

Winter Nature Connection--

Suggestions for Practice and Deepening

Consider identifying at least one of these that you would like to do with a human partner. Even if you and your partner are geographically separate, this is a point of connection you can share through images and conversation. It's a powerful thing, in this challenging time, to have a connection that starts from beauty, curiosity, and wonder.

Outdoors

- No matter what you plan to try, make sure your clothing is up for the task. Lined pants, insulated boots, handwarmers, and a good, warm hat and mittens will make your time far more enjoyable! Consider getting a really good pair of microspikes to attach to your shoes--these are worth spending more money on to make sure they have real traction and stay on your shoes!
- Beauty photo practice--Find a partner, each day take a picture of beauty and send to each other. No need for words/commentary, just appreciate and connect.
- Fire Pits--great way to connect with others outdoors this time of year, and connecting with fire itself is a wonderful way to explore.
- Experiment with darkness. How far away from lights are you comfortable when it is dark? Can you go a little bit past your comfort zone? What happens to your thoughts and in your body as you move away from a lighted home and deeper into the woods? See if you can play with this, being curious about exploring (internally and externally) in darkness.
- Silhouette Tree ID--Can you identify trees without leaves? If not, take some time to investigate what really differentiates oak from ash from maple, etc., when bark and from are your main sources of information.
- Bird Feeders--I can't tell you how much more I appreciate and know about birds from the simple act of installing a bird feeder. Plus, I get to care for many creatures very directly!
- Play--sledding and snow sculptures aren't just for kids!
- Get to know moon phases, tide schedules, compass directions from your home, times of sunrise/sunset, direction of weather. Consider creating a daily or weekly practice of pausing to immerse yourself in one of these rhythms.
- Explore the snowy woods in a new way--if you can follow your footprints home, you can fully embrace wandering
- Make a regular date to connect with one particular place or being in your area. Notice how it changes and adapts throughout the season.

Indoors

- Indoor visualizations, guided meditations

- Insight Timer, Headspace, Doyogawithme.com
- Nature imagery on phone, computer, walls
 - the science says all of this is genuinely effective in regulating our nervous systems
- Learn about your watershed/land history/indigenous history/ecosystems/natural history focus. (See other page for indigenous learning resources.)
- Research your own ancestral lineages relationship with land, as much as possible. What traditions, rituals, stories, and beliefs did your ancestors hold, way back when they lived in relationship with land?
 - If Women Rose Rooted by Sharon Blackie is a good example of how one woman with European ancestry made this journey
- Fill your home with houseplants
- Create an indoor collection of natural objects that resonate with you. You could gather objects that speak to you around a particular theme (resilience, hope, patience) or simply objects that spark curiosity, wonder, joy, etc. Make a practice of visiting these on a regular basis.
- [Naturalist Notebook](#)--The format allows space for 5 years worth of your daily observations of nature--wonderful way to see the nature around you more deeply. Nat Wheelwright, author and Bowdoin professor, suggests simply keeping the book near a chair by a window and taking time each day to simply write down what you see.
- [Nature Moments](#) also from Nat Wheelwright--2 minute videos that explain a specific aspect of the natural world.
- Seasonal and Local Eating--Farmers Markets, CSAs
- [Grow Microgreens](#) at home
- Creating indoor representations of what moves you outdoors and reminds you of different seasons (seeds, pressed flowers and leaves)
- Embrace stillness and darkness as a time to reflect and nurture self.
 - Journaling, art, music, meditation, crafting, reading, visioning, sitting. Appreciate the darkness for its presence and reminder of the power in spending time in stillness and internal exploration.

Both Indoors and Outdoors

- Volunteer with your local land trust/conservation organization
- Create new holidays/rituals around natural cycles--full moon, winter solstice
- Ice and Snow--create photos, poetry, art, journal, etc., around these

Always remember acknowledgment and gratitude

Ask permission and offer thanks in each practice. Building relationship requires acknowledging the other party as a being, not a thing. This may feel silly at first. I encourage you to do it anyway. Like any of the above, it is a practice rooted in respect

and reciprocity. As we give our brain new pathways of relationship and our bodies an experience of connection, it will feel more and more natural.



healing with nature

Corie Washow, LCPC-C
Elemental Counseling
Freeport, ME

corie@elemental-counseling.com

207.401.5085

www.elemental-counseling.com