



**GIVE ME A  
BIO BREAK**



**PAN FLUTE**





# *Pan Flute*

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**PAN FLUTE**  
**Give Me a Bio Break**

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**The Why**

**The How**

**The Who**







## WHY?

In our youth work, we often encounter young people who express indifference toward the environment, opting to connect with virtual realities while ignoring the natural world around them. Many also struggle with depression and anxiety, further disconnecting from their inner selves and becoming overwhelmed by the challenges of the world.

We see a pressing need for methods that help youth reconnect with themselves, their communities, and nature. As eco-anxiety becomes an increasingly common issue, this handbook aims to offer young people opportunities to rediscover and build a personal relationship with nature. Through these connections, they can learn to act as responsible citizens, committed to preserving the environment within their local communities.

Our goal is to help youth connect with themselves in meaningful and unique ways, tailored to their individual capacities and interests. Research shows that such reconnections not only strengthen bonds within communities but also foster compassion for all living things, positively impacting intergenerational relationships. By engaging youth in caring for nature, we can inspire real change, empowering them to think and feel differently about the environment and take meaningful action.

This manual is a collection of ideas, invitations, and inspiration for youth workers and NGOs interested in integrating nature-based activities into their programs. It serves as a method for climate action that shifts the focus from “Why?” and “How?” to “In what mindset?”

In conclusion, this manual is designed to guide youth workers and organizations toward fostering a deeper connection with nature and community. By nurturing personal stories with nature, we can empower young people to confront eco-anxiety and become active stewards of the environment. Together, we can inspire a mindset shift that leads to a collective commitment to preserving our planet for future generations.

## HOW?

The activities collected in this manual are simple, direct and accessible to everyone, regardless of previous knowledge and experience. They can be used as separate activities, as activities of one-day and multi-day workshops, trainings and courses.

To make the most of this manual, start by familiarizing yourself with the range of activities it offers. Each activity is designed to facilitate connections to self, community and nature through engaging, hands-on experiences. Begin by selecting activities that align with the interests and needs of your group or participants. Prioritize activities that resonate with your goals for nature-based youth work, whether it's fostering environmental stewardship, promoting mindfulness in nature, or building outdoor skills. Adapt and customize the activities as needed to suit your group's unique dynamics, age range, and environmental context. Encourage participants to reflect on their experiences and observations during and after each activity, fostering deeper connections to nature and a sense of environmental responsibility. Finally, remember that the goal is to inspire curiosity, appreciation, and respect for the natural world, for both inner and outer nature, so have fun exploring and learning together!

# WHO?

## Aiki En Organisation for Promoting Harmonious Living - Zagreb, Croatia

Founded in 2010, Aiki En is dedicated to fostering a harmonious relationship with the environment and promoting non-violent conflict resolution, particularly among children and youth. Through training and workshops in Aikido, a martial art rooted in principles of peace and balance, we help young people develop physical and mental well-being.

Beyond Aikido, we also embrace other elements of Far Eastern culture and art, including the Japanese practice of Shinrin Yoku (forest bathing), Chinese calligraphy, and Origami. These activities not only cultivate an appreciation for nature but also encourage tolerance, cultural awareness, and intercultural dialogue.

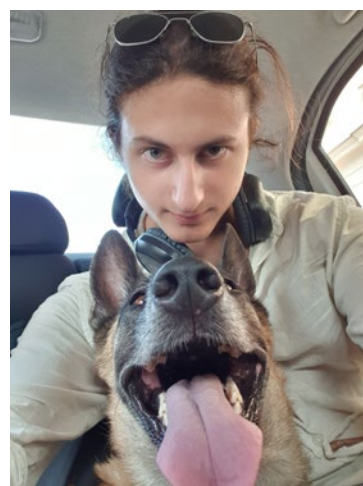
Our organization's primary goal is to enhance overall mental health and restore the natural balance of body and mind in daily life through movement-based activities and embodiment. Additionally, we are committed to restoring harmony between people and nature, focusing on environmental protection, conservation, sustainable living, and the non-violent resolution of conflicts. Through these efforts, we aim to empower individuals to communicate effectively, express their views with respect for others, and contribute to a more harmonious world.



**Maja Pušić - Čerić**



**Andrea Doračić**



**Andrej Eme Čerić (and Tessa)**

## Human and Tree NGO from Siret, Romania.

Human and Tree is a non-profit organization focused on promoting mental health in the local and regional community.

Their vision is a world in which every human maintains and nurtures their wellbeing by being deeply connected to (1) themselves, (2) the human community they are part of and (3) the local and regional ecosystem they are embedded in.

### **They work towards this by:**

- Bringing people in contact with nature and supporting a connection with natural elements and beings
- Creating communal spaces of mutual support, sharing of experience, practices and skills, of learning
- Facilitating learning opportunities for children, youth and adults
- Encouraging the cultivation of individual's resources for growth and resilience
- Facilitating community spaces in which intergenerational exchange can happen between children, youth, adults and elders
- Using a holistic approach to mental health and the person and, therefore, a variety of methods ranging from physical activity and body work, to arts(such as painting, dancing, expressive writing, music, etc) .
- Providing continuous learning opportunities for mental health workers

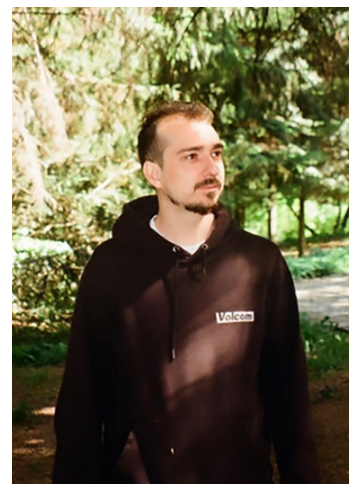
Within this project the the team from H.a.T. is composed of Alex Giurgea, Ramona-Diana Ghimpu and Daniel-Liviu Oros, all three engaged in the creation of this handbook and the tools contained within.



**Alex Giurgea**



**Ramona Ghimpu**



**Daniel Oros**

## NGO Radi Vidi Pats - Liepaja, Latvia

Radi Vidi Pats is a 20-year-old organization with 25 dedicated members and 30 passionate activists who support our work. Initially focused on environmental education for young people, we have naturally expanded to address broader community and social issues. Sustainability, alternative lifestyles, DIY practices, non-formal education, and promoting volunteering are at the core of what we do.

As our name—Radi Vidi Pats, meaning “Create the Environment Yourself”—suggests, we believe in the power and responsibility to bring positive change to our local community. Our goal is to promote sustainable development and participation in society through lifelong learning for youth and adults, and by creating opportunities for them to realize their ideas. We want to encourage people to become responsible co-creators, not just consumers, by supporting their active participation, sustainable behaviors, and willingness to solve problems in their communities and the world.

We engage with the local community to highlight environmental issues and encourage people to be more open-minded, less focused on consumption, more creative, and connected to nature. This helps us build a more inclusive, ecocentric society. We collaborate with partners across Europe, using non-formal education tools like storytelling, which helps participants understand different life experiences and reduce stigma against vulnerable groups.

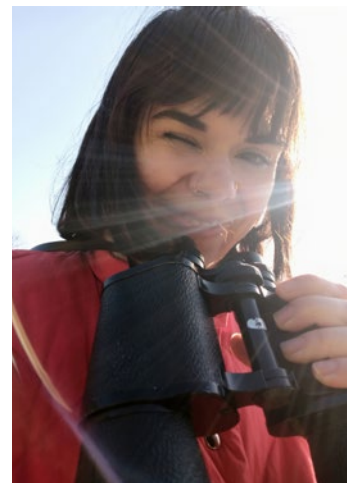
In recent years, we have begun to focus consciously on working with young adults facing NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) situations. While we have always welcomed socially disadvantaged individuals and tried to involve them, we now actively implement inclusion projects. These projects include solidarity initiatives, hosting and sending volunteers, educational workshops, community gardening, and talk events, where people with fewer opportunities work hand-in-hand with our members, activists, and support persons.



**Stanislavs Babins**



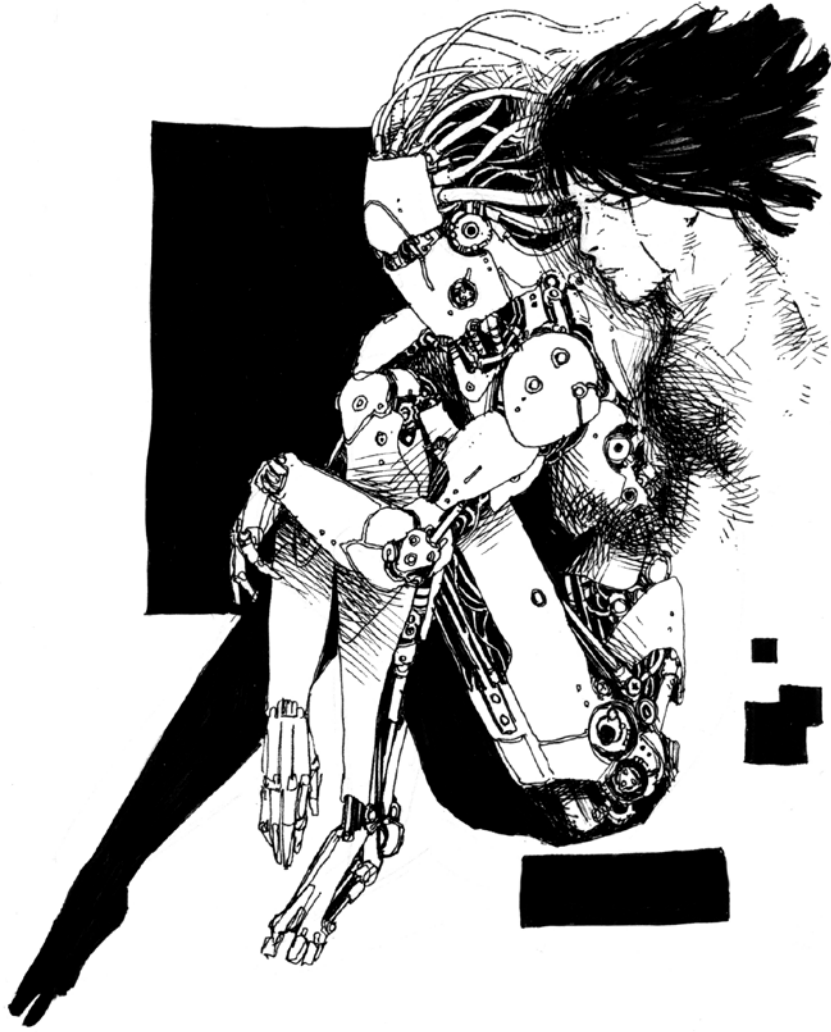
**Viktoriiia Bulavkina**



**Gloria Pascual**

# Disconnection





One day, the sought knocks on the seeker's door.

"Who is there?" the seeker asks.

"It's you!" the sought answers.

Annoyed, the seeker replies,

"There is no room for the two of us here, go away!"

The next week, the sought comes back to the seeker's door, and they have the same conversation.

"Who is there?" the seeker asks.

"It's you!" the sought answers.

"There is no room for the two of us here, go away!"

The next day, the sought comes back to the seeker's door and knocks again.

"Who is there?" the seeker asks.

"It's you!" the sought answers.

"There is no room for the two of us here, go away!"

The sought replies,

"How many times must I knock on your door for you to open it to yourself?"

Navigating the experience of connection and disconnection can bring us closer to the concept of "instinct or intuition," that wisdom inside us and all intuitive beings that simply know their own truth without using cognitive processes.

Nowadays, many of our connections with the world happen at an unnatural rhythm in virtual realities, mostly mediated by technology. This impacts our direct conversation with the natural world within and around us. The term "unnatural" now seems to accurately describe a living state of a species that is not aligned with the primal essence shaped by evolution.

Nature has always been there. Long before humans transformed it, it has always been present. Nature has provided humans with food, water, shelter, and raw materials for tools and clothing. It has played a central role in the cultural practices and beliefs of societies around the world. Many indigenous cultures have deeply spiritual connections to the land, viewing nature as sacred and imbued with spiritual energy. Nature has inspired art, music, literature, and mythology, shaping human culture in profound ways. Moreover, nature has profound effects on human health and well-being. Spending time in natural environments has been linked to reduced stress, improved mood, and enhanced cognitive function. Access to green spaces, such as parks and forests, is increasingly recognized as essential for mental and physical health. Nature is also about biodiversity. Ecosystems provide essential services such as pollination, water purification, and climate regulation, which are crucial for human survival.

Nature has been intimately intertwined with human existence since the dawn of our species. Throughout history, it has provided humans with essential resources for survival, influenced cultural and spiritual beliefs, and served as a source of inspiration and wonder. Overall, nature has been and continues to be an integral part of the human experience, shaping our history, culture, and well-being in profound ways.

We come from nature and we are nature. Therefore, to deny or ignore it goes against our own primitive essence, our animal side. A tree uses for its photosynthesis the carbon dioxide released by our lungs and, in turn, liberates oxygen that is further used by our lungs, making it possible for us to breathe and be alive.

But why disconnection? Scientists say that it serves as a way of protection from adversities. It is a strategy that our mind uses to protect us from emotional sufferings like loss or abandonment when lacking other resources. Our psyche employs disconnection as a protective mechanism because it can be overwhelming to directly confront intense emotions or situations that threaten our sense of self. By disconnecting, our mind creates a buffer zone, allowing us to temporarily distance ourselves from distressing stimuli. It's like a mental escape hatch when faced with emotional overload, enabling us to survive emotionally overwhelming circumstances.

However, people often remain in that state of disconnection, building layers around their true nature like a Matryoshka doll, influenced by external pressures. This disconnection creates difficulties in the relationship with our inner selves, our communities, and the external natural world. And it goes both ways; being unable to connect with our own inner nature, we are unable to connect with the nature outside ourselves, which profoundly impacts the environment.

This topic is increasingly covered in literature. Some books address the idea that on the opposite side of the feeling of disconnection is the feeling of belonging. For example, the book "Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home" by Toko-pa Turner explores the deep human longing to belong—to ourselves, to others, and to the earth. Turner delves into the idea that true belonging is not about fitting in or conforming to societal expectations but about embracing our unique essence and finding our place in the world.

Addressing this disconnection might start a restoration work. We might restore a profound sense of belonging that we had long forgotten. As the author mentioned above wrote: "We must reconstitute the world through our many small contributions, collaborations, and togetherness. As we work to protect the last stands of wilderness around and within us, when creating beauty from loss and heartbreak after adversities we will meet each other: those with no extraordinary power but the devotion to do what we know we must do—and look after each other."



# Intro into the phylosophies of the three pillars





# 1. Embodiment, Aikido and Shinrin Yoku

If we want to protect the environment around us we have to be in harmony with it, but first of all we have to be in harmony with ourselves. The way we treat ourselves is the way we treat our environment and the people around us, and that's how we treat nature too.

If we are out of balance, we do not know what is happening to us (inside and outside), we cannot see or feel what is happening around us. We don't really know what is happening in the environment and what kind of problems the environment has. And in the end, we don't know how to help since we don't notice the needs of the environment that surrounds us.

Therefore, we have to be able to self-regulate, co-regulate as a social being and eco-regulate or harmonize with nature, to really feel the environment.

This is not a one-way process. On the contrary, it is circular. One affects the other, and once we start it, it goes around in a circle and affects our whole life and relationships. Although it uses and develops awareness, focus and concentration, this is not just a mental process. It is both mental and embodied.

We as human beings have this wonderful ability and opportunity to change our state of being and to influence and be affected by our environment. Embodiment offers us many simple and easy, but very effective exercises and protocols for raising awareness of oneself and one's condition. With this knowledge, we can change our current state, and then influence and change others, as well as the natural environment.

Most of the embodiment exercises we include in this manual are derived from the principles of the martial art of Aikido. In Aikido, we use many harmonizing protocols for self-regulation through centering, grounding, and movement and flow exercises. From this balanced state, we can influence our environment, effectively and calmly resolve conflict situations and restore balance.

Shinrin Yoku, the Japanese concept of being in nature and communicating with it, also offers space to regain inner balance through eco-regulation, harmonizing directly with nature, raising awareness of oneself in the present moment, here and now.

Our aim is to open the field of discovery and encourage young people to find the personal story with nature. Therefore we invite the reader to try for himself and also, with curiosity and openness, to explore and find his own new ways to communicate and connect to self, community and natural surroundings. We believe that developing a personal story with nature opens the possibility for real change and preservation of the environment and natural habitats.

For a healthy individual it is of crucial importance to start a journey into oneself to develop true personal potential, authenticity and healthy self esteem. Then to further connect to the community in a nurturing and responsible way. Finally, to connect and take responsibility for the nature surrounding us and for the whole living planet.

Further, as we have already pointed out that this process is circular, we can begin to connect with one of these three - self, community and nature alike: opening up and harmonizing with nature and the people around us, finding our own inner balance at the same time.

Change is possible as long as our hearts and minds are not far away from nature. This booklet of invitations, ideas and activities is our contribution to a healthier and greener future of our world.

## **Embodiment**

Embodiment, in essence, is the idea of living fully within one's body, embracing physical sensations, emotions, and experiences. In this way, we open up to greater awareness of what is happening with us and around us, and increase the possibility of choosing a quality response to a given circumstance.

In the field of youth work embodiment can be a powerful tool for fostering holistic development and well-being among young people. By encouraging youth to engage mindfully in embodiment activities, youth workers can help them cultivate a deeper connection to themselves and their surroundings. This embodied approach promotes physical health and enhances emotional resilience, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills.

Moreover, embodiment offers many activities and practical tools for addressing challenges such as stress, anxiety, eco-anxiety and dissociation that many young people face in today's fast-paced world. Through experiential learning and somatic techniques, youth workers can empower youth to face life challenges with greater ease and authenticity.

Incorporating embodiment into youth work creates opportunities for personal growth, empowerment, and social connection, ultimately equipping young people with the tools they need to thrive in both their individual journeys and their contributions to the broader community. : (activities: Centring, 5 senses centring, 4 elements, Mirroring, Harmonize!, Crossing the threshold, etc.)

## **Aikido Principles as a Path to Reconnecting with Nature**

Aikido is a Japanese martial art that can offer valuable insights into our relationship with nature, even for those who are unfamiliar with it. Aikido is often described as the "Art of Harmony," and its core principles can guide us in reestablishing a profound connection with the natural world.

Aikido teaches us to blend with the energy and movements of our partners. Similarly, by spending time in the natural environment and harmonizing with nature, we learn to adapt to its rhythms and cycles, growing a deeper understanding and appreciation of it. In Aikido we avoid resisting or opposing any force directly. Similarly, when connecting with nature, we learn to adapt and flow with the natural world's forces, rather than trying to dominate or control them. (activities: Harmonize!, 4 elements, Connection / Disconnection)

Aikido emphasizes maintaining balance and stability in the face of challenges. In nature, balance is essential too. We learn that ecosystems thrive when there is a balance between various species and environmental factors. Applying this principle we learn to stay open and calm in everyday situations. Additionally, Aikido practitioners cultivate mindfulness, being fully present in each moment. When we apply this principle to our interactions with nature, we become more attuned to the beauty and wonder of the natural world. (activities: Centring, 5 senses centring, Shinrin Yoku walk in nature)

Nature operates in cycles and circles, from seasons to life cycles. Aikido techniques often involve circular movements that efficiently redirect the flow of the movement. Understanding and respecting these patterns allows us to reconnect with our own and nature's deep wisdom. (activity: Harmonize!)

Aikido teaches that we are all interconnected. Similarly, by immersing ourselves in nature, we experience a sense of oneness with the Earth and all living beings, reinforcing the importance of preserving and protecting the environment.

## **Shinrin Yoku: Deepening the Connection with Nature**

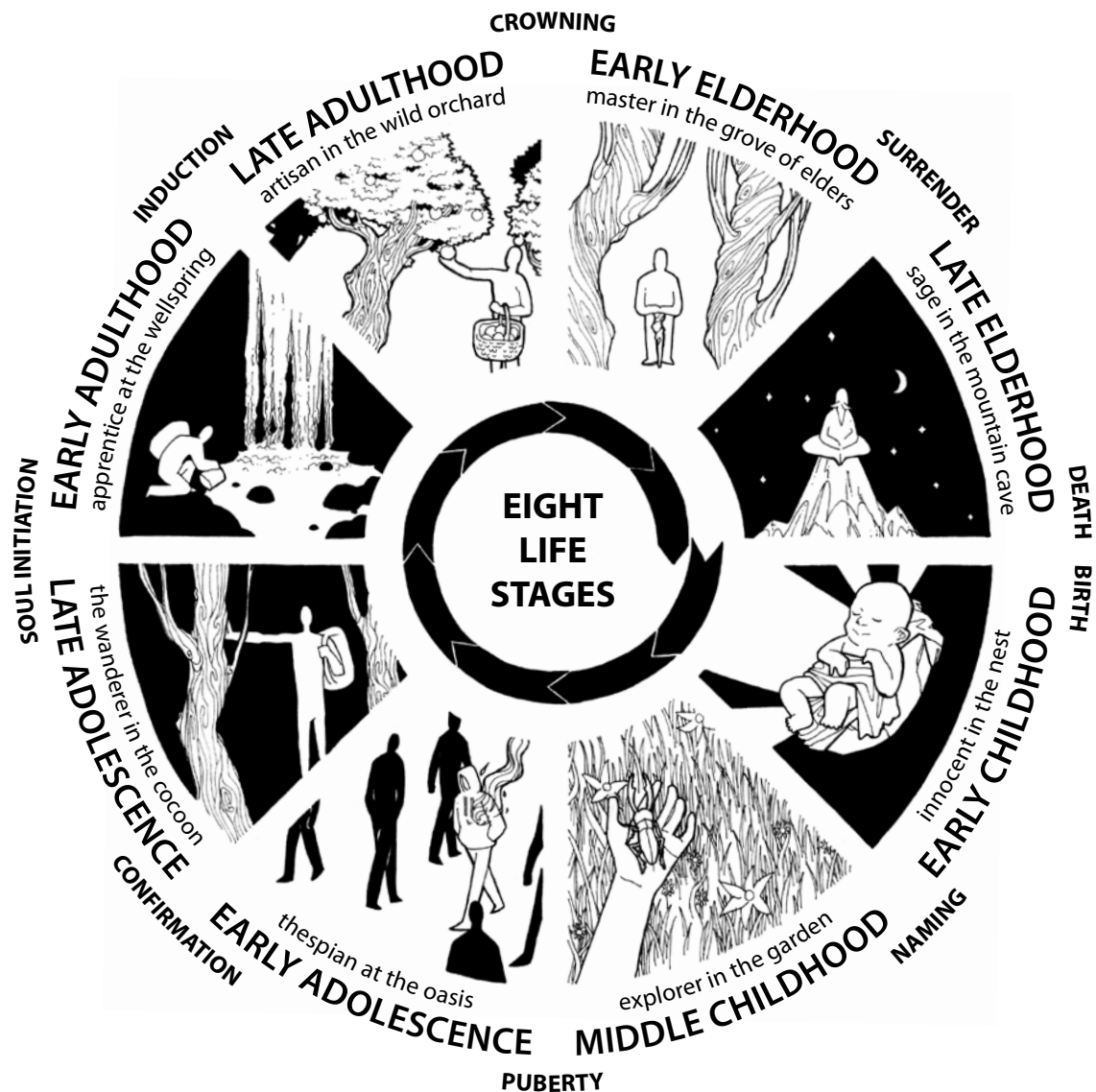
Shinrin Yoku, which translates to “forest bathing,” is not about taking a traditional bath. Instead, it involves immersing oneself in a forest environment, engaging all our senses in a mindful and meditative way. It’s a practice of slowing down, observing, and absorbing the forest atmosphere, that awakes a deep sense of relaxation and connection. Benefits of Shinrin Yoku are, to name some: reducing stress, improved mental health, enhanced well-being, heightened senses, and developing a connection with nature.

Integrating Shinrin Yoku into youth work can be a transformative experience. Here are some ideas for Shinrin Yoku activities: guided forest walks, nature journaling, mindful activities (mindfulness exercises, deep breathing, meditation, sensory awareness), nature art or land art, etc. (activities: Shinrin Yoku walk in nature, 5 senses centring, Land Art, etc) and Shinrin Yoku.

Incorporating the harmony and adaptability of Aikido, experiential learning through Embodiment and the mindful immersion of Shinrin Yoku into youth work creates a transformative blend that empowers young people to reconnect with nature, cultivate resilience and well-being, and experience a profound sense of oneness with the natural world. Together, these practices provide a holistic framework for nurturing the next generation of environmentally conscious and emotionally resilient individuals.



## 2. Eco-centric Developmental Wheel



### What is Eco-centric Development?

Eco-centric development, as in development centered in ecology, is a model of human maturation with a specific worldview that considers human beings as part of nature and nature beings as alive and sentient and just as important and intelligent as any human.

The development of a human is linked to the natural world. The health and wellbeing of the individual is interdependent to the health and wellbeing of the local ecosystem that each human is a part of. Being part of nature, a human, just like any other living being, has a natural developmental path in life.

We consider that just like any other more-than-human being, we as humans have an inborn process through which we grow, mature and offer our gifts into the world.

This developmental model is a set of concepts, practices and tools that are inspired by natural rhythms, diverse cultural practices and depth psychology put together through the visionary work of the Animas Valley Institute and its founder Bill Plotkin.

Considered as a mature model for human development, the Eco-centric Developmental Wheel (E.D.W.) puts the human individual within a human community that is part of a more-than-human wild world. The development of Earth as a whole is linked to the health of its ecosystem, and these in turn are interdependent to the wellbeing of humans and other beings (animals, plants, water, rocks, insects, birds, etc), what we call "more-than-human beings".

This character of interdependence is one of the main design elements of this work. If we consider that a tree, or a rock, wind, water and ant is just as important as a human being, and is an essential part of the whole ecosystem then our approach to how a human develops through life changes radically. We may even shift our questions from "How do I get what I want/need?" to "Why am I here" to "What role do I have to play in all of this?" Or even more to "What is my unique contribution that I bring to this world, to this watershed?"

Another design element of this model is the nature templates on which it is mapped onto, specifically the natural template of the four directions, north, east, south and west and it is comprised of eight stages of life, or stages of psycho-spiritual development.

And just like anything else in nature it is a cyclical pattern the first stage starts with birth as the first passage in the east goes around through south, west and north and the last stage ends also in the east, with death as a final passage. This patterns mirrors that of the sun as it moves across the sky between day and night but also that of the cyclical nature of seasons over the year.

A third design element is that of the cross-cultural pattern of the hero's journey, found in most myths and religious stories around the world. We could say that this model offers a nature rooted, mature version of the hero's journey through life.

As Bill Plotkin so eloquently writes, "...the hero's journey is an intricate interlude, often unfolding over a period of several months or years. It is the labyrinthine adventure of entering the mysterious depths of psyche and nature, experiencing there a psychospiritual death and rebirth, and returning with a new maturity and a life-enhancing vision. Mythologist Joseph Campbell proposed that the innumerable myths and sacred stories found in world cultures and religions exemplify the various stages of the journey. This is a pilgrimage that all of us are meant to undertake, each in our own way, in search of the holy grail of soul, the revelation of adult life direction. The hero's journey, in essence, transforms an adolescent into an adult.

Both men's and women's paths to genuine maturity are distinct from juvenile, usually masculine, heroism. The mature hero endures a descent to the underworld, undergoes a decisive defeat of the adolescent personality (a psychospiritual death or dismemberment), receives a revelation of his true place in the world, and returns humbly to his people, prepared to be of service according to his vision. This is equally true of the mature heroine."

## Overview of the Eco-centric Developmental Wheel (Bill Plotkin, Ph.D.)

The Eco-Soulcentric Developmental Wheel is a model of what the stages of human life look like when we mature in full resonance with both nature (eco) and soul when we are in a continuous process of becoming fully human throughout the lifespan. There are eight life stages on the Wheel, two each of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and elderhood.

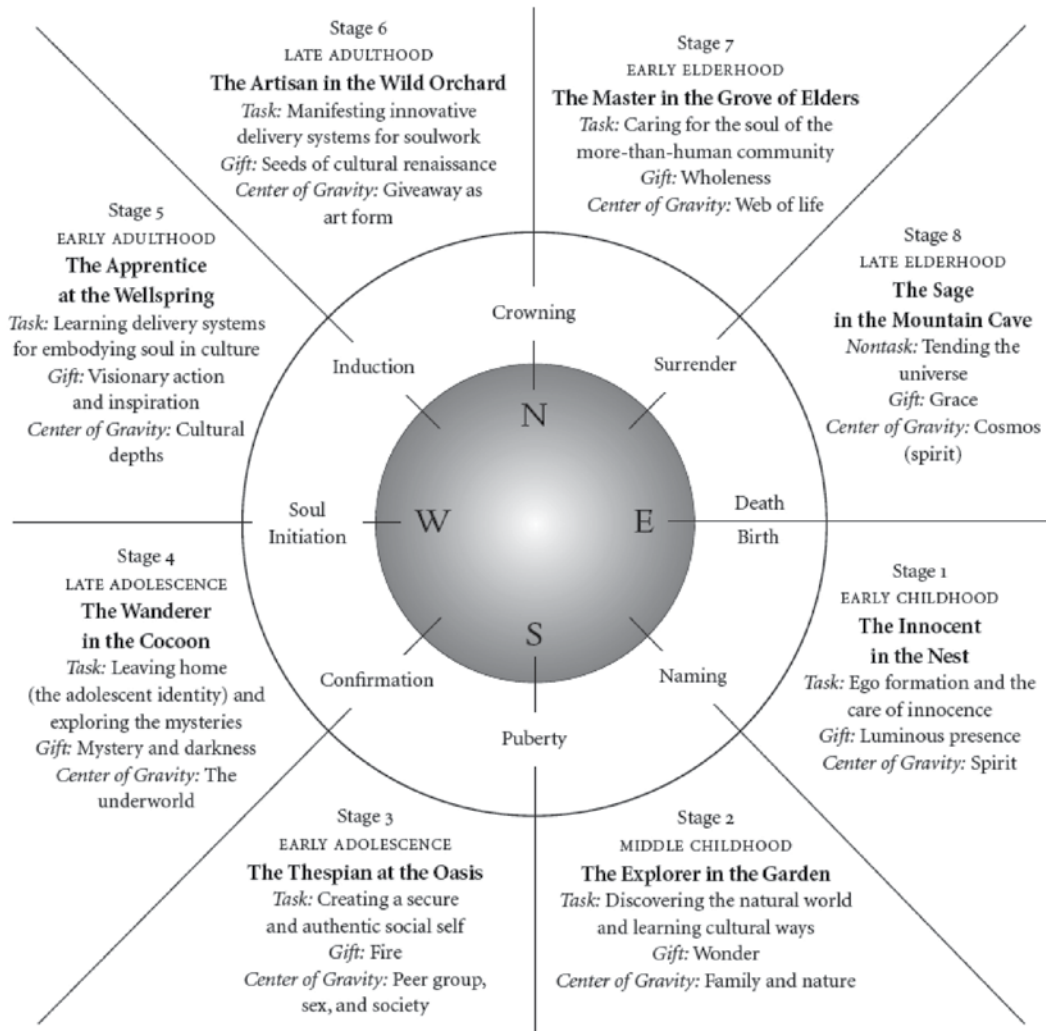


DIAGRAM 3-3: THE EIGHT SOULCENTRIC OR ECOCENTRIC STAGES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

(For a larger-format version of this diagram that you can download and print, please visit [www.natureandthehumansoul.com](http://www.natureandthehumansoul.com).)

