



To Sit With the Universe

SOCI 3998



We would like to thank our professor, Phoebe Godfrey, for bringing us all together and teaching us so much. We would never have had such a wonderful experience without you.

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Introduction

Sophia Stoll

Welcome to *To Sit With the Universe*, a workbook made by a group of 17 students for the purpose of encouraging self-healing and embodiment. When we embody, we are giving a form to the intangible parts of ourselves- our thoughts, our feelings, etc. In this book, we focus on the three parts of the self:

Body: We ask you to engage with your body by participating in various activities. We will ask you to write, draw, do yoga, meditate, and more.

Spirit: We engage our spirit, perhaps also thought of as the heart, through our own pieces of art. We ask you to take the time to appreciate and reflect on these pieces and how they relate to the activities and writing.

Mind: We include knowledge from Indigenous cultures to learn from their connectedness with nature. We ask you to challenge yourself to think critically about how this knowledge can heal you and the world.

Our contributions of mind, body, and spirit are heavily influenced by Indigenous philosophy. For this reason, we would like to recognize and thank the Indigenous community for their vast contributions to science, philosophy, writing, and for providing us guidance. We recognize that as students of the University of Connecticut, we reside on the land of the Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Nipmuc, and Lenape Peoples. We thank them for stewarding this land and we take it as our responsibility to protect and care for the land as well.

Tapping In

Lexi Schibli

Hey you, thank you for being here. We are thrilled that you have decided to take part in our activity book. Before you look through the rest of the pages, let's start with a welcome activity, and "Tap In" to our higher selves. Essentially, that's what this book is all about. We're here to give you tools to expand your mind and welcome you to be the best version of *you*.

Not the version we want you to be.

Not the version that you think others want you to be.

No, we want you to be the best version of *you*.

Let's sit with that for a few seconds.

Wherever you are, whoever you are, take note of how you're existing at this moment. How are you sitting? Are you surrounded by people, or are you alone? Are you tense or relaxed?

Take a few deep inhales through your nose, filling your tummy up with air... *one, two, three, four*, hold it for *five, six, seven*, and release it for *eight, nine, ten*... Why don't we do that two more times. On your exhales, allow yourself to release judgements about you, about others, about your thoughts, about thoughts in general. That's the most important part about this whole activity book. This book is a journey, but in order to take part, you have to let go of what holds you back; discomfort, judgements, fear, etc.

This is exciting! At this moment, you have decided to be an explorer! You are exploring the depths of your mind in complete liberty. No one is telling you to think a certain way, no one is telling you that you have to do this, no one is telling you who to be, or how to act! You're free in that big mind of yours. Maybe you don't quite see that yet, or you're having trouble understanding what I mean. If so, try this activity:

You'll need a piece of paper, and a pen/pencil. If you'd like, put on your favorite uplifting song- but avoid negative frequencies & words.

On one side of the paper, draw twenty random dots.

Connect these dots in whichever way you please (they can overlap lines, or never touch, you're free to do anything!)

Next, let your mind create a shape from these lines. Whether you want to shade it in, or outline it in a dark color, that's up to you. Just let your imagination run free.

On the back side, write down your full name (First, Middle, & Last).

Have you done it yet? Do it now before moving on.

Then, rewrite it but replace every vowel with either: "Oob," "Alb" "Erg" "Ibb" "Ubb." For Example: "Jane Doe" would be "Jalbnerg Dooberg."

Great. Now say yours out loud or in your head a few times.

If you feel like an idiot, you're still holding on to judgment. No one is listening to you, no one is in your thoughts. No one is living in your head except for you. Judgment holds us back.

"The journey itself is going to change you, so you don't have to worry about memorizing the route we took to accomplish that change." - *My Ishmael*

You may change where your headed on this journey one million and two times. Each turn may prompt you to make a new path, and I hope that you explore those opportunities.

You are prepared to go on this journey!

See you along the way!

Split Earth, Split Mind, Split Body, Split Spirit

Summer Wells



I painted this picture in high school using both watercolors and acrylic paint. I was tasked to make any form of abstract art. Although I had no set objective behind the components of this piece, there are many artistic elements that can be interpreted in various ways regarding the relationship between humans, earth, nature, and spirit. The earth is experiencing detrimental effects as a consequence of the imbalance between body, mind, and spirit in Western culture. We only have one earth, and we need to take care of it. This is what I perceive now looking at this piece of art years later, and reflecting on the focal point of a split earth. In addition, the butterflies remind me of one's mind. They are flying free amongst the universe, looking for direction in the midst of a broken planet. Take a minute and reflect on what this painting is saying to you? How can it connect to our world and society today? How can it connect to your mind and spirit?

Chapter 1: Creativity and Art

Lexi Schibli

“Realizing that the greatest source of metaphor comes from nature, these stories are filled with analogies, characters, representations drawn from nature, metaphors that more often than not refer back to the processes of nature from which they are drawn, or to human nature, which they attempt to reflect.”

- *Native Science*

Sit with this quote briefly, and allow it to introduce you into the metaphors that exist in your life. These metaphors... These symbols... are born from nature, human nature, and the beautiful interaction of the two. In *Native Science*, Gregory Cajete, refers to this as participation with nature which is indefinitely, the best way to learn about the environment around us. By participating in nature and understanding these natural metaphors and representations, we can begin to understand our place in this world.

Maybe you'd believe that taking the time out to draw, write, or engage in some form of art is a waste of time. Maybe you'll let societal pressures convince you that you have better things to do, and so you'll blindly engage in laboring activities, constantly wondering what you're even doing here.

Or maybe you'll stop for a minute. Maybe you'll see that those laboring activities can be confining... boxing you in and keeping the secrets of the universe out. So then, just maybe, you'll take a few minutes to engage in some art.

Maybe the art is the key to the secrets and answers you were looking for.

Activity: The Color of You

Lexi Schibli

Color is crucial to art. Though it's not all the time needed, such as black and white photographs or drawings, it's presence does a lot to convey the story, emotion, or purpose of the art. Color gives context; it tells us more.

In most cultures, not only Indigenous culture, color was worn on the body (whether it be paint, feathers, cloth, etc), as a way to tell some message. For example, red was often worn as face paint to symbolize happiness or beauty and green was associated with healing powers.

The Navajo people have four sacred colors in their life; black, white, yellow, and blue. Each color represented a mountain that surrounded them. Each color not only representing a direction, but also a time of day, a period of time in one's life, etc.,

In ancient India (and still to this day) the chakras (energy points in one's body), is associated with a different color; Purple/Violet for the crown chakra, knowledge, divinity, and fulfillment; Indigo for the Third Eye Chakra, intuition, meditation, and trust, etc.

Even outside of well defined cultures and spirituality, we associate colors with moods, seasons, and everything in between. Have you ever thought about the colors of you? What colors make up your world?

