappearing forests, fractured communities filled with anxiety and division. Genuine solutions feel distant, if not entirely out of reach.

Yet, history whispers a different story. Moments of profound transformation always begin as impossible dreams—whispered ideas that, at first, sound absurd. Societies living harmoniously with nature, seeing the Earth not merely as resources but as companions in a sacred dialogue, this notion feels impossible precisely because it challenges everything we’ve known.

But why not?

Imagine the world as a stage where impossibilities dance into realities. Perhaps humanity will first make small, practical steps: protecting our planet out of necessity, driven by survival instinct. Yet eventually, inevitably, we will need to leap further. The future requires a shift in how we see the world: rainforests valued for their own sake, rivers and mountains understood not as commodities, but as fellow participants in life's unfolding story.

This is a leap that won't happen overnight. It will begin gently, in quiet kitchens like this one, in conversations between mothers and daughters, teachers and students, leaders and dreamers. The shift from impossibility to possibility will be slow, subtle, passed on like a whispered secret through generations.

So when the mother tells her daughter about believing impossible things, she's not merely recounting whimsical tales. She's inviting her child—and through her, all of us... into an age-old tradition: the practice of imagining the world not as it is, but as it could be.

Because believing in impossible things isn't merely whimsical—it's vital. Indeed, it's always been the very foundation upon which human progress is built.

Daniel



Fallen leaf

This activity provides space and time for participants to connect with nature and to open an intimate, unique dialogue with the world around them.

Aims:

to connect to nature and observe natural details;
to translate nature's patterns into artistic expression

Materials: drawing paper (recycled or scrap paper is fine), pencils, colored pencils, crayons, watercolor paints, brushes, water and cups, mats for sitting on the ground if outdoors

Time: 60 to 90 min

Number of participants: 3 - 20 people

Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to form a circle, and do "5 senses" centring (see activity *Walk to the spring*), with emphasis on the sense of seeing;
2. After that, invite them to wander (for 25 to 40 min) to explore the nearby nature, and to observe the ground and search for fallen leaves. Here are some invitations to give participants before they begin their wandering:
 - Invite them to seek a spot that feels especially vibrant to them, and to notice specific leaves that catch their attention with their shape, color, or appearance.

- Invite them to rest in the spot and be curious. Encourage them to silently engage in a “conversation” with the place and to observe how they feel: do they sense acceptance and welcome, relaxation, and freedom, or maybe tension, uneasiness, or unrest?
 - In this spot, participants can pick up three leaves that especially catch their interest—but first, they should ask for permission to take them. Encourage them to observe the leaves closely, noticing details such as color spots, shape, imperfections, and similarities or differences. Invite them to observe the leaves as they would observe people or any other living beings;
3. After the wandering, gather the group in a circle with the leaves they collected—or with a mental image of them. Invite them to draw or paint the leaves, their colors and details, or the emotions that this experience in nature has stirred in them (at least 30 min);
 4. Reflection. Conclude the session with an art exhibition. Place the pieces on the ground side by side, and invite everyone to observe them together. During the exhibition invite the participants to share their impressions of this activity:
 - What did you do?
 - How did you feel while seeking your spot and leaves? And how did you feel when you found it?
 - Why did you pick these specific leaves?
 - What did the leaves tell you? What can they say about nature? About nature circles?
 - How was it to engage in art expression in nature?



For indoor sessions, provide fallen leaves for participants to explore and draw, adjusting the activity as needed.





Around the fire

By working together on this task, participants develop team spirit, improve communication, value each other's ideas, collaborate in pairs and groups, and strengthen bonds through a common purpose.

Aims:

to build team spirit and enhance the group work;
to explore roles in the group and to facilitate the group dynamic;
to help participants to find out their unique way of connecting to others,
to explore authenticity.

Materials: wood gathered around the site, fire matches, water bucket,
mats for sitting around the fire

Time: building fire - 45 to 60 min, sitting around the fire - whole evening

Number of the participants: 5+ people



Activity step by step

1. Intro: invite participants to build the fire, allowing them to decide for themselves who will take on which tasks and how they will organize the work. You can use this text as invitation:

“When gathering firewood, mindfully explore the surrounding nature. Enter the woods with respect, accepting that the forest is alive and breathing. Ask permission to take anything, and invite the wood to contribute to your fire. Listen for a response with all your senses—it may come as a visual, a sound, or a feeling. Make connections—with the nature around you, with the fire, and with the group gathered for this task. Notice how it feels to communicate in this way. Explore your own questions for the nature around you.”

Find your personal way of asking—verbal or nonverbal, through thinking, sensing, feeling, or imagining. Everything is welcome.”

The tasks are:

- gather the wood;
 - arrange and secure a place for the fire;
 - prepare water to put out the fire;
 - build the fire and light it.
2. As a facilitator, you are present at all stages to ensure the safety of participants, but do not interfere with the activity unless necessary. Allow participants to organize themselves, take on tasks, and work together.
 3. Debriefing: gather in a circle around the fire and invite participants to share their impressions of the activity. (This setup also works well for the activity *The Way of Council*—see the tips page—which can be used instead of this reflection.)

Reflection questions:

- What did you do?
- What was your role in this activity? What did you do to contribute?
- How did you feel communicating with nature? How do you feel now?
- What is your authentic style of communication with nature and the living world around you?
- How can you use this in your daily life?

Power of the Circle

Everything the Power of the World does
is in a circle.

The sky is round, and I have heard that
the earth is round like a ball,
and so are all the stars.

The wind, in its greatest power, whirls,
Birds make their nests in circles,
for theirs is the same religion as ours.

The sun comes forth and goes down
again in a circle.

The moon does the same, and both are round.

Even the seasons form a great circle in
their changing,
and always come back again to where they were.

The life of a man is a circle from
childhood to childhood,
and so it is in everything where power moves.

BY BLACK ELK



Positive gossiping

Who am I in the eyes of the others?

What other people think and feel of me, of my actions, of my vibe, acting, expression?

These are some common questions that we all have when trying to find our place in a group or community.

This activity can foster deep introspection and help discover new, sometimes unexpected, aspects of the self through another person's perspective. It also promotes a positive attitude toward oneself, enhances self-esteem and self-confidence, and strengthens group connections and positive group dynamics.



Aims:

to deepen introspection;
to connect with the group;
to develop empathy;
to share positive feedback.

Time: (depending on the number of participants) 60 min

Number of the participants: 5+ people

Activity step by step

1. Intro:

Invite the participants to form a circle and start a conversation about communication, focusing on gossip and backbiting. Discuss questions such as: Is gossip simply retelling a real event or talking about someone's actual characteristics, or is it fabricating and inventing things about someone? Does gossip generally carry a negative connotation?

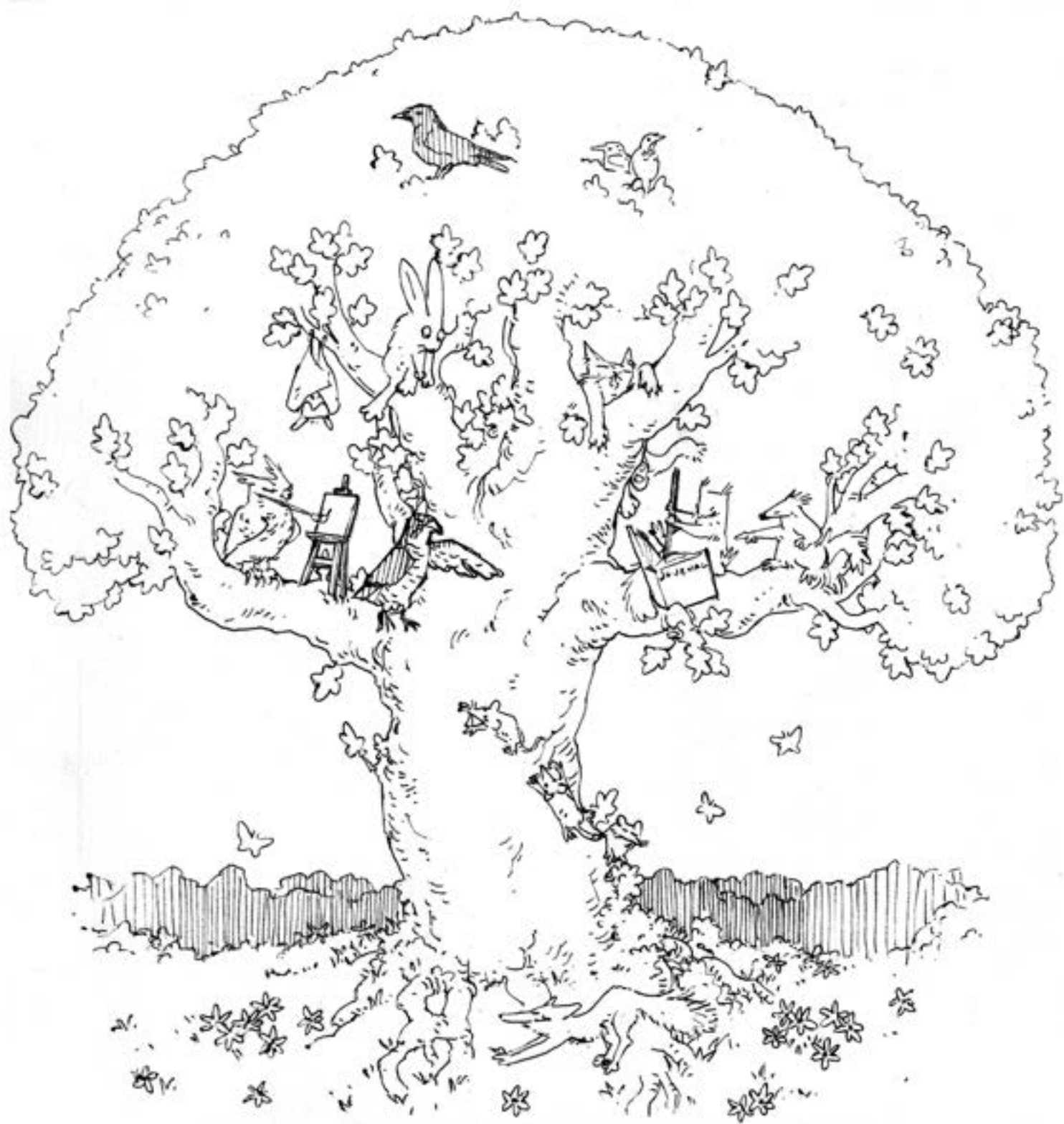
Ask the question: *“What would it look like if we said something kind and positive about each other, directly in the presence of the person we are talking about? Can gossip ever be positive?”*

2. After the short discussion, invite the group to engage in the “positive gossiping” activity. The person who is willing to be the first “gossip victim” comes forward. If no one comes forward, you can start and be the first to talk about. Each person in the circle is invited to say something nice (one word or short sentence) about the “gossip victim”. If someone wants to skip, it is also fine. The activity ends when everyone experiences being the object of positive gossiping.
3. Invite participants to sit in a circle and reflect together using the suggested questions:
 - What did you do?
 - How did it feel to engage in ‘positive’ gossip, compared to ‘negative’ gossip?
 - How did you feel during the activity? How do you feel now?
 - How do you feel as a gossipier? How do you feel as a “victim”?
 - How can you use this in your daily life?



This activity can be held in the evening around the fire, followed by singing, storytelling, and socializing late into the night.

The participant who is the ‘gossip subject’ can turn their back to the group while others share their thoughts about them.





Four Windows of Knowing

This activity helps participants become more open to different ways of learning about both the world around them and their inner selves. It is based on the *Windows of Knowing* model developed by psychotherapist Eligio Stephen Gallegos. By practicing all four types of knowing, participants can expand their learning to include the body, emotions, and imagination.



Aims:

to help the participants to open up for learning on more than just a cognitive dimension.

Materials: Notebook, pen

Time: 90 min

Number of participants: 1 - 30 people



Activity step by step

1. Shortly introduce participants with the concept of Four Windows of Knowing by Steve Gallegos, the four modalities of knowing the world directly: Felling (emotions, our own and others), Sensing (the 5 to 12 senses of the human body), Imagination (deep imagination that is alive and participatory) and Thinking (heart-centered, system oriented, mythological thinking). See a more detailed description at the QR link below;

2. Invite participants to spend 40 minutes exploring the Four Windows. They go into the nearest environment and notice a natural element that catches their attention—it could be a blade of grass, a tree, an ant, a stone, or anything else. They then spend time with this element, exploring it through all four windows: heart-centered thinking, sensing, emotions, and imagination. Here are the invitations you can share about every window:
 - Opening heart-centered thinking - observe the being, what kind of data you have about it, where it is located, what stories you know about it.
 - Opening the window of sensing - one by one connect to the being with all of your senses: name what you can see, smell this chosen element, put an ear to it and see what sounds it creates, touch it, if possible - taste it or taste the air around it.
 - Opening the window of emotions - what feelings come to you when you are with this being? What feelings does this being embody/express/tell you?
 - Opening the window of imagery - do you see any images? Where does your train of thoughts go? Are there any memories rising? If you have a time to have a mini nap, are there any dreams, visions?
3. They journal about their experience;
4. After returning, invite the participants to share in pairs or small groups about their exploration;
5. Guide the participants through the reflection. Possible questions:
 - What happened?
 - Was there a window that was easier to “open”? What was more difficult?
 - How did you feel throughout the process?
 - What did you observe in you and around you?
 - If and how this approach could support your learning process?
 - How could this approach support you in your day to day life?