The eco-soulcentric stages contrast with the egocentric stages in which most contemporary people are encumbered. Egocentrism, as in living as if the ego is the core of our psyche and that it should or can decide what's most important in life is a disorder due in part to the loss of effective rites of passage but more generally due to the loss of healthy cultures and the resulting erosion or disappearance of the practices and perspectives that support optimal human development.

Optimal human development, where every child, woman, and man progresses through the ecocentric stages of life, is the foundation for cultural transformations that are profound, generative, and life enhancing.



The Eco-Soulcentric Wheel is laid out on the template of the four cardinal directions. The diagram above shows the eight stages, beginning in the east and proceeding clockwise (sunwise) around the circle, ending again in the east. On the outside of the Wheel are the eight stages. The name of each stage is a coupling of a human archetype, such as the Innocent, with an Earth archetype, such as the Nest. The diagram notes three additional aspects of each stage: the developmental tasks; the gift that people in that stage contribute to the world simply by being present in it; and the psychospiritual center of gravity (the hub of the person's life, what their day-to-day existence revolves around). Inside the circle of stages are the names of the nine transitions or passages between the stages. These nine transitions are the occasions for rites of passage. But the timing of the passages and the rites that mark them are not a matter of chronological age or the desires or beliefs of parents, religious authorities, or the individual in transition. Rather, the passages occur after the individual has had sufficient success with the developmental tasks of her or his life stage, at which point Mystery shifts the individual's center of gravity from one stage to the next.

When human maturation goes well, in other words, it is primarily due to success with the developmental tasks of our life stages. This is what moves us forward. What takes place between the major life passages during the stages themselves is actually much more significant than the passages and the ways we mark them with rites. But both are essential and interdependent: Without day-to-day success with the developmental tasks of the stages, we either fail to reach the next passage or do so only in a partial or distorted manner. And without effective rites of passage, we might enter the next stage in only a partial or compromised way. In *Nature and the Human Soul*, I've described in some detail the specific developmental tasks of each stage, as well as other aspects of the stages.

### **Eco-centric development in applied youth-work**

As highlighted above, developmental progress of a human is directly linked to the dedication to the tasks in the specific life stage a young person is in.

The more one falls in love with their current stage, and the more they dedicate and work on the current tasks while also addressing earlier stage developmental deficits, the more enriching the life of that youth becomes and his relationships with the community that encompasses her are life affirming.

To this regard the eco-centric model can be used in youthwork in a number of ways:

1. As a guide to create meaningful and impactful learning experiences
2. As a evaluation tool for oneself(as a youth worker) and for our target groups, to identify needs and possible strategies to work with our people
3. As a inspiration to remember our connection with our human community and the natural world
4. A beacon of hope that our life is not just meant to be a relentless striving for more and better, but that we have a unique role to play in the maturation of the living world
5. It can serve to provide a comprehensive model for offering support in the process of maturation of the youth we serve

It goes without saying that most of the youth we engage in our daily work as youthworkers find themselves in either middle childhood or early adolescence, with a few exceptions being in late adolescence stage. So most of our efforts as youth workers are meant to create learning experiences that address the tasks of the first four stages. In that regard, having a comprehensive nature-based model of development is a valuable design tool for creating the growth settings our people need most.

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Bill Plotkin, Ph.D., *Nature and the human soul* (New World Library, 2008)

Bill Plotkin, Ph.D; *A Short Introduction to the Eco-Soulcentric Developmental Wheel: Stages of Life, Rites of Passage, and Cultural Transformation*, January 2015

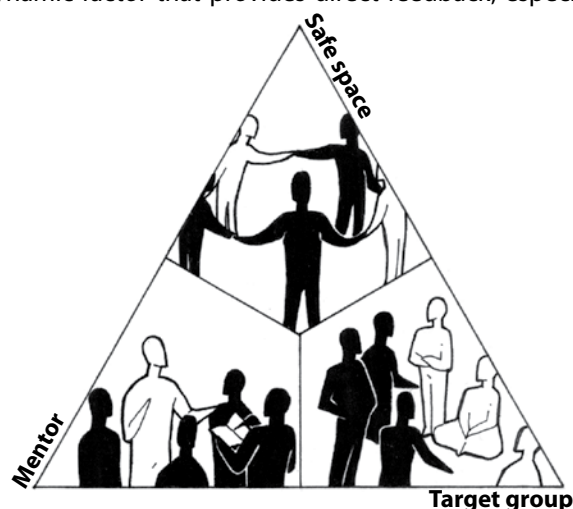
### 3. Volunteering

Volunteering is a powerful tool for acquiring new competencies in youth work. This dynamic approach enables engaged young individuals to explore diverse practices, discover new interests, develop skills or even learn a profession in a non-formal context.

Through volunteering, the conventional steps of the educational process—such as attending school, obtaining a diploma, and seeking employment—can be skipped. In this way, a young person will be able to put their interests into practice. In order to do something, all it takes is taking action.

The strength of volunteering lies in its multidirectional impact. When individuals altruistically contribute to a cause addressing a specific need and witness positive results, they experience significant and immediate gratification. This satisfaction becomes a motivating force, inspiring continued action. A coordinator's role extends beyond merely keeping the wheels turning; it involves providing volunteers with an awareness of their tasks' personal and professional benefits, creating a multiplier effect where gratification and impact intersect.

Effective volunteering requires the provision of a secure space where volunteers can engage without the overwhelming pressure of potential failure followed by reprimands, fines, punishments, or penalties—common in conventional job positions. Unlike employment, volunteering thrives on mutual trust between volunteers and mentors, fostering a supportive learning environment. The third element here is the target group, a dynamic factor that provides direct feedback, especially in activities involving individuals or groups.



In reconnecting with nature, volunteer activities offer an ideal platform for young people to gain firsthand insights into sustainable lifestyles, rural practices, historical traditions, and customs. For instance, a city-raised individual exposed to life on an organic farm in a natural setting not only acquires practical skills but also potentially develops an appreciation for the unseen efforts and foundational work that sustains society.

Similarly, volunteering can be a constructive outlet for young individuals experiencing eco-anxiety. Instead of remaining passive and overwhelmed by environmental concerns, these individuals can transition into agents of change, actively working to transform the dynamic reality we inhabit. Taking such proactive steps leads to a sense of gratification, ultimately contributing to the reduction of eco-anxiety.

Acknowledging the altruistic individuals who seek assistance while also dedicating time and patience to teach others, a circle of solidarity and learning emerges. Both parties mutually benefit from this exchange, creating a harmonious space where knowledge and support circulate.

# The Stages of the Hero's Journey

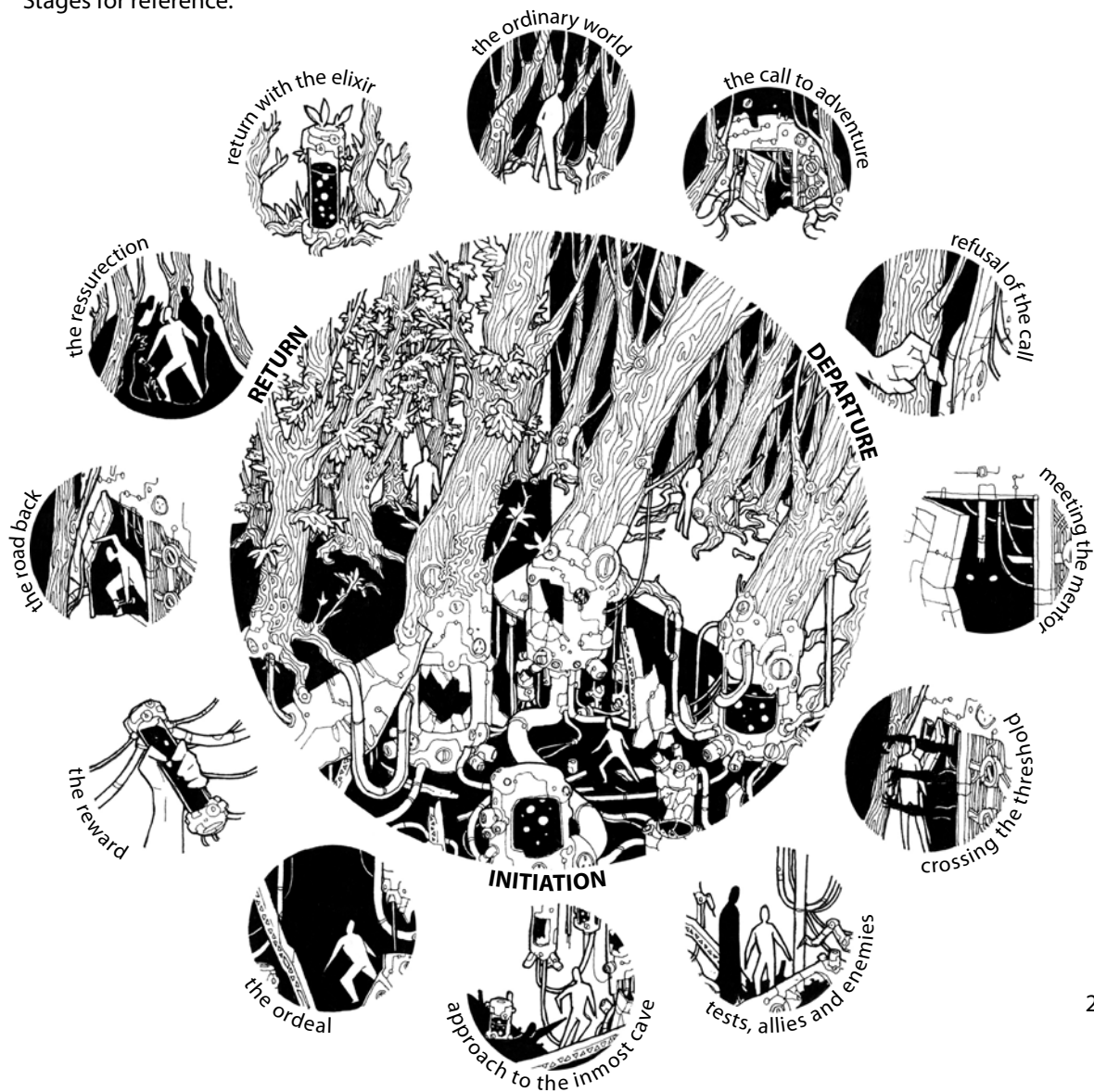
(summary inspired by the works of Christopher Vogler and Joseph Campbell)

Every story follows a basic structure with stages common in myths, fairy tales, and legends. These stages make up the Hero's Journey, which outlines each step, explaining its features and purpose. Originally used for storytelling and movies, it's now also used in marketing, psychology, education and even in youth work.

Use this guide as a quick reference for your strategic youth work, particularly when using volunteering as a tool with young people. Each volunteering experience, especially long-term ones, can be likened to a story. This model helps in preparing volunteers by identifying the support they may need and understanding the stages of their journey. It also aids in evaluating the overall experience gained. As you become familiar with it, you'll find that the Hero's Journey model is quite flexible. Its stages can be adjusted, repeated, or even skipped altogether, depending on the unique story each volunteer creates.

## The Character Arc: inner journey of a volunteer throughout a volunteering experience

The description of the Journey's Stages can give the impression that the model represents a purely physical journey. While the Hero (volunteer) does undertake physical actions to solve problems or achieve goals, the Hero's Journey is equally about emotional and psychological growth. A volunteer's responses to the Journey's Stages reveal their Character Arc—the phases of development they undergo throughout the story. Below, the Character Arc is illustrated using icons that symbolize the Journey's Stages for reference.



## **The Ordinary World**

The Ordinary World introduces us to the Hero (Volunteer) and helps us empathize with them before their journey begins. It allows us to understand the Hero's desires, struggles, and issues, revealing their unique traits and imperfections, which makes them relatable and authentic. Both inner and outer challenges may be introduced here, though these can evolve as the journey progresses. To solve the problem, address the main question, and restore balance, the Hero must step into the Special World.

The Ordinary World can be likened to the volunteer's comfort zone—home, routine, hobbies, etc. Outer challenges may encompass modern world issues like pollution and unsustainable use of natural resources, while inner challenges might include eco-anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and a sense of loneliness and disconnection.

## **The Call To Adventure**

The Call to Adventure marks the beginning of the story by disrupting the Hero's normal life. It presents a challenge or quest that the Hero must confront. This Call disturbs the balance in the Hero's ordinary world and reveals the consequences of ignoring the challenge. Typically delivered by a character known as the Herald, the Call can take different forms: a message or announcement (like a friend suggesting a volunteering opportunity), a sudden event (such as mobilizing for local action during a storm), the arrival of a villain (such as a large company planning to build a mall in a protected area), or a significant loss (like the destruction of an ancient forest). The Hero may receive multiple calls before realizing they must face a challenge or journey to the Special World for a solution. Sometimes, the Hero must choose between conflicting calls.

## **Refusal Of The Call**

The Hero initially says "no" to the journey because they feel scared and uncertain after receiving the Call to Adventure. They prefer staying in their familiar Ordinary World where they feel safe and don't have to change or face new challenges. This Refusal of the Call is important because it shows the risks and difficulties ahead in the Hero's journey.

Even if the Hero is eager and ready, they might still hesitate to accept the journey. This hesitation can be shown through their friends' concerns or the obstacles they encounter, like feeling they're wasting time or worrying about getting involved in dangerous situations. Each time the Hero refuses the Call, the tension grows until they finally decide to say "yes" and embark on the journey.

## **Meeting The Mentor**

The Hero meets a Mentor for support, advice, and skills to overcome fears, become confident, and start the adventure. The Hero doesn't want to rush blindly into the Special World, so they seek the wisdom of someone who's been there before. This Mentor has survived and can teach important lessons and provide training for the challenges ahead. The Mentor could be a real person or even an object like a map or a guidebook. In some stories, the Hero might have an Inner Mentor, like a strong sense of honor or justice guiding them through the Journey.

## **Crossing The Threshold**

Crossing the Threshold means the Hero is fully committed to their journey. They're ready to go through the gateway from the Ordinary World to the Special World. In practice, it means physical traveling to the spot where volunteering will take place. However, it's not just about traveling, facing fears, looking at a map, or getting a push from a Mentor. The Hero has to deal with an Event that makes them fully commit to entering the Special World, and once they do, there's no going back. The Event brings up the Main Question that drives the story. It directly impacts the Hero, making things more intense and pushing for action. External factors, like losing someone close to the Hero, may push them to move forward. A Chase might push the Hero to their limit, leaving them no option but to fully commit. Internal forces may also push the Hero to accept his Special World.

## **Tests, Allies, Enemies**

After crossing the Threshold, the Hero faces Tests, meets Allies, deals with Enemies, and learns the rules of the Special World. This Test Stage is like the on-arrival training for a volunteer. The Hero must figure out whom to trust, make friends and Allies, possibly find a Sidekick, or form a team of Heroes. They also run into Enemies and Villains (like conflicts with other volunteers, a worker from their NGO, rules they don't agree upon, customs and traditions they do not understand etc). A Rival may appear, challenging the Hero's goals. The Hero prepares for bigger challenges ahead, tests their skills, and may get additional guidance from their Mentor. This initiation into the Special World also checks the Hero's commitment to the journey and assesses their potential for success.

## **Approach To The Inmost Cave**

The Hero prepares to enter the most crucial part of their journey, the Inmost Cave, where the central challenge awaits. They might study maps, plan strategies, gather information, and possibly weaken the Enemy before confronting their biggest fear or the most dangerous aspect of the Special World. Alternatively, a confident Hero may skip these preparations and directly approach the Inmost Cave.

Having navigated the Special World, the Hero now takes a deserved break—perhaps for humor or romance—before facing the Ordeal. This is a time for the Hero's Team to regroup after earlier challenges, reflect on those who were affected or didn't succeed, and boost morale with an inspiring speech from the Hero or Mentor. The Approach may introduce a sense of urgency or increase the stakes of the situation.

## **The Ordeal**

The Hero encounters a tough challenge known as the Ordeal. It's a significant crisis where the Hero confronts their greatest fear and a very difficult problem, feeling intense fear that everything might fail. This moment is crucial for every volunteer. The Ordeal marks the most important part of the journey, where the Hero undergoes a transformative experience—they metaphorically "die" but emerge stronger or wiser, aiding them in completing the journey.

During the Ordeal, the Hero may face off against a villain, and failure could make the journey even harder. They might defeat one adversary only to confront bigger challenges later on. In romantic stories, a breakup can be like a form of "death," or it may be a moment where a partner reveals a dark side that threatens the Hero's happiness.

## **Reward**

The Hero has overcome tough times, faced fears, defeated challenges, or resolved emotional issues. Now, they receive their Reward—a special weapon (ability to learn effectively), a magical potion (new communication tools), valuable knowledge (from a life-changing experience), or reconciliation with a loved one (making up with a fellow volunteer). Whatever it is, the Hero deserves to celebrate. Celebration not only energizes the Hero but also marks their achievement. In reality, one of the rewards could be the Youthpass (volunteer can start to fill it up at that moment).

The Reward may have been earned fairly or taken without permission. The Hero might feel justified in taking it after overcoming so many challenges. However, there could be consequences, as the bad forces try to take back what the Hero took (a late conflict among the members of the NGO where the volunteer might feel his work is not well valued), and it shouldn't reach the Ordinary World.

## **Temptation**

It happens when the Hero is tempted to give up their quest. Typically, this temptation revolves around a romantic interest, but it could also involve desires for fame, wealth, or other distractions. It challenges the Hero's dedication to their mission and reveals an internal struggle between personal desires and their higher purpose. This stage highlights the complexity of the Hero's journey as they navigate between what they want personally and what they know they must do to achieve their goal.

## **Refusal of the return**

If the Hero's journey has been victorious, he may be reluctant to return to the ordinary world of his prior life. Refusal of the Return happens when the Hero, even after succeeding in their journey, doesn't want to go back to their Ordinary world. They might feel connected to the changes and challenges they faced in the Special World. It's a moment of inner conflict where the Hero struggles with leaving behind their new identity and experiences. This stage shows how the Hero's journey isn't just about external challenges but also about their personal growth and the challenge of returning to normal life. The support from sending organization could be crucial here - volunteer needs to have someone who is waiting for them to return and who can understand what kind of transformation happened to them.

## **The Road Back**

Now, the Hero must decide to finish their Journey and return to the Ordinary world. Even though they succeeded in the Special World, coming back can be tricky. Similar to when they first entered, something needs to happen that pushes the Hero to leave the Special world. This event should remind them of the main question and make them act, making things even more intense. It could change the story's direction. The Hero might need something important to make them leave, like a countdown to disaster or the Villain gaining control of something crucial. Alternatively, the event could present a choice the Hero must make. In funny stories, the Hero might have to give up one journey for another. In love or action stories, they might have to choose between a big cause and personal feelings.

## **The Resurrection**

Then comes the Resurrection, where the Hero faces their most dangerous moment, nearly dying. This final life-or-death challenge demonstrates how the Hero can apply everything they've learned from the Special World. It's like a process of purification now that the Hero is back. The Hero emerges changed, blending their newfound knowledge with their original self from the regular world and learning from the people they met on their journey.

The Resurrection is often a tough final test, a major battle between the Hero and their inner Shadow. Remember, the countdown from the Road Back is ticking. This battle isn't just about the Hero's survival—it's about saving lives, or perhaps even the whole world. The Hero must prove themselves as a true hero and be willing to sacrifice something important for the regular world. Sometimes, friends may arrive just in time to help, but ultimately, the Hero must make a significant sacrifice.

## **Return with the Elixir**

The Return with the Elixir is like the final prize the Hero gets in their Journey. After facing challenges and coming back stronger, the Hero has earned the right to go back to the regular world and share the benefits of the Journey. The true Hero returns with something special to share, like a treasure, magic potion, love, wisdom, or just the experience of surviving tough times. Even if the Hero's journey ends sadly, they can still have important learnings about themselves and the world they live in. In reality, ex-volunteer can use all gained competencies and experiences to apply for the job position they were dreaming of, or start something new in their community.

The Hero might use the Elixir to heal wounds, whether physical or emotional or do things they were scared of in the Ordinary world. The Return is a time when we see what happens to the Hero after their Journey. It could be rewards, punishments, celebrations, or even getting married. The Elixir can bring an end to the Journey and make things right again in the Ordinary world. Sometimes, it might leave us with questions and uncertainties that keep the story going even after it seems to end. In most stories, the Return with the Elixir is the final step, wrapping up the Journey and showing how the Hero's life has changed because of it.

## **Master of Two Worlds**

The Hero finds a balance between their past self and the person they've become through their journey. It's about integrating the lessons and growth from their experiences into their everyday life. This stage shows how the hero can apply newfound wisdom to navigate challenges in both their personal and external worlds, bridging their ordinary and extraordinary selves.

For instance, the Hero may apply the lessons learned during their journey to navigate challenges in their regular life, demonstrating a deeper understanding and resilience. This stage emphasizes the Hero's evolution from a mere participant in their own story to a master of their destiny, capable of harmonizing personal growth with worldly responsibilities. It underscores the Hero's journey as a continuous process of learning and self-discovery that enriches both their inner life and their interactions with the external world.





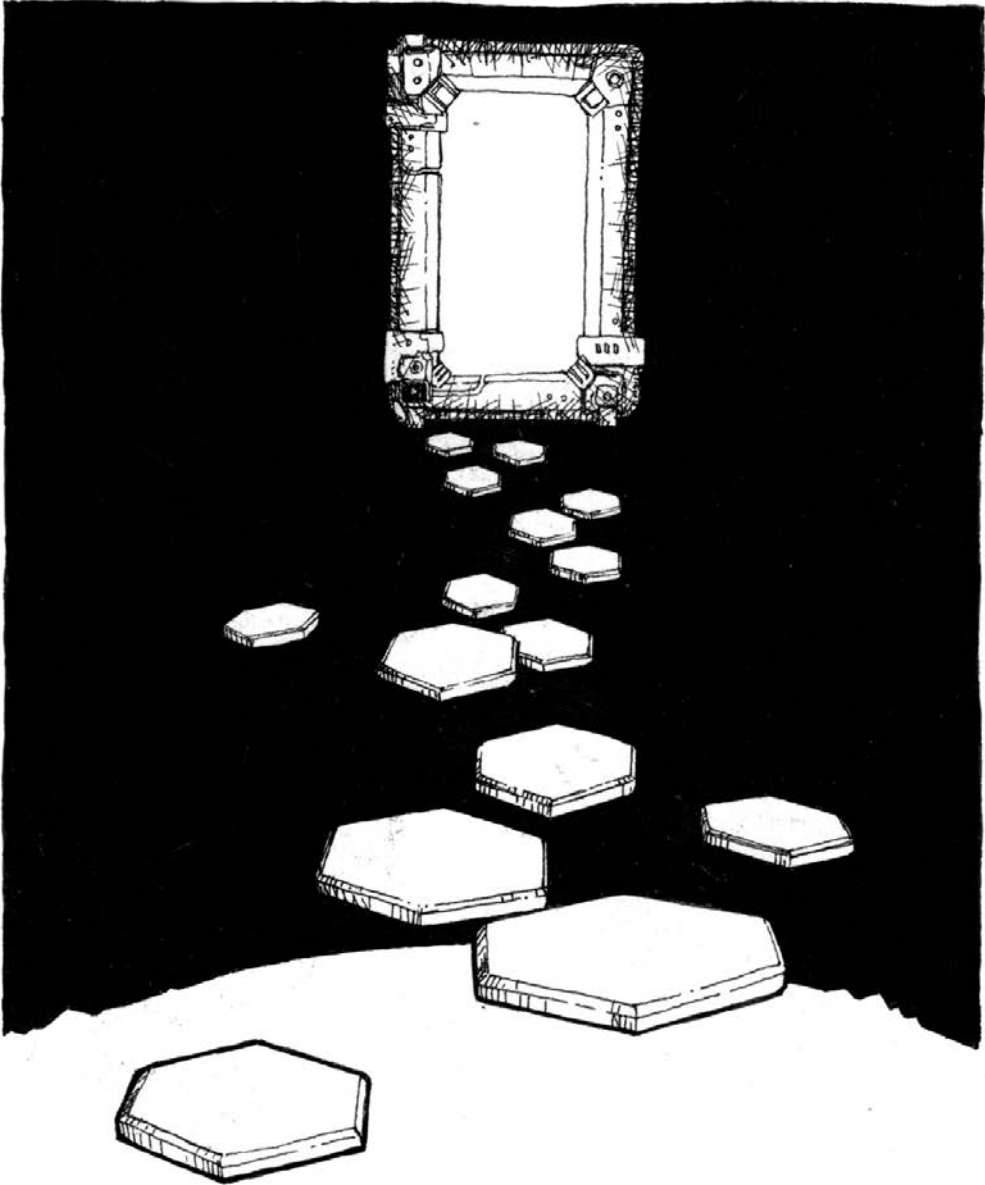


# Activities





# Self connection



# Self-Connection in Youth Work: The Vital Link to Nature

In youth work, fostering self-connection holds immense significance. It's a journey that empowers young individuals to explore their inner worlds, nurture self-awareness, and build resilience. When combined with a deep connection to nature, it becomes a transformative experience.

Engaging in self-connection activities within the natural world enhances personal growth and creates a profound bond between young individuals and the environment. Here are some key self-connecting activities with a focus on the importance of nature:

**Nature Journaling:** Encourage young participants to keep nature journals, where they document their observations, thoughts, and emotions during outdoor experiences. This practice not only cultivates self-awareness but also deepens their connection to the environment.

**Eco-Art Expression:** Engaging in art activities inspired by nature allows participants to express themselves creatively. It fosters emotional connection to the natural world and serves as a medium for self-expression.

**Nature-Based Mindfulness:** Teach mindfulness practices that emphasize the connection between mind, body, and the environment. By grounding themselves in nature, young people develop self-awareness and the ability to stay present.

**Adventure and Exploration:** Encourage participants to say "yes" to outdoor adventures, fostering an open-minded, exploratory spirit. This approach instills a sense of connection to the ever-changing natural world.

**Sharing Nature Experiences:** Create a platform for young individuals to share their nature wander experiences. Sharing observations and insights fosters a communal bond, deepening the connection between youth and the natural environment.

**Reflecting on Self-Identity:** Through activities like "Who Are You," young people are encouraged to explore their own values, beliefs, and identity in the context of their relationship with nature. This enhances self-awareness and environmental consciousness.

**Nature-Inspired Poetry:** Introduce participants to the world of nature-inspired poetry. This medium evokes emotions, and by creating or appreciating such poetry, young individuals strengthen their emotional connection to nature.

**Self-Assessment in a Natural Context:** Engage in self-assessment activities that take into account the impact of nature on personal development. This offers a unique perspective on growth and self-connection within the natural world.

The synergy between self-connection activities and nature creates a powerful transformative experience. It allows young people to navigate life's challenges with a deep sense of self-awareness, resilience, and an enduring connection to the natural world. This approach fosters personal growth and instills a sense of responsibility for the preservation and well-being of the environment, reinforcing the essential connection between humanity and nature.

# 4 Elements

## Embodiment of nature elements

**Timing: 45 to 65 min**

### Learning objectives:

- self discovery activity
- team building activity
- self-assessment of own preferences in connecting, in work style, in reactions, etc.

### Methodology step by step:

#### Introduction (5 min)

- The facilitator welcomes the participants and introduces the model of 4 elements

#### Embodiment of 4 elements (30 to 45 min)

- participants are guided into embodiment of 4 elements
- short discussion at the end of each activity about the familiarity of each element, pleasant/unpleasant features of the elements, the way that element is present in everyday life etc.