Take a second to gather a pen and paper, or open your notes app on your phone:

Then, whenever your ready, write down two to three emotions that you associate with the following colors:

<i>Velvet Red</i>	
<i>Bright Red</i>	
<i>Fire Orange</i>	
<i>Light Orange</i>	
<i>Hard Yellow</i>	
<i>Pasty Yellow</i>	
<i>Light Green</i>	
<i>Forest Green</i>	
<i>Sky blue</i>	
<i>Dark Blue/Navy</i>	
<i>Violet</i>	
<i>Lavender</i>	
<i>Blush Pink</i>	

Though your emotions associated with these colors may look similar to someone of the same culture as you, it's important to note that they probably have some differences in meaning just based on life experiences and associations.

Let's choose four of these colors.

Which are the happiest/strongest/ or most important to you?

Once you have chosen four, take the time to find some colored pens or pencils. We're going to indulge in a five minute art activity, and draw our four mountains.

Activity: Abstract Art

Summer Wells

Creativity is a subjective concept to each individual. A good way to tap into your inner creativity is to make art, especially in unconventional ways or out of materials not viewed as classic or normal. In this body exercise, I challenge you to get creative and make your own abstract art. Your abstract art can have a hidden personal meaning or no meaning at all, it is entirely up to you! For this challenge, find any materials that you are willing to upcycle or use for your art. With your materials, get creative! While making your art, anything is fair game and you have full creative control. Example projects can include painting various colors and shapes on a canvas that represent your mood for the day, or making an eccentric sculpture using various recycled materials. Making your own abstract art can be a way to distract yourself from various stressors occurring in your life. This type of art is also a physical task which can allow your mind to tap into forms of creativity that are suppressed by everyday motions of work and school. In addition, making art can be refreshing for your spirit! The purpose of this exercise is to get creative without any limits.

Activity: Meditative Dance

Jenny Ofray

First, find a place where you feel safe to be completely yourself (and preferably with a good amount of moving space). Pick a song that makes you feel empowered, centered, or generally free. Start playing the song, close your eyes, and align your breathing with the first notes. Take a few moments to roll your shoulders and allow yourself to release any tension or awkwardness you may feel. The point here is to let the song move your body and spirit organically. If singing along helps your mind allow you to be present with that, you can do that too! Listen and breathe with the beat of the song and let your shoulder rolls turn into more expressive movements. You can start any way you would like, but I'd invite you to start with the arms since they often feel the most "awkward" in dancing. Make shapes, use your hands, take up space. Envision the energy of your dance tracing your fingertips and creating art in the space around you. Let your arm's movement travel through your torso, hips, legs, feet. Express, take up space, express, feel. Use this flow dance to remind yourself that body and spirit are connected and that allowing their freedom allows your mind freedom as well.

Activity: Cherish the Process

Jess Leach

Throughout my life I have had a tumultuous relationship with art. I would compare my artwork to others as far back as I can remember. I was always able to see the worth of other's art more clearly than my own. I would approach art with the goal of perfection and (surprise) was always disappointed in myself. But lately I've been learning to grant myself the time and grace for the true creative process. The process that involves struggle and failure and faith and compassion. For it's those experiences and the wisdom that comes from them is where the value of art lies.

This past summer, I spent a day by a river with a good friend, books, some art supplies, and the nature around me. I was so grateful for the peace and connectedness with nature that day gave me and want to encourage you to do the same. The exercise I will walk you through will require some watercolor paints, a



brush or two, some paper, and an empty jar. Go to a body of freshwater that means something to you, maybe one you have visited recently and enjoyed or one from fond memories of childhood. To begin, find a spot where you can sit and rest with nature. For me, I wanted to be close to the water so I could feel the energy and spirit rushing off it. Once you find a spot, take some of the water from the earth into your jar and use it with the paints on the paper. What moved me so much during my experience with this exercise was how the water was so knowledgeable, it knew where it wanted to go on the page and

how much paint it was going to take with it. It didn't have to consider the "best" or "perfect" route, it just moved along the page. I encourage you to let the natural water guide your art and see where it takes you. I didn't finish my piece from that day but I look forward to returning next summer to do this again. Nature is always there for you when you need her. I've included a quote from Native Science below to help inspire you during this exercise.

“Creative participation in nature provides a glimpse of the human nature that has grounded our sensual experience... The perceptual process upon which Native science rests remains a mystery for most moderns. It is certainly not the “real world” of jobs, school, the mall, and television. Yet, if we learn once again to feel, hear, smell, and taste the world as our ancestors did, we may remember something truly wonderful about nature in humans.” – (Cajete, 2000, p 10)

Chapter 2: Meditation

Sophia Lindsay

Meditation is an important and sacred tool that helps align our bodies with our minds. A meaningful quote, from *Native Science: natural Lawys of Interdependence* (2000) by Gregory Cajete says: “By using our mind with reverence, we re-enchant and resacralize the world. We regain our identity. We reclaim our destiny.” - Henry Skolimowski *Ecoyoga*

Being mindful using meditation keeps the world magical and sacred, and so I hope you are able to incorporate this practice into your daily routine!

Activity: Body Scan

Sophia Lindsay

Start off by sitting or lying in a comfortable position. Close your eyes or keep them open and focus on one point in the room.



Draw your attention to your toes. Wiggle them, notice how they feel. Next, bring your attention up your legs, do they feel heavy? Light? Then move on to your hips, lower back, upper back, arms, hands, fingers, chest, neck and end on your face. Notice how each body part feels. Does it sink into the floor, or does it feel light. What sensations do you notice? Are you warm? Cold? Did you feel like smiling, or are you clenching your jaw? Once you are finished with your body scan, you can end your meditation with an affirmation. My body takes me where I need to go, my body is a vehicle of love and positivity, this is the body I was meant to be in.

Open your eyes and continue on with your day feeling connected and in tune with your body ☺

Activity: Mini Mantras

Kirill O'Neil

Whenever you get stressed or are feeling overloaded it is helpful to use mantras. Begin by saying “I’m not the body” on inhalation, then “I’m not the mind” on exhalation. This simple mantra will help release thoughts that may be negatively affecting you as well as giving you a sense of spirit by releasing the pressures from the mind and body. Even though we need rest and healing in these uncertain times, we tend to not give time to our mind and spirit. This mantra will also allow for your soul to come alive resulting in better clarity and allowing you to be one with your spirit. Practice this periodically and see how releasing

pressure from the never stopping mind and spirit can help you center yourself or decompress before or after stressful situations. If you'd like, you can also keep a journal to track your progress and see how you can better manage stressful circumstances by exploring your emotions around them and see how meditation is impacting your well-being.

Activity: Gratitude Meditation

Edison Escobar

Meditating is a great way to unwind from all of our daily stresses. Meditation can reduce anxiety and give time for self-reflection. This activity proposes that you invite a person who means a lot to you to meditate with you. This will show them that you were thinking about them and care about their mental health.