If it is a longer learning experience, once in a while remind the participants about opening all the windows, or invite looking through a specific window.

Link to resource on Four Windows: https://drive.google.com/file/d/19yhptQsWtZKwPLhmlB2or-J_19VXD8--7/view?usp=drivesdk





Drawing touch

When we explore the shapes, patterns, and forms in nature, we can perceive reflections of ourselves, as if looking into a mirror. Engaging the sense of touch deepens this direct connection. Through this activity, we use artistic expression to connect with the environment and immerse ourselves in our inner nature.



Aims:

to connect to nature;
to engage senses;
to explore art practices in nature.

Materials: drawing papers (recycled or scrap paper is fine), pencils, colored pencils, mats for sitting on the ground if outdoors

Time: 60 to 90 min

Number of the participants: 3 - 20 people

Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to form a circle. Invite them to do “5 senses” centring (see activity *Walk to the Spring*), with emphasis on the sense of touching. Invite them to explore touching various surfaces: tree barks, stones, grass, leaves, etc. If the activity is implemented indoors, bring various nature objects to touch and explore);

2. After that, offer drawing paper, pencils, and colored pencils, and invite participants to spread out and take a walk in nature. Ask them to observe and touch the natural world around them, and when they find an object that interests them—one that engages their sight, touch, or imagination—to take a sheet of paper and a pencil and copy the surface of the object onto the paper:

“Place the paper on the tree bark, leaf, or stone. Take a pencil and lightly scribble over the paper until the surface is copied. When you are done, lift the paper and observe it. You may see faces in the scribble, or perhaps a figure, an animal, or something else entirely. Use a pencil and colored pencils to draw it out.”

3. Participants engage in the activity and, at the agreed time, return to the circle, where they share their drawings with the group. The drawings can be placed on the floor or displayed on the walls to create a small exhibition. All participants are invited to tell a story about their drawing;
4. Encourage their reflection and sharing with questions:
 - What did you find in the drawing?
 - Is there a story inside?
 - Did you like the process of drawing?
 - How did you find the object in nature? Or did it find you?
5. After this reflection and sharing, thank the participants for joining in this activity, and let them engage further on in informal conversations over the exhibited pictures.





Fix the drawing

This is a wonderful activity for those who want to see the fruits of their work quickly, as well as for those who, at some point in their lives, have begun to believe they can't make art. By using a bit of painting and a bit of positive "cheating," participants can create a beautiful piece of art within a single workshop. Beyond that, the activity invites participants to listen to and get to know one another through art.

Aims:

to boost creativity;
to make connections with nature, especially in spaces where nature is not available.

Materials:

pictures of natural places, paper glue, paper for water colouring, water colours, brushes, cups with water, old newspapers (to protect the tables from paint)

Time: 2 hours

Number of the participants: 1-30 people



Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to choose one picture from a collection—one that represents a place where they feel safe or would like to explore more. Then, ask them to share why they chose that particular image;

2. Once participants have shared, invite them to tear their picture into two parts—or more if it's large—and glue the pieces spaced apart on a sheet of white paper;
3. On a separate sheet of paper, encourage participants to play with paint—experimenting with different brush strokes, exploring how colors can blend, and discovering various effects;
4. Invite them to return to the white paper with the glued pieces of their picture. Ask them to complete the composition by filling the empty spaces between the pieces with colors that feel appropriate;
5. As the drawings dry, place them in different areas of the room and invite participants to explore them in a mini-exhibition. The artists remain silent about their work, while viewers are encouraged to share what they notice and the feelings the drawings bring up;
6. After the exhibition, create space for a debrief. Possible questions:
 - What is the difference between the original picture and the art work you created?
 - Where are you in the drawing?
 - How do the reflections of the *public* during the exhibition make you feel? Can you relate to what you heard?
7. At the end of the workshop, invite participants to take their drawings home and place them somewhere visible, such as on a wall in their room. Encourage them to spend a few minutes with the drawing each day for a week or more. If you meet the participants later, ask them about their experience.



If you have more time or if you create a series of workshops for the same group, combine this task with the activity *Constellation poetry* with the help of images - natural places. For example, they can choose their strong places for poetry from the given images in this task.

I walk to my electric stove and put the kettle on. One cup of water—to boil. I grind five small spoons of coffee while the water heats. I start singing, as I usually do when I make coffee. Not just any song, but the Coffee Song. I sing and sing, the same short, rhythmic tune that has become something like a mantra—or a spell—over the past few years.

My thinking takes me to the edge of the forest. The huge elder Coffee Tree is still here, rooted as ever.

The water has come to a boil, so I take it off the stove and add the finely ground coffee. I put it back for the shortest boil, then turn off the stove and set it aside.

As I sing into it five times, I am completely transported to my Coffee Tree ally. I set the kettle down at its base and touch its bark. The “me” that sings in the kitchen is counting on fingers, careful not to lose track.

I climb onto the tree, rest on its branches, and tell it why I need this coffee—what my intention is for the day, what I need its power for. I merge with it, and it slowly drips a few drops of sap into the kettle.

I offer my gratitude, say goodbye, and leave this beautiful edge between the plains and the forest behind, returning to my kitchen.

Alex



A trip to your safe space

This activity invites participants to open a window to their imagination. It is especially useful in environments where access to nature is limited or nonexistent.



Aims:

to cultivate imagination;
to develop a tool for calming down and feeling safe;
to learn to explore in limited circumstances.



Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to find a comfortable sitting position, keeping their backs straight while the rest of the body remains relaxed, and their feet fully on the ground. Encourage them to lower their gaze or close their eyes if they feel comfortable doing so;
2. Invite participants to breathe together for a few rounds: four slow, deep inhales and exhales. Afterward, they can return to their own comfortable rhythm of breathing;
3. Guide them with invitations. You can use the following ones or create your own: *Feel your body on the chair... your feet on the ground... Notice the sounds around you..., observe the rhythm of your own breath...Take a moment to remember a happy place in nature where you have spent time in your life... Or you can imagine one... Allow yourself to slowly arrive in this place, or let this place come into your imagination... Start to notice the details..., explore them! What grows here?... What colours are around you?... What kind of sounds surround you?... What are the closest sounds, which are barely audible?... Are there any smells?... Which ones can you name?... How does your skin feel?... What is the temperature?... Try to touch a plant, a tree, the ground... How does it feel*

on your fingers?... Is there anyone else with you?... Who is it? Do you want to engage with them or invite them to give you a bit of space?... Continue your exploration!

4. After a couple of minutes, invite the participants to return: *Now, slowly get ready to come back..., return to your body..., to the place in this room..., to here and now..., and gently open your eyes, in your own rhythm without rushing;*
5. Next, invite participants to journal their experiences. Let them know they don't need to write a full story—short notes, insights, a drawing, or a quick sketch are all fine ways to capture and remember the experience;
6. Split the group into pairs. Alternatively, you can allow participants to choose a partner—someone they feel comfortable with. Invite each pair to share about their special place: what can be found there and how they feel in that space;
7. To close the session, invite participants to come together in a circle and share what stays with them after this activity.



Give participants plenty of time to reflect and imagine between each question, letting the experience unfold at their own pace.

Remind participants that it is okay if no memory arises or if imagining a space feels difficult. You can support them by showing a variety of pictures depicting different natural environments.

If participants aren't ready to share, or if the group isn't yet comfortable opening up to one another, you can invite them to express their special places through drawing rather than talking about them.

There is an optional extension for this activity. You can encourage participants to use their special place as a mental space to store beautiful experiences. For example, if it is a park, touching a tree could transport them to a cherished memory. Each tree might guard a different experience, or each little island in a lake, or each flower in a garden. Participants can also visit this place in their imagination whenever they need to center themselves.





Under the Old Tree: Learning from a Long Witness

In many cities there are trees that have outlived buildings, regimes, fashions, and generations of people. They stand quietly as traffic flows, children grow up, lovers meet and separate, and seasons repeat themselves with subtle variation. An old tree in a park is not only a biological organism but a living archive. It has endured pollution, pruning, drought, storms, and care. It has adapted without leaving.

This practice invites participants to meet such a tree not as a symbol, but as a living elder. One that knows something about staying, about bending without breaking, and about belonging to a place that is always changing.



Aims:

to cultivate a sense of continuity and perspective through relationship with a long-living being;
to explore personal questions of endurance, belonging, and change;
to experience mentorship from the more-than-human world within an urban context.

Materials: (optional: paper and pen)

Time: 60 min

Number of participants: 4-16 people



Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to gather near an old, mature tree in a park. Encourage them to notice signs of age: thick bark, scars, hollows, low heavy branches, or visible roots. Hold a brief moment of silence to acknowledge the tree as a living being, not just part of the scenery;

2. Invite participants to spread out and find a personal spot near the tree—sitting against the trunk, on the ground nearby, or within sight of its full form, but not so far that they cannot hear you clearly. Encourage them to rest their attention on the tree’s physical presence: its texture, smell, temperature, sounds, and subtle movements;
3. Walk slowly around the tree, making sure you can be easily heard by everyone, and offer the following gentle reflection: *“This tree has remained here through many changes. It has witnessed far more than any of us.”* Invite participants to sense what it might mean to be rooted in one place for decades or centuries;
4. Guide participants into a silent inquiry (10–15 minutes). Possible inner prompts include: *What changes has this tree lived through that I can only imagine? What helps me endure change in my own life? Where do I feel rooted, and where do I feel uprooted?*
Let participants know they may place a hand on the trunk or on the ground if appropriate, or simply remain nearby;
5. Then invite participants to walk slowly around the tree once or twice, noticing how their perspective shifts from different angles: what is revealed, what is hidden, what feels stable, what feels vulnerable;
6. Invite participants to return to their chosen spot and sense whether the tree seems to offer a particular quality or message not in words, but in feeling, image, or bodily sensation. Writing or drawing is optional;
7. Finally, gather the group in a circle near the tree. Invite participants who wish to briefly share what they noticed or received, keeping the sharing concise and experiential rather than interpretive;
8. Debriefing questions:
 - What did this tree seem to know about living in one place over time?
 - How the tree’s way of being might challenge or support the way you respond to change in your own life?



Choose a tree that is clearly old and accessible, even if surrounded by urban noise. The contrast often deepens the experience.

Participants may feel nothing in particular; remind them that this is also part of listening.

This activity works well as an opening practice for longer processes focused on belonging, resilience, or place-based identity.

If touching the tree feels inappropriate or restricted, proximity and attention alone are sufficient.



Heavy Air

In the high desert of New Mexico, there's a town called Aurelia that doesn't exist on maps. It's still there—roads intact, buildings upright, a rusted swing creaking in the breeze, but no one lives in it. What is strange, though, is how full it feels. Not full of people or noise, but of something denser: memory, maybe, or grief that's settled into the soil like minerals. Walking through it, you feel watched, not by ghosts, but by a presence that has completed itself. It's not haunted. It's whole. And that wholeness is heavy, like air right before a thunderstorm, charged with meaning you can't quite name.

Psychologists often describe grief as absence. But in Aurelia, it's the opposite. The silence is so thick it hums, so saturated with what once was that sound itself feels dangerous—like if anything did speak, it might shatter the air. In moments like these, grief isn't emptiness. It's surplus. Too much life held in too small a space. That's what makes Aurelia unnerving: not what's missing, but what remains. Because some places, and some hearts, don't echo when you knock. They absorb. And in that absorption, they survive, silently carrying everything too loud to ever be said.

Daniel



Who am I ?

A gentle inward journey where roles and expectations fall away, revealing participants authentic selves. Through reflective dialogue, mindful writing, and deep listening, participants may discover who they are beneath the masks. Participants gain clarity, self-compassion, and a written reflection that becomes a tangible reminder of their wholeness.



Aims:

to reflect on self;
to explore authenticity.

Materials: something to write with - pen, pencils, crayons and paper or participants can come with their own journals / notebooks. Play some music from your own device: 30 minutes long background music.