#### Self Assessment (5 to 10 min)

- self assessment on the individual preferences according to the 4 elements model
- short reflection in pairs

#### Closing and Debriefing (5 min)

- A summary about the 4 elements model and its utility in the daily life
- debriefing in circle - up to five words about experience on three debriefing questions

### Instructions to Participants:

#### Introduction (5 min):

- *"We will experiment today with an embodiment model of the four elements we find in nature: earth, water, fire and air. Why embodiment, and why the elements? When we say embodiment, we refer to a way we use our body to express something. And elements: in each of our languages there are sayings about certain behaviors, like "she has head in the clouds", or "he is a very grounded person", or "he gets along like a fish in water", or "she burned me with enthusiasm"..."*
- facilitator encourages a short conversation with participants about these sayings, invite them to share in their own languages
- *"This model is not "the rule" but the people's preferences which we can enhance, change and use the power of each element when needed."*

#### Embodiment of 4 elements (30 to 45 min):

### **Earth:**

- Facilitator starts with **Earth**, he embodies earth qualities - speaks in a calm, slow voice; gives accurate, short and precise instructions; guides the participants to embody the earth as well: invites participants to form a square, to feel grounded - like a square, to walk slow with measured steps, in straight lines, correctly and accurately, to turn into exact angle, to breathe deep with lower belly, to act seriously and reliably, to count the steps, to do the steps of the same speed and length, no laughing, everything is very serious, correct and disciplined
- while they walk the facilitator asks questions: *"What if we do this for the next hour? Notice if you like this sort of stable, reliable structure or is it boring? Are you tempted to do this for the rest of the day?"*
- Facilitator invites participants to look around and notice if something needs to be organized, cleaned or cleared (they are still walking) - earth is organized, not messy.
- While still walking they notice each other and greet each other very formally, with a short bow and measured hand shake, without smiling or laughing. A very formal hand shake. Disciplined.
- the participants walk for 5 to 10 min doing embodiment of the Earth
- The facilitator stops the activity, calls the participants to form a circle and invites them to do a short self assessment: *"Who is familiar with this? Maybe not this extreme but with this grounded quality? With this exactness? Who is less familiar with this? Who really hates this? What do you think are some benefits of this element? What do you think are some less beneficial features of it? Who finds it boring?"*
- (benefits of Earth element: groundedness, accuracy, reliability, practical... weaknesses: boring, stuck, uninspiring...)
- everyone shakes off and continue with activity - Water

### **Water:**

- The facilitator continues with the embodiment of the water element - slowly moving like a seaweed and flowing with the hands while talking to participants. Invites them to move around like they are swimming, slowly and flowy, backward and forward, no strict direction, no borders, no obstacles. When flowing next to the other, they can touch and pass by like water around the rock. But still to keep themselves on the ground, like a lake, or river, or sea. Arms down, knees soft, grounded but flowing. Relaxed, melting around.
- *"Water is about loving people, acceptance, everything is fine and nice, there is good in everyone. Water is connecting..."*
- the participants walk for 5 to 10 min doing embodiment of Water and then the facilitator again asks the self assessment questions about preference for this element like in Earth part of activity (see above)
- (benefits of Water element: empathy, humanity, relationship building, connection, support... weaknesses: no clear boundaries, weakness, avoidance, agree with everything...)
- everyone shakes off and continue with activity - Fire

### **Fire:**

- The facilitator starts to act "fiery" - resolute, determined and fierceless. Strong, clear, loud voice. Invites participants to form two straight lines. To act energetically and decisively. No laughing. Back up, posture proud and strong. Fire is the motivation that moves us to act, to get things done, to pick a direction. To fight for what we are passionate about. Also to keep healthy borders, to say No! it's not aggression, it's life inside of us.

- *"Take a couple of steps forward and bend one arm in front of you (as you are saying stop) and say "No". A not aggressive, but firm "No"."* - do a couple of times
- *"Now open your arms and say "Yes!" loud and clear."* - do a couple of times
- The facilitator invites the participant to walk around with determination, directly towards their goal, and they exactly know what the goal is. While walking they do not mind the other people around, they just go after their goal. The look is focused, they move towards a point where they want to go.
- the participants walk for 5 to 10 min doing embodiment of Fire and then the facilitator invites them to find a pair and do a "competition" - to push each other: *"Unite your palms without interlocking fingers and my job is to push her/him backwards and my partner job is to push me backwards. This is a competition, there will be a winner and a loser. Keep yourself and your partner safe. No laughing!"* (this part lasts for 2 min)
- the facilitator observes the participants and warns if they go too fierce, or too watery instead
- after that again asks the self assessment questions about preference for this element (see above in Earth part)
- (benefits of Fire element: courage, get things done, direct, active, challenging... weaknesses: brutal, aggressive, rushed...)
- everyone shakes off and continue with activity - Air

#### **Air:**

- The facilitator embodies the Air element and starts to act playful and easy. Invites the participants to join in and have some fun. To bounce around, hands in the air, move unpredictable, to get a little crazy in movement. To move like the wind, like the air. To act a little bit silly. To make animal noises. To jump around, bouncy, playing, moving their hands in the air. To walk around and be overwhelmed with everything around: "Woowooow!"
- *"Everyone say "Woowooow" like you are mesmerized by everything around you. Use your hands also. Say "Woowooow". We could do anything. Look around, you are visionary, you are creative. Your fingertips have rainbows coming out of them, spread these rainbows everywhere around. Say "Woowooow". Imagine your nose has a magic pan attached to it. Write your name in the air using this magic pan attached to your nose..."*
- the participants walk for 5 to 10 min doing embodiment of Air
- *"What if we continue to do this for the next hour? Are any earth people struggling yet? So, what are the benefits of air? What are some less beneficial features of the air?"* and other self assessment questions (see the Earth part)
- (benefits of Air element: curiosity, creativity, humor, innovation... weaknesses: ungrounded, chaotic, vague, lost of focus...)
- everyone shakes off

#### **Self Assessment (5 to 10 min):**

- self assessment - the facilitator shows 4 elements in 4 cardinal directions:
- *"Over there we have air, opposite we have earth, fire is in this part and water is opposite of fire"* (in a cross form)
- "Right now earth people may be: "can you give me the instructions again?"; water people: "what do you think I am?"; fire would be like: "I know exactly where I am, I don't care your opinion" and air people : "I'm everything, because I'm free"

- facilitator shows again the placing of every element on the imaginary axis
- *“Place yourself on this axis, where you feel that you are embodying this element mostly and often. You can place yourself also in between elements ( example: earthy - fiery people).”*
- the participants find their place on the axis and are invited to reflect in pairs
- *“Find someone near you and discuss what are the advantages and disadvantages of embodying mostly this element in your life. You have 2 minutes each and I’m going to let you know when to switch.”*
- *“Thank your partner in your element way and let’s get back forming a circle”*

#### 4. Closing (5 min)

- *“This 4 elements model is here to help us understand and accept differences, and to balance our own strengths and weaknesses. It is a tool to understand our own embodiment, embodiment of others, even of places and situations. You can explore it and play with it in your daily life by applying this knowledge on some simple daily activity like for example walking... This is a map we can use when needed to shift a state of being, for a short time or longer time, and in any situation needed.”*
- debriefing about the learning outcome in up to five words, one person starts and the word goes clockwise; facilitator has three debriefing questions written on the paper, showing them to all

#### Debriefing questions:

- How did you feel in this experience?
- What did you learn about yourself from the perspective of the four elements model?
- What can you take into your daily life?

#### Materials:

- clock / timer

#### Hand outs:

- three debriefing questions written on the paper for everyone to see

#### Tips and tricks:

- The features of “kindness, strength, safety and power” are considered to be present for each element but manifested in a different manner by each; is not necessarily a definitory characteristic of a specific element. If one of these comes as answers, you can bring this information for your group
- Adjust your attitude and tone accordingly with the element that you are exploring
- When you explore the Water, make sure people are keeping their movement still low, anchored on the ground, otherwise it can become embodiment of Air
- This activity requires skilful facilitator that can embody all 4 elements equally
- Before facilitating watch YouTube video: Embodying the 4 Elements - Working with the Body for Trainers and Coaches | Embodiment Coaching With Mark Walsh;
- reference: activity developed by **Mark Walsh**, Embodiment Unlimited, [embodimentunlimited.com](https://www.embodimentunlimited.com)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4qbsKL-j14>





# 5 Senses centering

## Restoring inner balance by awakening sensory awareness

### Timing: 15 to 45 minutes

- (activity can be done short, without disconnection part)

### Learning objectives:

- To discover a practice of centring using 5 senses
- To experience connection to self, others and nature through 5 senses
- To increase sensory awareness

## Methodology step by step:

### Introduction (5 min)

- Welcoming participants and introducing the topic and intention of the activity.

### 5 senses centring (5 to 10 minutes)

- The facilitator explains the 5 senses centring practice
- The participants exercise

### Short debriefing (5 min)

- in the circle, popcorn style

### Disconnection practice (10 minutes)

- exercise with stressors: participants in pairs share an unresolved and stressful situation that awaits them when they return home and observe the embodiment of stress before and after doing 5 senses centering

### Reflection (15 min)

- sharing in pairs of 3; handouts - printed reflection questions

## Instructions to Participants:

### Introduction (5 min):

- the facilitator explains the centring activity and its aims, also the usage in everyday situations:
- *“Centring is a very fast, straight-forward, user-friendly and powerful tool for changing our state of body and mind in the present moment. By changing our posture or breathing rhythm, or by feeling the ground under our feet for example, or opening our senses and really observing the world / situation / environment around us, we can easily change how we feel, we can relax and choose a better response for the challenges that we face. And be more peaceful and content in everyday life.”*

### 5 senses centring (5 to 10 minutes):

- Instructions on the activity: *“Today we will focus on 5 senses centring. Instead of talking, let’s do the exercise!”*

- *"Spread around and find your place, but be close enough to hear instructions. First, take a deep breath and exhale. Feel the ground under your feet."*
- *"Now acknowledge 5 green objects that you see around you. Look around, open your sense of sight. Observe as you are seeing this place for the first time. See the 5 green objects." - facilitator gives a minute or two for this, observes the participants and when all are done with exploration proceeds:*
- *"Acknowledge 4 objects with a sense of touch. Touch the ground, grass or a tree bark. Touch your clothes, your face or hair. Touch whatever you find interesting. But touch with genuine curiosity. Like you are sensing touch for the first time. Let yourself be surprised." - facilitator gives a minute or two for this and then goes on:*
- *"Acknowledge 3 sounds around you. Open your ears. Hear what is going on around you. Hear close by sounds. Try to hear some distant sounds too. Be curious what is there to hear..." - facilitator waits for participants to hear around, and then proceeds:*
- *"Acknowledge 2 different smells. Open your sense of smell and smell the air. Can you smell the flowers? Smell of wood? Or you can smell your hands or hair... Do that with openness and awe." - after everyone are done with exploring smelling, the facilitator goes on:*
- *"Acknowledge 1 taste. Taste something with curiosity. Do not experiment with things you don't know in nature. Take care that it's ok to eat it. You can taste your own taste in the mouth for example. Observe it and test it. How is it?..." - after all participants are done, the facilitator gathers them in the circle*

#### **Short debriefing (5 min):**

- in the circle, popcorn style
- *"With one word describe your state of body and mind now after this centring activity..."*

#### **Disconnection practice (10 minutes):**

- The participants are invited to make pairs. They are invited to share an unresolved and stressful situation that awaits them when they return home. The stress they pick should be calibrated, on the scale from 1 to 10 it should be around 6 (not the biggest one!). Invite them to go deep into details and really feel this stress inside. Each person in pairs has 3 minutes to share.
- The facilitator announces the switch with a music, drum or some other reminder. (6 min in total)
- When the time for sharing has passed the facilitator invites participants to check their posture - how they stand and act with the body, to notice how they feel, is there any tension and where in the body, level of stress (from 1 to 10), etc.
- Then the facilitator guides short 5 senses centering practice (fast, two min centring) and after it asks participants: *"How do you feel now? Do a little check in: How is your posture? Do you feel the difference between stress feeling before and after centering? Just acknowledge, we will do full reflection in a short while."* (4 min - both centring and check in)

#### **Reflection (15 min)**

- sharing in pairs of 3, each participant shares for 5 minutes.
- facilitator gives the reflection questions printed on the paper to each group and sends the groups to a short walk in nature, and reminder to come back in circle in time

### **Closing (5 min)**

- sharing in circle, popcorn style - participants share a word or two about the experience
- facilitator's closing word: *"Thank you everyone for taking part in this activity. Remember you have this tool and your senses are there with you supporting you every time you need to recenter. This practice can be done in a few seconds, it doesn't have to be in this length that we experienced today."*

### **Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do in this activity?
- How do you feel after centring?
- Do you feel more connected to yourself / others / nature?
- What do you take from this experience?
- How can you use this knowledge in your daily life?

### **Materials:**

- A clock / stopwatch
- A drum / musical instrument / an object you can use to make sounds

### **Hand outs:**

- Reflection questions printed on the paper

### **Tips and tricks:**

- This activity can be combined with Shinrin Yoku walk in nature (page 57)
- Preferably to do this activity outdoors
- Try this activity yourself before facilitating
- Reflection part can be done in Tribes (reference: activity Tribe time, page 86)
- The 5 senses centering part and Disconnection part of this activity can be done as separate activities
- This practice helps us to get out of the mental loop and to expand our attention around us, to harmonize with the environment and open our perception to the outside. This technique is also one of the options that can be used in case of anxiety and eco-anxiety.

# Centring

## Self-regulatory practices for everyday life

**Timing: 45 to 55 min**

### Learning objectives:

- to learn and practice centring methods
- to discover calmness in the present moment
- provides young individuals with the tools to achieve / regain their inner balance

### Methodology step by step:

#### Introduction (5 to 10 min)

- participants form the circle
- the facilitator introduces the concept of centring and explains the activity

#### Activity (35 min)

- exploration and practice of a few centring methods
- individual work

#### Reflection (5 to 10 min)

- reflection in circle - whoever wants start first, and then the word goes clockwise from participant to participant

#### Closure (2 min)

### Instructions to Participants:

#### Introduction (5 to 10 min):

- participants form the circle and shortly discuss the word "nature" in context of outer nature - environment and surroundings and inner nature - their own inner reality;

*"Our inner nature strives for balance, just like outer nature, where balance reigns in all cycles."*

- After that the facilitator asks: *"In one word - what do you consider as "inner balance" or when your inner nature is balanced?"* - the participants share their opinion - one word only (for example: peace, calmness, relaxation, harmony, etc.)
- *"Centring is one of the main practices of establishing inner balance and harmony, of returning to the present moment, establishing psycho-somatic equilibrium, a powerful method of self-help and a means of reducing stress. It helps in the case of anxiety and eco-anxiety, especially when done with outdoor activities, in nature."*
- *"We all have our own personal centring methods. They can be very effective, but not always good for us (like for example smoking or drinking when we need to calm down, indulging in addictions to electronic devices, eating to calm the anxiety, etc.). Today we will practice some centering methods that are not harmful and are very effective in everyday situations and in stressful moments."*

**Activity (35 min):**

- *"First let's see what is your embodiment when you have a good day? ... And what is when you have a bad one?" ... (the participants enact their good and bad state)*
- *"These centring tools are here to help us change our state of being so we can have more of the good days and less of the bad ones. Thus they can help us to gain more awareness and choice in everyday situations."*

**The Breath Centring:**

- *"Inhale deeply through your nose; exhale slowly through your mouth (as if you want to whistle)."*
- let the participants explore and practice for 5 min.
- Ask questions for self reflection while they are practicing: *"Scan your body. Are there any changes with the body? With posture? With breath? With feelings? Emotions? Senses?..."*
- everyone shake off before doing next practice (shake of as shaking the water from the hands, legs, complete body)

**Grounding:**

- *"Feel the ground under your feet. Feel the weight of your body pressing the ground. Feel the ground supports your body. Visualize that you are sending roots from your spine through your legs into the ground. Feel the flow through your body down. Breathe calmly and prolong the exhalation."*
- let the participants explore and practice for 5 min. and ask self reflective questions during the exercise.
- Shake off (if indoors) or just proceed walking in silence for a few minutes if outdoors. Then stop and introduce next centring method:

**Up / Down Centring 01:**

- *Breathe in - back up. Breathe out - relax your front.*
- let the participants explore and practice for 5 min. and ask self reflective questions during the exercise.
- shake off (or proceed walking as before)

**Up / Down Centring 02:**

- *Breathe out - extend your back. Breathe in - lower (relax) your front. Sigh out loud "Ahhhhh!" (or if it is more appropriate without sound)*
- let the participants explore and practice for 5 min. and ask self reflective questions during the exercise.
- shake off (or proceed walking)

**Peripheral vision / hearing:**

- *Open up your peripheral sight, as if you want to take in as much space as possible without turning your head. In the same way, you can open your hearing and encompass the widest possible range of sounds around you - in front of you, around you, behind you, near, far...*
- let the participants explore and practice for 5 min. and ask self reflective questions during the exercise.
- shake off (or proceed walking)

**Change of posture / Change of state:**

- Step one: *Close yourself like a shell or a seed, shrink as small as possible. Embody it and think about how it would be if you were like that for a longer period of time. Observe the feeling.*
- Step two: *Grow and open like a flower. Spread your hands towards the sky like leaves or wings. Breathe freely and deeply, with full lungs. Observe the feeling.*
- guide this practice step by step
- duration 5 to 7 min.
- during the exercise ask questions for self reflection: *"How does it feel to be small? How does it feel to grow and expand? Is there any inner change when changing the posture? Think about whether you can use it in your everyday life and, if so, how?..."*
- shake off (or proceed walking)

**Reflection (5 to 10 min)**

- reflection in circle - whoever wants start first, and then the word goes clockwise from participant to participant

**Closure (2 min):**

- *"From this list of centering methods we explored today, choose a method or two that works for you, practice it, make it your own, and it will work for you in everyday life when you need it."*

**Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do?
- How did you feel before the exercise?
- How do you feel now?
- How can you use this in your everyday life?

**Tips and tricks:**

- remind the participants that effect in everyday life will come from practicing
- remind the participants that these centering methods are listed in the handbook "Pan Flute" (share the link!)

# Mindfulness: Finding Peace in the Present Moment

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware of our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and surroundings without judgment. It involves paying attention to the present moment with openness and curiosity, allowing us to cultivate a greater sense of clarity, calmness, and self-awareness.

## Connecting Mindfulness with Nature in Youth Work

Incorporating mindfulness into nature-based youth work can offer numerous benefits. By engaging in mindful practices in natural settings, such as forests, parks, or gardens, young people can:

**Reduce Stress and Anxiety:** Mindfulness in nature provides a respite from the pressures of daily life, offering a calming environment where youth can relax and unwind.

**Enhance Focus and Attention:** Practicing mindfulness in nature helps sharpen attention and concentration skills, which can improve academic performance and cognitive abilities.

**Promote Emotional Well-being:** Connecting with nature mindfully fosters emotional resilience and regulation, empowering youth to manage stress, anxiety, and other challenging emotions effectively.

**Foster Connection with the Environment:** Mindfulness in nature encourages a deeper connection with the natural world, fostering appreciation, respect, and stewardship for the environment.

**Enhance Social and Interpersonal Skills:** Mindful nature activities provide opportunities for collaboration, communication, and teamwork, promoting positive social interactions and relationship-building among youth.

Incorporating mindfulness practices into youth work programs in natural settings benefits the well-being and development of young people, but also nurtures a lifelong connection with nature, fostering a generation of mindful, resilient, and environmentally conscious individuals.

## Here are some common mindfulness practices that can be practiced in natural settings:

**Breath Awareness:** Find a comfortable spot in nature and focus your attention on your breath. Notice the sensations of breathing in and breathing out, allowing your breath to anchor you to the present moment.

**Sensory Awareness:** Engage your senses fully in the natural environment. Notice the sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes around you without judgment. Allow yourself to fully experience the richness of the sensory experience.

**Walking Meditation:** Take a slow, mindful walk in nature, paying attention to each step you take. Notice the sensations of your feet touching the ground, the movement of your body, and the sights and sounds of the natural world around you.

**Nature Observation:** Find a quiet spot to sit and observe the natural world around you. Notice the colors, shapes, and movements of plants, animals, and other elements of nature. Allow yourself to be fully present and engaged in the beauty of the natural environment.

**Mindful Movement:** Practice gentle movements such as stretching, yoga, or tai chi in nature. Pay attention to the sensations in your body as you move, and allow yourself to flow with the rhythms of nature.

**Grounding Exercises:** Connect with the earth by practicing grounding exercises such as barefoot walking, sitting or lying on the ground, or leaning against a tree. Feel the support of the earth beneath you and allow yourself to relax and let go.

**Gratitude Practice:** Take a moment to reflect on the beauty and abundance of nature around you. Express gratitude for the gifts of the natural world, such as the sun, the trees, the air, and the water. Cultivate a sense of appreciation and connection with the earth.

Mindfulness practices offer a profound opportunity to deepen our connection with nature and enhance our overall well-being. By integrating these practices into activities in natural settings, whether as instructions, reminders, or invitations, we unlock the potential for greater peace, clarity, and harmony. Furthermore, these practices enrich any outdoor youth work experience, transforming nature hikes, team-building exercises, and park gatherings into opportunities for personal growth, connection with the environment, and the cultivation of mindfulness. By embracing the power of mindfulness in nature we can nurture both our inner selves and our connection with the world around us.

### **Mindfulness and Centring**

Mindfulness and centering share similarities in their aim to cultivate presence and self-awareness in the present moment, but they differ in their approaches and emphasis.

Mindfulness involves being fully present in the moment, observing thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment. It encourages acceptance and non-reactivity to whatever arises.

Centering, on the other hand, focuses on grounding oneself in the present moment by connecting with a sense of inner strength and stability. It often involves embodiment techniques like breath exercises, deep relaxing methods, activation of senses, or physical grounding to anchor oneself in the here and now.

While mindfulness emphasizes observing and accepting experiences as they are, centering places more emphasis on accessing an inner state of calm and resilience. Both practices can complement each other, offering different pathways to inner peace and clarity. Mindfulness may help us become more aware of our inner experiences, while centering techniques can help us access a sense of groundedness and stability amidst life's challenges.





# Connection / Disconnection

## Three short activities of connecting to self, others and nature

**Timing: 70 to 80 min**

### Learning objectives:

- self discovery
- rising awareness of the environment
- practicing and increasing connection to self, group and nature

### Methodology step by step:

#### Opening (5 min)

- Welcome the participants and introduce the topic with a short discussion about the meaning and importance of connection

#### Experiential activities of connection and disconnection ( 60 to 70 min)

- The participants will be immersed in three different activities, each targeting the experience of connection and/or disconnection with nature, others and self.

#### Closing (5 min)

### Instructions to Participants:

#### Opening (5 min):

- The facilitator welcomes the participants and invites them to engage in discussion about connection and disconnection: *“What “connection” means to you? Is it important for human beings to feel connected? Why is it important? If not - why not? What makes you feel connected or disconnected?”*

#### Experiential activities of connection and disconnection (60 to 70 min):

##### Nature: “Be apple, my friend!” ( 20 min):

- facilitator brings a basket of fresh fruits, share it to participants and invites them to eat half of it and left the other half for later:
- *“I invite you to eat half of the fruit while you are thinking about your plans for tonight. How your evening will look, what you will wear, what you will do after dinner etc. And, please, chew and swallow the fruit as fast as possible, as you are in a hurry.”*
- the facilitator puts some loud music in the background, as a distraction, and waits for participants to eat a first half of the fruit
- when the participants finish their eating, the facilitator turns off the music and slows down the voice to calm and meditative, inviting everyone to bring the attention to the fruit in their hands and to observe it with interest and attention
- then facilitator invites the participants to pay attention and to listen to a story he is going to tell, they can even close their eyes while listening:

- facilitator tells a story of the fruit that first was a little seed that found fertile ground, and started to grow, and it grew into a small tree, and year after year into a bigger one, and then started to give fruit, etc. etc. until some of this fruit found the way to their hands now (the facilitator can invent some beautiful fairytale magical story about this tree fruit or read an example of the story that is in the continuation of the text of this activity)
- after the story the participants are invited to eat the rest of the fruit with this story in mind

*“Now can you tell, in which scenario was it easier to have the sense of connection? Why do you think so?”*  
(5 min discussion)

**Others: “Walk a mile in my shoes” (20 to 25 min):**

- this is the mirroring activity, the participants will mirror each other while walking and give each other feedback in the end of the activity
- the facilitator invites the participants to make pairs and to choose person A and person B among themselves
- he briefly explains the activity of mirroring (2 min)
- all the A-persons from the pairs starts walking around: as usual, in their own rhythm and style of movement, normally, without changing, as they always walk, also greeting other participants around in their own and usual style and gesture; B-persons are looking at their pairs, observing the walk with curiosity and interest. (2 min)
- Now all the B-persons start to follow their pair, to walk like him/her, to follow personal movements, way of walking, special gestures, mimicking everything that person A does, greeting people in the same manner etc. (2 min)
- after 2 min A-persons step aside and observe their pair (person B) proceeds to walk and act like him/her (person A): walk, gestures, greetings, mimicking and everything remembered about person A appearance and movement; person A observes “herself” through the movement of person B (2 min)
- after that they give each other feedback: they tell each other how it felt to be the “other”, and how it was to observe oneself in the movement of other (2 min)
- the participants switch roles and do the activity again, with feedback in the end (8 to 10 min)
- short debriefing in the circle: popcorn style - up to three words about the connection discoveries in this activity (2 to 5 min)

**Self: “Under pressure” (20 to 25 min):**

- The facilitator prepares pens, some pieces of paper and notebooks / journals (one for each pair).
- the participants form pairs, choose person A and person B, and take a notebook, a pen and 2 papers per each pair
- *“Please, take some time and think about some words / messages you are telling yourself that are triggering you (in your daily life), makes you stressed and makes you lose balance. Think about one sentence or word for those moments and write it on the paper. Also, please, from the scale from 1 to 10 of stressors - choose 3 or 4, don’t go too harsh on yourself.”* (3 min)
- *“Now share the paper with your pair, you have 2 minutes to discuss it.”* (2 min)
- Person A takes a notebook and walks around the room with it on his/her head (without holding it), trying not to drop it, walking slowly, breathing slowly, keeping calm, centring (2 min)

- After 2 min person B joins and follows closely, continuously repeating the stressor sentence to the ear of person A. While doing this it is important that person A just listens to person B, without responding or interacting in any way. The facilitator reminds Person A to do a check in: to observe his/her ability to function with this, the change of breath, posture, way of walking, general feeling, inner balance etc. and the ability to hold a notebook so it doesn't fall off the head while listening to stressor words. At the last minute, the facilitator invites the participants to center - long outbreath, feel the ground, peripheral sight etc. and still walk with the notebook on the head. (5 min)
- the facilitator gives a sign to switch roles, but first invites the participants to shake off and then proceed
- participants switch roles and do activity again
- After the sound for the end of activity the participants shake off and do reflection in pairs: *"In which scenario was it easier to have the sense of connection with yourself? Why do you think so? How can you use this knowledge in everyday life?"* (5 min - 2,5 min for each participant)

#### **Closing (5 min):**

- *"This exploration of connection and disconnection has the goal to bring us closer to ourselves, others and nature, and to remind us to stay balanced, be present and centered as a way to understand and positively influence the environment."*
- *"Now, I invite you to form a circle and hold your hands. And with your eyes closed, or open, as you prefer, see how it feels to hold another's hand... and see how it feels to be held by another's hand... and see how it feels to be held together as a group, here and now by the Earth... When you are ready you can open your eyes."*
- short debriefing - popcorn style - one word on this activity (up to 5 min)

#### **Materials:**

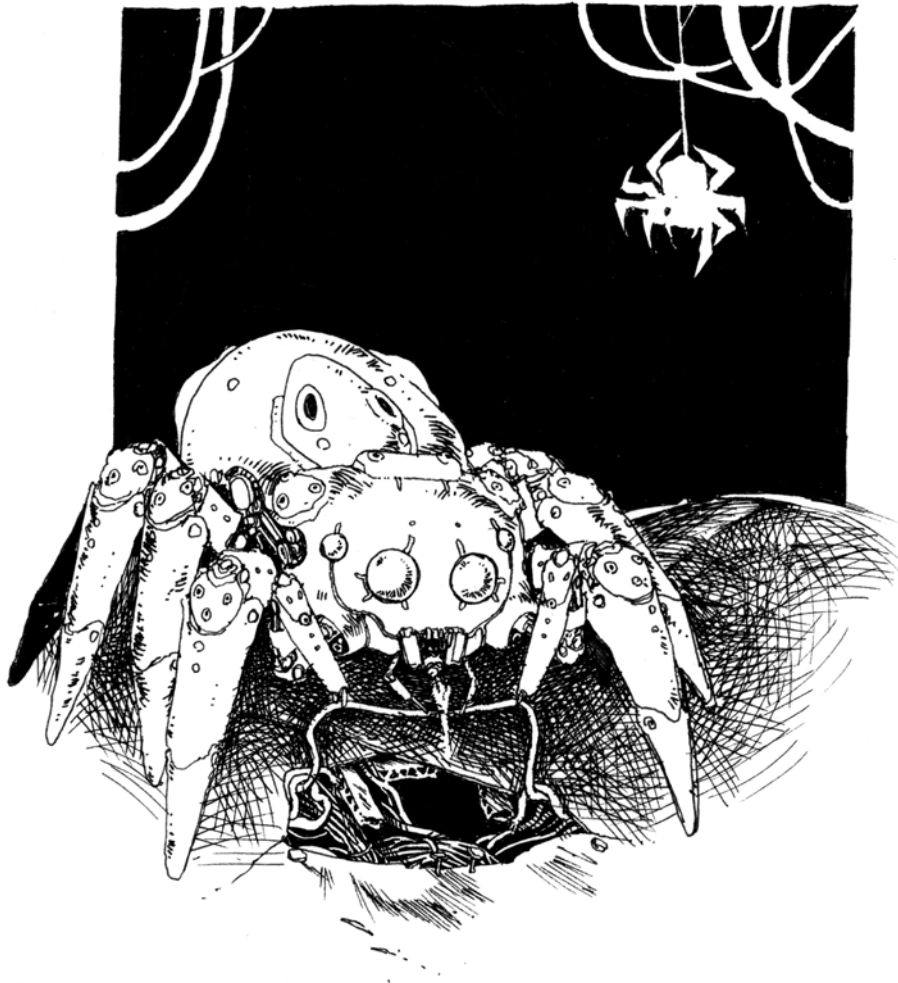
- Fruits ( one piece for each participant)
- Speaker / music
- Paper and pens
- notebooks / journals (one for each pair)

#### **Tips and tricks:**

- try the activities yourself before facilitating
- each activity can be carried out separately
- can be carried out both indoors and outdoors
- activity "Walk a mile in my shoes" reference: M. Walsh

### A story for "Be apple, my friend!" activity:

"There was an apple tree somewhere on this wild field, full of green grass. It is full summer outside, its branches are full of this mellow, red apple fruit. The deers living around are delighted by this feast each time they stop at this apple tree eating these apples. And this is how a seed of one apple ended down on the grass. Where it has received water and sun and now became a plant. A plant that by every season kept growing and growing until has become a tree, an apple tree, that is now producing itself red apple fruits, of course with the help of the sun, the ground that keeps nourishing and with the help of the birds that are cleaning the bark.. It happens that near this field, there is a village and from time to time, the villagers come and pick some of these apples. They use their energy and pick them from the tree with their hands, putting them in a basket and after that they bring them home. It happens that this village is the same village we are in now, and yesterday while I was having a walk, I met one of the villagers that picked up some apples from our tree from the story. And I brought some to you and right now you are holding it in your hands. You can open your eyes now and just look at the apple from your hand. Can you see all this long road that it had in order for you to hold it right now? How is this possible because of the deer, the sun, the water, the villagers? Do you observe its color? Does it have any marks? What does it look like? Use your sense of smell for a few seconds and just smell it. How does it smell? Also if you touch it, can you feel its texture? Not necessarily with your hand. You can touch it with your cheek or with your lips. What texture does it have? Does it make any sound? If you put it closer to your ear, does it make any sound? Now you can have a bite from it. But just keep this piece in your mouth without chewing it. Observe the taste it has. How does it taste? Great, you can swallow the piece of the fruit now. And this apple, after giving your body its nutrients will return back to the land as soon as you will use the toilet, continuing its journey. And it is the same with our breath. The trees and plants are using our carbon dioxide to produce food for them and they give us back oxygen. We are part of nature, in the same way nature is part of us."