While meditation can be done in many ways, here are a few tips and suggestions:

- Sit on the floor and close your eyes
- Play calming music, there are many songs available on Youtube
- You can have a write a meditation speech, but it isn't necessary
- Free your mind of all your stresses
- Take time to be considerate to yourself, be kind to yourself
- Take as much time as you need to meditate
- Thank friend/family member/significant other for participating

This exercise could become a daily or weekly event. It is a great way to unwind and share a special moment with a loved one.

Amazing Amygdala

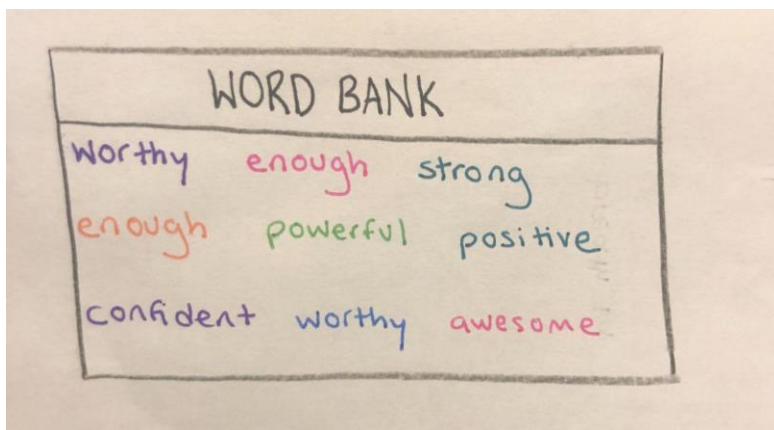
Jenny Ofray

“As the amygdala shrinks, the pre-frontal cortex – associated with higher order brain functions such as awareness, concentration and decision-making – becomes thicker.” - Tom Ireland, 2014, *Scientific American Blog*

Different forms of meditation have been studied more in recent years, leading to scientific developments and brain imaging that support the benefits of meditation. The amygdala is responsible for processing fear and emotion and our fight-or-flight response. Supporting both the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex of the brain help us to be less reactive to stressors and to recover better from stress when we experience it. In this case, the mind is taking in stimuli through the body. As the mind becomes more aware of the body connection, the body is better able to respond to the mind. Meditation has been shown to help with rumination, depression, creativity, and self-esteem- all of which can boost your spiritual sense of self.

Activity: Affirmations of Self Love

Shannon Laughlin



In order to practice self-love, start each morning with this brief breathing and affirmation exercise. Pick two words (see Word Bank for inspiration, or use your own words), and alternate taking deep inhales and exhales. On each inhale, say aloud “I am _____”. On each exhale, say aloud “I am _____”.

Community vs Individual Healing

Shannon Laughlin

Many of our Western healing practices revolve around the individual. Therapy sessions as well as yoga and meditation require an individual to voluntarily sign up in order to participate. It is also up to us to heal “when we have time”, which is hard to find in a capitalist society. Many of us share the same issues and anxieties though. One day, our class wrote anonymous letters to ourselves regarding our worries, and passed the letters around in a circle to read aloud. Many of us felt that the letter we read could have been addressed to us. Indigenous practices understand that the health of the community is interconnected with the health of the individual, and vice versa. Therefore, many indigenous healing practices revolve around shared, community healing. “We all have the power to heal each other” (Cajete, 2000, p. 28). Ask a friend about their mental health, and share your worries with them too.



Activity: Presence Meditation

Rory Monaco

I invite you to find a location where you know you can let your guard down for a few moments. Whether that be in your room, on the floor, your favorite comfy couch, outside beneath a tree... it doesn't matter. Find a spot where you know these next few moments will be yours.

Start by bringing your attention to your breath. Inhale.... Exhale. Notice the rhythm. Are the breaths deep? Or are they more shallow? Don't bring judgment to how you're breathing. Simply watch yourself inhale and exhale with each breath, and note how it is.

Often we find ourselves getting stuck in these patterns of judgment. Of ourselves, our community, our environment. It's a part of us to want to find, and to fix.

What if I told you there *is* nothing to fix?

What if I told you this moment is exactly as it needs to be? That you are not broken, but instead just misled from where you were headed?

Back to the breath again. Inhale.... Exhale.

What would it look like if you accepted reality as it is? If you accepted how you exist in this world?

Would appreciation begin to emanate?

Hold curiosity for these questions.

Hold curiosity for your potential, your ability to grow, to expand, to emanate love and light and kindness into this world.

Notice how this feels in your body. Begin by bringing awareness to the top of your body. Imagine a scanner is moving over you, top to bottom. How does the air feel against your hair? Your tongue against the top of your mouth?

Can you drop your shoulders? Unclench your hands?

Relax into this body that you have the privilege of calling yours.

Feel your feet against the floor. The weight of your body against the Earth. Think of how it supports you. How you are deserving, always, of this support.

Bring your attention back to your breath. It is your tether to the present—something that will always be with you.

Begin to bring yourself back into your surroundings. Hear the noises going on around you, perhaps the smells going on around you.

And when you feel ready, open your eyes again.



Chapter 3: Foraging

Activity: Western v. Foraging

Melissa Santos



This drawing is meant to depict the differences between a foraging society and an agriculture/industry-based society. Indigenous peoples have a strong understanding of nature and balance, which makes them excellent foragers. They know that in order to take, you must give back, and that when you take, to leave some behind. In contrast, our modern food systems are designed to have everything made at once and then taken at once, leaving nothing behind; hence the dead trees and stumps. The impact that this has on humans is evident. Indigenous people, or foragers in general, have that deeper connection with nature, allowing

them to be more grateful with what they have; whereas Western societies have a strong disconnect from nature, especially when it comes to food. Most Westerners don't even know where the majority of their food comes from, nor understand what has been done for them to obtain it.

Activity: Tuning Into Nature

Rory Monaco

Go for a walk in a nature spot that means a lot to you. This could be a local park, your backyard... choose a spot outside with lots of wildlife that you can explore for at least fifteen minutes. On this walk, think about *your relationship* with the wildlife around you. How do you interact with the trees? How do they interact with you? How do you live in relation with the squirrels in the trees? Take note of this. On your walk, collect fallen leaves, pines, rocks, sticks, etc. When you've returned, build some sort of memorial, altar, or any sort of art project that represents the relationship you have with the outside.