Time: 90 minutes

Number of participants: 3 - 27 people



Activity step by step

1. Welcome everyone in a circle and invite each participant to briefly share their name and something positive about themselves. If participants already know each other, they can instead share one word describing how they are feeling today. Model how the sharing should go, showing that each participant takes a turn without interruptions;

2. Invite participants to form trios randomly. In each trio, participants take turns answering the question, "Who am I?" for three minutes each. You keep track of time and gently remind participants to switch when three minutes are up. After the first round (nine minutes total), invite participants to form new trios and answer the same question, again three minutes each. Encourage them to notice how their answers might change in the second round. If the group has more than nine participants, they can switch once more for a third round of nine minutes;
3. Invite the participants to have the journals and pens very close to them. Tell them to find a comfortable position, sitting or lying down, eyes closed and listen to the following script, read it in a calm and slow manner, having a few seconds long pauses between sentences or the "..."
is present in the text:

"Please close your eyes, allow your body to settle... , breathing deeply, ... slowly in and out, ...allow your body to settle. Just notice... any thoughts or emotions that arise...and gently let them pass.

You are safe... You arrive in a place —real or imagined— where you feel completely at ease... A space from your dreams., memories., or deepest imagination...

Your attention is fully here... at this moment... Your mind settles... like a train arriving at its station..., surrounded by nature's quiet beauty... All tension dissolves... Clouds evaporate... The mist lifts... Your mind flows as freely as a river... Listen to the sounds around you... Feel the temperature of the air on your skin..., the texture of your clothes against your body...

In this safe place..., I invite you to look beyond... the roles you carry..., the attributes others have given you..., the masks you wear... Beneath all of this...Allow yourself simply to be... Here and now... In this body... With this awareness... As you truly are...

And now..., slowly..., return to full awareness of your body... and this room, slowly open your eyes without speaking..., When you're ready..., gently open your eyes. In silence, find your journal and pen.

With warmth and kindness... please complete the next sentence:

"I am..."

4. Invite participants to take their journals and write freely and continuously until you signal them to stop. Encourage them to be kind to themselves and curious about whatever comes up in their writing. Ask them to find a comfortable position, as this will be a longer writing period.

Clarify that the writing can take the form of a story, simple sentences, or whatever feels right. Optionally, once participants are settled, you can repeat the writing prompt: *"With warmth and kindness... I invite you to complete the next sentence: "I am..."*;

5. Play a music track lasting between 9 and 27 minutes—something soft and instrumental, like slow classical or meditative music—to help maintain a calm, focused mood for writing. Offer gentle reminders: once at the halfway point and again three minutes before the end. When the time is up, lower the music or stop it entirely. Announce that the time is up and ask if anyone would like a little more time. If so, allow two additional minutes. After that, invite everyone to stop writing and quietly read what they have written to themselves;
6. Invite participants to pair up and share for ten minutes. They can talk about the content of their writing or reflect on the experience of writing itself. Keep track of time and remind them to switch partners after five minutes so each person has an equal turn;
7. In the final 15–20 minutes, invite participants into a sharing circle. Ask them to reflect on what they discovered about themselves during the workshop. Go around the circle clockwise, giving each participant the opportunity to share or to remain silent if they prefer. Allow 2–3 minutes per person;
8. In the end, as closing, say *"thank you"* to the participants and invite them to spend time with this question: *"What do you take home from this live story?"*



The script can be read and rehearsed a few times beforehand so that it can be used spontaneously as written, or adapted to fit your own facilitation style. Certain sections can be repeated if you feel they need more time to resonate with participants.

Suggestions for music can be found at the QR codes.



Silence is also a valuable option. If it occurs outdoors, natural sounds are best.

If participants seem stuck while writing, suggest that they write something like, "I have no idea what to write anymore..." The important thing is to keep the flow going.

For more clarity on this method check the activity *Free writing*.

At the start of the session, choose the duration of the writing period based on the group and stay consistent with it. Invite participants to lean into any discomfort that arises during writing, reassuring them that it can be a meaningful part of the experience.

The Teaching of Wandering

One of the practices of the ecocentric model is wandering. Unlike aimless walking, wandering involves setting out with intention, even if you don't have a specific destination. The invitation to wander is an invitation to notice: which place is calling you, which plant or being is asking you to stop, to explore, to observe, or to receive information.

During this wandering I stay on the road, it is so fabulously beautiful! The little road snake winding between the snowy peaks leads me forward, forward, forward. The road itself has absorbed me, and slowly it is also absorbing my thoughts, which, like a swarm of bees, buzz and buzz. Sometimes I can't even decide which thought to tackle first. After half an hour, an hour, all that is left is the road and my footsteps. And the frost that pleasantly tickles my cheeks.

I am particularly struck by one question I was encouraged to ask on my first wandering. If we encounter an element, a place, or a scene in nature that speaks to us, I don't ask, "What does it mean?"—because that tends to pull me back into my thoughts, trying to figure out an answer. Of course, symbols and associations can be helpful, and I use them regularly to guide reflection after activities. However, ecocentrism suggests not using nature merely for answers, therapy, relaxation, or entertainment, but rather seeing it as an equal being. So, the question I carry with me on my wanderings is: "What do you want to tell me?" This allows me to open my senses and try to hear the answer from the resources around me. The answer may come through thought, but it can also come through my senses, bodily sensations, emotions, or imagination.

Sometimes wondering is just a walk. And I really appreciate that too. It gives my body a chance to move, because it is not made for sitting so long and so often, my head has a chance to rest, to let the oxygen visit all my cells. But sometimes, if I answer the call, a simple walk can turn into a rich experience where I meet myself as part of nature, my resources, my inner rivers and rotten trees, new shoots and crazy bird voices that I still have to learn to distinguish.

I wish for these experiences of self-discovery for everyone—especially for young people who are searching for their identity. How much healthier would we all be if we sought ourselves in nature rather than in societal networks, trends, and outdated systems? How can we bring this experience to young people in prison, where nature seems distant and unreachable? I am still exploring this question, but I must admit that last year's leaves already whispered something to me.

Linda



In dialog with autumn

I don't go out in nature, I am nature.

This activity lets you explore your experience of change and transformation by connecting with nature's cycles of regeneration.



Aims:

to experience autumn not as an observer, but as a participant in its cycle of change and release;
to experience the interconnection between the inner world and the natural cycles of Earth.

Materials: pen, journals, mats, watch

Time: 60 min

Number of the participants: 5 -30 people



Activity step by step

1. Participants arrive in the space, preferably outdoors. Begin with a brief introduction, explaining the aim of the activity. Guide participants through a few minutes of slow, mindful walking, encouraging them to ground themselves in their senses. Invite them to notice smells, sounds, textures, and to experience how the space is receiving them;
2. Each participant wanders slowly, staying close enough to still hear your guidance. Invite them to allow themselves to be "chosen" by an element of the landscape. Give them 10–15 minutes to spend in quiet observation and sensory connection with that element. Encourage them to explore it through their senses and imagination: How does it look? What textures

or smells does it have? Can they sense the story of this element? How might this element be experiencing autumn?

3. Invite participants to use their journals to explore through writing what their chosen element might reveal about how nature changes, transforms, or regenerates. Offer gentle guiding questions, such as: *What is it time for me to let fall or transform? What part of me needs rest, retreat, or regeneration? What no longer holds life, yet I still carry with me?*
4. Invite participants to meet in pairs and share a story of their experience. One person shares while the other listens as a witness. After both have shared, bring everyone back into a circle and invite reflection on the experience they just had.
5. You can use these questions for the reflection:
 - How did it feel to let yourself be received by the place, not just to observe it?
 - What did this dialogue reveal about yourself—and about the living world around you?



It is recommended to perform the activity in a natural environment, or at least in a setting exposed to natural elements whenever possible.

Even though it refers to autumn, it can be done in any season or in a less conventional weather.

During the activity, it is recommended to avoid distractions from electronic devices.

The facilitator keeps track of time, so it is also recommended to have a timekeeper with you.





Mirror me nature

Step into nature's creative studio and let your inner landscape bloom through natural elements. Engage in a playful dialogue between your inner world and the wild around you. Participants reconnect with wonder, discover authentic self-expression beyond words, and leave with a renewed sense of aliveness and creative freedom.

Aims:

to cultivate playfulness and wonder;
to build a basic connection with one's inner nature and nature's elements.

Materials:

if the activity takes place outdoors participants can work with the materials found on the land. Indoors you should provide a box of leaves, dried plants, seeds, feathers, fruits, pieces of clay dried, small stones, roots, wooden sticks.

Time: 60-90 minutes

Number of the participants: 6-30 people



Activity step by step

1. Invite participants to join a sharing circle. Use a talking object, passed around the circle in an anticlockwise direction. Ask each participant to share their name (or how they would like to be addressed during this session) and describe their current emotion or feeling as they begin the workshop;

2. Guide participants into a present-moment, felt experience. Invite them to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. Encourage them to notice what arises through their senses, the emotions or feelings present, any thoughts that come up, and any images, dreams, or impressions emerging from their imagination. Conclude by bringing attention back to the breath and gently opening the eyes;
Announce that the main activity will last 30–60 minutes. Invite each participant to freely create a temporary work of art that reflects how they feel in this present moment—a mirror of their current inner state. Encourage them to use natural elements and to express whatever arises for them in the here and now. Gently suggest maintaining a slow, unhurried pace, while respecting each other’s space and individual creative process. Emphasize that the focus is on the playfulness and enjoyment of the experience;
3. When the time is up, invite participants to walk around and visit all the works of art in the exhibition. Encourage them to move slowly and mindfully, maintaining silence and refraining from commenting on others’ creations. Suggest that they take their time with each piece, including their own, noticing what arises as they engage with the art;
4. Invite participants for a debrief:
 - How was it to make a work of art with these natural elements?
 - What feelings or thoughts arose in you as you observed the artworks created by others?
 - Can you tell which art work was made by which person? How?
 - What did you discover about yourself while expressing in this way?
 - How could you use this in your day to day life?
5. To close the activity invite the participants to share one word or metaphor that describes the experience they had in this workshop. Also silence is welcomed.



All artworks may be photographed by the facilitator and shared afterward, with participants' consent.

If you want you can use the guided practice (step two) from the activity *Who am I?*

Emphasize that artistic ability is not important; participants are simply invited to freely create and express themselves.

Alternative to the main activity: if materials are limited or the context does not allow the main activity, participants can use colored pencils, pastels, or wax crayons on paper to create symbolic representations of natural objects such as leaves, dried plants, seeds, feathers, fruits, small pieces of dried clay, stones, roots, or wood sticks.



There's only a river in me

Since I started to learn an ecocentric worldview, I pay much more attention to nature. I often travel to new places for work. Sometimes they are cities - with or without trees, lovely or polluted, quiet or crowded. More often they are small towns, villages or guesthouses in the middle of the most enchanting nowhere. As these are mostly short trips, I appreciate all places, no matter how much the presence of nature can be felt there. However, over the last year I have been trying more and more to feel the nature of a particular place. Whether it's the warmth of the sun on my skin in a metropolitan bus station, or the sound of mud crunching under my boots as I walk along the paths of the local forest. I am learning to simply be open to whatever is happening.

I have noticed that when I try to meditate in nature or "soak up" the sounds or smells of the meadow, forest, field I often remain there - in that moment of trying. But when practising different methods of ecocentrism, I find that I am best at giving up. What does this mean? I'm still trying, of course - to concentrate, to "tune in", whatever that means, to pay attention to all my senses. And then I get stuck waiting for some miracle. Several years ago I experienced something called 'eco-awakening' - it's a physical sensation and a really deep revelation that everything around me is alive, vibrating, present. Maybe I'm waiting to feel that again. I am even consciously trying to feel it. But I get stuck in that effort, and nothing really happens. However when I surrender, that is, when I stop waiting and "doing my task", when I just give in to the sounds, to the breath, to the thoughts, it is in these moments that I become much more aware of where I am, what is happening around me, and how it is reflected in me.

I watch as questions awaken in me: Do the locals still see what animals these fjords resemble? Were there as many shades of orange in the forest tops the day before yesterday? Where is this smell of rotting apples carrying me? How big a shadow was once cast by the tree that is now just a huge stump? How would I continue the drawing of the ice-flower on this window? How do I feel if I look at the rapids of the river only through my palms, blocking the view of the banks? Sometimes, very rarely, it happens that there is only the river inside me. Just that strange bird's voice. Just the frozen window of the city. Just the fjord wind. And the realization: I am nature.

Does it make a difference? In a moment, I have to return to reality—to the emails, the fear of war, the doubts about my body, the powerlessness in the face of today. Yet, even amidst tiredness and disbelief, there is also the reality of nature within me. Today, there is the power of the rapids, the safety of the fjords, the beauty of the ice-flowers. This, too, exists—and will continue long after human beings. In this awareness, I find both peace and the strength and meaning to keep going: to keep practising my values, to keep supporting, fighting, explaining, and creating.

