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The Secrets-of-Nature Trail and Game: A hands-on challenge for multi-sensory learning and relating

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Although we are part of nature, nature does not suffer our disorders. We don't find runaway garbage, war, loneliness, pollution, and mental illness in nature. How does nature nurture life yet avoid our problems? Discover the secret by taking this unusual nature trail. Learn how to let nature help you build sound social and environmental relationships for yourself and your community. The trail and game visits rewarding natural areas that flourish in the environment and in hidden valleys of your mind. To win the game, be open to letting nature recycle the questionable ways that Western Civilization has taught us to think.

## **Station 1. A gift to you from nature**

In unspoiled nature, clean fresh air prevails. It is a product of, by and from mutually supportive relationships between sunshine, rain and millions of different plant and animal species. You are one of those species.

We too often forget that when we inhale fresh air, we receive a gift. Air is a nurturing present to our lives from nature's global community. Air supports our ability to live.

## **Station 2. Your gift to nature**

Do you recognize that when you exhale your breath, Earth breathes you? You breathe carbon dioxide and water vapor into the air. They are food and water that nurture the plant and animal world.

Your breath helps to sustain all other forms of life. It is one of your gifts to them.

Notice how you feel right now as you breathe air normally. Would you feel

better if you were breathing pure, sunshine-clean, rain-washed air?

### **Station 3. The gift of life**

In earlier times, the word for air was psyche. Psyche also means spirit and mind.

Breathing air is called respiration, originally meaning "re-spiriting."

The word inspiration means "bringing air/spirit in."

The word expiration means "letting air/spirit leave."

(Continue to the next station)

### **Station 4. Disconnect from nature**

For demonstration purposes here, please exhale and then hold your breath for a few moments. Do this now. While holding your breath, read on:

You have stopped breathing and are now disconnected from air and nature. Notice how a sensation is developing in you, a feeling attraction to air that increasingly urges you to breathe again. Life's desire to connect to air has been part of nature for 400 million years. Like air itself, it is of, by and from nature. Scientists did not invent it. It is nature feelingly urging you to reconnect with the atmosphere and the natural world (Cohen, 1995). Do you trust that feeling and what it is telling you to do?

Continue to hold your breath, Don't breathe until you absolutely have to.

### **Station 5. Nature wants you alive and connected to it**

Here is a secret of nature: Your sensory desire to breathe is a natural love to reconnect with nature. Your love of air insists that you breathe, even if you choose not to. The feeling says "Participate in the natural community that sustains you. Share and enjoy its physical and sensory gifts (Adler, 1995)".

Even if you faint from lack of air, your natural attraction to air will revive and rejuvenate you by making you breathe again. That is nature's loving wisdom in action. That is how nature works. Nature needs you to help sustain the global community so it reconnects you.

Nature feelingly tells you it needs you to participate in life. You belong.

## **Station 6 Connecting with natural life feels good**

Begin to breathe normally again if you have not already done so.

Note that when you reconnect with air by breathing, nature rewards you. It gives you a good, satisfying, enjoyable natural sensation. Nature "invented" that sensation to express its appreciation for your supportive participation. Without using words, the sensation thanks and fulfills you for reconnecting. It thanks you for your natural gifts to the global community. Do you trust this rewarding feeling of thanks?

It is reasonable for us and the environment to breathe together, to cooperatively connect. That loving relationship helps support and sustain all of life. That's why it is intelligent, right and feels good.

## **Station 7. Words are your destiny**

The words of Section 4 on this nature trail asked you to stop breathing. Their message had the power to disconnect you from nature. When you sentiently ignored nature and disconnected, that is stopped breathing, you were uncomfortable. Nature signalled you that something vital was missing.

## **Station 8. Natural sensations and feelings guide you**

By Station 6 it was not this trail's words and story that led you to reconnect by breathing. It was your feelingful desire to breathe that did this. Nature itself feelingly guided you in a good way, without using words. When you sentiently listened to nature and reconnected, you felt comfortable and safe. Naturally and safely feeling good comes from being directly connected to nature. It is very important to keep this in mind.

Connective sensations and feelings are nature's way, an essence of how nature nurtures. How often do you seek and trust fulfilling experiences in nature?

## **Station 9. Nature has no words**

Here's something we often overlook: The natural world is a non-verbal community. In nature the desire to breathe has no name, for nature neither uses or understands words. However, we sense that air exists and we feel our desire to breathe, even though both have no word labels. That's how infants know to breathe when disconnected. That's how your "inner child" or "inner nature" knows it too (Cohen, 1995).

Can you learn to trust the experience you just had? When you fulfill your natural attraction for air by breathing, nature within and about you - without using words - rewards you by giving you good feelings. Do you trust that is nature's way? If so, you can trust thoughtful sensory connections with nature to help you guide and support your daily life.