Locking Up the Food

Shannon Laughlin

On this Earth, we are surrounded by food. There are so many plants that are edible and have medicinal properties, but we know very little about them. The dominant way of accessing food (practiced by Indigenous peoples) used to be just reaching out and taking the food they wanted. They only took what they needed, and there was plenty of food for them. It was not until White Europeans came and discovered industrializing food at a mass-rate that this practice was shamed and delegitimized. Food is now "locked

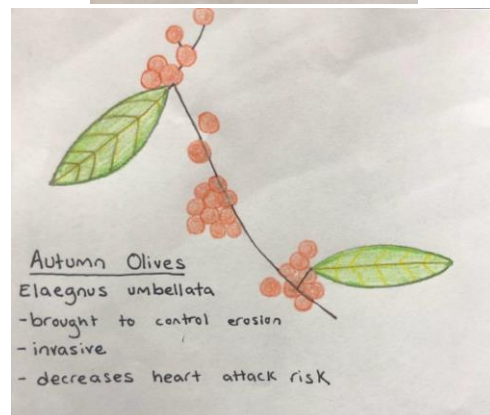
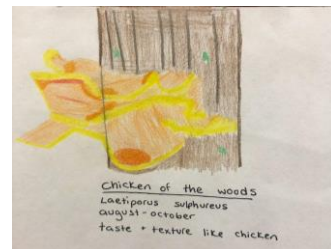
up”, and the expectation is that we need to travel to the grocery store and purchase our food. Why would we choose to live in this sort of society when *everyone* used to be able to access food?

Activity: Can You Forage?

Melissa Santos

For this activity, go outside, wherever you are, and try to find anything edible from nature. Write down what you find and how you feel about your findings.

Could you find anything at all? Do you think this is due to your location, the season, or simply a lack of knowledge? In Western culture, we are conditioned to go to the grocery store if we ever need food, and to assume that what we need will always be there. However, what if grocery stores were gone? How would you obtain the food you need to survive? Our generations have virtually no survival rate, even with a college education. If you were to want to learn how to properly forage, it would likely take years of education because foraging is not something Westerners are raised to know. Why is that? How do we fix this issue? Write down your thoughts. Maybe do some research into some edible plants in your area (yes, they are there)!



Sophia Stoll (Left) and Shannon Laughlin (Right)

Above are drawings of various forageable plants found in the Eastern United States. The leaves of wood sorrel are close to lemon balm and make a great addition to salads. The flowers of wild violets are edible and can be used as garnishes, in flower salads, and in syrups. Chicken of the woods is an edible fungus known for its chicken-like texture. It is often found on decaying logs and has pores instead of gills. Autumn olives are red berries that can be eaten raw or made into jam. With all wild edibles, always research thoroughly before ingesting and never take more than you need.

Activity: Research and Find Wild Foods

Edison Escobar

For this exercise, we encourage you to go out and forage your own food! The first important step to this exercise is to do research to find out what local foods are safe to eat. We wouldn't want any of you to get sick. Look for what foods are available in your area and take them home to eat. This is a great way to reconnect with the natural world around you and get a free meal! We have accepted that we have to pay high prices for foods we can find in the wild. Fight the system and get a free meal from mother nature.

Activity: Harmony in Hunting

Melissa Santos

Indigenous ways, such as foraging and hunting, which are now seen as 'outdated,' are very beneficial to our planet. Their processes are the solution to many environmental crises that are, and have been, occurring. Western society searches for solutions in new technologies, or instead, leaving the Earth and finding a new habitable planet to deal with the climate crisis (which has been created by Westerners and the industrial economy). However, the answers we have been looking for have been here all along, and most people are too stubborn to see it. Are you? One might say: how could we revert back to old ways if we have come this far? That's the thing! It's not 'old,' it's still happening today! Indigenous people are all over the world fighting to preserve their land and their culture, and the land they protect is the land thriving most in the world. In fact, based on research done with Aboriginal hunters in Australia, "...populations of monitor lizards – a staple of the Aboriginal diet – nearly double in areas where they are heavily hunted. The hunting method – using fire to clear patches of land to improve the search for game – also creates a mosaic of regrowth that enhances habitat." <https://news.stanford.edu/news/2013/october/fire-aborigines-wildlife-102913.html>



A monitor lizard!

Chapter 4: Animals

Honoring the Deer

Kirill O'Neil



I drew this picture of a deer to illustrate the beauty of a common animal that we see in the wild regularly. When drawing the deer, I was inspired to do this painting to show how vigilant these animals are and I wanted to highlight their focus within their eyes.

These animals are highly intelligent creatures that can spot hunters from a half a mile away and can detect the smallest of movements from a distance. They can hear just as well as us and are quick to react making them a challenge to catch. They are often hunted for their meat and have been eaten for as long as people have been around. Animals relate to the mind/body because they are visually appealing and we often feel great emotions around watching animals but also there is a downfall. We use them as a source of food and cloth our bodies with their fur. Have you honored an animal in your life?

Activity: Animal Awareness

Elijah Jeffreys

Go for a nice picnic or walk outside and look at all the animals you may see. Listen to the sounds they make and how they resonate with you. Try putting yourself in their position and imagine how different life would be if we didn't have the human capabilities that we have today.

Tough Love

Elijah Jeffreys



What this painting represents to me is Tough Love. Scorpions are known to be unpleasant and evil. They seem to carry a deep negative connotation expressing nothing positive. On the other hand, the rose on his tail signifies a blossoming life. It goes to show that evil in turn has the ability to love. The significance of this painting embodies the constant battle between good and bad, it sheds light on the fact that although you may stray, the light is always at the end of the tunnel.

Anthropogenic Extinction

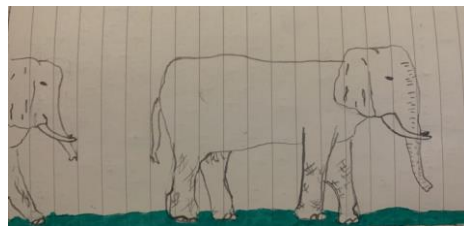
Jenny Ofray



The US Fish and Wildlife Service declared 23 species extinct this year. Many of them are birds and mussels, which I think says a lot about the state of our ecosystems. Many of the bird species are native to Hawai'i. Habitat loss and polluted waters are main causes of extinction. This is your reminder to leave Hawai'i alone :)

Honor the Elephants

Edison Escobar



Activity: Draw a Representation of an Animal's Effect on You

Jacob Drena

Draw: We often lose sight of our relationship with other animals in our technology driven society. Western culture has lost sight of our values pertaining to animals. We treat them with less respect than ever before, and we are less connected to them than ever before. We must find our way back to those ideals. To begin this process, we must open our minds up again to the reality of life on Earth. We are just one piece of a massive conglomerate of different species. To reconnect, draw a representation of an animal's effect on you. Pull inspiration from something you've experienced in your life. Weave your emotions and thoughts into the drawing to capture the full essence of the experience.

Respect Our Mother

Jacob Drena

"Treat the earth and all of her aspects as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world, the plant world, and the animal world. Do nothing to pollute the air or the soil. If others would destroy our mother, rise up with wisdom to defend her." (Bopp, et al., 1987 p.76)

Fox

Victoria Zucco



Embracing Nature

Jacob Drena

To complete the process of reconnecting with the animals around us, we must remove ourselves from our societal bubble of isolation. Embracing nature and walking not only in our houses, but in our Earthly home with other organisms, is a step towards mending the broken relationship. To do so, go out and look for an animal that you normally don't pay attention to. Look where you haven't looked and wonder about things you haven't yet wondered about. Write down some of the animal's distinctive characteristics. Write down its behaviors and appreciate its existence. This may enlighten you to the plethora of life all around you.