Linda



My inner animal

Imagine that inside each of us there is an animal. Listen to how it moves: the soft steps of its paws, the sound of its hooves. Maybe it's yawning, maybe it's roaring, maybe it's chirping. Maybe it's splashing through the water. Or maybe it climbs, swims, or floats in the air. Imagine its colour and shape. Does it have wings, or a hundred legs? Hair or feathers? Three tails and several heads? Maybe our imaginary animal is all of that. What characteristics does this animal have? What makes it so special? What are its needs? Does it dream? Where does it sleep, and where does it hide?

This activity takes us on a creative journey to connect with our inner animal and our inner nature.

Aims:

to discover one's own authenticity;
to raise awareness of one's own potential, qualities and needs;
to cultivate creative expression.

Materials: drawing paper (waste paper), pencils, colour pencils, crayons, mats for sitting on the ground, other materials that can be found in the nature during the wandering

Time: 90 minutes (It can vary depending on the number of participants and their profile)

Number of participants: 3 -- 20 people



Activity
step by step

1. Invite the participants to sit in a circle and, through storytelling, guide them to meet their inner animal: "Think of an animal that you really like or would love to be. What characteristics would you like to share with this animal?"

2. Afterwards, invite the participants to draw this animal (real or imaginary). Ask them to write down its characteristics and to give their animal a name and a story. When they are done, invite them to share something about their animal. This activity can take up to 30 minutes; participants can return to their drawing later if they wish;
3. After sharing, invite the participants to go for a wander and, while walking, think about the needs of their animal. Ask them to imagine what it eats, where it sleeps, and what kind of shelter it needs. Then invite them to create a nest for this animal according to its needs;
4. At the agreed time, the participants return to the circle. One by one, those who wish to share guide the others to the spot where they created a nest for their animal. They are invited to share details about the nest: why they chose this spot, which needs are met there, and so on;
5. After visiting all the nests, the participants gather for reflection. The reflection can be done in pairs, trios, or as a whole group:
 - What did you do and what happened?
 - How did you feel during this task?
 - How do you feel now?
 - What did you learn about yourself and about your needs?
 - What are your needs now?
 - Can you find the place where this animal is nesting in your body?



The wander activity and framework can be found via the link or QR code in the *Tips for youth workers*.



Every place has a center. Every community has a hearth, a gathering place, where the fire is kept, where people meet to speak to each other, where we gather to dream together and make plans for a concrete action.

The fire held in this place can inspire us, reconnect us with our peers and ourselves, and connect us to the simple power of nature called Fire, which has been alongside humans since the beginning of time.

Some stories of how fire became an ally of humans have survived in various nature-based cultures. They give us insight into this key relationship between humans and nature's forces. Examples include Prometheus stealing fire from the gods in Greek mythology, and Native American stories of animals or humans bringing wild fire to the village. Yet one of the most important stories in our own lives is the relationship we have with fire — the fire that brightens a room or a campfire, and our own inner fire.

Fire needs to be tended, whether individually or communally. It requires effort: gathering wood, stacking it, keeping it dry. It asks for dedication and attention — feeding it just enough to keep it alive, but not so much that it runs wild. Above all, tending fire is an exercise in mindfulness and caregiving over time.

This force called fire is present everywhere in our world: in fireplaces, cooking stoves, even the electricity powering our technology and the cars or buses we use. Most of the time, we don't notice it — but it's there. Being with a fire draws something out of us; it brings us together.

Alex



Building a Hearth

This activity invites participants to build a shared gathering space and opens a conversation about the kind of relationship they have with their inner fire.



Aims:

to create a place where the group can gather together;
to develop the sense of togetherness and contribution;
to explore their relationship with inner fire.

Materials: shovel, printed poem, two small candles for each person. And rocks if there are none in the place of the workshop

Number of the participants: 5 -30 people

Activity step by step

1. Gather the youth in a circle and read *Nalungiaq* poem found before the *Befriending shadow* activity. The emphasis is on all non-human others (rocks, birds, trees, water, etc) being alive and sentient;
2. Invite participants to go out on the land and each find two rocks about the size of their fists;
3. Make a hole in the ground, while participants gather sticks and branches to feed the fire;
4. Build the hearth together with the participants. Form a circle around the hearth, and have them hold their stones, paying close attention to them. Encourage them to observe the stones through all five senses;

5. Then invite them to place the two rocks around the whole, and when done, light the fire in silence and slowly. Alternatively if you are in an urban setting, participants light two candles each and place them in the firepit or around it after you've set the stones;
6. Tell the "Fire" story found on the next page;
7. Feed the story as a group by asking: "What moment do you find yourself in this story?" or "What stayed with you from this story?" Go around the circle, sharing answers and "feeding" them to the fire. Participants can even place a stick in the fire as they share. You can also use a popcorn-style approach to encourage everyone to contribute;
8. In trios, have participants share answers to the question: "What is your relationship with your own inner fire?" Give them 15 minutes in total, letting them know when to switch partners every 5 minutes;
9. Hold a sharing circle and ask: "What do you take with you from this experience?" Go around the circle, giving each participant a turn to speak;
10. Closing. If this is part of a longer program, you may tell them that the hearth will be a group meeting point, and also that they can use it freely along the way. If not, invite them to build a hearth in their own land.



If you do this activity indoors, provide two candles per person to create a fire. If the space does not allow open flames, give each participant an electric candle instead.

For indoor activity, also bring rocks to build the hearth together, or improvise with any materials that are appropriate for the space you are in.

When sharing in trios with the candle version, encourage each participant to take one candle with them as they find a place to share.

First Fire - story handout

Amerindian origins

This is a story from long ago, before time as we know it, before history or written word, before clocks and calendars and city lights.

On a cloudless, dark night, a youth who could not sleep — for the reasons that youth often have trouble sleeping — gazed at the sky, pondering the singing stars. As he watched the dark canopy above the sparkling stars, a bright body of fire streaked across the sky. With a loud roar, it set a distant forest ablaze, so that from where the youth stood, it looked as if the night had turned into day.

At once the youth took off running towards that place, and soon found an old willow tree that was burned almost to a stump, by this time smoke rising from what was left of the tree.

As the youth came closer, he heard a small voice calling from the burned tree:

“Feed me! Feed me, young one!” the small voice called, coming from the glowing embers.

“With what?” asked the youth.

“With dried leaves and sticks,” said the small voice.

The youth quickly gathered dried leaves and sticks and fed the small ember that sprang to life into a small flame. While burning, the flame said in a louder voice:

“Feed me! Feed me young one! I need to eat more!”

The young one gathered more sticks, of different sizes as much as he could carry and fed the fire.

Now the fire was getting warmer. The boy enjoyed the warmth and light so he kept feeding it, until at some point it became so big, so bright, so powerful that it started to burn the hairs on the youth arms.

The fire raged on shouting so that the whole forest trembled to its roaring voice:

“Feed me. Feed me. I want to consume the whole forest!”

The young one felt fear at the power of this being, so he quickly ran and hid behind a huge stone.

From there, he could see the fire's brightness on the canopy and hear the blazing being raging, commanding more wood to consume. He could even feel the warmth through the rock. He stayed there, hiding for a long time, until the brightness gradually dimmed and the voice grew quieter and quieter.

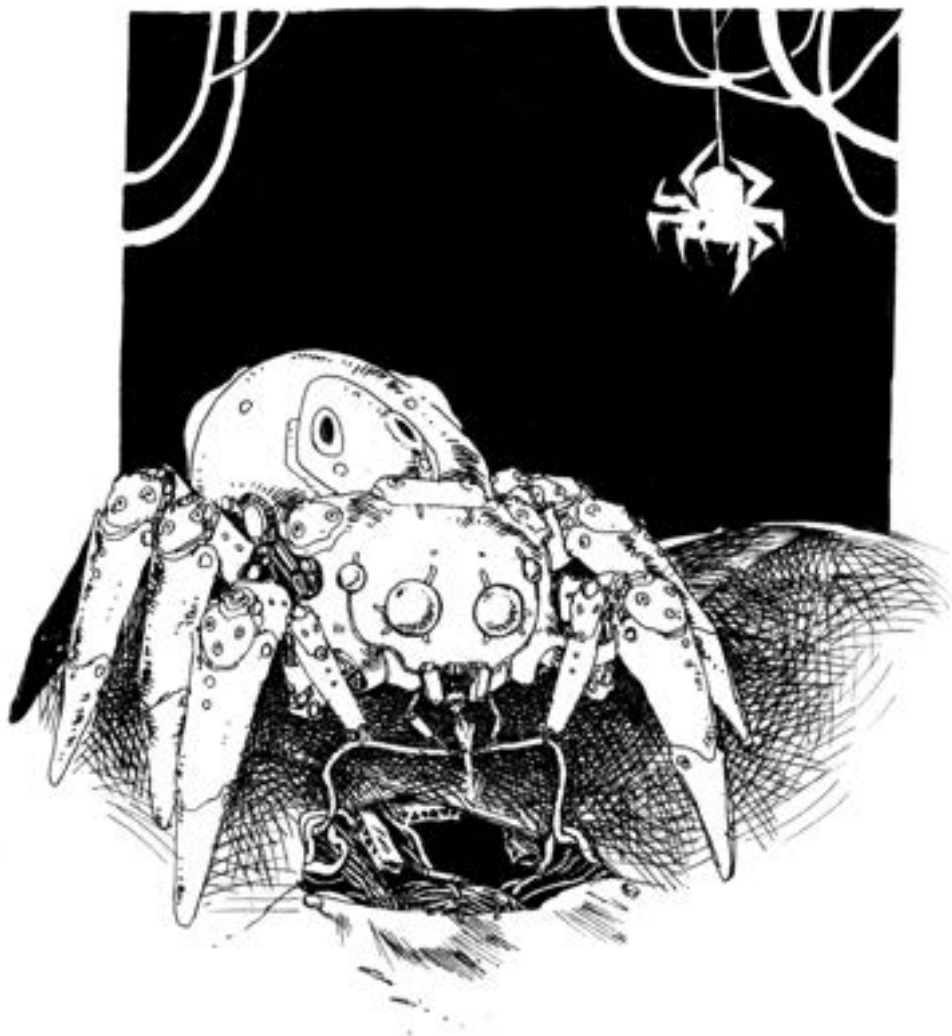
And then the young one gathered his courage and came from behind the rock, went to the place where the stump had been and then in the embers he heard the small whisper again:

"Feed me! Feed me young one and I shall be of use to you as well."

So he did. But this time it did slowly, not giving it too much or too little. And that night, and the following three nights the youth learned many things from Fire, and knew it had to be brought to his people.

Seeing a mushroom that was on the bark of many trees around had not burned in the fire, the young brave knew that was the way to carry it back. So he made a small hole into the mushroom cut in half and placed the small ember into it, tied it with a nettle string and went back to its people.

There, the young one taught the entire village how to befriend Fire: how to feed it, how to let it rest, and how to carry it. Fire became an ally of the people. It is said that this is how Fire came into human lives for the first time. From that moment onward, the young one received a new name: *Walking with Fire*.



I am walking on a beautiful hike with a group, and I get the sense that we mostly interact only with each other—the other members of the group. But wait, there is one more member of the group with whom we have no interaction at all. Yes, a nonhuman member—whose presence makes all of this possible. This member is the living environment around us. Yet somehow, I notice, we treat it as invisible; there is no intentional interaction with it. I feel sadness and start to question myself: why? Why do we tend to focus our conversations only among ourselves, and not also with the nonhuman living world around us?

Through my own observations and reflections, I got the sense that sometimes we treat the living world around us like a person in a room—always present, but someone we never talk to. We walk on this Earth, breathe the air, drink water, eat food, and somehow these actions become automatic, treating these vital elements as if they were just omnipresent resources that simply exist. In the same way, we expect garbage to leave our house and disappear without a thought.

In trying to answer my own question—why we tend to build conversations mostly among ourselves, and not also with the nonhuman living world around us—it occurred to me how difficult it can be, for some of us, to start a conversation at all. What should I say? How do I do it? What if...? Perhaps it's not that we don't want to, but that we don't know how. Maybe we need a little guidance on how to create a conversation with the natural environment around us.

So all this reflection and thoughts, this kind of way of relating, inspired me in the creation of this next activity. Treat it as an ice breaker, in beginning a conversation with the nature/wild around.

Ramona



Mirrored Landscapes

Sometimes, we may find ourselves wanting to connect with the natural world but not knowing where to start. This activity offers an icebreaker—a way to begin building a conversation with the environment around us.



