



HOW CONNECTING WITH NATURE CAN MAKE US HAPPIER

There's no separation between nature and us. As humans we are part of nature, we are connected intimately to it, we breathe the same air, we drink the water, eat the produce of our earth. The awareness of our connection and part in nature is something we may not be as aware of as we would like. Nature doesn't have to be the massive empty expanses of green countryside that somehow the word can conjure in our mind, it can be as simple as a herb pot, a courtyard, a park, garden or canal.



BEING AWARE

Sometimes we can be outside and be barely aware of our surroundings, our mind is elsewhere, visiting the past or sorting out the future, immersed in a current problem or preoccupation. It's these times when we're missing the benefits that nature could bring us.

Before going out for even the shortest of times set an intention to notice the nature that's present. It could be as simple as the persistence of grass forcing a way up through cracks in paving slabs, the sound of a bird, or the particular colour of a leaf, the smell of a flower or the earth itself.



SCIENCE

There's some amazing scientific experiments showing how connecting with nature can make us happier, more creative and even kinder. Look at this* article for some of the facts.

So if we presume this is true, how do we make the most of this connection with nature when so many of us lead busy, urban, technology-led lives?



THINGS TO TRY

To connect more with nature we can try some of these very simple things...

- Spend time alone in nature.
- Take a daily photo - you may want to aim for being more free from technology when you're in nature, so instead you can make a physical or mental diary of something beautiful you've seen. But photos can also be great reminders.
- Plant seeds
- Stand barefoot on the earth



THINGS TO TRY

- Stop. Find a place to just stop and be, even if it's just for a minute. At this point we can ask ourselves what each of our senses can reveal to us. What can I smell? Has the air got a taste, what can I feel (the bark of a tree, a petal?) What can I see and hear?
- Volunteer - places such as a community garden, litter picking, or a conservation group.

RYTHM OF NATURE

When we notice the seasons, the rhythms and cycles of nature, knowing we are part of that can help us accept some of the more difficult parts of life. Looking for beauty in all the seasons, the fresh energy of spring or the gentle decay of autumn helps us accept life's patterns of birth, ageing and death.

EXTRAS

If you've enjoyed this you might like the Creative Compass Point specifically on Landscape Art or some of the other nature based ideas. You may want to join us for an experience here in Masham where you can be guided on a nature and foraging walk or make some landscape art - check the website for more details.

A LITTLE MORE...

If we go outside in the dark - the dark of nature, without street lights or artificial illumination - it feels very different from the daylight, it's good to notice our senses and what we can feel.

We can collect some elements of nature around us (leaves, stones, seeds) and arrange them in pleasing patterns/textures/shapes/colours to create our own meditative landscape art.

If we learn the names and folklore of the plants we see around us - it will make us feel more connected with our environment, more grounded and part of nature.



ARTICLES

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/5-ways-connect-nature-help-our-wellbeing>

*https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_nature_makes_you_kinder_happier_more_creative

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/jan/07/the-joy-of-small-things-daily-lockdown-walks-with-a-camera>