Activity: Drawing the Animals in Your Life

Kirill O'Neil

List the types of animals/ animal products that you consume on a regular basis. Draw them out in a sketch if you would like. After that look up on google how many of the animals are killed each year. Write a few sentences exploring how this made you feel from looking at the numbers. Then see what ways animals can be appreciated better or honored for their beauty. You can also reduce your consumption, if you want to take this a step further try to go vegan for a week or two. Explore the human-animal relationship for yourself. How do pets contribute to our lives? Without animals in our lives, it will not be the same. Connecting with animals and sharing a spiritual bond with them brings us back to the present moment and reconnects us with ourselves.

Chapter 5: Plants

Elijah Jeffreys

“Plants are the primary living mechanisms for transforming and storing energy in forms that can be used by animals” (Cajete, 2000, p. 108)

We need plants to live. Plants provide us with necessary elements that are needed for survival; not only for us humans, but also for all living animals and things. They are the very foundation for life on earth. Not only do they help by providing us with oxygen and food, but they also have medicinal properties that can be used to treat illness and diseases.

Plants: Connecting with Nature

Sophia Lindsay

Sometimes it can be easy to forget that living things around us have consciousness, especially with things like plants. We believe that since they don't have a brain, they are not sensitive beings. Cleve Backster is a researcher who analyzed the consciousness of plants and found that they responded to the energy around them.

“We have a tendency to see ourselves as the most highly evolved life form on the planet. It's true, we're very successful at intellectual endeavors. But that may not be the ultimate standard by which to judge. It could be that other life forms are more advanced spiritually.” - Cleve Backster, *The Sun* (1997)

Adding a plant friend to your life is a great way to feel connected to the Earth. ♡ To learn more, full interview here! → <https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/259/the-plants-respond>

On The Importance of Plants

Summer Wells

“In reality, plants and humans have been biologically and energetically intertwined since the beginning of the human species” (Cajete, 2000, p.108).

The importance of plants to humans throughout our existence is specifically understood in the quote above. This relationship between plants and humans, dates back to the origin of our species, as various plants were and still are a provider for almost every component of life necessary for survival. This relationship dependent on plants should also be accredited for allowing humans to evolve into having such complex and socially advanced societies. I say this because plants play a necessary role in food production, medicine, clothing, and oxygen by supplying the air we breathe. Without plants as the base of all these life components, where would we be today? Plants are always the primary producer in our food chain, supplying humans with food and energy. Most modern medicines are also a result of the healing properties found within different plants, stemming from Native science and Indigenous knowledge. Plants like cotton and hemp are also huge contributors to the clothes we wear and the fabrics we buy, making materials like sheets, blankets, and towels. Lastly, plants produce oxygen into the atmosphere, providing

humans with fresh air to fill our lungs and keep our organs alive. Moving past biology, plants can play a huge role in one's spirit and well-being. Surrounding yourself with nature can act as a therapeutic way to clear one's mind, ultimately having positive effects on mental health. Overall, plants are a necessary factor in our world and keeping the human species alive.

Activity: Growing Your Own Avocado Plant

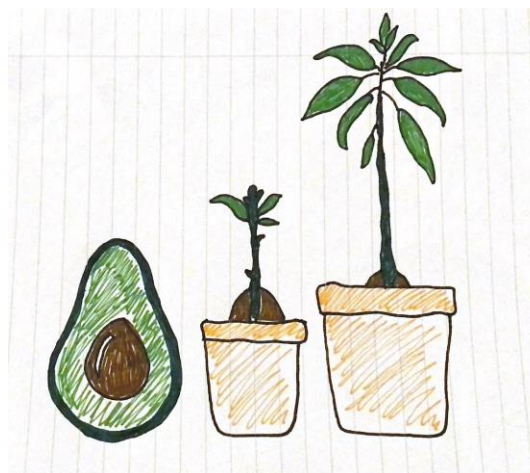
Sophia Lindsay

Supplies:

- An avocado, save the seed!
- Paper towel
- Plastic food bag

Instructions

- 1) Make guacamole! Save the seed and wash it off
- 2) Wrap the seed in a damp paper towel
- 3) Place seed with paper towel into the plastic food bag (but do not zip it shut)
 - a) Store this in a dark place at room temperature
- 4) Revisit the seed every 3-4 days to check for growth (set a reminder so you don't forget about it!)
 - a) Re-dampen paper towel when you check
- 5) You will know the seed is germinating when it cracks open and roots grow from inside the seed
 - a) Handle with care, the roots are fragile
- 6) When the root is 3 inches long, plant in a flower pot
- 7) Enjoy watching your new avocado plant grow, you new plant parent ☺



To see pictures of this process and also read an article about how to plant your seed, <https://empressof dirt.net/grow-avocado-seed-easy/>, where I learned this method from.

Flowering Education

Dal'Mont Gourdine

When we are little and inside school, we learned how to plant, how we are connected to these plants and we did activities to show us how we grow just like plants. Something I have used over the years is planting flowers and trees to clear my mind which helps my body be more productive. Something you can also place yourself in a garden and allow yourself to let go of everything that's on your mind.

On Plant Relationships. . .

Jenny Ofray

“There were differences among plants as to how and where they will grow which resonated with the perspectives people developed about themselves” (119)

Native science reflects on plants in terms of interaction between humans and a natural community. We breathe the same air as plants and recognize that we are dependent on them to sustain ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. Indigenous cultures know this sustainability came from harmony and balance with the natural environment. Their food plant rituals honored this balance and the human community’s role in co-creation, and this also became the philosophy for relationships with one another. As people cultivated plants, they cultivated a sense of place and belonging that fed their spirits and they passed down this understanding, starting with the tribe’s youth engaging in simple observation. Observing each other’s differences, like in plants, could help us become better co-creators. Knowing how and where we each will grow best allows us to create sustainable cycles within ourselves that then support a larger community.

Question for my plant parents: How does your relationship with your plant reflect your relationship with yourself?

Shannon Laughlin



On Trees

Star Meng



The drawing of a tree in the winter with snow on it which I see on the streets on campus. Most trees we see might be the one for decoration. They aren't huge and old plants for the willing of human beings. We need to remind ourselves that trees need years to grow but are easy to cut down.

Activity: Sowing the Seeds of Relaxation

Dal'Mont Gourdine

Something that would get your body calm and relaxed would be planting plants. I have done this in the past and it helped me calm down and helped me get back to my main focus. I went to the store and got two types of seeds. The seeds I got were Blue Daisy and Marigold. When I got back to the house I got soil, water and two plastic party cups. Next, I put the soil in the cup then made a hole for the seed. After planting the seed, I poured the water on top and found a sunny part inside my yard to give the plant some type of light. You should be able to see results in a couple of days.