Aims:

to deepen the awareness of one's personal relationship with nature; to explore the connection between the inner landscape (emotions, states, imagination) and the outer landscape (natural elements, environment).

Materials: pen, journals, colours, paper, mats, some natural elements (if done indoors, elements such as a rock, some piece of wood, some tree bark, leaves should be prepared in advance)

Time: 80-100 min

Number of participants: 6-30 people

Activity step by step

1. Begin with a short discussion about the ways we communicate with the natural world around us. Then guide a brief grounding practice, preferably with eyes closed—for example: “Feel the ground supporting you. Hear the natural sounds around you.” While participants’ eyes remain closed, invite them to envision an inner landscape and observe it as closely as possible. Ask questions such as: Where is this place? How does it look? What colors can you see? Are there any smells?

2. Invite participants to walk individually and in silence for about 30 minutes. This can be done either outdoors or indoors. Ask them to choose a natural element that draws their attention—without needing a reason—and spend a few minutes simply observing it;
3. Back in the circle, give each participant a sheet of paper and colored pencils. For the next 15 minutes, they create a small “map” divided into two halves:
 - Left side: Outer landscape — the element or place that caught their attention during the walk;
 - Right side: Inner landscape — the image or scene that was awakened during the first part of the activity;

Between the two halves, invite participants to draw a connection (a line, a bridge, a symbol). This represents themselves—the link between inner and outer landscapes;

4. Invite participants to journal for 10–15 minutes, reflecting on how the outer landscape and their inner world relate. You can guide them by questions such as: In what ways does the outside landscape mirror their inner landscape? In what ways does the outside world respond to or reflect their inner world?
5. Back in the circle, invite participants to share the natural element that drew their attention, whether that element is mirrored in the inner landscape they visualized, and how they now feel in relation to nature;
6. Have a debrief with the participants with following questions:
 - How were the landscapes mirrored?
 - What part of yourself did nature/surrounding help you discover?
 - What are you taking with you from this experience?

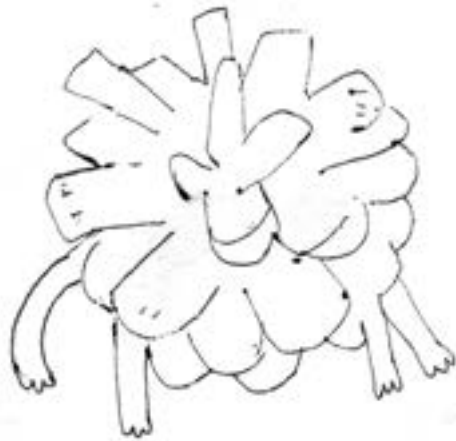


It is recommended to do the activity in a natural place.

If the activity is indoors, place some natural symbols in the space. Guide participants to treat these objects as living elements of nature, not merely as decorations.

During the activity, it is recommended to avoid distractions from electronic devices.

The facilitator is responsible for keeping track of time, so it is recommended to have a way to keep time at hand.



The Hunter and the Fox Woman

as told by Martin Shaw

Once upon a time there was a Hunter. And it's the end of the day and he's feeling a little bit like you do sometimes. He's tired, his boots are wet and he's coming back to his little hut.

He sees something that really frightens him, he sees a trail of blue smoke coming from the hut. Someone's in there. As he comes to the door and peers inside, this is what he sees: someone has prepared a meal for him, and someone has taken the time to wash and mend his raggedy pile of clothes. No one has ever been kind to him before—no one has ever shown him kindness like this.

All week this goes on. Finally, on Friday—and I think you may have arrived before him—he comes early, approaches the door, peers inside, and this is what he sees: a woman in the hut, her back turned to him, cooking. As she cooks, she sings in an old language, one so ancient that it is difficult for us even to imagine. And as he looks at her, he sees a river of dark red hair flowing down her back. He knows, in the way hunters know, that this is Fox Woman Dreaming—a being who is part fox, part woman, and part spirit of the forest.

She knows, in the way all women know when they have been watched. She turns, completely unaffected by it, and says this:

"I will be the woman of this hut."

The hunter looks at her, recognizes a good thing when he sees it, and humbly says:

"Yeah...yeah," recognizing a good thing when he sees one.

It was a very sweet night, one of those nights we all remember: a small candle flickering, an empty bottle of wine, really good food. It turns out she knows a lot of jokes, she knows a lot of songs, and he knows a few stories. Slowly, between them, love begins to wrap its swan-feather cloak around them. We're all a little jealous to this day.

But you should know that all Fox Women have a belt. They all do. The way she dealt with hers was this: she hung it at the back of the door. There it was, glittering that deep red, a little spark of fire seeming to come off it. And some of you will know—if you've ever been close to a fox—that their belts give off a strong, wild, red scent. Yes, it's strong.

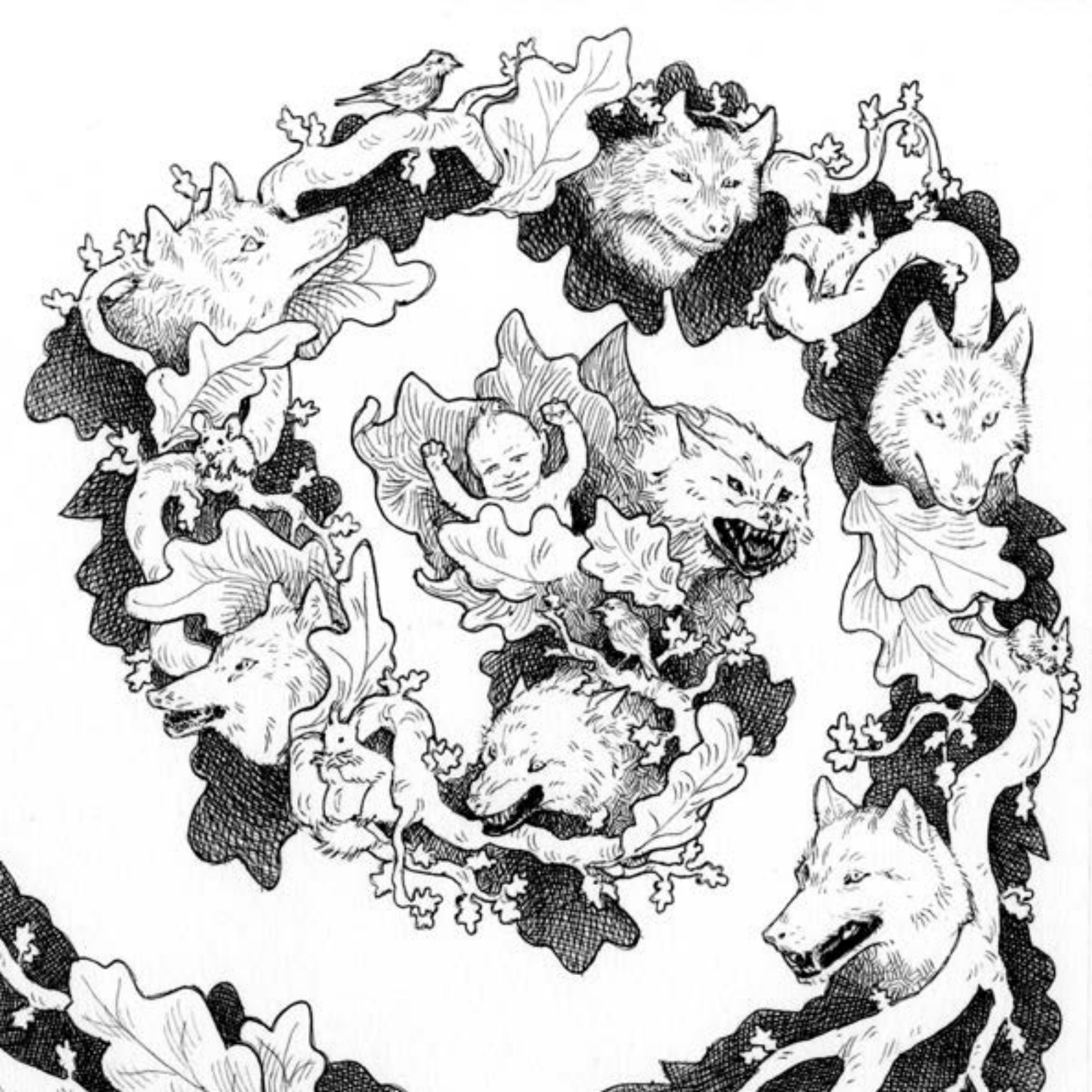
And as the weeks turn into months, she lives in the hut, and that belt really begins to give off its scent. It seeps into the mind of the hunter, into his clothes—until one night. He's sitting at the table, a candle flickering between them, the whole scene quiet and intimate, and he says something like this:

"Bright pulse of my whole understanding, sky woman of the dawn, blossoming branch, you are whiter than the swan in the pool, more tuneful than the fiddler. When I met you, I thought the moon herself had fallen out of the sky into a bed of wildflowers, singing an old tune I had waited my whole life to hear. But there's just this one thing... just this one thing. It's the belt—it's awfully strong. Now, I'm not saying I'm not saying I'm not saying it's bad, but in a little domestic situation like this, it's overwhelming. Would you consider just taking your belt somewhere—hand it off a tree, hand it out—side—but move it out of our love den?"

She looked at him with that quiet, knowing disappointment and thought: "Well, maybe it's a phase," saying nothing and not moving the belt. But it goes on—now all he can smell is the belt, it gets into the clothes of the hunter, it gets into the skin of the hunter, it's all he can think about; until one night at dinner, maybe after a little too much wine, the charm has left his language, the patience has left his heart, and he slams his fist on the table:

"I told you once already—get rid of the belt!"

And in the morning when he woke up, the Fox Woman was gone, the belt was gone, and the scent was gone. And they say—and truly so—even to this day, the hunter stands, lonely in his whole body, at the entrance of the hut, longing for the scent of the Fox Woman.





4 elements land art

There is a belief that everything around us—including ourselves and the entire universe—is made of four elements: Earth, Water, Fire, and Air. In this activity, we will explore these elements through creative expression in nature.



Aims:

to build positive group dynamics;
to engage in art and creativity while connecting to natural elements.

Materials:

materials found in nature, on the spot (with asking the permission to take them and use them in the art work)

Time:

60 to 90 min

Number of participants:

3 -- 20 people



Activity step by step

1. Gather in a circle and briefly introduce the four elements found in nature, explaining that all of nature, all living beings, and the entire universe are built from these elements: EARTH, WATER, FIRE and AIR. Discuss with participants all of the elements, for example:
 - *“Where can we find the EARTH in nature, and what quality could it represent in us?”* (for example: balance, calmness, dedication, step-by-step approach);
 - *“Where can we find the WATER in nature, and what quality could it represent in us?”* (for example: acceptance, friendliness, conformity, go-with-the-flow approach);
 - *“Where can we find the FIRE in nature, and what quality could it represent in us?”* (courage,

active, challenging, get-things-done approach);

- *“Where can we find the AIR in nature, and what quality could it represent in us?”* (curiosity, creativity, humour, turn-worry-into-joy approach);
2. Afterward, invite participants to form groups—preferably with four participants per group, but adjust as needed based on the total number of participants. Invite the groups to wander together and find a spot in nature that draws them. Once there, have them brainstorm and discuss ideas for their “Four Elements Land Art.” This can be anything—from a mandala, to a dragon-shaped design, to an abstract sculpture. It’s best to leave the creative decisions entirely to the participants;
 3. At this stage, the groups gather materials from around their chosen spot to create their land art. Remind them to ask permission before taking anything—for example, they might ask a natural object, “Do you want to be a part of our art?” They make their land art, letting themselves be guided by nature and the place itself (at least 45 min);
 4. Later, all the groups meet at a designated gathering point at the agreed time. Group by group, if they wish to share, they guide the others to their land art, telling something about it—perhaps the story behind the artwork, the creative process, how ideas were developed, or how they chose to represent the elements—until every site has been visited;
 5. Reflection: the participants form pairs and shortly share their impressions about the activity. Possible questions:
 - What did you do?
 - How did you feel during the activity? How do you feel now?
 - What was your contribution to the group work?
 - What natural element was your favourite and easiest to comprehend? What was the most difficult to grasp?
 - What did you discover about yourself in this activity? What element resonates with you?
 - How can you use this knowledge, how can you use “the power” of your element in your everyday life?

In the very earliest time,
when both people and animals lived on earth,
a person could become an animal if he wanted to
and an animal could become a human being.
Sometimes they were people
and sometimes animals
and there was no difference.
All spoke the same language.
That was the time when words were like magic.
The human mind had mysterious powers.
A word spoken by chance
might have strange consequences.
It would suddenly come alive
and what people wanted to happen could happen—
all you had to do was say it.
Nobody can explain this:
That's the way it was.