# Harmonize!

## **Skillful communication in movement and flow**

**Timing: 30 to 45 min**

### **Learning objectives:**

- To practice harmonization with people
- To discover movement and flow as a tool for skillful communication
- To increase empathy

### **Methodology step by step:**

#### **Introduction (10 min)**

- participants are gathered in the circle
- debate about communication and what makes it skillful - facilitator asks the participants for their view and opinion
- explanation of the activity

#### **the Activity (25 min)**

- working in pairs
- facilitator guides the participants through three modules of the activity

#### **Reflection (5 min)**

- reflection in pairs, each participant shares 2,5 min

#### **Closure (5 min)**

- sharing in circle, popcorn style

### **Instructions to Participants:**

#### **Introduction (10 min):**

- The facilitator starts the debate about the communication - what is it, what makes it skillful or not skillful, etc. asking the participants for their opinion
- then the facilitator introduces the embodiment part of the communication - non verbal part like body language, feeling of the other, empathy, active listening and observing, "moving" with the process of mutual understanding
- *"In this activity we will practice communication by moving instead of talking and walking towards each other instead of using words, and see how we can merge with it and work with it."*

#### **the Activity (25 min):**

- facilitator invites the participants to form pairs, chose person A and person B in each pair, and do the activity

### first module:

- the participants fold their hands in front of them, palm over palm (do not interlace fingers); hands are relaxed and form a circle
- they touch lightly with the palms and softly start to move like a clock mechanism without losing the contact from each other - through the length of hands to the back, and to the hands again and again, in circles, they are giving each other the movement and force
- Instruction: *"Follow your partner and move together. Give movement and follow movement at the same time, in the same rhythm and speed. Like two wheels in the same mechanism. Change direction of movement a few times. Feel your partner, is he relaxed or tense, does he move slowly or fast, follow the rhythm and change it with your movement, try to move as one in a pair..."*
- participants do the exercise for a minute or two and then switch the pairs (the facilitator gives the sign) and do the exercise with another person (5 min)

### second module:

- The pairs face each other on the distance of three steps. Their hands are in the same position as before. One participant from the pair is acting "the opinion" (person A) - he walks towards the other with the intention to push his partner from the position, to "explain his opinion". His role is to walk straight ahead, like in the rails. Not to follow the movement of the other.
- When they touch the palms, his partner (person B) makes a circular movement aside, like they did in the previous exercise.
- Instruction: *"Be flexible and open, wait for the contact and then move circularly to avoid the "attack of the opinion". Open a lane for person A and let him pass you. Turn with him and "see what he sees" while avoiding confronting "the opinion". Look from his perspective. Vary the speed of movement and practice fitting into the movement with a partner. Flow with him and his speed."*
- when the person B avoids the "attack" person A makes three more steps and then turns to "attack" again, thus leaving space and time for the partner to prepare for repeating the exercise
- there is **no pushing** with hands, just light touch and opening the passage by **moving from the line**
- the facilitator announces the change of partners several times, so that everyone has a chance to practice matching with several different partners
- (10 min)

### third module:

- Make groups of three or four. Now there is one person B and two or more persons A to "attack with the opinion". Person B again avoids the "attacks" by circular movement while keeping an eye on multiple sides.
- Instruction: *"Person B - stay focused, relaxed and centered. If you feel too much pressure give the sign to the partners to slow down (shows the sign with the palm of the hand). Person A - perform the "attack" slowly, one at a time. Take care of person B and don't raise too much stress. Remember that this is like playing a game, so be playful, and kind. Consider this as a conversation - everyone has an opinion and give it straight ahead, you don't push or fight, nor flee or avoid. You move through it and not get caught arguing. You don't even have to agree, just look in the partner's direction and see from his perspective... While doing it observe the flow of the whole group and merge with each other in movement."*

- the facilitator observes the activity making sure all the participants follow the rules, and signals the switch each few minutes (every 2 to 3 minutes, depending on the capacity of the participants and facilitator's assessment)

- (10 min)

**Reflection (5 min):**

- reflection in pairs, each have 2,5 min to reflect

**Closing (5 min):**

- sharing in circle, popcorn style
- *"In this activity we practiced communication through movement and flow. And we see that it is much easier to communicate when we are flexible and in motion, and when we feel the dynamics of the partner or a group, and merge with it."*

**Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- Was it familiar to be a person A - "the opinion attacker"?
- How did you feel as person B - "the skillful communicator"?
- How did you feel about the group work?
- How can you use this knowledge in your life / your work?

**Materials:**

- something to make a sound for signaling start / end of activity and switching of roles - drum, music, whistle, voice or other

**Tips and tricks:**

- this activity is potentially disturbing since we work with the stressors and raising the intensity by involving more "attackers"
- make sure that the group has clear rules and boundaries, and set the rules before the start (page 131 about the group contract)
- reflection and closure can be done together through conversation on reflection questions in a circle with the whole group, 10 min

# Mirroring

## Communicating our experience without words

**Timing: 50 to 65 min**

### Learning objectives:

- To practice non-verbal communication and body language
- To strengthen observation in the contact with nature
- To build connections between group members

## Methodology step by step:

### Introduction (5 min)

- The participants are gathered in a circle and the facilitator explains the activity.
- The participants will have time for a solo wander in nature, paying attention to the surroundings and environment, to their own feelings and thoughts, etc. with the aim to live their own adventure.

### Walk in nature (15 to 30 min)

- participants spread around to be alone in nature
- the facilitator announces the gathering back with the sound - music, drum, voice or other

### Sharing in pairs (20 min)

- The participants form pairs and share their adventure with no words: just movements, sounds, gestures, dancing etc.
- First, one will observe the other's performance of the adventure, and then the observer, without using words, will replicate what he/she has understood about this adventure, re-performing it for his pair.
- Then they switch roles and do the same with the adventure of the other.

### Reflection (5 min)

- The pairs stay together to reflect on the experience.

### Closure (5 min)

- The entire group gathers in a circle, and share some of their experiences, popcorn style.

## Instructions to Participants:

### Introduction (5 min):

- The facilitator explains the activity: *"This is an activity of non verbal communication and body language. We will also practice awareness with all senses while walking in nature. Try not to use words if it is not strictly necessary for the duration of the activity. Everything that we share and communicate should be in signs and sounds, facial expressions and body language descriptions. We will go on a solo Shinrin Yoku walk in nature. Observe everything around you. Try to memorize the surroundings you pass through, the places you visit, your feelings and thoughts and everything that happens in the meantime. Memorize even your walking speed and the way you move. Do it in silence and respect the*



*space of other participants. Later on we will share our adventure in pairs."*

#### **Walk in nature (15 to 30 min):**

- participants go to solo walk with the clear instruction to come back to the starting point in 15 to 30 min (duration of the walk depends on the group dynamics)
- participants are invited to practice awareness with all senses during the walk
- the facilitator will also call them with music at the agreed time

#### **Sharing in pairs - non verbal (body language and sounds) / interpretation (20 min)**

- When the group gathers, the facilitator invites them to form pairs and share their story from the nature walk without using words.
- *"Share without words. Use movement, sounds, singing, gesturing, dancing... Share your adventure as completely and in as much detail as possible. When you finish, your partner will mirror your adventure with the same gestures and sounds that he memorized."* (10 min for each sharing and mirroring, 20 min in total)
- before switching the roles facilitator invites participants to do shake off centring (shaking off helps to get out of the current state) and then proceed with the activity

#### **Reflection (5 min):**

- when the activity is done the pairs stay together and reflect on the experience, each one for 2,5 min, facilitator announces time: *"You are invited to comment briefly on what you have experienced, how it made you feel to see your story in the other person, what you wanted to express, what you understood about the other person's story, etc..."*

#### **Debriefing in circle (5 min):**

- after the reflection the whole group gathers in circle and share the experience - popcorn style

#### **Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do?
- How did you feel during the activity, while connecting to others in this unusual way?
- How are you feeling now?
- What did you learn/discover in this experience?
- Is there anything that surprised you in this session?
- How can you use this knowledge in everyday life?

#### **Materials:**

- mats for sitting on the ground, whistles for case of emergency while walking in nature, first aid kit, mosquito repellent

#### **Tips and tricks:**

- Before the walk in nature the facilitator can invite the participants to do short 5 senses centring (page 40)
- This is an exercise in silence, and works best if participants do not speak for the entire duration of the activity

# Shinrin Yoku walk in nature

## Eco-regulation antistress self care practice

**Timing: 45 to 75 min**

### Learning objectives:

- To practice connecting to nature
- To increase sensory awareness
- Self care practice

### Methodology step by step:

- **Introduction (5 min)**
  - short intro into Shinrin Yoku as a concept of connecting to nature and self caring practice
- **Walk in nature (30 to 60 min)**
  - solo walk in nature in silence, nature connection practice
  - walking in silence, sitting in silence, journaling, drawing...
- **Reflection (5 min)**
  - reflection in pairs, each 2,5 min
- **Closure (5 min)**
  - sharing in circle - one word to express the experience
  - reminder and invitation to include this practice in everyday life

### Instructions to Participants:

- **Introduction (5 min)**
  - the facilitator explains the concept of Shinrin Yoku (intro into philosophies of the three pillars - Embodiment / Shinrin Yoku, page 19-21, Shinrin Yoku page 59)
  - *"Today we will explore Shinrin Yoku as a tool for connecting to nature and as a self care practice. I invite you to go into the nature walk, alone and in silence, and open your senses and perception to discover and foster the link between us and the natural world. Pay attention to the world around you, and to your inner state and inner nature: to your thoughts and feelings. Also, pay attention to how the encounter with nature around you affects your condition."*
  - *"You can take your journals and drawing pens with you, or you can just walk and sit in silence, doing nothing, with your senses open and alive."*
  - *"Come back to this spot in 30 (60) min. I will announce the end of your walk with music / drum / voice"*
- the length of the walk depends on the group
- **Walk in nature (30 to 60 min)**
  - The participants spend time alone in nature

- **Reflection (5 min)**
- upon returning the participants gather in the circle and facilitator invites them to find a pair and do short and brief reflection on their experience, 2,5 minutes each
- **Closure (5 min)**
- sharing in a circle: *"Describe the event we experienced today in one word."* - the participants share for 5 min - whoever feels like starts and the word goes clockwise through the circle
- *"Thank you for being involved in this activity. Remember that Shinrin Yoku is a powerful practice of connecting to nature, and an eco-regulatory self care method. It is simple, easy and accessible to all. We can apply it in our daily life and our weekly schedule and have a lot of benefits from it."*

#### **Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- What did you see, hear, smell, touch, (taste?) during the activity?
- Do you feel more connected to nature than before (explain how)?
- How can you use this knowledge in your daily life or in your work?

#### **Materials:**

- participants can take mats for sitting in nature, journals, pens, drawing materials...
- safety whistles in case of emergency (include 5 min of instructions how to use it and what sounds)
- drum or music or other sound to announce the end of activity in nature

#### **Tips and tricks:**

- remind the participants to use insects repellent if needed
- take a first aid safety kit to the site
- depending on the group, limit the radius of movement so they don't get lost or go too far

# Shinrin Yoku

Shinrin Yoku, or “forest bathing,” is a nature-based practice that involves immersing oneself in a natural environment. It is a practice of mindfulness in nature.

The advantages of incorporating Shinrin-Yoku activities in nature based youth work include many benefits for the participating youth, who face a myriad of stressors and challenges in their daily lives. Some of the most common ones include academic pressure, social pressure, peer pressure and family dynamics, mental health issues, digital addiction, social media stress and reduced face-to-face interactions, bullying, economic uncertainty, and last but not least environmental concerns. Therefore Shinrin Yoku activities as a skilful means for connecting and reconnecting with individual self in the context of nature offer powerful methods for self-regulation and social co-regulation.

Shinrin-Yoku has been shown to reduce stress levels, making it an effective tool for enhancing emotional well-being. By reducing stress it improves the immune function because time spent in nature can boost the immune system, contributing to better overall health.

Shinrin-Yoku also encourages mindful awareness of the natural surroundings, deepening the connection between individuals and the environment. That improves all the individuals’ connections in the closer community. The practice also stimulates creativity, making it a valuable tool for self-expression in nature-inspired art and poetry activities.

Forest bathing is known to improve mood, supporting positive emotional experiences during self-connection exercises and in the end it fosters greater connection to nature. Shinrin-Yoku strengthens the bond between individuals and the natural world, aligning with the broader objective of deepening one’s relationship with nature in youth work.

Integrating Shinrin-Yoku activities enriches the self-connection journey and reinforces the significance of nature in youth development.

Here are five common Shinrin Yoku activities:

- 1. Forest Bathing Walks:** Take a leisurely stroll through a forested area, focusing on immersing yourself in the sights, sounds, and smells of the natural surroundings. Allow yourself to relax and absorb the calming atmosphere of the forest. Feel the ground under your feet. Feel the wind on your skin. Acknowledge colors, smells, touch the texture of surrounding trees, etc.
- 2. Tree Hugging:** Find a tree that resonates with you and spend some time connecting with it. Embrace the tree in a gentle hug, feeling its texture and energy. This activity can promote a sense of grounding and connection with nature.
- 3. Mindful Breathing:** Sit or stand in a peaceful spot within the forest and practice mindful breathing. Close your eyes or leave them open, and focus on the sensation of your breath as it enters and leaves your body. Allow the rhythmic pattern of your breath to bring a sense of calm and presence. When the thoughts come in, observe them and let them flow away, and gently turn your awareness to the breathing again.
- 4. Nature Observation:** Find a comfortable spot to sit quietly and observe the natural world around you. Notice the movements of wildlife, the patterns of sunlight filtering through the trees, and the subtle changes in the environment. Practice being fully present in the moment without judgment.
- 5. Nature Art:** Engage in creative expression by creating art using natural materials found in the forest. Collect leaves, flowers, rocks, and other items, and use them to create nature-inspired artwork such as mandalas, sculptures, stupas or drawings. Be mindful to ask permission and respect nature, and care for the environment in the process of gathering materials for your art piece. This activity encourages creativity and appreciation for the beauty of the natural world.

# The Unexpected Joy of ...

## Discovering the world around us with eyes closed

**Timing: 70 minutes**

### Learning objectives:

- To develop connections and trust in the group
- To push the boundaries of the comfort zone in secured environment
- To develop the capacity of exploration and curiosity

### Methodology step by step:

#### Introduction (10 to 15 min)

- short explanation about the activity
- start with brief reading (haiku, poem, short story or song connected to darkness) to get involved and raise the curiosity of participants

#### Exploration in the dark (30 min)

- activity in pairs

#### Debriefing (20 min)

#### Closing (5 min)

- sharing in circle, one word sharing

### Instructions to Participants:

#### Introduction (15 min):

- The participants are sitting in the circle and the facilitator explains the activity: *"Close your eyes for a brief moment. Notice how your other senses start to take over. Notice the sounds. Do you hear clearer now that the eyes are closed? Louder? Further away? Notice the smells. Touch the ground and grass around you. Take the hand of the person sitting near you, feel the warmth of it. Touch your face. Touch the texture of your clothes..."*
- *"Keep your eyes closed, I will read you a poem. Let your inner eye see and imagine visions while listening."*, and then read two times from the handouts. Poem is here to engage imagination and raise curiosity to explore the world in an unusual way.
- *"You can now open your eyes. What moved in you hearing this poem? Which part stayed with you?"* (take a few reactions and then continue)
- *"In this activity we will be blindfolded. Let's not merely exist in the absence of light, but let's thrive in it. Take your time; let the darkness be your canvas. In this realm, I encourage you to listen and feel, seeking to understand the person before you with all your senses engaged."*
- The facilitator informs the participants that they will have conversations while blindfolded for a duration of five minutes. The time will be announced with the sound (drum for example) and they will be moved in order to change partners. There will be four switches.

**Exploration in the dark (30 min):**

- Participants are blindfolded and put in pairs of two, each facing each other.
- The facilitator gives the first task: *“Share a happy memory from your childhood.”*
- Each participant shares for 5 min.
- The facilitator moves participants to change pairs and gives the second task: *“Talk about one of your main struggles.”* (sharing 5 min each)
- The facilitator moves participants again to change pairs and gives the third task: *“Talk about one of your greatest fears.”* (sharing 5 min each)
- The facilitator moves participants for the last time to change pairs and gives the fourth task - gives the piece of fruit or something else to eat to each participant. It is preferable to have several different types of fruit. Instruction: *“Without words taste the food. Allow sounds to escape but don’t speak.”*
- After a minute or two of tasting the participants are invited to share with their partner the sensations of tasting the food: taste, pleasure or discomfort, intensity of taste, etc.

**Debriefing (20 min):**

- The participants take off the blindfolds and engage in a group discussion. Facilitator employs the questions from the debriefing section to guide the conversation.

**Closing (5 min)**

- sharing in circle, one word sharing: *“In one word tell your feeling or emotion or any takeaways from this activity”* - the participants share for 5 min - whoever feels like starts and the word goes clockwise through the circle

**Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do?
- How did you feel?
- What did you observe (see, smell, touch, taste, hear) from the environment around you?
- What surprised you during this experience?
- What did you learn about yourself? What insights or discoveries did you make?
- How can you apply these experiences and lessons in your daily life?

**Materials:**

- blindfolds, mats for sitting on the ground (or on the floor), treats for eating

**Hand outs:**

- The Sound of Silence by Simon & Garfunkel (listen to a song)
- Haiku: *“In the darkness, Illumination of the Moon, Gracefully.”* - Azumi
- *“It’s been so long! Lay down on flowers, you white moon, darkness never stays.”* Basho
- *“A jag of lightning – Then, flitting toward the darkness, A night heron’s scream.”* Basho
- *“In pale moonlight, The wisteria’s scent, Comes from far away.”* Buson
- Poem: *“Sweet Darkness”* David Whyte

### Tips and tricks:

- before the activity, find out if someone is allergic or sensitive to the food you want to include in the activity
- at the beginning of the activity listen to a song or read poetry twice

### Sweet Darkness David Whyte

When your eyes are tired  
the world is tired also.

When your vision has gone,  
no part of the world can find you.

Time to go into the dark  
where the night has eyes  
to recognize its own.

There you can be sure  
you are not beyond love.

The dark will be your home  
tonight.

The night will give you a  
horizon  
further than you can see.

You must learn one thing,  
The world was made to be  
free in.

Give up all the other worlds  
except the one to which you  
belong.

Sometimes it takes darkness  
and the sweet  
confinement of your  
aloneness  
to learn

anything or anyone  
that does not bring you alive  
is too small for you.

### The Sound of Silence by Simon & Garfunkel

Hello darkness, my old friend  
I've come to talk with you again  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains within the sound of silence

In restless dreams, I walked alone  
Narrow streets of cobblestone  
'Neath the halo of a street lamp  
I turned my collar to the cold and damp  
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light  
That split the night, and touched the sound of silence

And in the naked light I saw  
Ten thousand people, maybe more  
People talking without speaking  
People hearing without listening  
People writing songs that voices never shared  
And no one dared disturb the sound of silence

"Fools," said I, "You do not know  
Silence like a cancer grows  
Hear my words that I might teach you  
Take my arms that I might reach you"  
But my words, like silent raindrops, fell  
And echoed in the wells of silence

And the people bowed and prayed  
To the neon god they made  
And the sign flashed out its warning  
In the words that it was forming  
And the sign said, "The words of the prophets  
are written on the subway walls and tenement halls  
And whispered in the sound of silence"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAEppFUWlfc>



# Trust while blind

## Leading and Trusting in social connections

**Timing: 55 minutes**

### Learning objectives:

- Outdoors activity
- To develop trust, confidence and interpersonal connections
- To stimulate the development of empathy
- To awake sensory awareness

### Methodology step by step:

#### Introduction (10 min)

- explanation of the activity, setting the rules and safety measures

#### The activity (30 min)

- activity in pairs

#### Debriefing (10 min)

- debriefing in pairs

#### Closing (5 min)

- sharing in circle, popcorn style

### Instructions to Participants:

#### Introduction (10 min):

- the participants are gathered in the circle
- *"In this activity we will explore nature around us with closed eyes, engaging other senses. We will make pairs and one person will guide while the other will be blindfolded. Take care of your partner while being his/her eyes. Show your partner around and pay attention to details to touch, listen, smell, even taste if it's safe. Guide with a touch, without words, and keep it safe. In the end find something inspiring and unexpected to show to your blindfolded partner. Then we will switch roles."*
- *"Now slowly find a place in the space, spread out a bit. Close your eyes, listen to your own breathing, and concentrate on your surroundings. Walk carefully through the space with your eyes closed, without colliding with anything. If you concentrate on your surroundings, you won't collide because you will feel when something or someone is near you."*
- Let everyone walk around for a while to experience what it's like, and then invite them to open the eyes and form pairs



**The activity (30 min):**

- The facilitator gives each pair a blindfold and one partner puts it on.
- Instruction: *"The partner who is not blindfolded guides the other through the space, making sure they don't bump into anything. Remember that the guide is solely responsible for the partner's safety. Avoid obstacles while guiding your blindfolded partner in this sensory adventure. Guide in silence, avoid verbal instructions, use touch as main communication. You will be blindfolded for 15 min and then you will switch roles."*
- After 15 min the facilitator announces the time to switch the roles (with music, drum, or just calling loud and announcing the time).

**Debriefing (10 min)**

- sharing in pairs, 5 minutes each; the facilitator announces the change with the music / sound / drum / voice

**Closing (5 min)**

- sharing in circle, popcorn style

**Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do?
- How was it for you to guide (to connect in this way)?
- How did it feel to be led blindfolded (level of trust, connection to partner who guides)?
- How did it feel to connect to nature and explore it with other senses?
- What have you discovered or learned through this activity?
- How can you use this experience in your daily life?

**Materials:**

- blindfolds

**Hand outs:**

- reflection questions printed for each pair

**Tips and tricks:**

- Pick a suitable safe environment and set the safety guidelines at the beginning of the activity.
- Also announce that you are present here to ensure safety.
- In the case of a larger group, it is recommended that there be two or more facilitators to take care of the group.
- This activity can be disturbing and can cause a panic attack - make sure to do a good preparation and later a good debriefing and self assessment.
- Pairs can go to do debriefing while walking in nature around.

# Reading poetry

**Timing: 40 minutes**

**Learning objectives:**

- Increase motivation to use poems as developmental tools.
- Know how to use the poems as a self-reflection resource

**Methodology step by step:**

**Introduction( 5 min)**

- The facilitator invites participants to sit on the floor in a circle. The facilitator introduces the activity by starting an open discussion about poetry and how poetry and nature are connected. Make sure that the participants bring a journal/notebook and a pen with them.

**Poem reading( 10 min)**

- The facilitator invites the participants to close their eyes while reading a poem, two or three times in a row, in a calm and slow manner.

**Journaling(10 min)**

- After listening to the poem, the participant will be journaling about their experience.

**Debriefing( 10 min)**

- The participants are sharing their experience in the circle, guided by some debriefing questions

**Closing( 2 min)**

- The facilitator is sharing some final thoughts about the practice of writing, reading or listening poetry, thanking the participants for their presence

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Introduction (5 min):**

- *"Welcome everyone! In today's session we will experience the practice of reading and listening to poetry."*
- *"What do you think, is poetry relevant to our life? How do you think poetry and nature are connected?"*
- *"In this session I am going to read you a poem. For the next few minutes I invite you to sit down and close your eyes. First, take a moment and make yourself comfortable in the position you are in. Now I invite you to close your eyes and try to listen to the poem with all your being, with your ears, with your heart, with your imagination, with your body."*

**Poem reading (10 min)**

- Read your chosen poem two or three times in a manner that makes it accessible for the participants to imagine and feel.

**Journaling (10 min)**

- *"Now that you have listened to the poem, some of you maybe with your ears, some with your heart, maybe with your imagination, I invite you to write in your journal about how it was for you to be exposed to this poem, what resonated with you, what intrigued you etc. I will give you a beginning*

of a sentence from where I invite you to continue your journaling: "Listening to this poem brought me..."

### Debriefing (10 min)

- "Welcome back! I invite you, if you feel like sharing, to let us know about your experience. I am going to offer you a guiding question and whoever feels ready is invited to start and who feels to continue, feel free to do it." You can find the question below, in the Debriefing questions.

### Closing (2 min)

- "Thank you everyone for allowing some poetry in your life. Reading or writing poetry allows us to reflect on our relationship with nature, providing a space for introspection and personal growth, it allows us to ignite our imagination, and is also encouraging us to explore and appreciate nature in its own unique way. I hope this poem, this activity, makes it possible for you to remember your connection with nature, and that more than being part of nature, we are nature. Thank you everyone for your participation."

### Debriefing questions:

- What moves in you hearing this poem?
- What verse/part of it or image stayed with you?
- Any emotions stirred?
- Is there something you discovered while listening to this poem?

### Materials:

- pillows on which participants can sit/mats
- notebooks, pen

### Hand outs:

- papers with a written or printed poem

### Tips and tricks:

- while choosing a poem facilitator should be aware if the poem is related to the topic
- before beginning to read a poem it would be good for facilitator to guide participants through some kind of meditation exercise, body scan, centring or other, in order for them to bring some presence and relax (mindfulness page 46, centring page 43)
- you can find some poems inspiration here: <https://www.bodyartsoul.org/poems>

### David Whyte Enough.

These few words are enough.  
If not these words, this breath.  
If not this breath, this sitting here.  
This opening to the life  
we have refused  
again and again  
until now.  
Until now.



# Self assessment on life stages

**Timing: 90 min**

**2 sessions: 50 min and 50 min, with a short break 10 min**

## **Learning objectives:**

- Reflect on their own life journey, experiences, and personal growth.
- Identify which life stage they may currently be in according to E.C.D. model.
- Explore the connection between personal development and the natural world.

## **Methodology step by step:**

### **Poetry intro**

- A poem is read twice by the facilitator to shift people's attention to the topic.

### **Introduction to the Wheel of the developmental stages with discussion, questions and input from participants (30 min):**

- Facilitator gives a short intro and guides participants through the wheel and its stages, putting emphasis on the characteristics of the phase(s) the participants are in.

### **Self assessment - individual work with taking notes and journaling (10 min):**

- Each participant for himself/herself reflects on their own life journey, experiences and personal growth, guided with the wheel of the developmental stages.

### **Sharing in pairs (10 min):**

- Each participant shares what they've discovered.

### **Short break (10 min)**

### **Invitation on a solo wander in nature (35 min - 5 min explanation of the activity, 30 min wander):**

- Facilitator gives a comparison of the developmental stages of man with growth in nature, seasons, fruit ripening, etc. and invites the participants to take a walk in the forest bearing that in mind and to take notes and journal.