## **Station 10. Nature is multisensory**

Here is a vital secret of nature that is seldom taught in our society. In addition to the sense of desiring to breathe, nature has similarly created and contains at least 52 other distinct natural attraction sensitivities. Each of them is found in some form throughout the global community. Each can produce good feelings. As with your desire to breathe, in conjunction with natural areas, each of these other natural attractions also feelingly, responsibly guides your relationship with the environment..

In sentient non-verbal ways, you may learn to reconnect with nature and enjoy its balance, validate its wisdom and feel good. The 53 natural senses that help you accomplish this include senses of sight, sound and smell; gravity, reason and temperature; nurturing, community and trust; empathy, belonging and place, thirst, hunger and trust; compassion, touch and taste (Cohen, 1995A). Each of them offers you enjoyable, trustable feeling signals when you connect with nature through them. This includes your connections with nature in people.

## **Station 11: The wisdom of natural sensations**

We don't exclusively own our natural attraction senses and sensitivities, we share them with every species. They help the natural community beneficially flow through us and us through it.

Natural senses balance us personally by balancing themselves and each other. For example, thirst knows how much water we need so it regulates us by turning itself on and off appropriately. And although you may be thirsty, without being

told verbally, you probably won't drink water that looks bad or has the wrong smell, taste, temperature, color or texture. These additional senses modify your thirst.

## **Station 12: It is your choice**

We are given the natural ability to reason - it is one of our natural senses. It enables us to reasonably choose or not choose to feel good responsibly by following our natural attraction senses and reconnecting with nature.

## **Station 13: You belong**

In nature, as demonstrated by breathing, we get good feelings by directly giving and gaining support from the global community. In that community, every member, including yourself, is very important. In some way, every member is naturally attractive, loved, and included. That is how and why nature does not produce garbage.

One of nature's secrets is that on a macro level everything is needed. Nothing natural is garbage. Alive or dead, each natural being is naturally attractive, wanted and belongs. That is the reason runaway pollution, violence, loneliness, war and mental illness are unknown in nature. It is why it is reasonable gain good feelings by reconnecting with nature.

Reconnecting with nature is a vital, intelligent and responsible way to safely gain fulfillment. By activating multiple natural senses, the reconnecting process helps our sense of reason rebuild our personal relationships as well as our society, economics, and the environment. It helps us establish a communion and partnership with nature.

## **Station 14: Nature pulls things together**

Here is another well kept secret of nature: At every level, the global life community is built upon many mutually beneficial natural attraction relationships. This process is so effective that the greater the creativity, diversity, and differences of each individual community member, the stronger the whole community becomes. Our inner nature inherits and trusts this natural attraction, cooperative natural wisdom. It biologically and emotionally enjoys, encourages and operates from it. Our inner self always expects to be loved and supported by natural attractions simply because that is nature's way.

## **Station 15: Effects of disconnecting**

The value of our natural loves and their wisdom is often hidden from our awareness by stories that tell us to avoid, disconnect from, or conquer nature within and around us.

We live over 99

## **Station 16. You are in charge of how you feel**

You always have the option to safely feel comfortable by reconnecting with nature through natural attractions. You can do this even when a story within or around you stresses you by telling you to do otherwise. For example, once you complete this nature trail, do the first part of it again. When you come to Station 4, you now know the story there will tell you not to breathe. You also know that heeding that story will disconnect you from nature and produce uncomfortable suffocation feelings. This time, think with nature. Choose not to pay attention to that disconnecting story. Don't stop breathing. Instead choose to pay attention to what naturally feels safe, attractive and worthwhile to you. Be responsible by choosing to breathe, to cooperate with nature by sustaining your natural integrity, good feelings and the Earth community.

## **Station 17. Non-verbal learning, relating and knowing**

The natural world produces its beauty, peace and balance solely through non-verbal attraction relationships. You can personally learn to choose and reconnect to this form of "higher power". It fulfils you, relieves stress and helps dissolve problems. You can teach others how to do it too.

This interpretative nature trail contains only one nature-reconnecting activity. There are an additional 108 published activities you can do and teach at your convenience. Each further reconnects you with nature and empowers you to feel good. Each helps you think more reasonably, to make senses in 53 natural sensory ways, and build friendships in the process (Cohen, 1993).

As we strengthen our natural attraction senses, they become more alive in our consciousness. We begin to think with nature's wisdom, in a way that is more feeling, sensible and sensitive. This helps us feel more alive and make sense of our lives. For this reason, many educators, counsellors and leaders advocate and use nature-reconnecting activities.

## **Station 18. What have you learned here?**

This nature reconnecting trail is a structured educational tool. It attempts to teach you that you inherit from nature at least 53 natural senses and feelings. They are sensible natural communications that non-verbally but responsibly enable you to connect you to nature's wisdom because they are an essence of it. When connected to nature, they not only feel good, they wisely sustain and balance us just as they balance the natural world.