Nalungiaq (Inuit story)



Befriending shadow

This is a playful activity designed to invite participants to explore shadows—the interplay between dark and light, and the in-between spaces where shadow meets light.



Activity step by step

Aims:
to discover unknown elements of one's inner world;
to playfully explore the relationship with one's shadow.

Materials: mats/blankets, pen and journals, papers, colours, time keeper

Time: 60 min

Number of the participants: 6 -30 people

1. Invite participants to gather in a loose circle, with phones on silent. Introduce the activity, explaining that this is not therapy and not classic “shadow work”—it is about curiosity. Shadow will be explored as something natural, like night, rest, or the parts of ourselves that don't usually get the spotlight. Nothing to fix, nothing to solve;
2. Invite participants to take a slow, silent walk—ideally westward, toward the setting sun if visible. While walking, offer prompts such as: “Notice how the light is changing,” “Pay attention to how the colors around you shift,” “Notice how edges and shapes are affected by this transition between light and shadow,” and “Observe how your body responds as the day winds down.”

3. When the light is soft and shadows become visible, invite participants to stop walking. Ask them to observe their own shadow on the ground or on a nearby surface. Encourage curiosity and exploration. You can offer invitations for the participants to play with the shadow, to experience different movements, to try to touch it, to do some funny movements or just to sit quietly with their shadow they see projected. Allow them time to get into the experience of meeting their own shadow;
4. Invite participants to find a comfortable place to sit, and reflect on the experience they just had. This can be done either indoors or outdoors. Invite participants to engage in a free writing or drawing activity—each can choose the method that serves them best—expressing their encounter with their shadow. Some guiding prompts: “If your shadow could speak, what might it say to you right now?” “What feelings arise as you turn toward it?” “What qualities might live within this part of you that you rarely notice?”
5. Gather everyone back into a circle for a debrief:
 - What did you discover or sense about your shadow — or about yourself — during this walk?
 - How did nature mirror your inner world?
 - What would it mean to honor this shadow as part of your whole self?



This activity is best experienced outdoors during sunset or early dusk, when shadows naturally appear and shift.

If dusk light is not available, move to a darker space and use flashlights.

This is not a shadow work activity. The invitation is to relate to your shadow as a way of connecting with a part of yourself that you may not know very well.

The Power of Story

Our mind is, in its most natural form, a mythological mind, a stories' mind.

We live and experience the world in the form of stories.

In our mind, events take the shape of a narrative. When we meet with friends, many times we “tell our stories” to them and ask them for their stories in return. We understand events and experiences, small and big, as stories.

Over millennia, people have passed wisdom, teachings, remedies, trades, and all kinds of important knowledge from one generation to the next—grandmother to granddaughter, uncle to nephew, elder to youth. This storytelling is one of the ways we have learned and grown across hundreds of generations.

Stories carry meanings and truth, important knowledge and they themselves are carried by people, from one community to another, from one age to the next.

The wild stories of nature can have a powerful and profound effect on us. Found in the myths, epics, and fairy tales of nature-based cultures, these stories carry magic and vitality, offering a unique experience to both listener and storyteller.

Alex



Stories of Nature

This workshop offers an experiential way to connect with one's imagination and the sense of aliveness in the ecosystem, using a method accessible to all ages and levels of experience. It can be facilitated in any setting where a circle can be formed and requires minimal materials, though some preparation time may be needed.



Aims:

to raise awareness of other living beings in the local ecosystem;
to cultivate deep imagination.

Materials: wax crayons or pastels, A4 or A3 paper, story handout

Time: 90 min

2 sessions of 45 minutes with a 15 min break in-between

Number of participants: 5-30 people



Activity step by step

1. Landing circle. Invite all participants to share their current emotion or where are they coming from, going in a circle one by one.
2. Tell a story. Either learn it by heart and tell it spontaneously or read it from the handout. Participants may want to listen to the story with eyes closed or unfocused, or laser attention, or doing artwork during the story, or anything else that supports their openness and relaxed focus.

3. Artwork. Give them A4/A5 papers and chalk pastels or wax crayons. Invite them to close their eyes and see where they find themselves in the story. Then give them 15 minutes to express that part of the story, their current emotions, or to express themselves freely using art materials.
4. Feed the story. In a popcorn style, but encouraging all participants to share, invite them to answer the question “What moment in the story do you find yourself in?” Go a few rounds, until the sharing runs dry. Invite and encourage everyone to share at least once.
5. Closing. Send everyone off, inviting them to take the story with them, let it work on them, and perhaps even share it with others. Being “worked by a story” could include the following: being with the whole story or its characters for the rest of the day; or contemplating on what moved you in the story for the rest of the week; journaling on the story or doing any kind of artwork, paying attention to your emotions and dreams in the following days.



Popcorn style sharing is “whoever is ready to pop, pops” and then we continue until all kernels are cooked. But do invite all to speak, and in silences between sharings you may wanna repeat the guiding question.

Take your time with the story, but be concise enough to keep their focus.

Before the workshop, try telling the story out loud—to a tree, the air, a houseplant, or even a pet—to get comfortable with speaking it.

Link to nature stories: Here are some possibilities of some stories you could offer (please mention the source when you tell these):

- Cherokee Fire story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=othiWKn0trU>



- Sky woman falling: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/140PZmMDzOkLSmENniAwksHwCSF-8W4hTs/view?usp=drivesdk>



- Rabbit and wolf story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TswzVmG9sy0>



- Apache creation story (starting minute 12.00): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ofjw-doow&t=2592s>



- Jumping Mouse story(text): https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ccX2i_eCPfulmOjTjvnBvffa4Lx-9PLuT/view?usp=drive_link





Cargo

You enter life a ship laden with meaning, purpose and gifts
sent to be delivered to a hungry world.
And as much as the world needs your cargo,
you need to give it away.
Everything depends on this.

But the world forgets its needs,
and you forget your mission,
and the ancestral maps used to guide you
have become faded scrawls on the parchment of dead Pharaohs.
The cargo weighs you heavy the longer it is held
and spoilage becomes a risk.
The ship sputters from port to port and at each you ask:
"Is this the way?"
But the way cannot be found without knowing the cargo,
and the cargo cannot be known without recognizing there is a way,
and it is simply this:
You have gifts.
The world needs your gifts.
You must deliver them.

The world may not know it is starving,
but the hungry know,
and they will find you
when you discover your cargo
and start to give it away.

by Greg Kimura



The map of Wholing

When used as a longer session, this method provides participants with an engaging way to explore their psyche through movement and symbolic language. It helps them gain meaningful insights into their strengths, patterns, and emerging qualities that support the journey of becoming whole.

Aims:

to begin forming a personal map of the psyche, supporting future self-development or group processes;
to encourage emotional processing through movement;
to promote humor as a tool for self-esteem and socialization;
to support inner integration.

Materials: small pieces of paper, pen, speaker, object/paper to mark the 4 cardinal points and printed letters.*

Time: 2 hours (It has an intro (15min) and four different activities (15 min each, but can be adjusted). It is recommended to have a final discussion and give them time for a small break between activities.)



Activity step by step

1. Before you begin, mention that this activity is based on Bill Plotkin's book *Wild Mind*, which presents a theory of the human psyche using a map with four cardinal directions. Make it clear that each of us has these four aspects of the psyche within us, although some aspects may be more developed than others;

2. At the beginning, make sure there are four designated spots in the space marking the cardinal directions—North, East, South, and West—with a printed letter next to each. These can be walls, corners of the room, trees, etc. Mark each one with a symbolic object or a piece of paper labeled N, E, S, and W accordingly;
3. Invite the group to take a small piece of paper and a pen, and begin walking around the space, using the whole room;
4. Then read a question and ask participants to position themselves in one of the four cardinal spots in the room according to their answer.

The questions:

1. You learn best when...
 - **n.** You understand the why behind things. (North)
 - **s.** You can experiment for yourself. (South)
 - **e.** It sparks your curiosity or admiration. (East)
 - **w.** It connects you with your inner world and hidden sensations, having a sense of meaning. (West)
2. When you feel most aligned and energized, you are usually...
 - **n.** Accomplishing goals, helping people, or improving systems. (North)
 - **s.** Fully present in your body, enjoying touch, movement, or physical pleasure. (South)
 - **e.** Sharing ideas, laughing, exploring, or discovering something new. (East)
 - **w.** Creating, reflecting, dreaming, or sitting with silence and depth. (West)
3. In a group of friends, you are usually the one who...
 - **n.** Organizes and makes sure plans happen and that everyone is doing well. (North)
 - **s.** Gives lots of hugs, massages, can't stop moving in their chair, or really enjoys eating—even better if it's with your hands. (South)

- **e.** Cracks jokes and keeps the mood light, gets excited easily, and draws others' attention in the present moment. (East)
 - **w.** Is more mysterious and observant, asks deep questions, or says what others avoid. (West)
4. When you feel overwhelmed by many emotions, what actions do you take to process them?
- **n.** I take initiative and get organized to make things more efficient next time: I make a list of problems and solutions. (North)
 - **s.** I choose to get active and move my body to channel the energy (free movement, dance, yoga, strength training...). (South)
 - **e.** I express what I feel by talking, sharing stories, using humor, or engaging in something to bring lightness. (East)
 - **w.** I turn inward, reflect deeply, and allow emotions to unfold in silence or introspection, sometimes doing something creative out of it. (West)
5. The phrase that fits you best is:
- **n.** "I am a caregiver and a leader. I like to organize myself and take action." (North)
 - **s.** "I have highly developed senses and I enjoy the sensory, animal, and primal." (South)
 - **e.** "I can put things into perspective, and with humor everything becomes lighter." (East)
 - **w.** "Everything has a deeper meaning. I need space alone to observe and express my ideas through creativity." (West)
5. Once participants arrive at their chosen cardinal point, ask them to write it down on their paper and then invite them to continue walking around the space. Read the next question, following the same process until all five questions have been read;

6. Finally, ask participants to move to the cardinal point they selected most often on their papers. Invite them to take the printed letter at that location and read it aloud to the others gathered at the same cardinal point;
7. After they have read the letters, invite participants to begin an exploration of their psyche, following you through the next four activities (see below)—one for each inner aspect. Encourage them to pay special attention to the activities corresponding to the two cardinal directions they read on their letters, perhaps approaching them with greater mindfulness.

**you can find the letters for N, S, E and W ready to be printed below the activity and at this QR code:*



Letter to my little self:

1. Announce to the group the first cardinal point: North. Now invite the participants to take something to write, sit down and find a comfortable position;
2. Invite them to close their eyes and think about themselves when they were kids. Was there a very special year? Any remarkable memories from their past childhood?
3. When they are ready, invite them to open their eyes, take their writing materials, and begin writing a supportive, fiercely loving letter to that child from their adult self, in their preferred language. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this process;
4. Remind participants that this exercise is personal and will not be shared at the end of the session. Keep track of the time and give a heads-up when they have reached the halfway point and again in the final few minutes.



Free movement:

1. Allow participants to sit with their emotions after writing the letter. Mention that, as they continue this adventure with you, they will have the opportunity to transform these feelings through movement in the South;
2. Explain the principle of free movement, inviting participants to connect with their bodies and primal senses:
 - a. *close your eyes or lower your gaze;*
 - b. *try to hear the music and pay attention to your emotions;*
 - c. *move the body as it feels more instinctive, maybe it is stretching, maybe it is doing yoga poses, maybe it is following the rhythm of what you hear, maybe it is climbing around the room;*
 - d. *Try to connect with your primal self and pay full attention to how your body feels—its temperature, heart rate, muscle movements, and the sensations that arise from the movement;*
 - e. *If you feel shy or judged, feel free to keep your eyes closed the whole time, or face a wall so you can't see the others;*
3. Put on music that supports the exercise (see more in tips) and let them explore their movement for 15 minutes.



Mimic stories:

1. After mentioning that the next part will focus on the East, invite participants to form pairs. If someone is left without a partner, you can join them;
2. Then, ask participants to think of a short story or anecdote—something funny that has happened to them recently;
3. In pairs, one participant should represent the story for two minutes without using words—only through body movement and sounds—while the other observes carefully. Keep track of the time. When two minutes have passed, have them switch roles: the observer now retells the story as accurately as possible, using the same method (mimicry and sounds, but no words);
4. After both participants have taken a turn, give the pair about three minutes to share what they understood from each other's story and how they felt during the exercise.