### **Debriefing (15 min)**

## **Instructions to Participants:**

### **Poetry intro**

- (read poem Cargo from resources twice, asking participants to listen with eyes closed)

### **Introduction to the Map of the developmental stages with discussion, questions and input from participants (30 min):**

*"American psychologist Bill Plotkin's "Eco-centric Developmental Wheel" is a framework for understanding various stages of human development and growth. Based on it, this activity is designed to help us assess and reflect upon our personal development and where we might be in our life journey. Also, it can help us deepen our relationship with the natural world." (give the handouts)*

*"It is proposed in this model that human beings, when they develop in cultures that are connected to nature, go through eight stages of life."*

- (list the eight stages of life, and the gifts and the center of gravity of the individual in each stage)

*"How can this help us connect to nature?" (helping suggestion: life circles, cyclic processes in nature, circling of water / energy in nature, the seasons, etc.)*

*"Can you tell the stage you are in? Why this stage particularly?"*

*"Do you see the connection between your own growth and development and those in nature? "*

*"As everything in nature, the human has its developmental phases. In nature everything is born, grows, matures, ripens, and in the end fades. It is an eternal circle of life. Same, the human grows through its stages and each stage has in it developmental tasks. Human life makes one individual circle, from birth to death. But not every person achieves its full potential or grows through all of the phases in its life. Our aim is to grow and mature through all the stages in our lifetime. What we have to bear in mind is that there are no shortcuts and the phase we are in right now is the best phase and in accordance with our life path and experience."*

*"Progression from one stage to another does not happen because we want it, it happens when life shifts us or moves us into the next stage. But it depends on our involvement in the stage we are in and our day to day working on the developmental tasks of that stage."*

#### **Self assessment - individual work with taking notes and journaling (10 min):**

*"Now take your time and do your own self assessment reflecting on your own life journey, experiences and personal growth. Help yourself with the list of tasks and sub-tasks for each life stage from the Summary of Ecocentric Development (handouts)."*

#### **Sharing in pairs (10 min):**

*"I invite you to find a pair and share your assessments, feelings, thoughts, discoveries, etc. Each one has 5 min."*

#### **Short break (10 min)**

#### **Solo wander in nature (35 min - 5 min invitation, 30 min wander):**

*"I invite you to go out and wander. Considering what you've discovered about the stage of life you're in, find yourself in love with what and where you are right now, and share this feeling with nature."*

*"Walk as this one, talk like him/her, fully embody the archetype of the stage. Maybe you find yourself as a Wanderer, or a Thespian or Explorer or even an Apprentice. be that one and see how nature responds. Or if you are confused about this stages of life thing, share that with the nature beings."*

*"Stay open to connection and communication with nature. She may respond in many ways - through thought, feeling, sensing, imagination, intuition or any combination of the 4 windows of knowing. Journal - take notes, write a song or make a drawing, or whatever other way you feel right" (embody it, dance, sing, shout...).*

*"Come back exactly 30 min from now back here."*

#### **Debriefing (15 min)**

- Debriefing in a circle.

### **Debriefing questions:**

- What did you do in your wander?
- How was it?
- How did you feel?
- How do you feel now?
- What did you discover in this experience?
- Did you find some relation between nature and you/your inner nature?
- How can you use what you learned/discovered?
- How can you stay connected to nature in the future?

### **Materials:**

- Journals
- paper A4
- pencils, color pencils, pastels

### **Hand outs:**

- Sheet with "Developmental wheel" map (for each participant)
- Sheet with a summary of Ecocentric development (for each participant)
- Self-assessment handout

### **Tips and tricks:**

- The part of the session where participants go into nature can start with 5 senses centring (page 40)

## Self-Assessment Handout

Answer freely in whatever way comes to you the following questions. Use the handouts given earlier to orient yourself.

1. What is your main center of gravity? To What do you feel mostly drawn? Your family of origin? Your peers, (friends, colleagues, co-workers) or society in general? Or the dark mysteries of nature and your own depths?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What are the primary tasks you find yourself working on (from the summary handout) either intentionally or by happenings of life?

.....  
.....  
.....

Which are the developmental archetypes with which you and your behavior most fully resonate?

Explorer in the garden (stage 2) discovering the world? Thespian at the Oasis (stage 3) engaged in society looking for your own authentic way of being? Wanderer in the Cocoon (stage 4) drawn to depths, mysteries, darkness and underworld, or Soul Apprentice at the Wellspring (stage 5) offering your visionary soul-gifts to the more-than-human world?

.....  
.....  
.....

Which of the gifts of the stages of life do you find yourself naturally offering to those around you (even if you are trying to suppress them consciously or unconsciously)?

.....  
.....  
.....

What is your circle of identity? Whom do you consider "your people" or "your community" or "all your relations" ? Who do you include in this circle of relations? Yourself, your family of origin, your relatives or your neighbors or your country mates? The whole of humanity including every individual? The more-than human beings, all habitats and whole earth? The whole cosmos?

.....  
.....  
.....

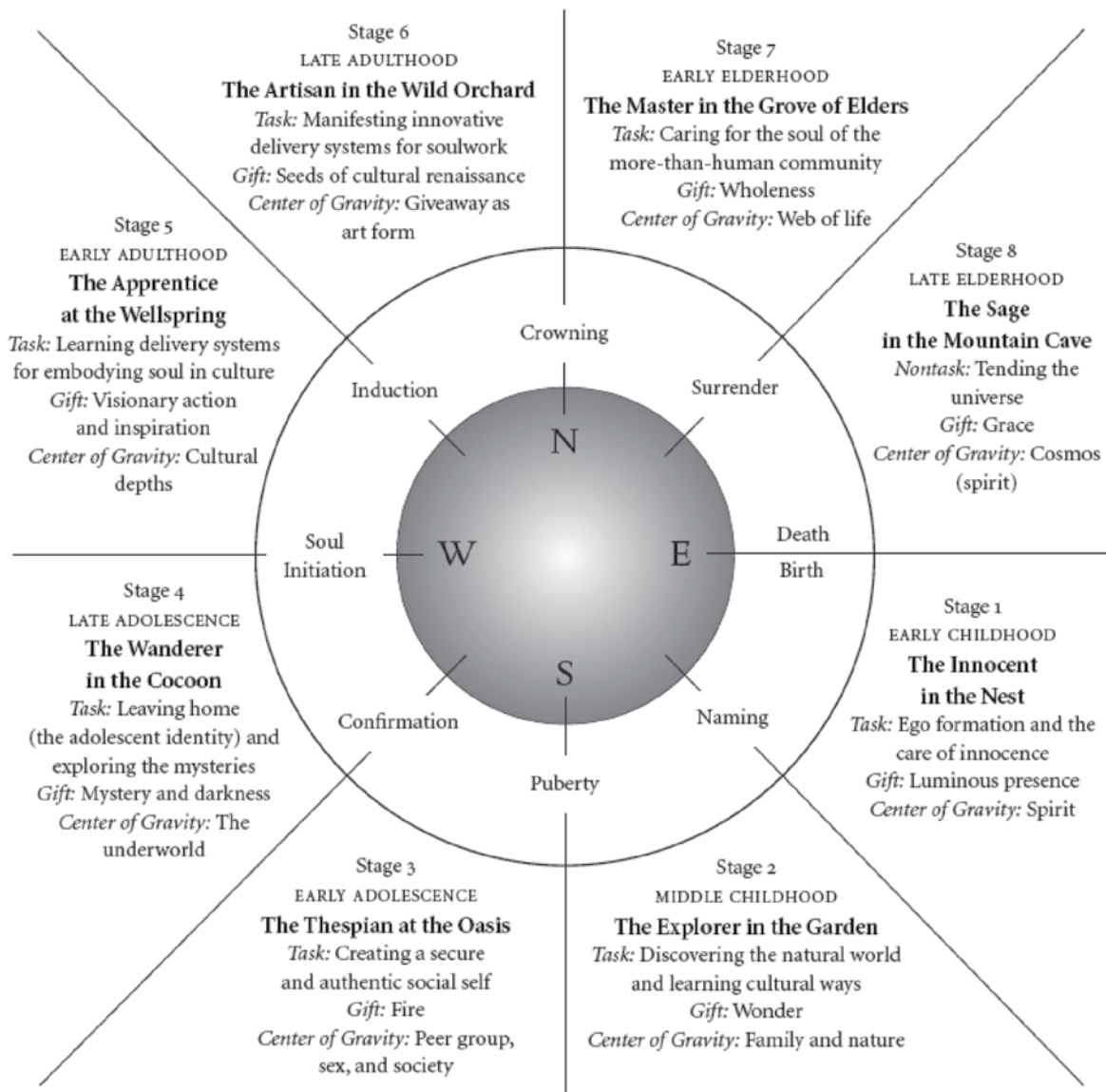
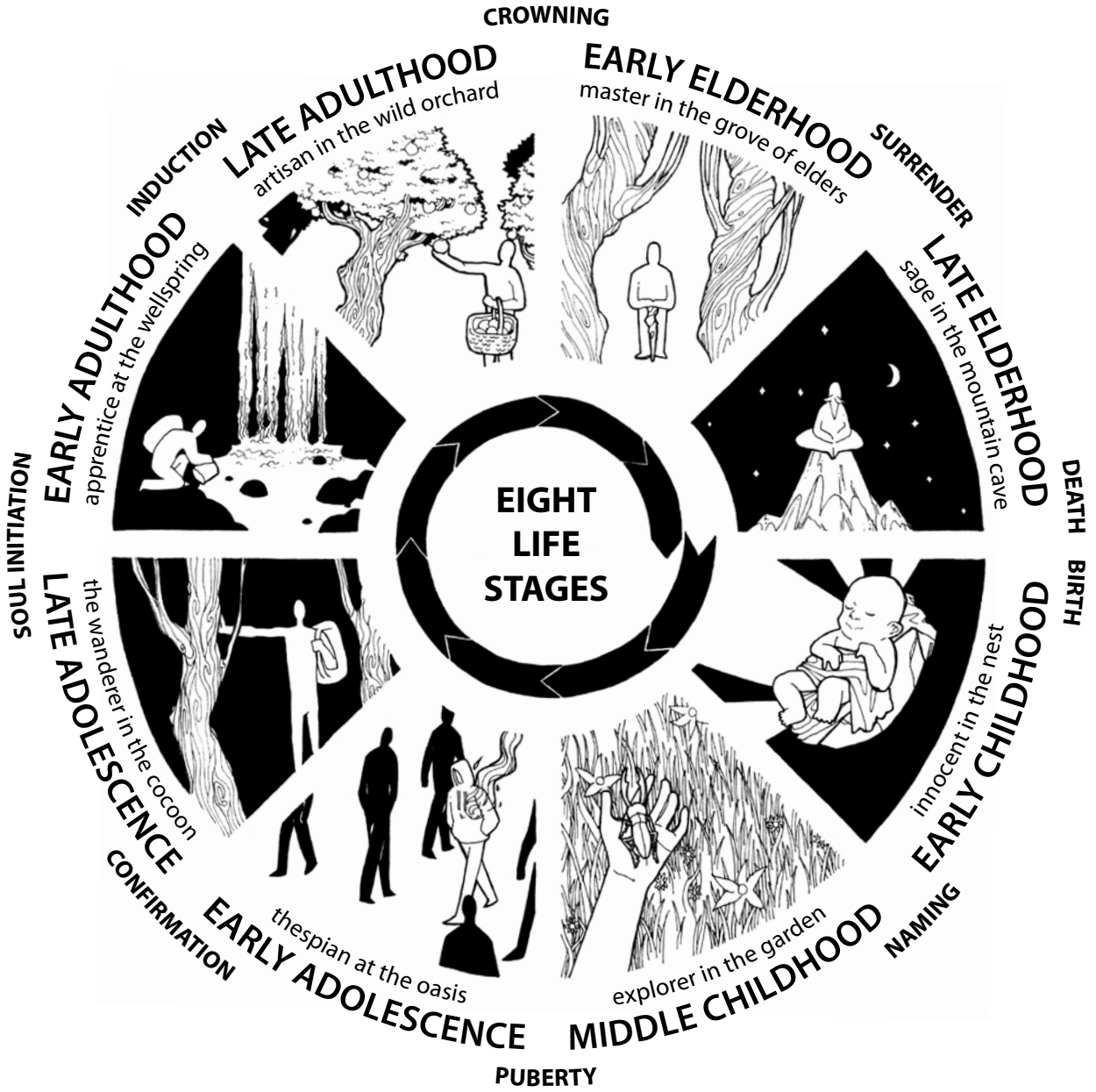


DIAGRAM 3-3: THE EIGHT SOULCENTRIC OR ECOCENTRIC STAGES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

(For a larger-format version of this diagram that you can download and print, please visit [www.natureandthehumansoul.com](http://www.natureandthehumansoul.com).)





## Summary of Eco-Soulcentric Developmental stages

### EAST - Stages 1 & 8 Archetype of the direction: The Fool

<b>Stage 1:</b>	The Nest (early childhood)
<b>Passage into this stage:</b>	Birth
<b>Archetype of the stage:</b>	The Innocent
<b>Gift:</b>	Innocence and luminous presence
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	Spirit
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	From none/infinite to self-centric

#### Tasks (managed by parents or caregivers):

The preservation of innocence and the formation of a healthy, intact, culturally viable ego.

### SOUTH - Stages 2 & 3 Archetype of the direction: The Orphan

<b>Stage 2:</b>	The Garden (middle childhood)
<b>Passage:</b>	Naming (celebrating the emergence of conscious self-awareness)
<b>Archetype of the stage:</b>	The Explorer
<b>Gift:</b>	Wonder
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	Family and nature
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	Sociocentric

#### Task:

Learning the givens of the world and our place in it

#### Sub-tasks:

1. Discovering the enchantment of the natural world. Four realms of nature
  - a) Wild nature (the other-than-human-world)
  - b) The human body (including the five senses)
  - c) Imagination (especially dreams and spontaneous imaginings)
  - d) Emotions
2. Learning cultural ways: the social practices, values, knowledge, history, mythology, and cosmology of one's family and culture

<b>Stage 3:</b>	The Oasis (Social Individuation) (early adolescence)
<b>Passage:</b>	Puberty (when we begin to experience ourselves primarily as members of a peer group and community beyond our membership in family and nature)
<b>Archetype of the stage :</b>	The Thespian
<b>Gift:</b>	Fire
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	Peer group, sex and society
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	Ethnocentric

#### Task:

Creating a secure and authentic social self (one that generates adequate amounts of both social acceptance and self approval)

**Sub-tasks:**

1. Value exploration and learning the skills of social authenticity
2. Emotional skills: emotional access, insight, action, and illumination
3. Art of conflict resolution (with both outer and inner conflicts)
4. Status-assigning skills
5. Skills with sex and sexual relationships
6. Sustenance skills
7. Studying human-nature reciprocity and ecological responsibility
8. Welcoming home the Loyal Soldier

**WEST Stages 4 & 5 Archetype of the direction: The Visionary****Stage 4:****Passage:**

The Cocoon (late adolescence)

Confirmation (of adequate completion of the adolescent personality and hence preparedness for the descent to soul)

**Archetype of the stage:**

The Wanderer

**Gift:**

Mystery and Darkness

**Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:**

Mysteries of soul and nature, the underworld

**Circle of identity:**

Worldcentric

**Task 1:**

Leaving Home (i.e., relinquishing the adolescent identity)

- A. Honing the skills of physical, psychological, and social self-reliance
- B. Relinquishing attachment to the adolescent personality
  1. Addressing developmental deficits from earlier stages
  2. Giving up addictions
  3. Exploration of the Sacred Wound
  4. Learning to choose authenticity over acceptance
  5. Making peace with the past (the Death Lodge)
  6. Learning the art of disidentification through the practice of meditation

**Task 2:**

Exploring the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche

- A. Acquiring and using soulcraft skills (examples: dreamwork, the way of council, self-designed ceremony, nature dialogues, deep imagery, trance drumming and dancing, signs and omens, soul poetry, symbolic artwork, plant allies, fasting, tracking)

- B. Cultivating a soulful relationship to life

Practices and disciplines that support Task 2B:

1. The art of solitude
2. Discovering nature as mirror
3. Wandering in nature
4. Living the questions of soul
5. Confronting one's own death
6. The art of Shadow work

7. The art of romance
8. Mindfulness practice
9. Volunteering
10. Advanced Loyal Soldier work
11. Developing the four dimensions of the Self
12. Praising the world
13. Developing a personal relationship with spirit

<b>Stage 5:</b>	The Wellspring (early adulthood) (Soul-Rooted Individuation)
<b>Passage:</b>	Soul Initiation (the moment we commit, utterly, to the embodiment in the world of our soul image, soul story, or soul powers)
<b>Archetype of the stage:</b>	The Soul Apprentice
<b>Gift:</b>	Visionary Action, Hope, and Inspiration
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	Cultural depths (the embodied mysteries of nature and psyche)
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	Ecocentric

**Task:**

Learning delivery systems for embodying soul in culture

**Sub-tasks:**

1. identifying one or two cultural settings for our soul work
2. developing the skills of our soul work (acquiring a delivery system) and performing that work in our community
3. further explorations of our soul image/story and the nature of our soul powers
4. the soul-rooted individuation of the personality (i.e., differentiating the self in relation to soul, as opposed to the earlier differentiation in relation to society)

<b>NORTH Stages 6 &amp; 7 Archetype of the direction: The Warrior-Martyr</b>	
<b>Stage 6:</b>	The Wild Orchard (late adulthood)
<b>Passage:</b>	Induction (confirmation of mastery of at least one form of soul embodiment)
<b>Archetype of the stage:</b>	The Artisan
<b>Gift:</b>	Seeds of Cultural Renaissance
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	Cultural giveaway as art form
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	Holistically ecocentric

**Tasks:**

1. Creating and implementing innovative delivery systems for soul
2. Advanced cultivation and integration of the four dimensions of the Self

<b>Stage 7:</b>	The Grove of Elders (early elderhood)
<b>Passage:</b>	Crowning (initiation into true elderhood)
<b>Archetype of the stage:</b>	The Master
<b>Gift:</b>	Wholeness
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	The soul of the more-than-human community
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	From ecocentric to cosmocentric

**Task:**

Caring for the soul of the more-than-human community

Examples:

1. defending and nurturing the innocence and wonder of children
2. mentoring and initiating adolescents
3. mentoring adults in their soul work
4. guiding the evolution or transformation of the culture
5. maintaining the balance between the human and more-than-human worlds

**EAST Stages 8 & 1 Archetype of the direction: The Fool**

<b>Stage 8:</b>	The Mountain Cave (late elderhood)
<b>Passage:</b>	Surrender (of the goal-oriented ego; primary life orientation returns to spirit)
<b>Archetype of the stage:</b>	The Sage
<b>Gift:</b>	Grace
<b>Psycho-spiritual center of gravity:</b>	The cosmos (spirit)
<b>Circle of identity:</b>	Spirit-centered or cosmoscentric

**Non-Tasks:**

Tending the universe

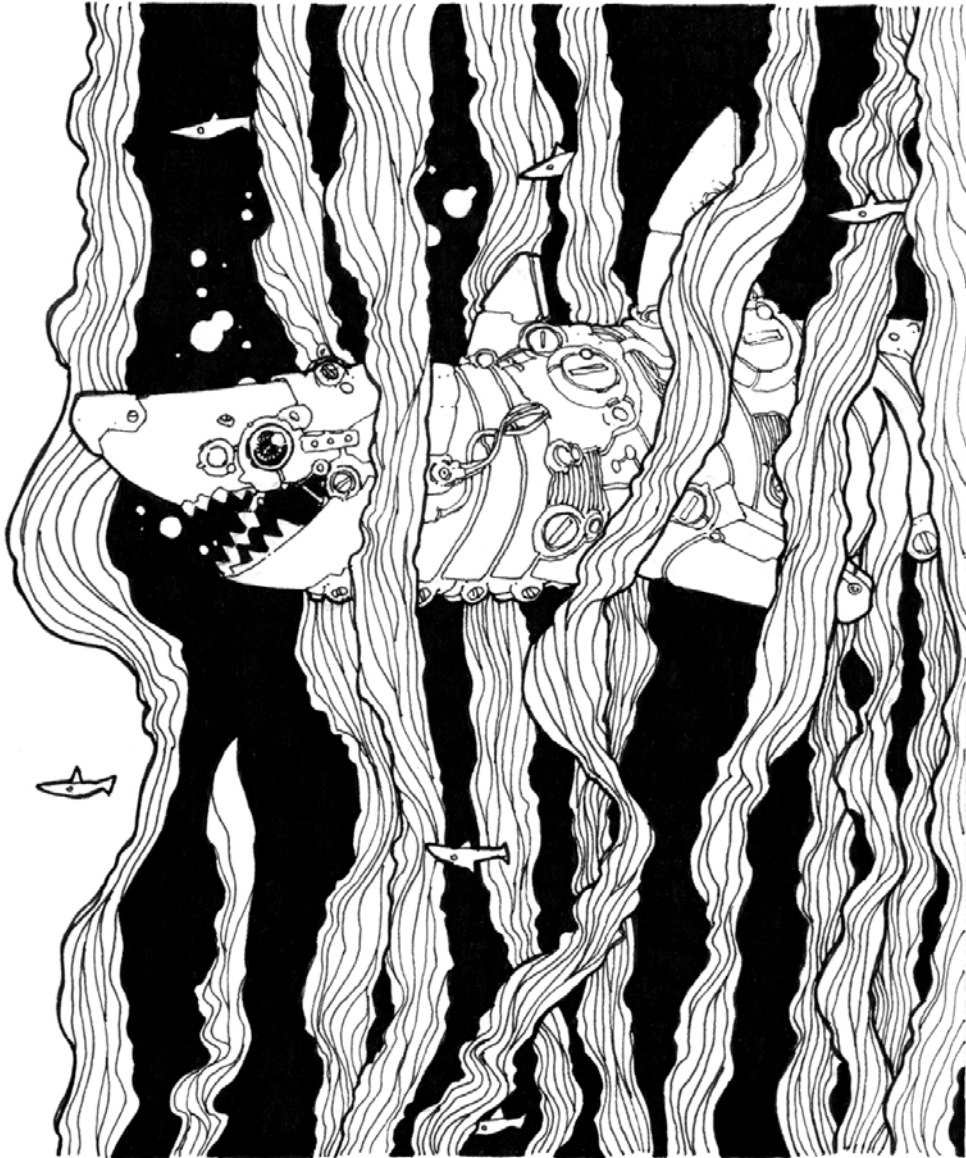
Examples:

1. sharing of wisdom
2. the coordination of the human with the cosmological
3. mentoring by means of an enduring imaginal presence
4. preparation for death

**Final passage: Death**



# Group connection



# Creating the altar

**Timing: 60 min**

**Learning objectives:**

- To make a personal connection with nature
- To build something together, that holds the group together and includes nature

**Methodology step by step:**

**Introduction (5 min)**

- Facilitator reads a poem.

**Wander (15 min)**

- The participants will have 30 min to go for a wander in a natural space, paying attention to the surrounding nature.
- They will introduce themselves to the place, or to a being in the nearby nature. They will also bring back with them a small natural object that they feel drawn to.

**Create the altar (5 min)**

- Coming back with something from nature, participants make together a small altar by placing who/what they brought from their wander around the candle.
- Facilitator lights the candle and all participants, including the facilitator are invited to share.

**Sharing(30 min)**

- Participants are invited to share briefly on their experience, on their intention and if and in what way nature answered. Going clockwise, a person will start and then all have an opportunity to share.

**Closing(2 min)**

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Introduction (5 min)**

*"Welcome everyone, I will read a poem and invite you to listen with an open heart, to listen with your ears, and your skin with your emotions and your belly. You can also close your eyes, I will read it twice so we can really feel it."*

- (read poem from resources)

**Wander (15 min)**

*"I invite you to go out for a wander. Let your steps lead you in nature. Have your awareness open to what is around you. Find a place or a being to be in conversation with. Go up to it and talk to it. Be curious about it, explore it with all your senses."*

*"Tell it why you are here, share your intention, or what comes to you in this moment. Listen to it for a few moments, see if has anything to share."*

*"Let yourself be surprised by what happens, observe, listen with your ears, nose, with your gut and your imagination."*



*"Before you leave, find a small object or or being to bring back with you. Before picking it up, ask for permission. If you feel it wants to go with you, take it, if not, look to find another one who does."*

#### **Create the altar (5 min)**

- (put the altar place on the ground with the candle in the center. have a small natural object yourself which you will contribute to the altar)

*"Welcome back, hope all of you came back with something. Let's all now make together a small altar, with this candle in the center. Palace that which you brought from the wander around the candle, see where it wants to stay, maybe shift other things/beings."*

- (At the end light the candle)

#### **Sharing(30 min)**

*"Let's share on what happened for you. You can share your intention, or your experience in this wander, or even what the other being if you met any responded to you."*

#### **Closing(2 min)**

*"We'll keep this around and use it whenever we gather and share in this circle. Feel free to bring more objects for it and contribute to it."*

#### **Materials:**

- Big candle, a slab of wood or a plate, or a small scarf to hold all the elements.
- David Abram poem

#### **Tips and tricks:**

- This activity could be done as an opening element for a group that meets for more than one workshop, just as it can be used as a closing activity when adjourning the group, but in reverse. Once created it can be used as well during reflection sessions (harvesting circles, steaming groups, councils), (Harvesting circle page 101, Tribe time 86, The way of council page 83)

#### **Between the Body and the Breathing Earth**

##### **David Abram - Spell of the sensuous**

Owning up to being an animal, a creature of earth.

Tuning our animal senses to the sensible terrain:

blending our skin with the rain-rippled surface of rivers,

mingling our ears with the thunder and the thrumming of frogs,

and our eyes with the molten gray sky.

Feeling the polyrhythmic pulse of this place—this huge windswept body  
of water and stone.

This vexed being in whose flesh we're entangled.

Becoming earth. Becoming animal. Becoming, in this manner, fully human.

# The way of council

**Timing: 95 min**

**Learning objectives:**

- Discover the principles and intentions of council activity
- Set the basic knowledge of participating in council sharing.
- Discover the council activity as an ongoing practice.

**Methodology step by step:**

**Opening(5 min)**

- Welcome and short discussion on council practice

**Instructions and principles (20 min)**

- Facilitator introduces the principles, logistical aspects and intentions of council.

**Short bio-break(5 min)**

- The following activity is quite long and best uninterrupted so better if pax take care of physical needs before we start.

**Council(60 min)**

- All participants, including the facilitator, share on a given topic.

**Closing(5 min)**

**Setting of the room, participants distribution:**

- On the ground, in a circle, on mats or pillows. Everyone must be able to see everyone else when seated.

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Opening (5 min)**

*"Welcome, all today we will engage in a practice called Council. this is a very ancient practice, found all over the globe in many cultures."*

*"When you hear this word, "council" what comes to your mind?"*

- (take some answers and continue)

*"Council is a way of sharing, in which we connect to our inner selves, to each other and to the whole group. It can be used to share experiences, or to make decisions, or even to negotiate conflicts."*

## **Instructions and principles (20 min)**

### **Principles:**

#### **1. Talking stick/object:**

- the only person who can speak is the one who holds the talking object
- the object is passed counterclockwise (the way the Earth turns)
- you can pass the talking stick and at the end it will be placed in the middle giving a chance to those who haven't talked to do so.
- when you pass the talking stick make eye contact, don't hurry and ask the guiding question.

#### **2. Confidentiality:**

- what is shared in council stays in council without exception

#### **3. Holder of council:**

- one person (usually the facilitator holds the council)

### **Intentions:**

#### **1. speak from the heart**

First, our intention is to speak from our hearts when we hold the talking piece. We speak only what is true and has heartfelt meaning. We speak by way of our emotions, our imaginations, and our senses, as well as from our thoughts. But always, we speak from our hearts.

#### **2. listen with your heart**

Second, when we sit in council, we practice listening with our hearts. Our primary goal is to feel what the person is saying, whether or not we understand it with our heads. We hope to experience where the other is sitting in their lives and in relation to the circle without worrying about whether we can quantify it, rationalize it, or explain it.

#### **3. go to the heart of the matter**

Third, when it is our turn to speak, we practice brevity or, as Jack and Gigi put it, "being of lean expression." The goal is not to offer an exhaustive account or a defensible explanation of how we got to be where we are, but rather to simply be there. If we have some faith that the others are listening with their hearts, then they won't need an elaborate explanation.

#### **4. leap from the heart**

Fourth, and often most challenging, we practice spontaneity. It is, of course, tempting and only human to rehearse. So we are called upon to practice a radical faith that, when the talking piece reaches us, we will indeed be able to access our hearts and find a way to express what's there.

Still, most people find themselves rehearsing, then council can be approached as a meditation practice. When we notice our attention has strayed from the heart, we simply let go of our rehearsal and gently (with self-love) come back to the heart, both our own listening heart and the heart being expressed by the other.

**Logistics:**

- council-holder can speak if needed to intervene, to answer administrative questions or to gently bring people back on track
- we can express our being moved by what others share by making a silent gesture that does not interrupt such as a “hmmmm” or “aho” or hand gesture of silent applause
- A question is given and all participants answer the same question

**Short bio-break(5 min)****Council (60 min)**

*“So, let’s start. Our question for today is “What is in your heart?”. Remember to speak from your heart, listen with your heart, leap from the heart and go to the heart of the matter. Whoever feels invited is welcome to take the talking stick and start.”*

**Closing (5 min)**

*“Thank you everyone. If you want, you can take these 4 intentions of the councils and walk with them in your daily life. You can for example, walk each day of the week with a different one as your guide, and on the fifth day with all four.”*

**Tips and tricks:**

- The less people there are, the less time it takes. The reverse also applies
- You can choose a different question that applies to your specific group learning experiences. If this is the first time you do this activity, best to stick to the default question of “What is in your heart?”

# Tribe time

## Group reflection daily activity

**Timing: 40 to 45 min**

### Learning objectives:

- To form groups for reflection and evaluation at the end of the day
- Teambuilding

The goal is to create a group where the participants feel safe and comfortable to share how they felt during the day. It is important that this group, once settled, always remains the same, in order to generate a sense of comfort and well-being, a safe space. Ideally, the participants should be looking forward to the tribe time at the end of the day.

### Methodology step by step:

#### Forming groups (10 min)

- To form the groups can be by choosing a preferred element - earth, water, fire, air, or “desert island” scenario, (or something of your choice that is the best for your particular group)
- Draw different scenarios (in advance), one on each poster, depending on how many groups are to be formed.
- The participants will have to walk around the space while listening to the story and decide which scenario best fits their personality when they need to unwind and feel good. When they choose, they stand in front of the poster.
- Groups will be from 3 to 5 participants, depending on the size of the total group.
- If the scenario they choose has too many participants, they could go to the next one of their preference (leave the decision to the participants).

#### Arranging tribes (25 min)

- Once the groups are formed, the participants invent a name for their tribe, their special greeting, and draw on the poster whatever they want for their tribe to be a safe space.