The Rose

Dal'Mont Gourdine

One day the rose bloom
As the sun shine
The thorns sharp as a knife
The stem greener than the grass

The day passes and it's raining
The rose is bending because of the heavy rain
The rose thorns is still sharp as glass
The stem might pop because of the bending

Another day passes for the rose
The rose is free from the rain
The rain couldn't stop the rose blooming
Never let anyone stop your bloom



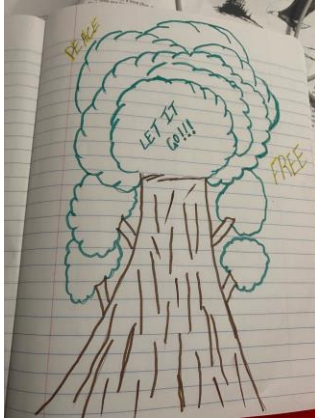
Flowers = Fuel for Life

Edison Escobar



Peace, Freedom, and Trees

Dal'Mont Gourdine



This tree is a drawing from my journal that I believe is a part of the spirit part of the sacred tree. I remember when I was drawing the tree thinking about what does the spirit of the sacred tree be and the first thing that comes to mind is being free and at peace.

Activity: Your Sacred Tree

Elijah Jeffreys

Now an activity that you can do is draw a picture of a tree in the center of your paper. Then you can draw what is meaningful in your life around the tree. It can be anything important to you. It should come out as all the things that are an essential part of your life revolving around the tree which would show that whatever you dish out in life you shall eventually receive. In other words, what goes around comes around.

Activity: Sacred Tree Meditation

Dal'Mont Gourdine

For 5 minutes lay on your back and imagine you are laying under a tree in the shade and let your body relax and see the sunlight throw the tree. Take a deep breath and inhale for 5 seconds and slowly exhale for 8 seconds. This is going to help you clear your head before doing anything that you need to focus on.

Grow Like a Tree

“The ancient ones taught us that the life of the tree is the life of the people”. This quote from “The story of the Sacred Tree” means a lot because when people compare humans to things they don't like trees. Trees grow up and down, aslo left and right. Us humans only want to grow up and we limit ourselves from seeing and experiencing new things because we only want to go one way. We all need to allow ourselves to grow like a tree - which is freely.

Playlist: Soci Revolution

Jenny Ofray

Music is very sacred to me. I tried to compile this playlist with a sacredness towards self-worth, emotions, and relationships with the Earth/each other in mind. Also proud of the transitions so listen in order pleaseee. Enjoy! <3



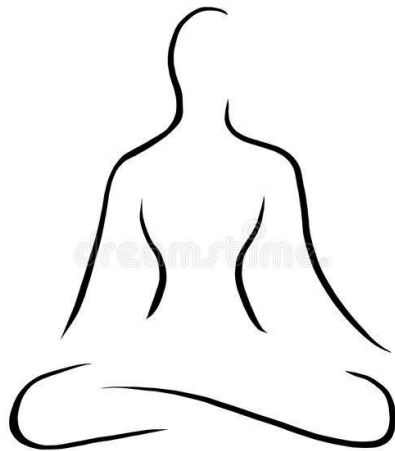
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<https://music.apple.com/us/playlist/soci-revolutions/pl.u-kv9lbK5t7GM2mxL>

Activity: Paint Yourself in Sacredness

Jenny Ofray

Recognizing sacredness is respecting worthiness.

Sit or stand in front of a mirror, as naked as you are comfortable with. Place your hands over parts of your body that are sacred to you or that you want to be sacred to you. Feel the warmth of your hands and notice what feelings come up. If paint is available to you, begin to finger paint the parts you've chosen with any symbols, colors, or words that resonate with you. Once you feel ready, reflect on how you can honor your sacredness without judgement as you wash off the paint. Imagine any limiting or harmful beliefs about your body washing away. Finally, give yourself a hug. Treating your body as sacred, in any form, reminds your mind and spirit of your innate worth and that the relationship between all three is ultimately about love and respect.



Chapter 7: Spirituality

Lexi Schibli

I didn't stop believing in magic until I was thirteen. By that time, I had known Santa wasn't real, the tooth fairy was a sham, and the Easter Bunny was merely a way of keeping young christians engaged in the resurrection of Jesus. Hogwarts hadn't sent me an invitation the year prior, so turning thirteen was my last chance to find out if I was magic. The test: put my hand under water and wait to see if I grew a tail.

At this point in time, I was going through a dramatic period of transition. As most do during their first experience with life-altering struggles, I began to question everything; "Why me?" "Why this?" "What's the point?" etc. My relationship with religion had become complicated and confusing, so I desperately needed something to believe in

So, on my thirteenth birthday, every ounce of logic and common sense mocked me as I put my pinky finger under my faucet, but my desperation for hope begged I'd be proven wrong.. There was no surprise when nothing out of the ordinary occurred, but I couldn't help but be disappointed.

Still undergoing the previously mentioned struggles, I spent the next two years in an awfully bitter place believing in nothing; no magic, no religion, not the people around me, and not even myself. The question of my existence and its purpose began to torment me.

Then one day, a young girl in my town passed away from a car accident just days before her sixteenth birthday. The whole community was devastated, and shook to their core. Though I had no relationship with this girl, I too couldn't wrap my head around the event. I hadn't been to the church in some time, but a few days later, I took myself to the chapel and prayed. I looked to the wooden statue of Jesus, hung on the cross, and asked why this young girl's life randomly came to an end. She was full of vitality, popular, and a staple in our community. I, on the other hand, had been the opposite.

It's the randomness, unfairness, and cruelty of death and suffering that deterred me from spirituality. If there was something greater than our being, how could these things happen?

The reminder of our mortality continued to follow me around shortly thereafter when my grandfather passed a few months later. At the funeral, I stood at his open casket searching for a sign of life... a blink, a breath... anything. Yet I saw nothing.

After the funeral, my family and grandfather's closest friends gathered to comfort one another with stories of my Popou; the way he lived, and the way he impacted those around him. And it was then, I began to understand that human mortality is nothing more than losing someone tangibly. The way we exist through life, and the way we interact with life, is everlasting... if we allow it to be.

The next day, I wrote this down in my journal immediately; promising myself that from there on, I would live to the best of my ability with purpose. As I wrote this, I looked outside my grandparent's window and saw a Red Robin (my Popou's favorite bird) perched up on the windowsill.

And this was my first glimmer of hope that re-ignited my belief in magic.

All the common sense and logic wanted to dismiss it as coincidence, but I latched onto the belief that it was a result of something greater than myself.

"Coincidences" such as these merely stopped here. Popou's birthday was November 11th (11/11), and I began to see that number (1111) everywhere at least four or five times a day. I could try to dismiss it, but at the rate it followed me around, I'd be naive to do so.

Instead, I let myself open my heart, mind, and soul back to this idea of spirituality and magic in general. The more I opened myself to it, trusted in it, the more it showed itself to me. Once you see it, you can't remember life without it.