Drawing landscapes:

1. Let the group know that this is the final part of the adventure, concluding in the West. Invite participants to take paper and drawing or painting materials. Then, ask them to find a comfortable spot in the room where they can work;
2. On one side of the paper, ask participants to write a question—something that has been on their minds lately;
3. When everyone has written their questions, ask them to close their eyes and invite them on a journey through their imagination. Once participants are ready, read the text, being mindful of pauses and silences between sentences:

Think about your question. Imagine it as the beginning of a journey... Now picture yourself setting out to find an answer... This journey begins in a place that feels very familiar to you... Imagine your luggage. What does it look like?.. How heavy is it?..

You start walking, and you keep walking, until you are far from where you began, leaving all civilization behind. Now there is only nature around you... You cross different paths and landscapes, each one slowly unfolding as you move forward...

Little by little, night falls, and everything around you begins to darken... You enter a place that feels strange, yet calm and peaceful... Look up at the sky... What does it look like?.. What color is it?..

You continue walking through this mysterious place until, in the distance, you notice a living presence... Curious, you approach slowly. It could be a tree, a plant, a wild animal—someone familiar, or someone unknown...

When you stand in front of them, you sense that this being is your guide, and that you can trust them... You know they have been waiting for you...

You ask your question... Now imagine their response... Perhaps a gesture, a sound, or another question... Let the answer come in its own way... Now stay there for a moment, reflecting on it...

When you're ready, thank your guide and say goodbye... Slowly bring your awareness back to the room and to your body within it... Begin to move your fingers and toes...

And without hurrying, at your own pace, slowly open your eyes.

4. Once the reading is finished, invite participants to draw the landscape they imagined with the guide they encountered, as well as any insights or outcomes they gained from the exercise. Allow 20 minutes for this;
5. When 20 minutes have passed, ask participants to gather in pairs or trios and invite them to share about their journey—how was the imagination journey? What did they draw? Did they gain any insights or answers?

To conclude the session, invite participants to join a closing circle and ask them to share what resonates with them after this adventure. Possible questions for reflection:

- What did you notice in yourself and around you while participating in the activities?
- Did something shift at any specific cardinal point?
- How do you feel now? Is it different from how you felt at the beginning of this journey?



If there is a tie during the introduction, when participants are asked to choose a cardinal point, invite them to select between the two options using their gut feeling.

For the South activity, ensure the music is appropriate for the group's age and the space you're in. Instrumental music is recommended, with a variety of rhythms and energy levels—starting soft and calm, and gradually building. You can use a single piece (e.g., "Cloud Dance" by Tatjana Branoff, Estas Tonne, Bern B.) or a compilation of several tracks.

During this activity, it is normal for participants to connect more strongly with pain or suppressed emotions. For this reason, it is especially important to maintain a safe space and be attentive to participants' needs. If participants are deeply moved at the end of an activity (such as the one from the North), allow time for everyone to process their feelings before moving on to the next part.

LETTER FOR THE NORTH

Dear participants,

According to *The Nature-Based Map of the Human Psyche* by Bill Plotkin, if your dominant facet is the North, this is where your Caregiver/Leader Self resides — the part of you that is most responsible, mature, and compassionate. How can you strengthen this aspect of yourself?

The main practice for cultivating the North is simple: turn your attention inward and invite this facet to be present. You can imagine stepping into the Northern perspective — experiencing the world from a place that is clear, grounded, committed, and caring.

You may also recall moments in your life when you naturally expressed this Northern energy. These could be times when you cared for someone with genuine compassion, stepped into a leadership or teaching role, or faced a challenging project that required courage, responsibility, or skill. You can also think of one or two people who inspire you and seem to embody this same energy.

Whenever these memories or inspirations arise, pause for a moment and invite your adult self to step forward in your awareness — to enter your body and be fully present here and now.

As you enter this Northern consciousness, notice how the way you inhabit your body may shift. From this perspective, ask yourself:

What is the most important and helpful thing I can do right now?

What is the best way to continue what I'm already doing?

What opportunities for care, growth, or love are present at this moment?

Another way to strengthen your North is by taking action in the world. This can include volunteering, coordinating activities, or assuming leadership roles in settings such as youth exchanges or community projects. You can also cultivate this facet through courses or programs focused on leadership development, nonviolent communication, parenting, conscious love and intimacy, sustainability, or permaculture.

Writing love letters — to yourself, family members, or important people in your personal or professional life — is another powerful practice that nurtures the Northern side of your psyche.

But that is not all. According to Bill Plotkin, to feel truly balanced, we must also develop the facet opposite our dominant one — the South.

The South is where your Indigenous or Wild Self resides — the most instinctive, sensitive, and alive part of you. The good news is that connecting with this part of yourself is not difficult. The simplest and most accessible way to do it is to call it forth, because it is already alive within you.

For example, sit outside — or near an open window — and notice how cold air or warm sunlight touches your skin. Let the unique atmosphere of this place on Earth — its climate, its mood — move through you, like the soundtrack of an intense movie. What emotions begin to awaken?

At any moment and in any place, you can also pay close attention to your emotions and physical sensations — even subtle ones — when you encounter another person. This could be a stranger across from you on public transport, someone you love, or anyone at all. What do you feel between you? What kind of energy or vibration do you sense?

While doing this, notice the smells around you and what they awaken inside you: images, memories, or bodily sensations. You can try this at home as well, by opening a drawer or shelf where you keep spices. Once again, what emotions or sensations arise?

If your situation allows and you feel comfortable, you might also take off your clothes and let your whole body fully experience the world around you — perhaps in a meadow, in your garden, or in your living room. What feels pleasant on your skin? What feels less comfortable? What emotions or desires arise?

You can also give your full attention to the sounds of the world, preferably in a natural setting. Listen carefully to their details — tones, rhythms, and layers. Try to hear them as music, or even create a song out of them in your mind. What do you feel as you listen?

At any moment during your day — whether working in a shop, an office, or a garden; playing sports; spending time with your family; or moving from one place to another — remind yourself that you are a wild, sensitive, emotional, and deeply alive being.

When you remember yourself in this way, notice how your body moves as you go about your activities. What changes do you sense in your relationships? What now feels more vivid or attractive? How does it feel to be in your body? To be in a living, breathing world? What emotions are clearly present? How does it feel to be in contact with the Earth? Do you feel at home? What might help you feel even more so?

LETTER FOR THE SOUTH

Dear participants,

According to *The Nature-Based Map of the Human Psyche* by Bill Plotkin, if your dominant facet is the South, this is where your Indigenous Self resides — the wildest, most instinctive, and most alive part of who you are. How can you strengthen this part of yourself?

The good news is that connecting with your Wild Self isn't complicated. The simplest and most accessible way is to call on it — because it already exists inside you, waiting to be noticed.

For example, sit outside, or near an open window, and notice how cold air or warm sunlight touches your skin. Let the unique feeling of this place on Earth — its climate, atmosphere, and mood — move through you, like the soundtrack of an intense movie. What emotions begin to appear?

At any moment, anywhere, you can also tune in to your emotions and physical sensations — even subtle ones — when you encounter another person. It could be a stranger on the bus, someone you love, or anyone at all. What do you feel between you? What kind of energy or vibration do you sense?

While doing this, notice the smells around you and what they awaken inside you: images, memories, or physical sensations. You can try this at home as well, by opening a drawer or shelf where you keep spices. Once again, what emotions or sensations arise?

If your situation allows and you feel comfortable, you might also take off your clothes and let your whole body fully experience the world around you — perhaps in a meadow, your garden, or your living room. What feels pleasant on your skin? What feels uncomfortable? What emotions, impulses, or desires arise?

Another practice is to listen deeply to the sounds of the world, ideally in a natural setting. Pay attention to their details — tones, rhythms, and layers. Try to hear them as music, or even create a song out of them in your mind. What do you feel as you listen?

At any moment during your day — whether working in a shop, an office, or a garden; playing sports; spending time with your family; or moving from one place to another — remind yourself that you are a wild, sensitive, emotional, animal, and deeply alive being.

When you remember yourself in this way, notice how your body moves differently as you go about your activities. What changes do you notice in your relationships? What now feels more vivid or attractive? How does it feel to be in your body? To be part of a living, breathing world? What emotions are clearly present? How does it feel to be in contact with the Earth? Do you feel at home? What might help you feel even more so?

But this is not the whole picture. According to Bill Plotkin, to feel truly balanced, we also need to cultivate the facet opposite our dominant one — the North.

To awaken our wholeness (or any of the four facets), the most important step is simply remembering to do so. The main practice for cultivating the North is straightforward: turn your attention inward and invite this facet to be present. You can imagine stepping into the Northern perspective — experiencing the world from a place that is clear, responsible, committed, and caring.

You might also recall moments in your life when you naturally expressed this Northern energy: times when you cared for someone with compassion, took on a leadership or teaching role, or faced a challenging task that required courage and skill. You can also think of one or two people who inspire you and embody this same energy. Whenever these memories or inspirations arise, pause for a moment and invite your adult self to step forward in your awareness — to enter your body and be fully present here and now.

As you enter this Northern consciousness, notice how your posture, breath, and presence shift. From this place, ask yourself:

What is the most important and helpful thing I can do right now?

How can I best continue what I'm already doing?

What opportunities for care, growth, or love are present at this moment?

Another way to strengthen your North is by volunteering, coordinating group activities, or taking on leadership roles, such as in youth exchanges. You can also cultivate this facet through courses or programs focused on leadership, nonviolent communication, parenting, conscious love and intimacy, sustainability, or permaculture.

Finally, writing love letters — to yourself, family members, or important people in your personal or professional life — is a powerful practice that nurtures and strengthens the Northern side of your psyche.

LETTER FOR THE EAST

Dear participants,

According to *The Nature-Based Map of the Human Psyche* by Bill Plotkin, if your dominant facet is the East, this is where your Innocent/Sage lives — the part of you that carries innocence, wisdom, spontaneity, humor, and a natural sense of perspective. These qualities are often recognized and nurtured in childhood and adolescence, so they rarely need to be “re-educated.” They simply need to be remembered.

As with the other facets, the most practical way to cultivate the East is to remember that it already exists within you. These qualities have always been there, quietly waiting for your attention.

Whenever you have a free moment — while waiting for water to boil or for a friend to arrive — remind yourself of your natural ability to return to a calm center, even in the middle of life’s storms. You can also remember your ability to smile at the absurdity of being human, including your tendency to want life to unfold in one specific way instead of another.

Using your imagination, you might picture yourself standing on top of a mountain, able to see a much wider story unfolding. Or you could imagine yourself wearing something ridiculous in the middle of everyday seriousness and busyness. As you gently rise into this Eastern perspective, notice what changes: how do you feel now about yourself and others?

From this place, ask yourself:

Can I open to pain without turning it into suffering?

Where do I experience joy in my life?

Can I laugh at myself with kindness and affection?

More traditional and structured practices can also awaken and mature the Innocent/Sage, such as meditation, contemplative prayer, and disciplines like yoga. Engaging in stand-up comedy, clowning, or mime — especially when integrated into workshops or group activities — are also powerful ways to strengthen the East.

Attentive and loving observation of the natural world supports the cultivation of simplicity, wonder, and mindfulness — core qualities of the East — just as movement practices like dance can.

And of course, there is a universal opportunity to learn directly from true Innocents and Sacred Fools: babies and children. Spend an hour — or even a whole day — with one or more children. Let go of your adult plans and expectations, and follow their rhythm: how they play, focus, express emotions and desires, laugh, cry, sing, move, and explore. Allow yourself to be carried along with them — and try it yourself.

But this is not the whole picture. According to Bill Plotkin, to feel truly balanced, we must also cultivate the facet opposite our dominant one — the West.

The West is where your Muse lives — the voice of your imagination and inner world, and the most creative and intuitive part of who you are. Accessing and nurturing your Muse is easier than you might expect, even if it feels unfamiliar at first. The main key is to imagine that this inner source of creativity and insight is already alive within you, waiting to be invited in.

Remember to call on your Muse and allow it to express itself. When you are facing important decisions — such as who you want to share your life with, which professional path to choose, or how to respond creatively to new opportunities — turn first to your Muse for guidance.

This practice is just as valuable for smaller, everyday choices: how to respond to the feelings of someone you care about, how to approach a creative project, or what to write in your next sentence. In these moments, gently ask your Western facet to share its wisdom through your imagination.

This way of listening may take some practice. In the beginning, it can help to slow down, set aside at least an hour without interruptions, find a quiet and private place (or a peaceful natural setting), and begin with a few deep breaths. You can imagine yourself entering an inner sanctuary. With your mind's eye, notice the details of this space — the colors, shapes, and quality of light — while holding a question you wish to offer to your Muse as a gift. Once you've asked your question, wait and notice what arises.

Your Muse may respond in many forms: an image, an intuitive feeling, an emotion, a bodily sensation, a spontaneous movement or dance, a sudden thought, a memory from a dream or real experience, or something you notice in the world around you.