#### Introducing tribes (10 min)

- All the groups introduce themselves to others as a tribe: with the poster and their greeting

#### Closure

## Instructions to Participants:

### Forming groups (10 min)

For forming groups we suggest two scenarios, choose one of them or invent your own that matches the dynamics of your target group:

- 4 elements scenario: ask participants about their preferred element - how they feel: like earth, water, fire or air, and invite them to form the groups accordingly (or form groups after facilitating the activity "4 elements" page 29)
- Desert island scenario: invite the participants to start walking around slowly and relaxingly, while telling them a story:

*"Imagine you are traveling on a transatlantic cruise ship and suddenly it is shipwrecked. All of you who are here survive and end up on the shore of an island. Here there's a white sandy beach, a thick green forest, some mountains from where you can see everything from above and a cave where you can take shelter. As you walk around, take a moment to breathe with gratitude and observe. Which of these places feels more like your safe place? To which one would you go to feel good? What resonates best with yourself? "*

### Arranging tribes (25 min)

- Invite the participants to form tribes, to invent their tribe name and greeting, and to arrange their poster with drawings, affirmation words, quotations that they feel nice or important to them, and anything they need to make their tribe the safe space
- The tribe greeting can be a word, a sign or a combination of both, also the sound, dance, shouting, etc. The tribe members can use it during the day every time they meet or pass by the member of their tribe, and also in the beginning of the evening tribe time session.

### Introducing tribes (10 min)

- All the groups introduce themselves as a tribe saying their name and showing the poster they have created, describing the elements in there, showing everybody their tribe greeting

### Closure

- the facilitator gives the tribe's daily task: to meet at the end of each day, before dinner, to discuss the following questions:
  1. Today I felt...
  2. What were your highlights of today's activities?
  3. What was the worst part of your day?

### Materials:

- color pencils, markers, crayons, etc
- color paper
- glue
- scissors

### Tips and tricks:

- do this activity as the last one at the end of the first day of training, so that tribe time sessions are the end of every day
- The groups can be formed at the end of the "4 elements" activity, after self-assessment part (4 Elements page 36)
- If you choose the desert island scenario, you can play ambient beach music when reading the story as participants walk around the space to create a more immersive effect
- Form the groups depending on the total number of participants. For example, for 12 participants - draw 4 scenarios: the beach, the forest, the mountain and the cave, (or 4 elements)...
- Be sure to include tribal time at the end of each day.
- An excellent method of feedback to check how the group is doing every day is to ask the tribes to write their reflection answers on the paper each day in their tribe time activity

# Crossing the threshold

## Initiatory practice

**Timing: 35 to 45 minutes**

### Learning objectives:

- To increase motivation and engagement of participants into the learning process

### Methodology step by step:

#### Introduction to the activity (5 min)

- The facilitator is inviting participants to join him in the circle.
- The participants are invited to question themselves about what they are saying yes to.

#### Crossing the threshold (25-35 min)

- By adjusting two stones, the facilitator is creating a threshold. He is encouraging people to cross it when they are ready and while doing it to verbalise what they are saying yes to.
- Participants are one by one crossing the threshold and forming a circle on the other side.

#### Reading a poem (10 min)

#### Debriefing (5 min)

- Sharing in circle

### Instructions to Participants:

#### Introduction to the activity (5 min):

*"This practice is a way of welcoming the journey waiting on the other side. This is the threshold we will cross and I want you to think about what you are saying yes to on this journey that's starting today. When you are ready, approach the threshold and before you cross it I invite you to acknowledge what you are saying yes to. Say it out loud. You can say it in English or in your mother tongue, if you wish. You can shout it, you can sing it. However, if you feel not to share it aloud, say it clearly and with full intention in your mind. Whatever you feel right in this moment and for your journey. After crossing we are going to form a circle on the other side."*

#### Crossing the threshold (25-35 min):

- Participants are crossing one by one, acknowledging and saying their affirmations.

*"Now, we are on the other side, ready to dive into the things we said yes to. Thank you all!"*

#### Reading poem (10 min)

*"I will read you a poem, and feel free to close your eyes, and listen with your heart, senses, emotions and imagination, with your mythical mind and your gut."*

- Read the poem "The Journey" twice.

#### Debriefing (5 min)

- Sharing in circle, the facilitator asks the participants debriefing questions



**Debriefing questions:**

- How are you feeling?
- What were the feelings that appeared during this activity?
- Is there anything that surprised you in this session?
- What did you discover in this experience?

**Materials:**

- Materials necessary to set up a portal ( for example, two stones, two branches, etc.) or use nature around and find passage among the trees, two rocks, edge of the field, or something else that can be used as a portal

**Tips and tricks:**

- this exercise is better to do outside
- A portal can be made out of natural materials like sticks, stones or flowers but even something like a passage between trees can also be used as a portal. Be creative!

**The Journey**  
**Mary Oliver**

One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting  
their bad advice --  
though the whole house  
began to tremble  
and you felt the old tug  
at your ankles.  
"Mend my life!"  
each voice cried.  
But you didn't stop.  
You knew what you had to do,  
though the wind pried  
with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations,  
though their melancholy  
was terrible.  
It was already late  
enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.  
But little by little,  
as you left their voice behind,  
the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,  
and there was a new voice  
which you slowly  
recognized as your own,  
that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world,  
determined to do  
the only thing you could do --  
determined to save  
the only life that you could save.

# Who are you?

**Timing: 30 to 40 min**

**Learning objectives:**

- To raise the empathy with the different elements of the environment
- to work on the imagination through improvisation
- to create meaningful connections with other people in the group

**Methodology step by step:**

**Introduction (5 min)**

- the facilitator explains the activity
- the participants form a groups of 3

**Answering the question “Who are you?” (20 to 30 min)**

- the participants go walking around and do the activity

**Debriefing (5 min)**

- in the last group the participants share their impressions by the debriefing questions

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Introduction (5 min)**

- The participants are divided into groups of three people each
- In the group, two participants take turns asking the third participant a question “Who are you?” five times and he/she is answering
- After five questions participants take turns
- When all the participants answer the question in all the groups, a new groups are formed and they do same process again
- The activity stops after 3 rounds with 3 different groups

While formulating the question, it is important to look at the one who answers in the eyes and ask sincerely.

Be free and imaginative with your answers. The answer can be the first thing that pops into your mind, it can be whatever you want or whatever you feel like at that moment.

**Answering the question “Who are you?” (20 to 30 min)**

- the participants go walking around and do the activity

**Debriefing (5 min)**

- in the last group the participants share their impressions by the debriefing questions

### Debriefing questions:

- What did we do?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- How are you feeling?
- What are the feelings that appeared during the activity?
- What did you learn/discover in this experience?
- Is there anything that surprised you in this session?
- How can you use this knowledge in your daily life?

### Tips and tricks:

Use an open space to carry out the activity, preferably outdoors. Invite the participants to move around the area, and to change spots whenever they change groups.



# Ancestor's walk

**Timing: 60min**

**Learning objectives:**

- To experience a meaningful connections with the individuals of the group;
- To be aware of the existence of one's ancestral heritage;

**Methodology step by step:**

**Introduction(5 min)**

- The facilitator welcomes the group and describe in few words what the activity will be about; If the participants are sitting, before switching to the next part, the facilitator invites the participants to stand and start walking throughout the space;

**Ancestor's walk practice( 40 min)**

- The participants are guided into a group connection practice where they are diving in the ancestral inheritance each participant carries;

**Debriefing( 10 min)**

- The process will be debriefed by sharing in the circle

**Closing (5 min)**

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Introduction(5 min)**

*"Welcome everyone! Today we will try to experience how we can connect with each other by meeting each other's history. We are here and now, also because of our ancestors's efforts. Who are these ancestors? What from who we are can be an expression of their existence? Are we sharing any of these inheritances? We will explore this questions and maybe finding some answers too. For this I invite you to stand up and start a random walk through this space we are in. Walk around the room silently, not talking with each other. Just walk in your own rhythm, trying to fill in any empty space from the room. Make sure you can hear my voice wherever the place from the room you are in. Just walk randomly in the room, and make sure you walk really randomly, not in a circle.If you realize you are moving in a circle change your direction. And then change it again."*

**Ancestor's walk practice( 30 min)**

*"And now, while you are walking imagine..."*

- (read the script)

*"In this pair you find yourself in right now, I invite you to share about how it was for you to share this experience together. Remember it is not necessary to use just words when sharing, feel free to share your experience by moving, drawing or any other form that feels right for you. You have five minutes each and after you both finish sharing I am waiting for you in the circle. I will let you know when it is time for switching by making a sound."*

**Debriefing( 10 min)**

- See below

### **Closing (5 min)**

*"For closing this activity I invite you to share, in a "popcorn style" a sound that describes your experience of the activity."*

#### **Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do in this activity?
- How did you feel throughout the activity?
- Did you manage to connect with the person in front of you? How was it?
- What are the feelings that appeared during the activity?
- What did you discover about the others in this experience?
- What did you discover about yourself in this experience?
- Is there anything that touched you in this session?

#### **Materials:**

- Materials for drawing
- Printed script - can be found on the next page

#### **Resources:**

- Ancestor's walk script

#### **Tips and tricks:**

- Read the script slowly, allowing some quiet time in between the ideas when they need to sink in or when the participants need to act on the script. Use the script flexibly, repeat some ideas if you feel it is necessary. Feel the power of it and the reaction of the participants to it and adapt the rhythm accordingly;
- This activity can be used as a part of a set of activities aimed to facilitate connection between the members of a group; but also as an individual activity;

## Ancestor's walk script

It is Thursday afternoon, rush hour. You're a very important person with very important things to do. You've come out of the house and you're walking down the street to get to work, or for an appointment... or to get the kids to school, or to meet your friend. The bus hasn't come. The pavement is full of people. These people are getting in your way, slowing you down. You've got a meeting to get to, a very important discussion about very important environmental issues to get to... The kids will be late again... Your friend will be annoyed... If you're late for this, the whole of your schedule is going to be thrown out!

And what you're doing is SO IMPORTANT!! These people are in your way!! Don't they know what a rush you're in?? Sometimes they just change direction or stop without any indication. Feel how it is in your body to be in this state of rushing. Keep focusing on moving as fast as possible... Think of your schedule, your hurry! Notice the lack of eye contact, there's no time for that. And these people! Still getting in your way! What kind of things are you thinking? Does this feel familiar? Are you breathing? What would it do to you to be in this state all the time?

And now slow down a little. Notice what happens in your body, and slow down a little more.

Allow a little eye contact... Notice these are people you are pushing past. Are they like you or different? Allow some curiosity about them to arise. What are they thinking? Where are they going? What is their list of tasks, or appointments?

Slow down some more, all the way into first gear. How is this? What thoughts are you having now?

And gently come to a standstill, finding yourself facing one other person. Let yourself take in this person, making eye contact as much as it feels comfortable.

If your mind feels busy, take a moment or two to slow down. Are you breathing? Feel your feet on the grass, feel the earth beneath you, let your attention and your weight drop.

This person also has made the choice to be here now. This person also cares enough about what is happening on our earth to want to make a difference, to play their part in turning around our world. Just take a moment to let that sink in. Feel how it is to be with this person right now.

Like you, this person wants to build a healthy future for generations to come. Like you, they are willing to be awake at this time of great change, and possible crisis. They are not turning away or refusing to respond. They want their place and their community to find a way to live sustainably on this earth.

And know that this person sees the same willingness to meet the challenge, the quality of caring, of wanting to be part of something positive and good that you see in them.

Staying without words as much as possible, find a way to let them know your appreciation of their presence here.

Moving slowly again... Allowing curiosity about these people you are moving between – what is happening in their lives? What have they seen? What do they care about?

Come to rest in front of another person. Once again, just make as much eye contact as feels comfortable.

Just letting yourself be aware of how much you share with the person in front of you. And you might imagine you can see this person's ancestors behind them, stretching back in time. How many generations of people came together to create and pass on life, to find food and shelter, to pass on wisdom and knowledge so that this person could be born into their family and be here today? And imagine the huge changes that this person's ancestors have seen – how much hardship they have endured, how much they have learnt over the centuries and even millennia of evolution, the agricultural and industrial revolutions.

Perhaps they have children, or will pass on life. Perhaps they will pass on their gifts and wisdom through their relationships and work in the world. Something of this person will go on to future generations.

You share the certainty that your time for living on the planet is limited. Perhaps this person won't live to see the changes we are working for brought into being. Yet they are still willing to give their time, their wisdom, their energy to create that change, so that future generations may live well.

And know that the person in front of you sees these things about you.

Once again, just see if there is something you want to express to your partner, just do so in silence.

Start to move around again...

Again, we go back to our wandering, letting ourselves move slowly, touching lightly as we pass.

And again we find ourselves in front of somebody and we take their right hand in ours. Close your eyes so that all your attention can go into the sensation of touch. Now we can begin to appreciate the gifts of our animal ancestors. Can you feel the pulse in your partner's wrist?

Open your awareness to this hand's journey through time. It was a fin once in the primordial seas where life began, just as it was again in its mother's womb in this lifetime. Countless adventures since then have shaped it. This hand connected with tree and wind as it refined its intelligence. This hand: the ancestors are in it, ancestors who learned to push up on dry land, to climb, to reach, to grasp, to chip rocks, to gather berries and greens, to straighten arrows and pull bowstrings, to cut into flesh, to bring food to mouths, to gather plants and weave them into baskets, to gather seeds and harvest them and plant them again; to make fire and to carry this fire from place to place. It's all in that hand from an unbroken succession of adventures.

Similarly, open your awareness to this hand's journey through this particular lifetime, ever since it opened like a flower as it came out of its mother's womb. Clever hand that has learned so much: learned to reach for the sustaining breast, learned to wipe tears, learned to give pleasure. You know there are people living now who believe they are worthwhile and lovable, because of what that hand has told them. There are people living now whose last touch in life will come from this hand, and they will be able to go into their dying knowing they are not abandoned. You know there are people living now who will be healed in mind or body by the power that this hand allows to flow through it. So experience how much you want that hand to be strong and whole for this time, to serve its fellow beings and the planet of which it is a part. Experience how much you want it to be strong and play its part in the building of a culture of sanity and decency and beauty.

Now open your eyes, and in your own way, express gratitude to the other person.



# Opening a longer program

## **Timing: 180 min**

- two sessions of 90 min each with a flexible 15 min break

## **Learning objectives:**

- To build group cohesion and build a container for the learning experience that lasts for more than one day

## **Methodology step by step:**

### **Welcome and facilitator(s) introduce themselves (5 min)**

#### **Why we are here (5 min)**

- Facilitator introduces the theme of the project, objectives or the story of how this learning experience came to be.

#### **Connection practice (45 min)**

- Use the activity flow named "Ancestor's walk" (page 94).

#### **Nature connection(35 min)**

- The participants will have 30 min to go for a wander in a natural space, paying attention to the surrounding nature.
- They will introduce themselves to the place, or to a being in the nearby nature and share/journal on their intentions.

#### **Council (40 min)**

- Council type sharing activity (The way of council page 83) in which everyone shares their short time on the land introducing themselves.

#### **Break (15 min)**

#### **Principles of cooperation (10 min)**

- Establishing the group contract together with participants through a discussion.

#### **Expectations and contributions (10 min)**

- An individual reflection followed by a discussion on what are expectations and possible contributions of each individual in the group for our time together.

#### **Crossing the threshold (30 min)**

- Symbolic crossing a threshold of all participants and facilitators and expressing an intention.

#### **Closing (5 min)**

## Instructions to Participants:

### Welcome and facilitators introduce themselves (5 min)

#### Why we are here (5 min)

- Facilitator introduces the theme of the project, objectives or the story of how this learning experience came to be.

### Connection practice (45 min)

- Use the script and flow from activity named "Ancestor's Walk" (page 94)

### Nature connection (35 min)

*"I invite you to go out for a wander. Let your steps lead you in nature. Have your awareness open to what is around you. Find a place or a being to be in conversation with. Go up to it and talk to it. Be curious about it, explore it with all your senses."*

*"Tell it why you are here, share your intention, or tell it why you are here, in this place."*

*"Listen to it for a few moments, see if it has anything to share."*

*"Let yourself be surprised by what happens, observe, listen with your ears, nose, with your gut and your imagination."*

- You can also use the activity "5 senses centring" (page 40)

### Council (40 min)

- Invite participants to share their intentions following the guidelines of the council found in the activity with the same name.

### Break (15 min)

### Principles of cooperation (10 min)

- Describe the cooperation principles important to you, choosing from the section named "group contract" (page 131) or using others you prefer, and then open the conversation for them to add any that are important to them. It would be useful if either you or a co-facilitator writes these on a flipchart during the discussion or to have them prepared before the session and add the ones from pax.
- For groups of youngsters, it could be useful that each signs the flipchart at the end.

### Expectations and contributions (10 min)

*"Using these post-it's write what are your expectations, as in "What do you expect to receive from us as trainers, or from others in the group?"*

*"On another post-it write what you can contribute to the process by answering "What do I have to give, or offer, or share with others?"*

- After a few minutes, invite them to put all post-it's on the flipchart, look over them with your colleague and address the fact that you may be unable to meet some (giving one example) that some are already addressed by the flow of the program and others can be fitted in. And invite them to be responsible to get their expectations met by directly asking others.

### **Crossing the threshold (30 min)**

- Follow the instructions of session named “Crossing the threshold” (page 66)

### **Closing (5 min)**

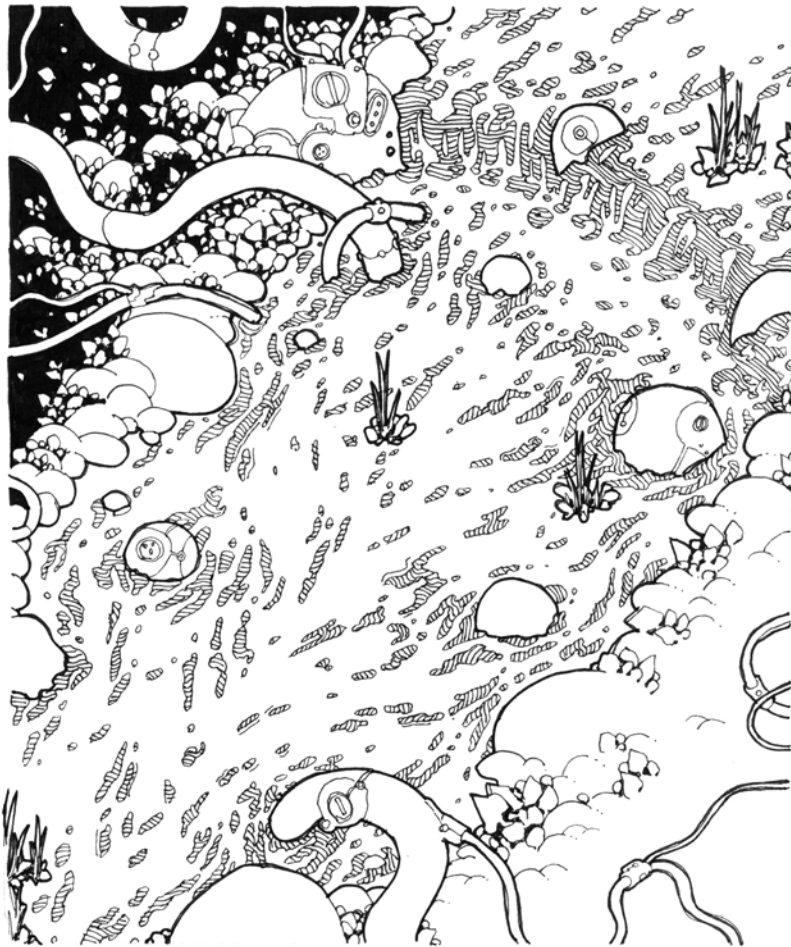
- Close however seems appropriate to transition into the next session of the program.

### **Materials:**

- Post-it papers
- pens

### **Tips and tricks:**

- This activity is meant to open a learning experience that is longer than a day. It can also be adapted creatively to be shorter.
- In the last part of the first day you can add the session of “Tribe time” if you believe it is valuable to have reflection groups. (page 86)



# Slow Morning Routine - Harvesting Circle

**Timing: 60-90 min**

**Learning objectives:**

- To create space for self-directed learning, self-reflection and integration practices of the previous day's insights;
- To prepare for the new day full of learning;
- To foster group cohesion and team building.

**Methodology step by step:**

**Preparation:**

Starting from the second day of the training course plenary.

- Posters from the previous day(-s) are visible on the walls of the plenary;
- slideshow of 10-15 photos of the working group moments from the previous day(-s) projected on the screen;
- pens, markers, and paper available for notes and writing;
- background instrumental music is ready to be played during the writing part;

**Slow morning routine - 60-75 min:**

**1. Slow morning (10 min)**

- This is a time for individual reflection and preparation for the upcoming day. The trainer/facilitator welcomes everybody who is in the plenary on time and invites them to do everything they need to be ready for the activities.
- Participants are invited to find their journals, pens, posters - everything they worked with during previous days - and check their intentions, goals, insights, and remarks.
- An ongoing slideshow of photos of yesterday's activities could support them with this task.

**2. Free writing exercise ( up to 15 min.)**

- Starting for 6 minutes, 1 minute each next day will be prolonged.
- The exercise starts with a sentence provided by the facilitator that the participants would have to use as a starting point of their activity and keep writing nonstop until the 6 minutes are over.
- When the time is over, the participants will take from 2 to 5 minutes to read what they wrote and try to integrate it.

**3. Harvest circle (30 - 40 min)**

- We ask the participants to return and sit in a circle. The "altar" created the first day will be placed in the center.
- In the harvest, the facilitator will light "the altar's" candle and invite the participants to share the fruits of their learning the previous day.

- After the first participant starts (by popping), the rest will follow the sharing clockwise, one by one.
- When the last participant has shared their words, the facilitator will say a few words for closing and blow off the candle.

#### **4. Technical announcements and presentation of a new day's program (10 min)**

- Inviting participants to ask questions for the group, address technical issues, and announce some changes or new activities.

### **Instructions to Participants:**

#### **Introduction to free writing (5 min):**

*"Good morning, everyone. Please settle in comfortably and take a moment to enjoy the silence. In this activity, we will practice free writing to help foster a deeper connection with ourselves. The goal is to let your thoughts flow freely without judgment, turning off the "inner critic" within us. Allow yourself to write whatever comes to mind and embrace this opportunity for self-expression and reflection."*

#### **Free writing (7-15 min):**

*"The principle of free writing is to keep writing without stopping until the time is up. It doesn't matter what you write about or which language you use; the key is to keep writing. If you can't think of anything, simply write "I have nothing to write." Write whatever comes to mind, even if it's unrelated to the topic, and don't stop until the time is up. Now, please take out your notebooks and something to write with. Today's free writing will start with the sentence ... (related to the particular topic of the activity/training). You can start."*

#### **When the time runs close to the end, the facilitator reminds the participants:**

*"Dear participants, just a reminder that you have one minute left. Please start finishing your sentence or end with three dots. You can continue later during the breaks if needed."*

#### **Harvesting circle (30 - 40 min):**

*"Now, I encourage you to share any discovery, insight, or lesson that has been valuable to you and that you believe could benefit others in their life, work, or relationships. If you don't have anything to share, simply pass the word to the next person. In the end, if you feel like adding something, you're welcome to do so." (After the circle, the facilitator will invite those who haven't shared yet to do so, if they wish.)*

#### **Announcements and new day program:**

*"And with this, the previous day is over and a new day can start. Today we will..."*

### **Debriefing questions:**

- no need to debrief this activity

### **Materials:**

- Personal notebook, pen, pencil, colorful pencils, markers, etc.
- Instrumental music playlist
- The "altar" (see activity "Creating The Altar" on page 81)
- Projector and selected photos from previous days arranged in the slideshow

### **Tips and tricks:**

- The trainer/facilitator must be on time for the plenary and ready to "hold the space" for the participants during their reflection;

- Make sure that the participants use a piece of paper and a pen or pencil instead of an electronic device. In case of a blind person, audio recorder can be used.
- You can use instrumental music (without sharp rhythms) in the background to support the flow of thoughts. Ask participants if they do not mind music, before you start an activity



# Nature connection



# Land Art

**Timing: 90 minutes**

**Learning objectives:**

- Nurturing the imagination and fostering creativity
- Expanding the capacity for self-expression

**Methodology step by step:**

**Introduction (10 min)**

- Begin by leading the participants into a natural setting and convey the unique opportunity they have to create artwork using nature's own palette.

**Instructions (5 min)**

- Participants receive instructions and they go and look for a place for their art.

**Create the Landart (30 min)**

- Participants immerse themselves in the activity.

**Visit the Landart (20 min)**

- We meet back where we started and then we lead the entire group to each piece of land art and invite the creator to introduce their artwork.

**Debriefing (20 min)**

**Closing (5 min)**

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Introduction (10 min)**

*"Welcome all, we are here to connect with our inner artists, we are here to ignite our imagination and creativity while working with nature as our own palette."*

**Instructions (5 min)**

*"Embark on a quest to discover a spot in nature where you can craft a piece of art. This could be a flat space on the ground, an element of a tree, or even a stone. Choose a location that speaks to you."*

*"Once you've found your chosen spot, let it inspire your imagination and creativity. Begin to construct images and visual installations. You can recreate a famous artwork using natural objects like stones, leaves, or plants. Alternatively, you can sketch a portrait, design symbols, create an abstract masterpiece, fashion a mandala, or express anything your heart desires."*

*"Employ only objects that are easily accessible and refrain from disrupting the environment by removing or damaging anything. Also please ask permission when you take or move anything in nature. If you do not get permission, find another object/element that agrees being taken/moved."*

*"Immerse yourself in the creative process and allow your imagination to take you on a journey of surprise."*

*"Please enjoy this activity in silence, and do not speak until we meet back here. After the allotted creative time has elapsed, we will all meet back here."*



**Create the Landart (30 min)**

**Visit the Landart (20 min)**

*"Who would like to share with us their creation and tell us a story about it?"*

**Debriefing (20 min)**

**Closing (5 min)**

*"As a closing, I invite everyone to share one word or metaphor that describes this experience for you. Whoever feels ready can start and then we go in a circle."*

**Debriefing questions:**

- How did this activity resonate with you? What sparked your creativity and imagination?
- What was it like working with natural materials and elements?
- Did you experience a state of flow, and if so, how did it feel?
- What did you learn and discover during this creative process?
- How can this experience enrich your capacity for creativity and self-expression in the future?

**Materials:**

- Natural materials and elements sourced from the environment

**Tips and tricks:**

- This can be a group activity that also builds the group cohesion. In that case the activity will be shorter, because you visit less installations. If each participant makes their own artwork, you need to plan for more time to visit the installations.

# Nature immersion

**Timing: 105 minutes**

**Learning objectives:**

- To increase the connection of participants with the natural environment.
- To increase the knowledge about various natural laws, ecosystems and different natural beings.
- To develop the capacity of exploration and curiosity.

**Methodology step by step:**

**Gathering and Poem (10 min)**

- The participants are assembled in a circle. The facilitator introduces the activity by reading a captivating poem or a short story about nature.

**Introduction (10 min)**

- The facilitator offers some invitations on how to immerse in nature exploration, setting their own pace, guided by their curiosity, and led by their senses.

**Nature Exploration (60 min)**

- Participants wander on the land nearby for a given amount of time, by themselves, following some instructions.

**Debriefing (20 min)**

**Closing (5 min)**

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Gathering and Poem (10 min)**

*"Greetings, everyone. I invite you to embark on a sensory journey as I share a story. Feel free to close your eyes, allowing your senses to become fully engaged. Listen not just with your ears but with the entirety of your being—your heart, emotions, and every inch of your physical presence. Open your eyes and ears, yes, but also your nose, your taste, your skin, and your imagination. Let the verses envelop you, transcending the boundaries of sight and sound, to touch the very essence of your soul."*

- Read the story from the handout Nature Immersion - story 2 times. (page 109)

*"What moves in you hearing this poem? Which part stayed with you?"*

- (take a few reactions and then continue)

*"In the upcoming moments, we will immerse ourselves in a practice of connection with the pulse of the world. This journey invites us to rediscover the living essence that surrounds us and recognize our role within it."*

### **Introduction (10 min)**

*“Dear Explorers, as we embark on this journey of connection with nature, I want to guide you in a manner that deepens your understanding and opens your senses. Consider these as invitations and instructions for a meaningful exploration.”*

1. *“Be curious: Allow your instincts to guide you towards places and natural wonders that captivate your interest”*
2. *“Open your senses: Close your eyes and let the world speak to you through its sounds; Distinguish and identify each nuance of sound in your environment; Observe with intention, allowing the environment to reveal its secrets. Engage all your senses—smell, touch, listen, and even taste the different facets around you. True nature observation is a multisensory experience;”*
3. *“Be Self-Aware: Pause and reflect on your own presence in this process. Be attuned to your thoughts, emotions, imagination, and senses. Acknowledge their existence. In this exploration, you aren’t just observers of nature, you are active participants”*

### **Nature Exploration (60 min)**

May these invitations guide you into a profound connection with the natural world. I will share with you also some specific instructions on how to craft your exploration. Happy exploring!

- (go through the Wandering - safety and how to protocol, page 113 with participants and allow them to ask questions if they have any.)

### **Debriefing (20 min)**

- As the allocated time draws to a close, gather the participants and lead them in a group discussion. Employ the questions from the debriefing section to guide the conversation.

### **Closing (5 min)**

- Share a word or metaphor or color that describes this experience for you. Let’s go in a circle one by one, counterclockwise.

### **Debriefing questions:**

- How did you feel during the process of observing nature?
- Where did you go, and how was your journey?
- What did you observe (see, smell, touch, taste, hear)?
- What captured your attention? What surprised you during this experience?
- What did you learn about nature and about yourself? What insights or discoveries did you make?
- How can you apply these experiences and lessons in your daily life?
- In what ways can your connection with nature support your personal growth and well-being?