When we fulfil our natural attractions to breathe clean air, drink pure water and eat uncontaminated food, we enjoy worthwhile, healthy fulfilment. Similarly, safely reconnecting with nature through our many other natural sensory attractions is also fulfilling, healthy and responsible.. It is what every other species on Earth does. Natural people(s) do it too.

The word consensus means "to feel with many senses together." Because nature-centered communities think by consensus, they don't produce our runaway personal, social and environmental problems. (Bower, 1995)

## **Station 19. Something to think about**

Nature consists of non-verbal attraction relationships, but we learn to mostly think and communicate in words. That separation divides us from nature and produces our runaway problems.

Our inherent natural intelligence, loves and values are often lost to nature-conquering images, stories and labels that demean them. For example, in uncomplimentary ways, our natural attraction senses are often called "subjective," "unscientific," "environmentalist," "imagination," "fuzzy thinking," "immature," "crazy" "non-academic," "flaky," "granola" "childish," "unimportant," "spiritual," "foolish" "nostalgia," "fantasy," "unreasonable," "touchy-feely," or "instincts."

Consider this: Isn't our sensory natural attraction to air just as vital as air itself? Just as air is a scientific fact, isn't our natural love to breathe air an equally scientific fact? Isn't it polluted thinking, bad science and limited consciousness to prejudicially value material facts while devaluing sensory facts?

Trust your experiences. You can think, learn and know using more than just language and a few senses. You can learn to think in multisensory ways with nature, relate more responsibly, and feel better too.



## **Station 20. No need to stop now**

This trail contains one activity that helps you think and feel with nature. You can continue learning that process. An additional 108 activities are found in the introductory book *Reconnecting With Nature* . and the self-guiding training manual *Well Mind, Well Earth*. A free, optional, on-line E-mail course accompanies each of these books along with optional professional or academic independent study credit.

You may safely, anonymously chat and share attractive nature-connecting experiences with others by joining the internet mailing list. at [natureconnect-request@lists.mindspring.com](mailto:natureconnect-request@lists.mindspring.com) You can request the assistance of a Project Nature Connect guide to share doing the activities with you by contacting [nature@pacificrim.net](mailto:nature@pacificrim.net)

## **Station 21. Your conclusion**

Researchers suggest that nature consists of resonant attraction connections between natural things (Wald 1985, Langer 1995). The deteriorating state of Earth and people signals that we and the environment are at risk. We are excessively separated from nature and must reunite. Doing nature reconnecting activities helps make this happen. They offer an urgently needed service and vast economic benefits.

Interestingly, the word for breathing and sharing spirit together is conspire. Shouldn't we learn how to conspire to support life and our lives on Earth, rather than dance on the deck of a sinking ship?

## **Station 22. An extra reward**

You can enter a nature-reconnecting activity game and win a free copy of the book *Reconnecting With Nature*: Every month, a copy of this book will be awarded to each of two people who complete the following 3-part activity.

Part 1: Go to the most attractive natural plant, animal, mineral or place that you can conveniently find. A "weed," potted plant or aquarium will do if a park or sanctuary is not available. Go to nature in reality, not to a story, artifact, picture, video, visualization, spirit, memory or other likeness of nature. Be sure not to get too close to any natural area or thing that may irritate, hurt or be unhealthy for you. In nature, that is not attractive.

Part 2: Find an immediate natural attraction for you at this natural site and for

a few minutes get to know that attraction non-verbally. With your eyes closed become aware of it through some of your inherent natural senses and feelings, senses such as touch, taste, smell, sound, color, motion, temperature, nurturing, community, trust, empathy, belonging, place, reasoning, peace, texture, compassion and others. Then repeat this with your eyes open.

Part 3: In a total of 200 words or less, write:

- a) What happened.
- b) What you sense and feel from doing this activity.
- c) Why you think the activity led you to feel as you do.

Send Part 3 along with a self addressed stamped envelope to Project NatureConnect POB 1605, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 or Email it to [nature@pacificrim.net](mailto:nature@pacificrim.net)

Each month a free copy of Reconnecting With Nature will be sent to each of the two entries whose submissions best convey the sense, feeling and spirit of reconnecting with nature. If you already have the book, you will receive a refund or another copy. You may enter the game as often as you like. In addition, if you want to further reconnect, do the activity with friends and share Part 3 with each other, or send your statement to our mailing list so others may enjoy it too. You may also send it to anybody else you think might appreciate it. Ask them to respond to it. Your nature-connected thoughts and feelings may connect you with the natural attractions of others, and vice versa. This process is a good way to build or strengthen relationships.

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