I share with you this story because it's more than a spiritual awakening tale. It recalls the time I began to understand why spirituality exists in the first place. It's our way of making meaning of our existence. It provides us with a loose map to navigate the complexities of our existence. It changes the way we perceive our existence.

We spent the entirety of our class studying and comparing indigenous cultures with our own. Mainly we compared it against capitalism. During this time, I became so enthralled with the way Indigenous peoples led a sixth sensory life, compared to most people in western society. They placed an equal amount of importance on spirituality as they did logic, and common sense.

In Western society, we have become obsessed with control. If something doesn't make sense, it's wrong... it's not controllable. We don't have power over it. Oftentimes, spirituality can't be explained by science, therefore it doesn't make sense.

On Animals and Spirituality

Edison Escobar

"I think that most of us have the sense that whatever religion means, it's not obvious. It's complicated, beyond words - similar to God, which is, within classical theology, always something you can't quite describe. So the first I thing I would say is that to utterly exclude animals from the phenomenon of religion is to pretend we know what is more than we know."

-Aaron Gross "What if Animals Believe in God?"

<http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2017/3/23/what-if-animals-believe-in-god-kb6gx-crpg9>

This quote explores the idea that we seem to think that religion and spirituality is something exclusively reserved for humans. We seem to believe that animals are not capable of being spiritual. We likely believe this because we mostly only think of the major religions and not pagan religions. The thought of a monkey going to church seems ridiculous to us because we have such a limited view of spirituality.

Are Humans Truly Above Animals?

Zhiyue Meng Star

"Like any other species, human beings have survived because we possess certain traits that have helped us secure a place on Earth." (Suzuki, 1997)

In the book *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in nature*, by David Suzuki (1997), the author told us

In turn, we neglect and dismiss it. If it's not logical, it mustn't be true.

Then, I noticed that the indigenous people *embraced* this. They *embodied* it. In fact, if it didn't make sense, it was because they knew they didn't have the means to understand its complexities. Therefore, it was greater than their physical being, and they let it guide them.

In fact, a beautiful quote from Native Science explains this simply, "To understand the foundations of native science one must become open to the roles of sensation, perception, imagination, emotion, symbols, and spirit as well as that of concept, logic, and rational thought."

An activity:

I invite you to write down some of the complexities in your life that make no sense at all; life's mysteries and wonders. And I invite you to write down what those mysteries can teach you about your life. This is the beginning of your spirituality.

that we are not at a higher hierarchy than other animals, instead, all creatures have their specific traits. We shouldn't forget that human beings are only one of the species that amount to the number of all the animals on the ark. However, religion seems to teach us that we are the most important and powerful one of all creatures around the world. It tends to place us on the top and so we forget the importance of the other creatures.

Activity: Drawing Your Highest Self

Rory Monaco

Draw a picture of your highest self. Use nice paper and around the portrait, write the songs/musicians this version of yourself listens to, the foods they eat, the people they surround themselves with, the values they embody, the words they speak.



Gratitude as Spiritual Connection

Ace Sholtes

There is a South American Indian saying that goes “To become human, one must make room in oneself for the wonders of the universe”, but what does this mean? We all know what it’s like to be human. There are times when you feel on top of the world, times when you’re caught up inside it and times where you feel the world is on your shoulders. We experience a lot. We feel a lot. We think a lot. But so does the universe. In fact Alan Watts says, “you are the universe experiencing itself”. It is like a ripple in the water. The first ripple is us, and as it expands it becomes the last ripple, or the universe. It is this idea of “As above, so below, as the universe, so the soul, as within, so without”. So, what does it mean to “make room in oneself for the wonders of the universe”?

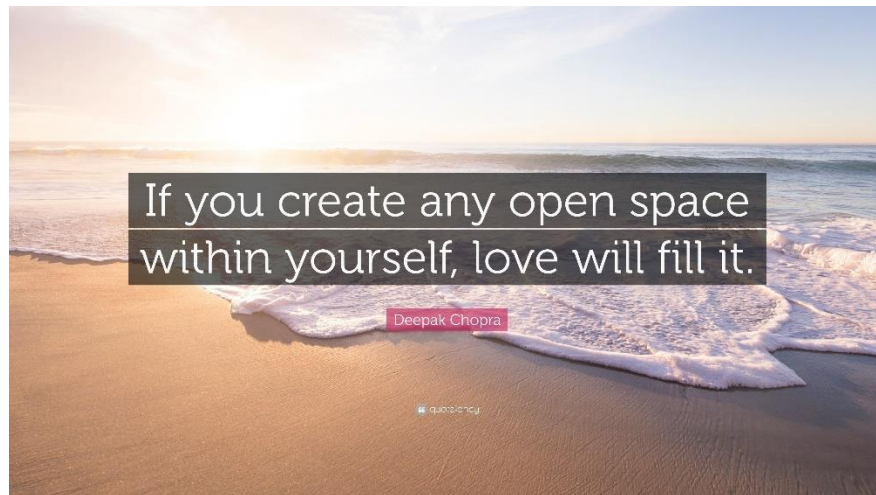
To be spiritual essentially means to believe in something greater than yourself. You know how people say “everything happens for a reason”? It infers that they believe that there is something out there that made that experience happen for a reason. A non-spiritual person would call this a

“Ok, I understand you don’t feel your best, maybe a friend will help cheer you up”. I find that when I practice mindfulness and gratitude, it is when I feel most connected to the source. Mindfulness helps me pause and experience life through a more wholesome lens. Mindful eating is a great example. It is so easy to turn on a show and eat while you watch, I am very guilty of this. But I try to challenge myself to eat most meals without any distractions. Or if I am waiting for the bus, instead of scrolling mindlessly through my phone I’ll look at my surroundings or do a check in with myself. Have you eaten today? How are you feeling? Gratitude really helps me appreciate everything in my life. Every day I end the day with what I am grateful for. Practicing gratitude and mindfulness really allow one to make space within themselves for the wonders of the universe. Maybe now you’re off to class or about to go on a walk. Whatever you do after reading this, maybe try creating more awareness in your life. If someone has a really cool outfit, maybe compliment them. The universe might be giving

coincidence, while a spiritual person would call this a synchronicity.

Synchronicities are when you pay attention to what happens to and for you in belief that the universe is essentially communicating with you. For example, one day I wasn't feeling my best but I had to go study. I'm walking through campus and something made me take a different route to the library than I usually would. As I was walking, I ran into a friend of mine that I hadn't seen in a long time and so we walked around campus and caught each other up on things. After we departed, I felt so much better than I had before. I 100% believe that was a synchronicity because it was almost as if the universe was saying,

you the urge to compliment them because maybe that would make their day. Or maybe you're at the drive thru and the person in front of you paid for your coffee. Take two seconds to say thank you to the source and maybe if you're up for it pay for the person behind you (and if you're scared it's going to be expensive maybe pay \$3 of their order). These are the little wonders that the universe embeds in our lives. We just need to make space within ourselves to appreciate it.