Whatever form the response takes, offer your thanks. Remember that the answer may not come immediately. Allow whatever you receive to gently influence the actions you take in relation to your question.

Another way to strengthen your Western facet is by building a relationship with your creativity and inner world through art — poetry, writing, singing, dancing, drawing, or any form of expression that gives voice to what is happening inside you.

LETTER FOR THE WEST

Dear participants,

According to *The Nature-Based Map of the Human Psyche* by Bill Plotkin, your dominant facet is the **West**. This is where your **Muse** lives — the voice of your imagination and inner world, and the most creative and intuitive part of who you are.

Accessing your Muse and learning to care for it is easier than you might expect, even if it feels unusual at first. The main key is to imagine that this inner source of creativity and insight already exists inside you, waiting to be invited in.

Remember to call on your Muse and give it space to express itself. When you need to make important decisions — such as who you want to share your life with, which professional path to follow, or how to respond creatively to new opportunities — turn first to your Muse for guidance.

But this practice is just as useful for smaller, everyday choices: how to respond to the feelings of someone you care about, how to approach a creative project, or even what to write in your next sentence. In these moments, gently ask your Western facet to share its wisdom with you through your imagination.

This way of listening may take some practice before it feels natural. In the beginning, it can help to slow down, set aside at least an hour without interruptions, find a quiet and private place (or a peaceful natural setting), and start with a few deep breaths.

You can imagine yourself entering an inner sanctuary. With your mind's eye, notice the details of this place — the colors, the shapes, the light — while holding a question you would like to offer to your Muse, almost as a gift.

Once you've asked your question, wait and see what arises.

Your Muse can respond in many different ways: through an image, an intuitive feeling, an emotion, a bodily sensation, a spontaneous movement or dance, a sudden thought, the memory of a dream or a real experience, or something you notice in the world around you.

Whatever form the response takes, thank your Muse for it. Remember that the answer may not arrive immediately. Allow whatever you receive to gently influence the actions you take in response to your question.

Another powerful way to strengthen your Western facet is by building a relationship with your creativity and inner world through art — poetry, writing, singing, dancing, drawing, or any form of expression that gives voice to what is happening inside you.

But this is not the whole picture. According to Bill Plotkin, to feel truly balanced, we must also cultivate the facet opposite our dominant one — the East.

The East is the dimension of the Innocent / Sage. These qualities — innocence, wisdom, spontaneity, humor — are often naturally developed in childhood and adolescence, so they usually don't need to be “re-learned,” only remembered.

As with the other facets, the most practical way to awaken the East is simply to call it in, with openness and innocence, knowing that it has always been present within you. Whenever you have a free moment — while waiting for water to boil or for a friend to arrive — remind yourself of your ability to stay calm in the middle of life's storms. You can also remember your ability to smile at the absurdity of being human, including your tendency to want life to unfold in one specific way instead of another.

Using your imagination, you might picture yourself standing on top of a mountain, able to see a much larger story unfolding. Or imagine yourself wearing something ridiculous in the middle of everyday seriousness and busyness. As you gently rise into this Eastern perspective, notice what changes: how do you feel about yourself and others now?

From this place, ask yourself:

Can I open to pain without turning it into suffering?

Where do I experience joy in my life?

Can I laugh at myself with kindness?

More traditional and structured practices can also awaken and mature the Innocent / Sage, such as meditation, contemplative prayer, yoga, or other mindful disciplines. Practicing stand-up comedy, clowning, or mime — especially when integrated into workshops or group activities — can also be powerful ways to strengthen the East.

Careful and attentive observation of the natural world supports qualities of simplicity, wonder, and presence, just like dance does.

And finally, there is a universal and deeply human opportunity to learn directly from true Innocents and Sacred Fools: babies and children. Spend an hour — or even a full day — with one or more children. Let go of your adult plans and expectations, and follow their rhythm: how they play, focus, express emotions, move, sing, laugh, cry, and explore the world.

Allow yourself to be carried along with them — and try it yourself.

YOUTH IN NATURAL SETTINGS



According to the Ecocentric Developmental Wheel, the majority of youth participating in our activities are in the third developmental stage. To fully develop their potential, they need opportunities to explore their own authenticity, experiment with different roles within a group, strengthen social skills, and build self-confidence by discovering and practicing their place in society.

To address the needs of this developmental phase, one way to engage youth in the rewilding process is to organize a small, camp-like weekend. The weekend takes place in a natural setting, where participants stay overnight. At the beginning of the camp, it is important to set the framework for the rewilding activities described in this manual. We suggest starting with the short outdoor activities listed below. These activities are very simple, yet they can be challenging for some participants. They often require leaving the comfort zone.

1. Take care of your sleeping!

The group decides together how to build the camp with tents. They choose the shape of the campsite, how the tents are built, and how they are arranged. The group must cooperate and help one another throughout the process. During this activity, participants actively try out different roles within the group. These include the role of a leader, a helper, someone “who knows,” and someone “who learns.” Through this process, they build group connections while also developing their own sense of authenticity.

1. Take care of your food!

The group prepares the wood and builds the fire for cooking. Together, they prepare the food. They cooperate, discuss, and make decisions as a group. Through these activities, they strengthen a sense of community. They explore social relationships through real situations and shared tasks. At the same time, they build their own sense of place and self-image by experimenting, trying new roles, and exploring their own expression and authenticity.

1. Take care of your water!

The group goes to fetch water from a nearby well. They walk in silence and observe the nature around them. They are aware of wild animals that may startle or frighten them, or even cause harm. At the same time, they take in the wildness of nature. They feel the hard rocks under their feet, the coldness of the water, and the heaviness of the full bottle they carry back to the site. They experience the steep climb uphill and the possibility of losing their way. The forest walk places them fully in

nature. They must find their place within it, notice their thoughts, and breathe with the trees around them.

These “situational” activities emphasize open space, youth facilitation, and peer learning. They create the setting and conditions for experiences to unfold in nature. This allows participants time to explore social and cultural situations in connection with themselves, others, and the natural environment. It also supports growth in new and meaningful ways. Immersion in nature, combined with the absence of a “safe retreat” into virtual tools, is a welcomed collateral effect. The activities themselves are designed to offer situational challenges and opportunities for exploration. They also support the development of new connections among group members.

You, as the facilitator, are present throughout all stages of the activities. Your facilitation is minimal, limited mainly to giving clear instructions at the beginning. During the activities, you observe without interfering. You intervene only when necessary. In the case of conflict, stay nearby and step in only if participants are unable to resolve it themselves. Offer help when participants ask for it. This approach is known as “open space” facilitation. The facilitator provides a safe environment and allows participants to carry out the activities and let experiences unfold naturally.

Before the activities, you may include icebreakers, name games, or other exercises that support team spirit and group cohesion. These should be chosen according to the specific target group, setting, and situation.

If needed, you can explain what is comfort zone, and then invite participants to dive into the activities:

The **comfort zone** is a **psychological state** in which a person feels **safe, comfortable**, and **relaxed** because they are in a familiar environment, performing routine tasks, and utilizing their proven abilities. It provides predictability and control, and it minimises stress. Although it provides security, staying in it for too long can lead to **stagnation**, preventing personal growth, learning new skills, and facing challenges. By exposing ourselves to new and unfamiliar situations, we step out of the comfort zone and into the learning or growth zone. This is crucial for progress. However, if we step too far from the comfort zone, it can lead to anxiety, fear, or panic, so the facilitator should care for the participants and remain present at all times.

After each activity, take time for a debrief or reflection. This helps participants make sense of and integrate their experiences. You can guide the reflection with simple, open-ended questions, such as:

- What did you do?
- How did you feel in this activity?
- What did you learn about yourself? For example, are you more focused on helping, listening, cooperating, or on your own needs? Are you more of an individual or group-oriented person?
- What did you discover about your needs?
- Did nature itself offer you a spot? How did you hear or feel it?
- Do you want to do it again?
- What would you do differently (if anything)?

To conclude a longer event, it is helpful to:

- Conduct a full camp evaluation;
- Invite participants to say goodbye to the land through a short walk;
- Hold a final sharing circle, where participants can express gratitude;
- Finish with a short celebratory moment to break the circle, such as a closing rhythm with clapping, blowing out a candle together, or simply saying, "You are free now, just as you were before."

**MORE
OPPORTUNITIES**



Sources of Inspiration:

- The websites of our three organizations:
 - [AikiEN: https://aiki-en.hr/](https://aiki-en.hr/)
 - [Om si Copac: https://www.omsicopac.org/](https://www.omsicopac.org/)
 - [Radi Vidi Pats: https://www.radividipats.lv/en/](https://www.radividipats.lv/en/)
- Pan Flute, the sister handbook for youth workers of this Guide. Available in English, Croatian, Latvian and Romanian: <https://aiki-en.hr/naslovna/projekti/pan-flute/>
- All things Eco-centric Development, the main inspiration for the work that came into building the Re-Wild Guide: www.animas.org
- The blog of one of our colleagues: <https://paragraph.com/@figtree>
- Our mailing list, a newsletter that will offer seasonal insights, resources, inspiration, tools, rewilding stories, and professional opportunities, coming to your inbox four times per year: <https://forms.gle/FH7YTgEh4oYLLA17>

Books:

- Wild Mind: <https://newworldlibrary.com/product/wild-mind>
- Nature and the Human Soul: <https://newworldlibrary.com/product/nature-and-the-human-soul>
- Soulcraft: <https://newworldlibrary.com/product/soulcraft>
- Journey of Soul Initiation: <https://newworldlibrary.com/product/the-journey-of-soul-initiation>
- Coyote's Guide to connecting with nature, a wonderful book for those working with kids: <https://wildernessawareness.org/store/alumni-authored/coyotes-guide-to-connecting-with-nature-2nd-edition/>

- Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder: www.barnesandnoble.com/w/last-child-in-the-woods-richard-louv/1018688535
- Animals of the Four Windows, by Stephen Gallegos: <https://www.amazon.com/Animals-Four-Windows-Integrating-Thinking/dp/0944164404>

Videos:

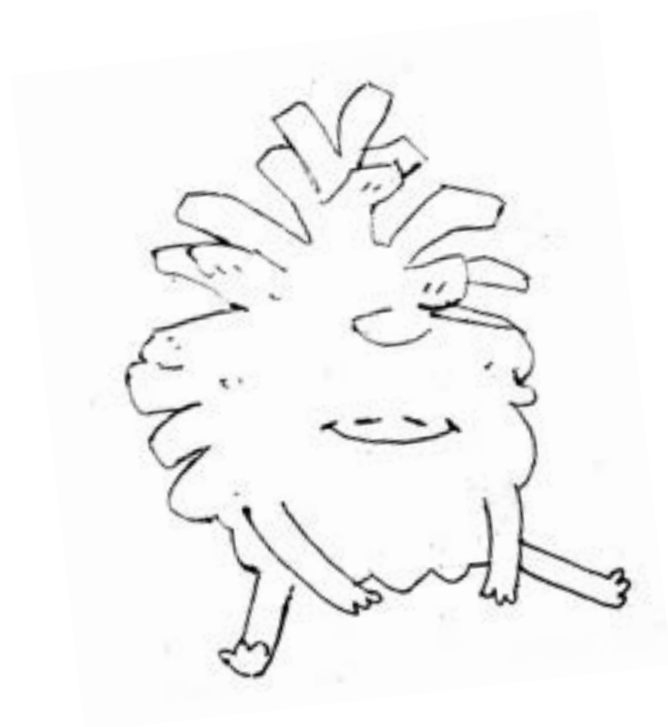
- Repairing emotional isolation by reawakening deep nature connection | Jon Young: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMWSvUp0CYk>
- Podcast with Bill Plotkin from Animas Valley Institute, on eco-centric development: <https://www.lifeworld.earth/episodes-blog/depthpsychology>

Training courses for youth workers:

- SALTO-YOUTH - European Training Calendar - Training for youth work and projects - or recruit participants

Various methods and tools to use in youth work:

- SALTO-YOUTH - Toolbox - Tool for youth work and projects - or recruit participants
- Training of Trainers manual built by a brother NGO from Bulgaria <https://learningforchange.net/knowledge-base/manual-training-trainers-using-non-formal-learning-interactive-methods-youth-work/>



CLOSING WORDS





We hope this guide will serve you to rewild yourself and the people you work with. Share it freely and widely.

We offer our support in using this guide, adapting it to your setting and target group and of course we are open for collaboration. Contact us through the contact forms on our websites, found in the Resources page.

Before you go tough....

Do sign up for the Re-Wild Newsletter through which we will offer seasonal insights, resources, inspiration, tools, rewilding stories, and professional opportunities, coming to your inbox four times per year: <https://forms.gle/FH7YTgEh4oYLLA17>



In Wildness,
The Re-Wild team

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