### **Materials:**

- artwork materials: colored pencils, clay or plasticine, wax crayons
- emergency whistles and clocks

### **Resources:**

- Nature Immersion - story:Richard Lewis, from Living by Wonder
- Wandering - safety and “how to” protocol

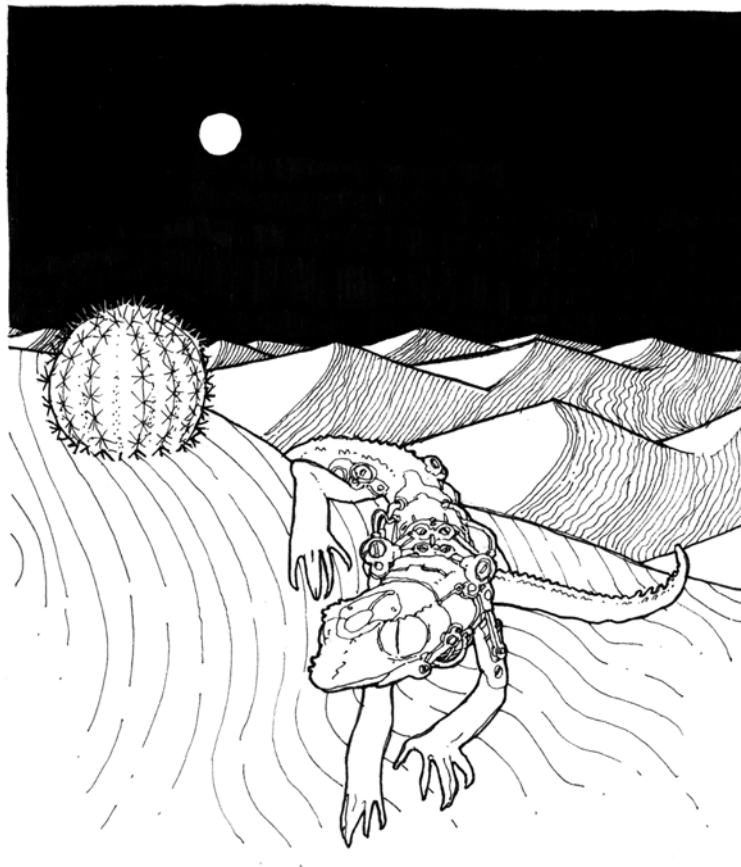
### Tips and tricks:

- This transformative activity is best experienced in a wild or semi-wild place.

### Nature Immersion story: Richard Lewis, from *Living by Wonder*

In our grasshopper and salamander days, who among us didn't ask why the grasshopper could jump so far - or why the salamander had black dots on its orange body? We trampled leaves with our feet just to hear what kind of sounds the leaves made. We threw flat stones over the surface of streams to see how far the stones could skip. We listened to crickets cry in nights far beyond our grasp of what the darkness was. We slept, only to wake, with the strange sense of how we could be awake when we had only just been sleeping.

In those days we knew as much as we had to know in order to ask what we didn't know. Our ignorance wasn't just innocence but the foundation from which we offered ourselves the daily surprise of discovering another question, another way to uncover something mysterious, something we hadn't understood yesterday. We lived by wonder, for by wondering we were able to multiply a growing consciousness of being alive.



# Wandering

**Timing: two 90 min sessions with a flexible 15 min break**

**Learning objectives:**

- Discover wandering in nature as a practice.
- Set the basic principles and safety protocols around wandering

**Methodology step by step:**

**Opening (10 min):**

- Facilitator reads a poem that is resonant with the topic of the wander.

**Wander instructions and safety protocol (30 min):**

- Facilitator introduces the instructions for wandering and demonstrates safety protocols.

**Wander - Solo nature encounter(90 min)**

- Participants wander on the land nearby for a given amount of time, by themselves not interacting with any other humans, following some invitations.

**Break (15 min)**

**Journaling/artwork(10 min)**

- Individual time in which all wanderers can journal, sketch, draw, or in any way record their experience.

**Council (30 min)**

- A council in which everyone shares their experience from the wander.

**Closing (10 min)**

- Setting of the room, participants distribution: Circle on ground mats or pillows. Artwork materials in the center of the circle when needed. Participants will also spend half of the time in solo

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Opening (10 min):**

*"Welcome. I'm gonna read a poem for you. Feel free to close your eyes during this, and make sure to listen with your heart, your emotions and your whole body, with eyes and ears, nose and taste, listen with your skin and imagination open."*

- (Read poem from the resources out loud two times, slowly)

*"What moves in you hearing this poem? Which part stayed with you?"*

- (take a few reactions and then continue)

*"What we will discover in the next few hours is a practice that can help us remember a way of engaging the world in order to feel again how it is alive. Wandering is what you used to do as a kid, going off on your own either into the green fields or in your imagination, or in the garden. And do so without a specific purpose, but maybe with a intention."*

*"So I'm gonna invite you to wander on the land, by yourselves, but first let's see how to do it in a safe way."*

### **Wander instructions and safety protocol (30 min):**

- (See resource on wandering "safety" and "how to" protocols and go over it with participants)

### **Wander - Solo nature encounter (1 hour and 30 min)**

*"Here are a few invitations, things you can do in the wander:"*

- *"Find a place, a being or an element in nature, or let yourself be found by one. Say hello, and sit with this one, observing it and taking it all in."*
- *"Speak to the being out loud or by writing in a journal, share with it your needs, wants and desires, your longings or you can share what you see or observe about it, what you admire in it or what it makes you curious about it."*
- *"Embody the element, move as it does, or take a stance similar to it, follow it's flow"*
- *"Be curious, ask the being if it would like to share, to show you or teach you something. Listen to the response with your ears, nose, smell, with your heart and your imagination, listen with your emotions. You can also open your journal and let the being write to you it's answers."*

*"I remind you this is an individual exploration, allow everyone to have their own experience until we meet back here in council."*

*"So let me send you off with a poem."*

- (Read poem Nalungiaq again)

### **Break (15 min)**

- (After everyone is back from the wander, we have a short break also have materials ready for artwork/journaling)

### **Journaling/artwork (10 min)**

*"Welcome back; feel free to find your journals and take time to write, draw, sketch, or find your own way to journal on your experience."*

### **Council (30 min)**

*"So, let's settle in a circle and start our council. Following the guidelines of councilwork, you are invited to share to the heart of the matter, listen with your heart, leap from the heart and talk from your heartspace. We will go in a circle, counterclockwise and share on "What happened for you or to you in this wander?"*

### **Closing (10 min)**

*"Thank you everyone. I invite you to consider having a wander on your own, without anyone giving you the task. You can take any of the invitations from earlier and follow them, or repeat one that you've already experienced. Wandering as such is an experience, and it can become a practice by engaging in it repeatedly."*

### **Materials:**

- safety whistles, watches, journals, pens
- art materials: colored pencils, colored markers, chalk pastels, wax crayons, plasticine or clay, drawing paper

### **Tips and tricks:**

- You can ask participants in the preparation phase to make sure they bring a whistle, a timepiece(wristwatch, phone), a journal and pen. But prepare that a few of them won't have anyway

- see the intentions and principles of Council in the activity “Way of Council” (page 83)
- make sure you have a first aid kit, know how to use it (or have someone in your team who knows how to offer first aid), or have a first aid plan in case anyone gets hurt
- This activity will make more sense for participants and it will be easier to facilitate if you go through this experience yourself first, by following the instructions individually and wandering in the nearby nature, letting yourself be guided by the invitations given.
- For more context on this practice see this link also found in the qr code:
- [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/125iM17lrZltUnWCsZ65enEUY96AeKHPo?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/125iM17lrZltUnWCsZ65enEUY96AeKHPo?usp=drive_link)

### Facilitator handout - Nalungiaq (Inuit story)

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.



# Safety when wandering

Depending on where the activity is taking place, and what the activity requires, try to do it in safer spaces like gardens, public parks or near urban areas, if you are in the wilderness DO YOUR RESEARCH and avoid areas with higher risk.

## **Emergency whistle**

- Hand out emergency whistles to the participants and agree upon a code for emergency help (this is the standard protocol: blow on the whistle three times. one, two, three. Then make a pause. Then again one, two, three, and so on, until someone replies -for example)
- Tell the participants to move toward an emergency call when they hear it, and sound off with their own whistle (also agree upon an answering call different from the emergency call, usually its one whistle), and to help if they know first aid and are sure they can help, otherwise to keep company until the facilitator or other help arrives
- You can also give out your phone number in case of emergencies

## **First aid**

- When in nature make sure to have a first aid kit with you and know how to use it

## **30 minute window**

- If the participants do not return in a 30 minute window from the agreed upon time a search party needs to be sent to find them, make sure that the participants are informed of this

## **Lay of the land / Animals and insects / Dangerous plants**

- If you are holding the activity in the wilderness, research the area and the potentially dangerous places, animals, insects and plants beforehand, if there are any notable dangers inform your participants of them and give out maps of the area if needed

## **Must have equipment**

- Whistles and timepieces for all participants, first aid kit, and a phone with which you can call the emergency line



# How to wander

## individual work

- Invite participants not speak to each other during wanders, and respect each other's space.
- Even if they feel or think that the other one may be open for a conversation, still respect their privacy, and everyone's right to have their own experience.

## Cross a threshold

- At the beginning of the wander it is good to cross a threshold. This can be a line on the ground, or the space between two trees, or a doorway, or a river, a bridge, anything that symbolizes a crossing between two places. Stop, be aware of the threshold, remind yourself of your intention (one of the wander invitations) and cross it.

## Phones on airplane with timer set

- Phones are always on airplane mode and completely silent. Ask participants to set a timer to give themselves enough time to return.

## Journal

- Invite participants to take their journal and write, either in that place, during or at the end of the wander.



# Rhythms of bodies, bodies of others

**Timing: 90 min**

**Learning objectives:**

- Experience how it feels to embody a being of nature
- Develop felt embodied empathy towards more-than-human living beings

**Methodology step by step:**

**Stepping into wild feet (10 min)**

- Participants are guided into a physical activity, in which they have to choose an animal they like or are inspired by, and act as though they are that animal.

**Meeting a wild other (15 min)**

- Coming into pairs, participants meet each other as the animal they were embodying. They approach each other from the animal perspective.

**Wild wandering. (30 min)**

- Participants are invited into a solo wander into nearby nature, to meet a more-than-human wild being (such as a tree, sky, grass, stone, earth air, insect or any other living being) and return with a symbolic object that links to the being.

**Council of wild others (30 min)**

- We gather in council and speak from the perspective of the being we encountered in the wander before.

**Closing (5 min)**

- Offering thanks to the land

**Setting of the room, participants distribution:**

- Circle on ground mats or pillows. Artwork materials in the center of the circle when needed. Participants will also spend time solo wandering in nature.

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Stepping into wild feet (10 min)**

*"All right. So, let's start by standing up and start moving. as your body feels to move right now, and start walking slowly listening to your breath, feeling your feet... flowing into your body. Move and allow others to pass by without noticing them, without interacting. Follow your own rhythm. Follow the rhythm of your own body and move...just move"*

*"Just see what your rhythm is today. How do your feet like to move with it? Fast or slow. If it's steady. Is it a-rhythmical? Or is it in a way that doesn't make any sense? Just move in this space. Then take a deep breath in and out ... maybe stretch a little bit. Shake anything in your body that needs to be shaken."*

*"And slowly, in your own rhythm, come to a standstill. Just stop and close your eyes."*

*“And then let it come into your mind’s eye, in your imagination, the presence of an animal. Any animal. Maybe it’s an animal that you admire or it’s an animal that you’ve met someplace. Maybe it’s an animal that stayed within your mind from a documentary or from a photo or a video game. Just let the memory, the image, the presence of this animal join you and observe it a little bit...”*

*“Ask yourself: How does this animal look? Does it have fur? Does it have paws? Is it tall or small? Is it slim or big? How does this animal move? Is it fast or slow? Does it walk on four legs or on two? Does it skip around or run? How does it move?”*

*“Allow yourself to feel this movement. Allow yourself to slowly step into the shoes, into the paws of this animal, into the fur of this animal and start moving as though you are this animal, this living being of the earth... Slowly move as it does. Maybe it’s a slow movement or fast movement, just move as though you are this animal.”*

*“Be aware that there are also other animals around you moving in this space, try not to disturb them, just move within your own animal feet and fur. Listen, with the animal ears you have, look at the space around you with your animal eyes, move within your animal feet and wings. Smell the air with your nose. Feel the wind through your animal skin and keep moving as this one... Keep moving as this one, that came to your mind, to your imagination.... Move.... Move, breathe... Move...”*

*“Maybe there’s a sound that this animal makes. Maybe there’s a growl or a shout or anything else. Any other sound that this animal makes and if you don’t feel like doing it here, surrounded by these other animals, maybe you can do it in your own imagination... do this sound movement, shake.”*

*“Just allow yourself to express yourself as your animal self.”*

*“And maybe there are other animals around that are doing the same. Others that are moving, exploring, discovering... start to notice them. Maybe as you pass by other animals, you acknowledge their presence. Maybe there’s a growl or a shout of acknowledgment, maybe there’s some way to let them know you see them.. you’re here.”*

*“And slowly, steadily, come to rest in front of another, of another living being around you. So come to rest and find a partner for the next activity. Without talking, without speaking, just rest, one in front of the other.”*

### **Meeting a wild other (15 min)**

*“Coming into this pair, just allow yourself to make eye contact for a few moments, without talking acknowledging each other’s presence.”*

*“First, take ten steps backward putting some space between the two of you. And then you start moving one towards the other. keeping eye contact, you take every step carefully, synchronising yourself with your partner.”*

...

*“And now you again will put 10 steps of space between yourselves, but this time, when you approach each other, you will do it from your animal selves. Walking as that one does, looking through your animal eyes, making your animal sounds. and as you meet, just take in the other.”*

...

*“And now you again will put 10 steps of space between yourselves, approach each other from your animal selves. Synchronise your movements, your pace. As you meet, synchronise your breaths, and interact with each other from your animal selves ,in your animal ways. Not speaking, but communicating in other ways that feel wild to you.”*

*“As you come to an end of this interaction, come to rest somewhere on the ground and spend the next five minutes sharing on this experience.”*

*"Now let's stand up, all of us and find ourselves in a circle. And slowly start shaking your body, shake your arms, your shoulders, shake yourself back into your normal body, your human self, shake your chest and your belly, allowing the animal self you were moving with to recede in the background, shake your feet and feel the ground beneath, coming back into the full awareness and embodied presence of yourself. And stop."*

### **Wild wandering (30 min)**

*"Coming back into our circle, please make sure you have everything you need to go on a wander, your whistle, water, pen and journal and your timepiece. We will continue to explore meeting wild others, and now I will invite you to go on a wander and to spend some time meeting a wild being, more-than-human other."*

*"This is an individual activity, so from this moment until we convene here in council, I invite you to not interact with the other participants unless there is an emergency."*

*"So you are invited to go on the land open for a conversation, for a meeting of another. As you start your wandering you can find yourself in front of a threshold. This can be the space between two trees, or a bridge, or crossing a pathway, or the space between two stones or pinecones. Just stop in front of the threshold and remember your intention of meeting a wild, more-than-human."*

*"And cross into the wander, and wander softly, with all your senses open, wander with a soft body and open heart. You can also open your vision, to softly allow yourself to see at the edges of your sight, through the periphery of your vision."*

*"Wander around until you find another wild one, or you let yourself be found by another. Any living being is good, just let yourself be surprised by what finds you."*

Here are a few possibilities of what you can do with this one:

- *"Say hello to this one, introduce yourself and ask for permission to be there. Use your voice, speak out loud."*
- *"Tell this one about yourself, your curiosity, your wants, your desires, what brings you to this place"*
- *"Ask this one about itself. its wants and desires, its life, what it likes, its life. Listen carefully with your ears, your imagination, emotions and deep thinking."*
- *"Ask if it wants to show you something, tell you something, let yourself be surprised by what it wants to share."*
- *"Share a favourite poem with this one, or tell it a story."*
- *"Observe the relationships this one has with this place, other beings or elements in this place. And speak that to it."*
- *"Observe this one through your senses and notice how it looks, smells, feels, and so on, observe it carefully and with curiosity."*
- *"Mirror the being, move as it does, make the sounds it makes, adopt its posture, feel as it feels."*
- *"Ask the being if it has a story of its own to share, or a story of the place it inhabits. Listen softly and journal."*

*"As you return, bring with you some object that symbolises the being, or the encounter with the being. Be respectful and ask for permission to take anything from the land with you."*

*"As you prepare to finish make sure you thank the other and the place, and take a short moment before you leave to see if anything surprises you."*

*"Make your way back to council by crossing a threshold (the same as before or another)"*

*"Make sure to set your clock either an alarm or a timer so you have enough time to return here. For this wander you have 30 minutes."*

### **Council of wild others (30 min)**

*"Alright so let's settle down into council. We will share on this wander, and you are invited to share in a specific way. I hope you brought the object that symbolises the being you met. So I invite you to take this object in your hands, and bring into your awareness the one whom you met on the wander. How this one felt, what it looked like, how it moved, how it smelled and shifted with the wind. Invite this one here, into your body, lending it your voice."*

*"And what we will do is that one by one, we will speak from the perspective of the wild being we encountered in the wander before."*

*"We use the talking object and go one by one, and keep in mind the council's intentions: speak from the heart, listen with the heart, leap from the heart and speak to the heart of the matter. We will have 4 min each to share and I will keep time."*

### **Closing (5 min)**

*"I invite you to return this object back to the land from where you brought it here, offering your gratitude to it and to the land in your own way. If you don't remember where you took it from, or cannot find the place again, just find a good place for it in nature."*

### **Materials:**

- safety whistles, watches, journals, pens
- art materials: coloured pencils, coloured markers, chalk pastels, wax crayons, plasticine or clay, drawing paper

### **Tips and tricks:**

- Best to do this activity after you've done the one called "Wandering" (page 110) with the same group and "The way of Council" (page 83) with at least one other group before.
- You can ask participants in the preparation phase to make sure they bring a whistle, a timepiece, a journal and pen. But prepare that a few of them won't have anyway
- make sure you have a first aid kit, know how to use it or have a first aid plan in case anyone gets hurt while wandering
- This activity will make more sense for participants and it will be easier to facilitate if you go through this experience yourself first, by following the instructions individually and wandering in the nearby nature, letting yourself be guided by the invitations given. Council can be done also individually.

# Safety third

**Timing: 90 minutes**

**Learning objectives:**

- Discover the learning potential of deprioritising safety.
- Discover the pleasure of going through your limits and achieving or finding something beyond them

**Methodology step by step:**

**Opening (5 min):**

- Facilitator guides a connection practice and then a short centering practice that can be helpful in the following activity.

**Main activity (50 min):**

- Facilitator takes participants through a shocking experience in which they have to go beyond their limits.
- They finish this part by encountering a rewarding surprise.

**Debriefing (30 min)**

**Closing (5 min)**

- Facilitator's offers an input on the topic.

**Setting of the room, participants distribution:**

- Participants work individually, and then in small groups.

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Opening (5 min):**

*"Ok, so let's stand up and start walking through the room in a random manner, by going in any direction, or changing direction suddenly, trying to fill the empty spaces in the room at all times, and slow down or hurry up, fall into your own rhythm..."*

*"Keep walking... Now start noticing how you feel... how is your breath, how does your body feel, what emotions are going through you..."*

*"And start to notice that there are people around you... make eye contact, maybe even break a smile or two..."*

*"Without talking, find a way to show that you acknowledge their presence, that you see them... and come to a stop in front of someone else, forming pairs."*

*"With this pair, make eye contact and, holding this connection that is created by making eye contact, synchronize three breaths..."*

*"Now keep walking... and come back to your breath... while walking in the same random manner, breathe in deeply three times, filling your lungs and exhale slowly... and come to rest in front of another person."*

*"And with this new partner, you will make eye contact, synchronize three breaths and after you have managed that you will say the first word that comes to your mind..."*

*"And then keep walking and again come back to your breath...breathe in deeply three times...and come to rest yet again in front of another person."*

*"With this new human in front of you, you will make eye contact, synchronize three breaths and after you have managed that, you will say a sentence, one sentence that is your truth at this moment. Something that is true for you at this very moment. ...."*

*"And start moving again....."*

*"Now stop for a moment... Close your eyes, breathe in, breathe out, and again, deep breath in and breathing out, open your eyes..."*

*"And find five green things... "*

*"Discover four sounds around you.... "*

*"Three different things to touch. .."*

*"Two things to smell ..."*

*"And one thing to taste... "*

### **Main activity (50 min):**

#### **1. Walk and talk (12 min):**

*"Find the person you were in the last moment of connection and along this one we will be walking together in the next few minutes."*

*"I will give you a prompt and as you walk you are invited to share on this topic. make sure you give each other space so you both get to share."*

- First topic: *"Tell a story about a moment when you were nervous."* you have 4 min for this.
- Second topic: *"Tell about a talent you have and how you use it."* you have 4 min for this.
- Third topic: *"Tell a story about a time when something hurt."* you have 4 min for this.

#### **2. Shocking activity (30 min):**

*"The destination is beyond the river, so we will cross it here. Follow me."*

- (cross the river or go through the challenging task you decided on, go slow so all can follow)

#### **3. Rewarding surprise (10 min):**

- (Have the participants led with their eyes closed to the surprise, fantastic view, a before prepared picnic, a wonderful corner of nature whatever you find fascinating)

### **Debriefing (30 min)**

#### **Closing (5 min)**

*"Safety third. Sometimes the things that are worth having, or experiencing are beyond what we are willing to do, beyond our comfort or our limits."*

*"Safety third, as in having giving and receiving as first and second priorities, not necessarily in that order. Receiving is to fully enjoy being alive in this world. It is to behold with awestruck wonder the magnificence of creation. It is to delight in the gifts of others, and the animals and plants and the sky, the singing of the birds, the creativity of other people, to play and enjoy."*

*“Giving is what you put into the world. It is your art and music, it is the love you show to others, it is volunteering for no obvious reward as a goal, it is everything you do to make the world more alive and more beautiful.”*

*Safety third, go beyond the limits and let yourself be surprised by what or whom you may find there.*

#### **Debriefing questions:**

- What did we do in the last few hours?
- How did you feel in this experience?
- Did you discover anything about yourself in all this?
- How was it for you to go over your limits?
- How did it feel to find the surprise?
- What are some takeaways from this workshop for you?
- How can you transfer this in your daily life?

#### **Materials:**

- Facilitator resource with questions

#### **Tips and tricks:**

- make sure you do the challenging task yourself first before the workshop to know is it possible to do and to the level of the weakest participant
- use the land resources creatively, maybe there is a beautiful view or a small patch or weird forest, or a great rock, that you can give as a surprise. If nothing else, an improvised simple picnic can do.
- You can find more topics for walk and talk in the resource text



## More than one story - conversation topics

Tell a story about the time when something hurt  
Tell about someone you miss.  
Tell a story about a present which you have given or received  
Tell about the time when you succeeded  
Tell a story from a trip you have made  
Tell a story of your choice from an experience in your life.  
Tell about something you are grateful for  
Tell a story about the moment when you were nervous.  
Tell about the talent you have and how you use it.  
Tell about something you have created or want to create  
Tell a story about the time when you felt lucky.  
Tell a story of your choice from an experience in your life.  
Tell about someone you admire, and why?  
Tell a story about the time when you got mad.  
Tell a story about a moment you will always remember.  
Tell about something you look forward to.  
Tell about the person who has had an impact on your life.  
Tell something about how you played as a child.  
Tell a story about something that made you happy.  
Tell about a personality trait, you have inherited.  
Tell a story about something exciting, you have experienced.  
Tell a story about the moment you are proud.  
Tell a story about the time when you broke a rule,  
Tell about a moment, which you would like to live again.  
Tell about something you appreciate about yourself.  
Tell about something new that you would like to do.  
Describe the life of your dreams.  
Describe a place where you lived as a child.  
Tell a story about the time when you were scared.  
Tell a story about something that you have lost or have found.  
Tell a story about the mistake you have made.  
Tell about one of your passions.  
Tell a story about the period in your life you will always remember.  
Tell about the person that makes you feel good.  
Tell about the place that makes you feel good.  
Tell about how a book has influenced you.  
Tell a story about an embarrassing moment.  
Tell a story about a time when you were generous.

- Source: <https://www.simrishamn.se/kultur-och-fritid/more-than-one-story>



# Four windows of knowing

**Timing: 2 sessions of 1.5 hours with a flexible 20 min break**

**Learning objectives:**

- Discover that there are four ways to interact and discover the world
- Experience perception of the world through each window of knowing

**Methodology step by step:**

**Centering practice (10 min):**

- Facilitator guides a practice to help bring participants into the present moment, and open the four windows (thinking, sensing, feeling and imagination)

**Model description with visual aids (20 min):**

- Facilitator presents the model of the four windows of knowing using visual aid.

**Experiential activities (105 min)**

- Participants are guided into four experiential activities, one for each window with a break in between.

**Wander (40 min)**

- Participants are invited in an individual exploration, in the surrounding nature to interact or spend time, or speak to a natural being or element they find there.

**Debriefing (20 min)**

**Closing (5 min)**

- A short activity for rounding up focussed on sharing in the whole circle.

**Setting of the room, participants distribution:**

- Participants work individually, and then in small groups.

**Handouts or materials:**

- Facilitator resources with the visual aid

**Instructions to Participants:**

**Centering practice (10 min):**

*"Let's be here and now... and find 5 different colors around you..., and closing your eyes notice 4 thoughts that come to your mind right now..., and 3 emotions you are feeling right now or have felt today and where do these emotions move in your body, and 2 things that come to your imagination..., and one things that is true fro you right now."*

**Model description with visual aids (20 min):**

*"What you experienced right now is a practice that is meant to open, even a bit slightly what we call the four windows of knowing."*

*"Can any of you guess what these four are?"*

- (take some answers and see if they fit, and place the visual aids on the flipchart/floor)

*“From the perspective of psychologist Stephen Eligio Gallegos, we are born with 4 faculties through which we experience, discover and interact, and know the world. These are Deep thinking, Feeling, Deep Imagination and Senses. These four modes of knowing are equal as value and power in our being. And each one offers a different perspective on our outer and inner world, together creating a whole picture. It is the way we are naturally built to engage the world.”*

*“Let’s move into experiencing opening these windows and then we will talk more about it.”*

### **Experiential activities (105 min)**

- (use facilitator resource for these activities, page 127)

#### **1. Deep thinking - Sharing of stories (35 min):**

#### **Break (20 min)**

#### **2. Sensing - Magic raisin (15 min):**

#### **3. Feeling - Emotional embodiment and artwork (20 min):**

#### **4. Deep imagination - Guided imagery (15 min):**

#### **Wander (40 min)**

*“In the following 30 minutes I will invite you into a wander, to interact with the land, with the beings and elements of this surrounding place. This is an individual activity, from the moment we finish with the instructions, until we return to the group and I initiate the group discussion. This means you are encouraged to not speak to each other, and allow everyone to have their own experience.”*

*“You will have individual, solo time in nature, in the presence of an element, a being, or a place in nature.”*

*“You are invited to walk and find or be found by a being in nature to be in its presence, observe, or engage in a conversation with it. It can be a rock, a tree, a blade of grass, the earth, the wind, water, a bug or the clouds, an animal, a bird. Any nature being or element will do.”*

*“Go wander and find a place, or let yourself be found by a place or being, or element that feels welcoming.”*

*“In this place, or with this being, open your 4 windows one by one and observe what happens. Be curious, open and let yourself be surprised.”*

*“For this wander you have 30 minutes. Start your timer now and make sure you give yourself enough time to return here. We meet back here at exactly (specify the time by counting 30 min from now). I remind you that this is an individual activity, please respect each other’s process and do not interact until we meet back here.”*

#### **Debriefing (20 min)**

#### **Closing(5 min)**

*“As a closing, I invite everyone to share one word or metaphor that describes this experience for you. Whoever feels ready can start and then we go in a circle.”*

### Debriefing questions:

- What did we do in this workshop/activity?
- How did you feel throughout this activity?
- What were the main/strongest emotions you felt through this experience?
- What did you discover about how you connect with nature?
- How was it to experience the world through the 4 windows?
- Did you find any window more easier to open than others?
- What do you take from this experience?
- How can you practice this in your daily life?

### Materials:

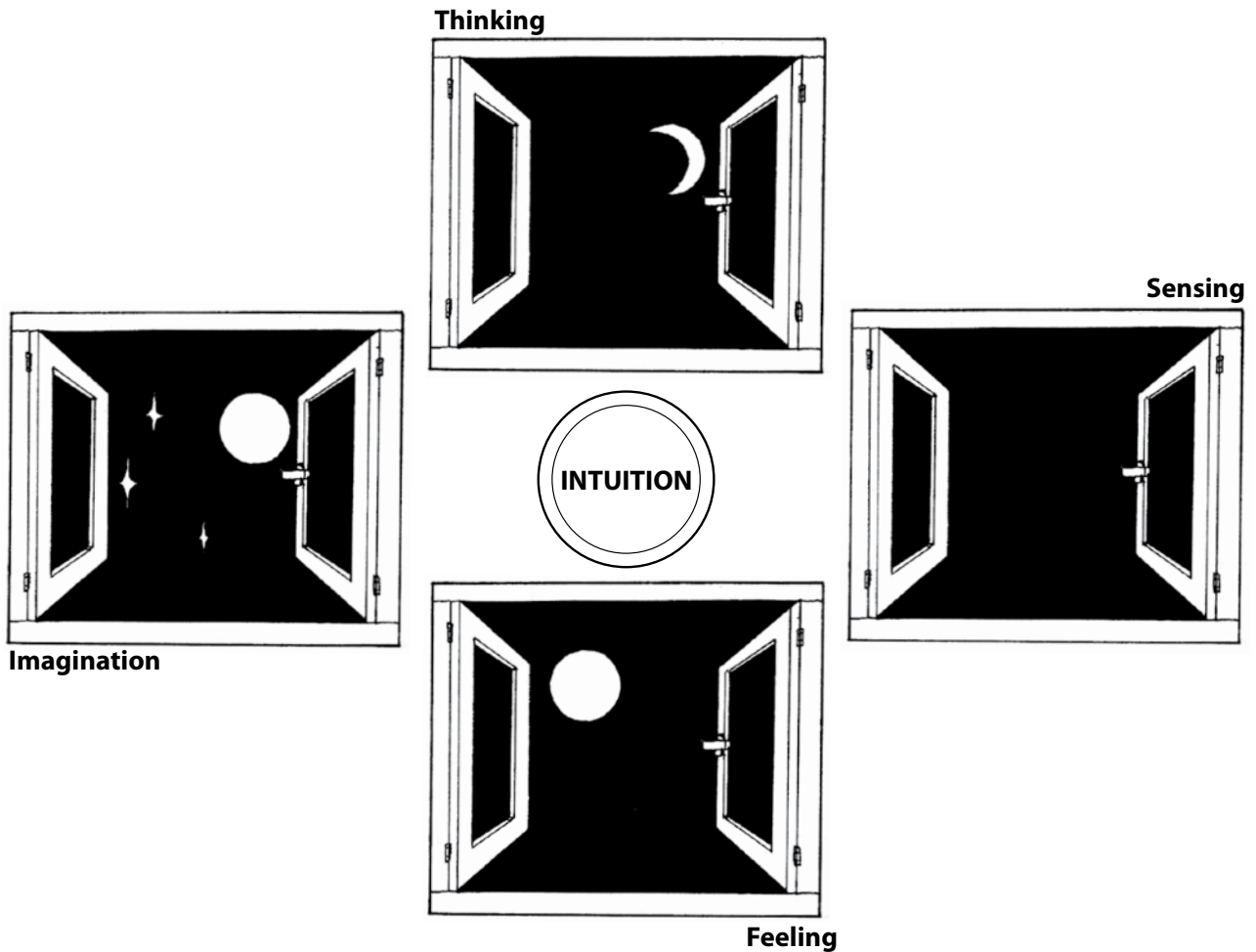
- colored pencils, markers, wax crayons or pastels, 30 sheets of blank paper
- bag of raisins and some other dried fruit for those who are allergic or intolerant to raisins
- Flipchart and visual aids found on the next page, or the more colorful ones at this link: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b2K7M\\_uCBhyLGHCbHZBMkd0BklXvIF6m/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b2K7M_uCBhyLGHCbHZBMkd0BklXvIF6m/view)
- all participants must have a clock/watch or any timepiece

### Tips and tricks:

- This activity will make more sense for participants and it will be easier to facilitate if you go through this experience yourself first, by following the instructions individually.
- you can shorten this activity by removing the experiential activities part and send them directly on a wander.
- Try out the raisins or other fruit you offer, make sure they are tasty.



# The Four Windows of Knowing



## Deep listening:

- Just listen, do not speak while the other is talking, absorb your reaction
- Do not interpret, do not jump to conclusions
- Do not try to see or point out the good part in a bad situation
- Offer body language that incites curiosity, openness, and presence, do not cross your arms
- Take the perspective of the person you are listening to
- Practice active curiosity and be open minded
- Connect to the emotion of the other and communicate it by making sure you understand the context and the emotion felt
- Listen from the heart
- Do not judge and do not give unwanted advice, or advice of any kind while listening

# Experiential activities - 4 windows of knowing

## Deep thinking(35 min) - Sharing of stories:

*"To start with, find yourself another person you would like to work with, for the next 15 min. Go sit with that one."*

*"I will give you a prompt and you are invited to share a story. You get 10 min, and at half time I will let you know when to switch. Any questions?"*

*"So take the next ten minutes, to share a moment in your life when you have been proud of yourself."*

- (start a 10 min timer and at 5 min tell them it is time to switch storytellers)

*"Good. How was that? How was it to share?"*

- (take 2-3 reactions and then move on to the next part)

*"For the next ten minutes we will do the same, but this time with a more focused perspective. So as you take in the other's person's story, I invite you to follow these guidelines:"*

- (put the flipchart from the resources on the wall)

### Deep listening:

- Listen from the heart.
- Take the perspective of the one you are listening to.
- No advice.
- Do not try to see the good part of the situation.
- Don't judge, don't interpret, don't jump to conclusions.
- Practice active curiosity and be open minded.
- Connect to the emotion of the other and communicate it by making sure you understand the context and the emotion felt.
- Connect to your own emotions that are aroused in you by being connected to the other and communicating these emotions, without grabbing the interaction.
- Offer body language that indicates openness, curiosity, presence.
- Just listen, do not speak while the other is sharing, absorb your reaction.

*"Now you will have again 10 min, 5 min for each one of you to be a storyteller. But this time you are invited to follow these guidelines. You can focus on one or more, or all of them as you take in the other's story."*

- (start a 10 min timer and at 5 min tell them it is time to switch storytellers)

## Sensing - Magic raisin (15 min):

1. *"Please pick up two raisins and try not to eat them until you are told to do so."*
2. *"Now please eat the first raisin as you would normally eat a raisin. (Demonstrate eating the raisin yourself)."*
3. *"Now we are going to practice mindful eating with the second raisin. This is going to be very different from how you normally eat food, so listen closely to the directions."*

- *“Place your second raisin in your hand. Imagine that you are a scientist discovering a raisin for the first time. Better yet, imagine you are an alien from another planet and have just landed on Earth! This raisin is the first thing you find, so we are going to explore it using all of our senses.”*
- *“First we will use our sense of sight. Lift the raisin up so that you can see it clearly. Focus all of your attention on really seeing it. Scan it with your vision, exploring every little ridge, bump, and surface.”*
- *“Hold it in your fingers and notice how many colors you can see.”*
- *“Notice all of the different shapes. Hold it up to the light and notice any lighter or darker spots.”*
- *“Next, we will use our sense of touch. Close your eyes and explore the raisin using just your sense of touch. What textures do you notice? Is it hard or soft? Smooth or rough? Really take your time and focus your attention on feeling the texture of the raisin.”*
- *“You may notice thoughts arising, like, ‘This is weird,’ or ‘why are we doing this?’ or even, ‘I hate raisins!’ These thoughts are normal. See if you can simply notice these thoughts, let them go, and then bring all of your attention back to the raisin. You may notice your emotions and thoughts changing as you are able to focus more attention on the raisin.”*
- *“Now we will explore it with our sense of smell. Have you ever smelled a raisin? Move the raisin beneath your nose and very gently notice any smells. What does it smell like? Does it remind you of anything? Focus your awareness on the smell of the raisin and let all other thoughts go.”*
- *“Next, we will explore the raisin with our sense of hearing. You might laugh and think raisins do not make any noises, but have you ever listened to a raisin? Bring the raisin to one ear, close your eyes, get really quiet, and then use all of your attention to listen to the raisin. Gently squeeze it, roll it around, and try to notice if there is any sound coming from the raisin.”*
- *“Finally, we will explore the raisin with our sense of taste! Very slowly place the raisin on your tongue without chewing it. Close your eyes and your mouth and let the raisin rest on your tongue. Focus all of your attention on any tastes or textures you can notice with your tongue. Roll the raisin around in your mouth and then very slowly take just one bite. What do you notice? Pay attention to the details. Take another bite. Then another.”*
- *“Notice when your brain tells you it is time to swallow and then see if you can use your senses to notice how it feels to swallow a raisin. Imagine the raisin moving down your throat and into your belly.”*
- *“You may even take a moment to reflect on the long journey this raisin took to get to your belly. The grape seed that grew into a plant. The farmer who picked the grapes and dried them in the sun. The truck driver who drove your raisin across the country to the grocery store. The store clerk who put it on the shelf. Me who bought the raisin and brought it to you. And finally, the journey it took from your hand, to your mouth, to your stomach, where it is now giving you the same energy it took from the sun as it grew. How often do we really think about where our food comes from?”*
- *“Take a moment to notice how it feels to eat mindfully. Notice any sensations in your body and any changes in your thoughts or emotions.”*

### **Feeling - Emotional embodiment and artwork (20 min):**

- (Take the group through this sequence in a steady, slow manner at the pace of the group.)

*“Ok, so let’s stand up and start walking through the room in a random manner, by going in any direction, or changing direction suddenly, trying to fill the empty spaces in the room at all times, and slow down or hurry up, fall into your own rhythm....”*

*“Keep walking...Now start noticing how you feel... how is your breath, how does your body feel, what emotions are going through you...”*

*“And start to notice that there are people around you... make eye contact, maybe even break a smile or two...”*

*"Without talking, find a way to show that you acknowledge their presence, that you see them... and come to a stop in front of someone else, forming pairs."*

*"With this pair, make eye contact and, holding this connection that is created by making eye contact, synchronize three breaths..."*

*"Now keep walking... and come back to your breath...while walking in the same random manner, breath in deeply three times, filling your lungs and exhale slowly... and come to rest in front of another person."*

*"And with this new partner, you will make eye contact, synchronize three breaths and after you have managed that you will say the first word that comes to your mind..."*

*"And then keep walking and again come back to your breath...breathe in deeply three times...and come to rest yet again in front of another person."*

*"With this new human in front of you, you will make eye contact, synchronize three breaths and after you have managed that, you will say a sentence, one sentence that is your truth at this moment. Something that is true for you at this very moment. "*

*"... Now start moving again, slowly, and do not interact with the others... and through the walking, i invite you to come to a standstill... still standing, still moving your body but come to a rest in one spot, and close your eyes.... bring your awareness to your emotions, what is present here, what are you feeling, maybe it is one emotion or more... where do they move or live in your body?...be curious about them, invite them inward, and welcome them, see how they feel, what is the intensity of this emotion, what's it's movement and also the relationship with the rest of your body?"*

*"Allow it to be there and move your body, maybe it wants to make a sound, or move you in any way..."*

*"And now allow your attention to come into your body, notice your breath, notice the beating of the heart and the blood flowing through you... You may even touch your wrist to feel the heartbeat pumping. listen to it..."*

*"Feel your sense of wakefulness or sleepiness, are you tired or rested?...Do you feel powerful or lacking power?...Notice also your sense of wellbeing, do you feel healthy or not so much, towards disease?... what is running through your body?..."*

*"Alright and now sit down finding your journal and take few minutes writing of this experience or draw, sketch, using the art materials."*

- *bring out the pencils, markers, wax crayons or pastels and some sheets of blank paper (for people who don't have a journal with them)*

### **Deep imagination - Guided imagery (25 min):**

*"Allow yourself to come to the end (of the drawing\journaling) and closing your journal i invite you to find a comfortable seat and close your eyes, allow yourself to focus on your breath, inward breath..."*

*"outward breath..."*

*"and follow it, follow your breath into your body, wherever it takes you..."*

*"see if it leads somewhere and be there.... and breathe in and out, and allow yourself to just rest... just be here..."*

*"And maybe you feel as something like the seed of you resting in the fertile ground...allow yourself to just be here, as the seed of you feels into the earth...feels into the warmth and holding of the soil..."*

*"As a seed and you have been in the earth for a long, long time."*

*"Spring summer, autumn, winter. And then again, spring summer, autumn, have come and gone, and you have been in the ground for this long long, winter.... long, cold, winter..."*



*"and gradually slowly spring comes. And as the sun, warms the air and the warm gentle rain begins to fall, the earth soaks up the moisture and reaches, down through the ground in the cracks and starts to wetten the soil around you..."*

*"The earth and moisture is around you. And you're soaking up this moisture. ..."*

*"as a seed start popping open, and you begin to grow a root... Small root goes down in the ground... Looking for that water. The small root of you is soaking the water and taking on nutrients and as you grow more roots are sprouting from you and you grow more and more.... and reach deeper and deeper into the ground, and your roots are providing you with food and water, and they anchor you into the earth."*

*"And slowly, a shoot begins to grow upward upper through the dark soil..."*

*"and this small shoot breaks through the soil for the first time and you find the sun..."*

*"and you start to absorb the warmth and the energy of the sun..."*

*"and as the sun is absorbed, you start to grow taller and taller... and your stem grows thicker and you start to sprout leaves..."*

*"and then a small bud and this bud growing it's way towards the sun, embracing the sun starts to develop a blossom..."*

*"and this blossom is hugging the sun and thanks it, for its energy... and you reach down deeper and deeper into the ground with your roots... They grow stronger and stronger, and you reach upwards towards the sky higher higher, stronger and stronger...embracing the worth of the sun. Allow yourself to feel this."*

*"This sense, this state, you are a conversation between the ground and the earth, you are a conversation between the ground and the sky, the earth and the sky..."*

*"For a moment allow yourself to see this wonderful wonderful being that is growing... this wonderful being that is growing between sky and earth. This being of you, that sprouted from the seed of you, then grew and grew. Just allow yourself to see, feel, sense, smell this one. just notice it and be with it. ...."*

.....

*"Now slowly and steadily, find a way to say thank you and some form of "I'll see you later" to this one and come back to your body."*

*"Come back here. And now in the room that we are in, noticing the air, the sounds, the light slowly move your body and in your own rhythm, open your eyes and find your journal."*

*"Now take a few minutes to write or draw anything in your journal that you would like to bring back from this experience."*

*"And now stand up and move around, shake a little bit, a bit more, shake your hands, your neck, your feet, your legs, shake your body, and find another person to share on these experiences int he next 10 min."*

# Group Contract for Nature-based Youth Work

This is a list of attitudes /principles/rules to be used freely in your work. We've noticed time and time again in our work with children, youth and adults that it is a good practice to have a group contract that everyone adheres to. Below we listed those principles we use in our trainings and workshops.

Decide for yourself which you need for their specific target group, and find a way to include a discussion with your participants on these principles.

## 1. Confidentiality

All that is shared in this circle, stays in this circle. You cannot share another person's experience without their direct, informed consent. You can share your own and the flow or process, but it is of the utmost importance that we hold each other's experiences safe.

## 2. Curiosity

Curiosity is a powerful and transformative attitude to adopt when immersing oneself in nature. When we approach nature with curiosity, we open ourselves up to a world of wonders waiting to be discovered. We question, observe, and seek to comprehend the processes, patterns, and life forms that surround us. This inquisitive mindset leads to a deeper appreciation for the complexity and beauty inherent in every leaf, rock, and creature.

Furthermore, curiosity in nature leads to personal growth. It encourages us to learn from the natural world, drawing parallels between its resilience and adaptability and our own capacity for growth and adaptation. We are inspired to see challenges as opportunities for evolution, both for ourselves and the world we inhabit.

## 3. Respect

Cultivating an attitude of respect towards the environment is an ecological responsibility and a profound recognition of our interconnectedness with the natural world. When we embrace sustainability, practice conservation, and nurture an eco-conscious mindset, we contribute to the preservation of the very essence that sustains us.

In the team context, open lines of communication foster understanding, build trust, and fortify the bonds that hold a team together. Respecting diverse viewpoints within the team mirrors the biodiversity found in nature, each perspective contributing to the richness of the collective experience. By cultivating mindfulness, empathy, and adaptability, we not only contribute to the well-being of the environment but also fortify the foundations of successful teamwork. Like the seasons, teams go through phases, each presenting unique challenges and opportunities for growth. Embracing change as a natural and inevitable part of the journey allows for resilience and innovation to flourish.

## 4. Committing to the schedule

In order to maintain a harmonious and cohesive group dynamic, it is important to respect the timetable. In this way, we not only honor the time and effort put in by the facilitator of the activity, but we also respect the other participants who have organized themselves to meet the schedule. This giving and taking generates good working energy within the group, since the more energy and dedication you put into it, the more the group will respond in kind with joy and effortlessness. It is everyone's job to take care of the group in order to build a cozy atmosphere, pleasant to belong to.

## **5. Exploring your limits but keep yourself safe**

Exploring the limits of the comfort zone in nature is not only about personal growth but also about establishing a bonding with the wild. Discovering the intricate dance of ecosystems, encountering wildlife in their natural habitats, and witnessing the awe-inspiring beauty of untouched landscapes invite us to connect with the simplest things in life- the Earth's wonders.

By embracing discomfort, facing solitude, conquering physical challenges, and forging a deep connection with nature, individuals can unlock hidden potentials, broaden their horizons, and cultivate a deep appreciation for the beauty and complexity of the natural world.

## **6. Getting Permission from others, the land and any non-human others**

Before embarking on any nature-based adventure, it is essential to obtain the necessary permissions and approvals. This includes parental or guardian consent, as well as any permits or authorization required for specific activities or locations. Respecting these permissions is fundamental to building trust with both participants and the natural world. Also, encourage the participants to ask permission from nature and natural things before stepping into a forest, picking a mushroom, a flower, a stone, etc., especially in Land Art activities and such.

## **7. Saying "yes" before you say "no"**

Encourage participants to embrace new opportunities and experiences. Encourage them to say "yes" to challenges, adventures, and learning opportunities in the natural world. Say "yes" to the invitations and practices in these activities, before you say no. Say "yes" consider the proposal, and after you've said at least an internal "yes" if you still feel like saying "no" then follow your gut and step out of the experience.

## **8. Talk from "I"**

Promote open and respectful communication. Encourage participants to express themselves using "I" statements, sharing their personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This fosters a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone's voice is valued, at the same time allowing people(including yourself) to connect with what is alive in them at this moment.

## **9. Disconnect to connect**

Disconnect from technology, from social media, messaging and other tech modern ways of not being here in order to connect with yourself and the living web of life that surrounds you.

## **10. Everything is an invitation**

All activities, all tasks, all the things we propose in this workshop/manual/session is an invitation. Take it as an invitation, take it as deep or as light as you need, or say "no" if you must. If what we propose here does not resonate with you or does not land on you, or simply is not for you right now, let it pass by with all the ease of the wind.

# Tips and tricks for youth workers

These are some elements that we consider important but did not know how to nestle them in any part of the handbook. They may make the difference from a workshop to a really rich learning experience.

## 1. Wild

Embrace the wild, raw, and unpredictable aspects of the natural world. Consider the land, with its beings a co-guide. They are guiding the nature reconnection work as much as you are.

## 2. Do the activity yourself before facilitating it

Most of the workshops and educational activities proposed in this handbook can be explored individually with small adaptations and some imagination. To go through the experience yourself before guiding it for others helps you to connect emphatically with your learner's experience, and will be useful when adapting it for your specific context.

## 3. Clear Instructions

Provide clear and concise instructions for all activities. Ensure that participants understand the invitations you give and underlying instructions. After giving them a task/invitation ask if anyone has any questions. The more clear the instructions, the more chances for success the learning activity has. If there are no questions, it's either that everything is clear or participants are so confused they don't even know what questions to ask. Clear anything that arises.

## 4. Research topic if you need more info

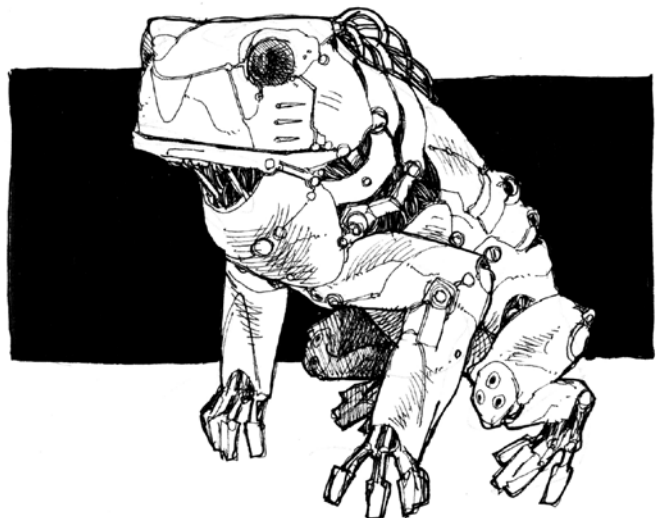
Self-explanatory, we believe, most workshops have some links or references or have their authors or contributors mentioned. You can also contact us by email directly if you need more info.

## 5. Purpose and objective of the activity

All learning activities in this handbook have a learning objective. Make it clear for yourself what this objective is and how the activities you will do with your learners will help you reach that objective. When you know your objective (what you want your participants to gain by the end of the activity) your instructions become much clearer, and you can adapt the workshop to increase the chance of meeting those objectives.

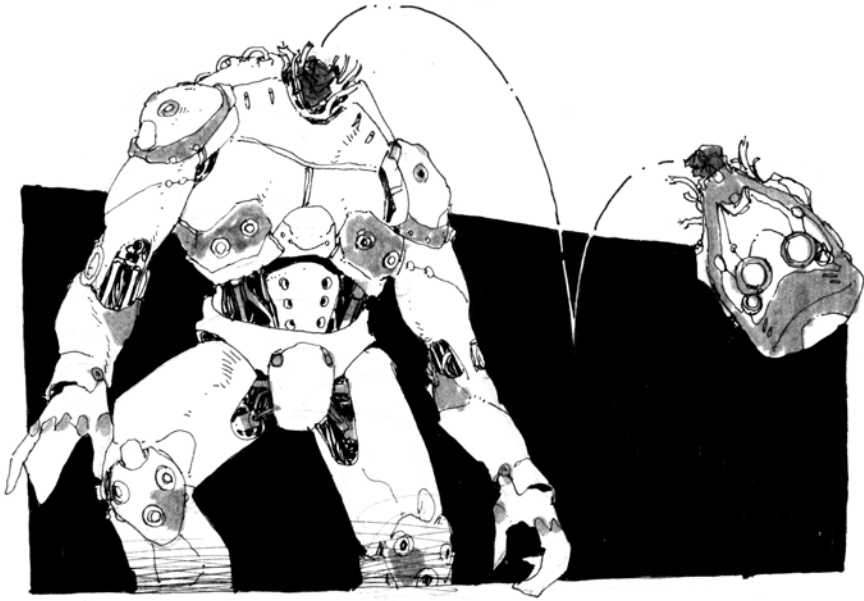
## 6. Safety instructions

Among the resources there is a Safety Protocol document (page 113). Make sure you go over it, know it by heart and introduce it to your learners.

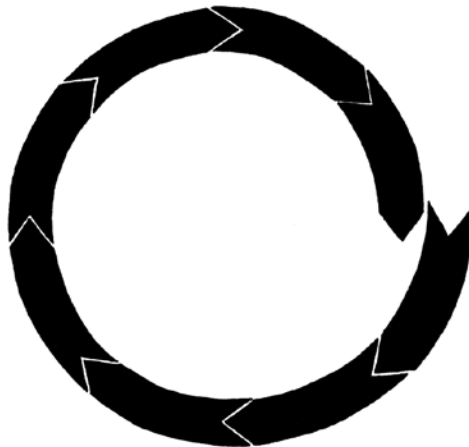


# Integration practices





# Integration practices



## Why does integration matter?

In order to have energy, our body needs to metabolize food, not just to receive food. In the same manner that the process of producing energy by our bodies is not completed just by introducing food in the body, the process of learning is not completed if the new understandings are not metabolized. That is why, we refer to “ integration” as a very important and necessary part in order for the learning process to be completed.

When we talk about learning, we take a holistic approach to the different ways a person can learn. We consider thinking, feelings, senses and imagination as ways of learning, or discovering the world. Beside cognitive learning we also include and sometimes emphasize emotional learning, somatic (bodily-centered) learning, learning that comes through the use of the 5 senses, and that which comes through deep imagination.

Including integration into the learning process is important because it creates a context in which the learner can metabolize what just happened. So it provides a framework within which the learner can fully digest and make sense of the recent learning experiences

It also supports the learner by inviting them to question what just occurred. As a way of encouraging them to reflect on recent happenings.

All this develops the perspective on how different pieces fit together in a broader framework, fostering a deeper understanding of how various elements interconnect within a larger context. Finally, the integration can be related to as the element that connects the result of learning to real-world applications.

## How to apply integration practices in Youth Work

All the integration practices mentioned below have multiple applications in the context of youth work.

Considering the timing of an activity it can be done at the end of an activity or after each consistent section of an activity. It also can be implemented before debriefing, as a practice for emotional release in the case of intense emotional activation.

These types of practices are applicable to all kinds of activities, starting with short timing workshops to longer training sessions. They can replace or support the debriefing and closing part.

Some of these below have a description or a link, others are self-explanatory. For more info and details, contact the authors by email.

## Integrations practices

### Artwork

- Drawing, painting, pastels: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xmd\\_2VZ-MFE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xmd_2VZ-MFE)



- Modeling with clay or plasticine
- Landart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlS64B3rDc>



- Collage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1XpHARdwSc>



- Body percussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsXOehynKJ8&t=1s>



- Musical instruments: <https://www.youtube.com/@SchoolofDrumsandHearts> ( min 3:27)



### Emotional work

- Naming emotions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbBcdfYsCd0>



- Embodying emotions (living statues): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ8SqghGmQA>





- Moving emotions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U53-K0iLsmA&t=23s>



- Fully identifying or merging with an emotion: “I am... Alex’s enthusiasm with this workshop “ or “I am... Ramona’s confusion regarding this situation”

### **Embodiment**

- Shaking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6lyGhAANR0>



- Dancing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynEdiL8KhvQ>



- Stretching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l05Wh6REu7Q&t=108s>



- Jumping: [https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1586447366/tracyk12caus/shud3modjjck84e7xvvg/ActiveHome\\_Jumping\\_Spots.pdf](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1586447366/tracyk12caus/shud3modjjck84e7xvvg/ActiveHome_Jumping_Spots.pdf)



- Mirroring in pairs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNe-QxsMvoM>



- Settle an experience somewhere in the body: <https://www.tarabrach.com/meditation-the-center-of-now-3/>



- Looking for the place in your body where an emotion / experience / insight lives or moves.
- [https://drive.google.com/file/d/123M39vcutM0KhVsML9DQRamc3n9562KI/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/123M39vcutM0KhVsML9DQRamc3n9562KI/view?usp=drive_link)



- Embody the animal/nature being of a experience
- For help with this see the first part of the activity named “Rhythms of bodies, bodies of others” (page 115)
- Unfocused attention, or doing nothing specific and looking in the distance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5WZJGFTSmw>



- Looking at the edges of your vision, with the peripheral sight
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtUURaq\\_Lqc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtUURaq_Lqc)



### Stories

- Sharing in pairs, trio's or tribes on the experience
- Sharing circle: <https://betterhumans.pub/how-to-start-a-sharing-circle-with-your-loved-ones-and-why-you-should-8fa67d5b93aa>



- Word / metaphor of the day

- Journaling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22vd7lYhqA8>



- Write a letter from the third person perspective describing an experience
- Storymaking - write a story/poem about this experience/emotion/insight
- Council(see activity with the same name)
- Speak from the perspective of a story/emotion/insight

#### **Other**

- Wander in nature with and experience or insight or emotion coming from a workshop/learning experience (see activity named Wandering)
- Fooling around being tricksters (head between your legs looking at others, wear your clothes on the other side, speak in bird language)
- Voice dialogue of the parts of you that participated in this experience;( e.g: between the following inner parts: the one who enjoyed , the one who was afraid and the totality of you)

- [https://drive.google.com/file/d/109HFhv\\_4AiZn7p7OZezVaGTfSFssy0c6/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/109HFhv_4AiZn7p7OZezVaGTfSFssy0c6/view?usp=drive_link)



- Revisiting a sit-spot: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hltGpWk1lIB8QzZHO87BLcOU64e4lVz3/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hltGpWk1lIB8QzZHO87BLcOU64e4lVz3/view?usp=drive_link)



# Sit spot

(1 hour or more for initial wander or 5 min a day at random)

Wander in your immediate surroundings, close to home, no longer than a 15 min walk. Place should be accessible.

Wander slowly, with all 4 windows open, until you let yourself be found by a place/being that feels welcoming, safe, curious, inviting.

Once here, ask permission to be here and introduce yourself. Talk about who you are and what you want, long for, are curious about or simply what is present in you right now.

After, wait for a moment for an answer.

Being here, notice this place, the beings in it. The relationship between different beings and elements.

Or simply breathe.

This is your Sit spot. It means you will come here for 5 minutes a day and... sit here.

Make it a practice.

What to do here, here are some possibilities:

- Share on your current state of being, what is alive in you at this moment?
- Ask about other;s, current state and listen with all 4 windows open(Senses, Imagination, Feelings and Thinking; S.I.F.T.)
- Open yourself, and perceive what you S.I.F.T. here( Sese, Imagine, Feel, Think). Do this at dawn or dusk, midday or night. Just observe and notice, metabolize what do you SIFT in these different moments of the day, being here?
- Free-write: set a timer of 5 to 15 min and write freely, without stopping whatever comes through the flow of your conscious awareness. No stoppin, no censorship, just write.
- Dance, move slowly, do intuitive movement
- Observe and track different birds, animals, insects, plants, trees, and their interaction with each other.
- Read poetry out loud to wild others in this place. Over and over again.
- Share dreams or secrets. And ask for the Other's dreams and secrets
- Just sit. And breathe.
- Meditate or do yoga. Or stretch like a cat who just woke up
- Have breakfast, or any other meal and share it with the others
- Watch the sunset and sunrise

Journal on these practices and share with a close other.

# Voice dialogue

Voice dialogue, as developed by Hal and Sidra Stone, is a technique for cultivating awareness of, dialoguing with, and integrating the many parts or aspects of the human psyche. (See H. Stone and S. Stone, *Embracing Our Selves: The Voice Dialogue Manual* (Novato, CA: Nataraj Publishing, 1993). The specific voice-dialogue approach outlined below was developed by Alex Giurgea.

You can use voice dialogue on your own, with a companion, or in a group. Below is an outline of one approach. Feel free to creatively modify it.

If there are one or more others joining you, designate a facilitator. If you're alone, your 3-D Ego is the facilitator (see *Wild Mind*, Bill Plotkin, New World Library, 2013). Here I assume you are working alone.

Imagine more people at a dinner table.

Each of these people are parts of you, different voices that are present in your day-to-day inner dialogue.

The pitcher of water falls and breaks on the table, spilling water and shards of glass everywhere.

How do the different people at the table react? Speak out loud their reactions. You can even be physically at the table in your home, and as you move from one person to another, switch chairs and places at the table. Use your voice, speak out loud using voice and body and full spectrum of emotions.

This exercise can also be done with a journal, where each voice is a different line of dialogue, like in a theater play.