Chapter 8: Naturopathy/Medicine

Activity: Can You Name These Medicinal Plants?

Zhiyue Meng Star

People seem to lack knowledge about the medicines that we might easily get as we pass it. While these plants are being used by the indigenous people for treatment, those who might not feel affected to stop the pain at the time take them but do cure people slowly.

Try naming some! (flip the page the answers under the images)



a) _____



b) _____



c) _____



d) _____



e) _____



f) _____



g) _____



h) _____

a) California Poppy b) Gooseberry c) Milkweed d) Nettles e) Persimmon f) Spruce g) Willow h) Yew

Broaden Your Definition of Healing

Summer Wells

“Through long experience, people came to know a plant’s properties for healing certain illnesses. This knowledge, which ensures survival in a given environment, became an essential and basic foundation of Indigenous education.” (Cajate, 2000, p.115-116)

If you take a minute to reflect on the medical customs of Western culture, what comes to mind...high medical bills? Prescription drugs? Big pharma? All of the above? It seems that human health in Western culture comes at a price, and a big one at that. However, there is an alternative way to view health and medicine, connecting back to Native science and Indigenous knowledge which embraces the healing components in various herbs and plants. As understood in the quote, natural medicinal practices

and naturopathy were practiced in the education of Indigenous culture. In Native science, a huge part of health relates to your mind and spirit. It is not just the symptoms of your body that are targeted, like how they are by prescribing drugs in Western culture. The importance of naturopathy is that it holistically connects mind, body and spirit. A component of this holistic medicine includes personal experience, knowledge, and relationship with the plants that make up our living earth. Broadening one's education on the medicinal resources found in our natural world can allow one to become less dependent on the culture aiming to target symptoms as opposed to personal well-being.

Naturopathy: The Basics

Kirill O'Neil

“Naturopathic medicine is a system that uses natural remedies to help the body heal itself. It embraces many therapies, including herbs, massage, acupuncture, exercise, and nutritional counseling. The goal of naturopathic medicine is to treat the whole person -- that means mind, body, and spirit. It also aims to heal the root causes of an illness -- not just stop the symptoms.”

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/what-is-naturopathic-medicine>

Native Americans have established this practice and it has been used since the beginning even before colonizers or western civilization became a prominent part of today's society. They have used plants, herbs, and fungi to heal the mind, body and spirit. They were experts in foraging and were able to distinguish helpful versus harmful species which provided the fundamentals for practitioners and healers. Their minds were trained by their senses, sight, smell, touch, and taste. Spirit is often healed by exercises, acupuncture or other treatments, and lifestyle changes. The goal of naturopathic medicine is to prevent the problems from getting worse. You are treated holistically rather than symptomatically. The treatments that are used have been around a lot longer than the good old pharmaceutical drugs. Naturopathic physicians provide a person with multiple options and solutions to their problems.



Health From the Earth

Melissa Santos



As you've probably noticed, in Western culture there is a strong disconnect from nature and a big part of that occurs within medicine. Naturopathy has been used as a means of healing for thousands and thousands of years. Yet, now it is seen as just an alternative to pharmaceuticals. By using herbal medicines, you may start feeling more connected to the Earth. There are also a lot less side effects that come with natural remedies as opposed to pharma. Try doing your own research or meeting a naturopathic doctor next time you're sick! There has not been much research done on naturopathic ways, but what is done has shown just how effective, if not more, it can be.

Health and Reciprocity in Native Science

Ace Sholtes

In indigenous culture, medicine may not cost anything but that doesn't mean it is free. They believe that keeping a balance between themselves and the Earth is essential. This quote from the book "Native Science" further explains this. "Among some Indian herbalists, plants are referred to as 'the hair of the Earth Mother'. There is a widespread traditional Native belief that the Earth feels the pull every time a plant is taken from the soil. Therefore, humans must always make a proper offering and prayers. As one Navajo elder states, 'You must ask permission of the plant or the medicine will not work. Plants are alive; you must give them a good talk. Such offerings are made to ensure that the pulling of the 'Earth Mother's hairs' does not hurt her too much and so that she understands that you comprehend your relationship to her and what she is giving you through a part of her body'" (page 111).

This concept of how Mother Earth can feel every flower we pluck is so foreign to me, yet so fascinating. In our western culture if you feel sick you either take an over the counter pill that you don't know anything about or your doctor prescribed you a pill that you can't even pronounce the name of. Our culture would never consider getting enough sleep or taking a walk, as medicine. It seems so backwards though. We are living beings. Why would we cure our sickness, whether it be physical or mental, with non-living matters. It makes sense to cure ourselves with other living energies. It also makes sense to have this idea of maintaining balance between us and Mother Earth.

Does it make sense to you? We go to CVS to pick up a prescription, we ask for it, we pay for it and move on with our day. But when it comes to picking a flower or something, we don't think twice, just...pick! We don't leave anything in return. Why do we not ask for permission like we would at the CVS pharmacy counter? Is it because there is no person to speak on behalf of the plants? But isn't that the

whole point? How there is no one to speak for the plants so in doing so, WE have to speak WITH them, have a conversation with them, just like we would the CVS pharmacist.

Let's put ourselves in the shoes of Mother Earth. What do you think it feels like when someone pulls a flower from your soil? What about when someone pulls a flower but leaves something in return like watering the surrounding flowers? Now let's put ourselves back in our own shoes. How is your relationship with Mother Earth? Have you ever pulled a plant from her soil and never left anything to maintain the balance? If so, what can you do moving forward to change? Is recognizing the fact that you haven't maintained the balance before enough to learn from this poor behavior? Or can you only truly learn from the past by changing your future habits and perceptions with your relationship with Mother Earth?

Activity: Mindful Tea

Melissa Santos

Make a cup of herbal tea, if you have some. Think about the type of tea you are drinking and what you know about its medicinal benefits, if you know any at all. Tea has been used as a type of medicine for thousands and thousands of years. Compare how making and drinking this cup of tea feels compared to picking up and taking pharmaceutical drugs. Write down your thoughts. Would you say one feels more rewarding? Why is that? Why is that if not?

Indigenous cultures find reward within their work. Their work is doing what they need to do to survive, like finding medicines within nature, foraging, hunting, preparing meals, etc. They do not even view this as 'work'. They do not need to go to the pharmacy to get medicine, they are able to obtain it themselves through nature and hundreds of years of knowledge that they've passed down from generation to generation. Whereas in our modern generations, we don't even know what we are putting in our bodies half the time. We don't even make our own food, or tea, most of the time. We are too busy trying to make money or pleasing someone other than ourselves. This results in a complete lack of knowledge and mindfulness that is necessary for a beneficial and happy life.

Here's a challenge: try being more mindful, grateful, and present every time you have a meal/snack/drink and see how that impacts your energy.



Activity: Self-Guided Exploration

Kirill O'Neil

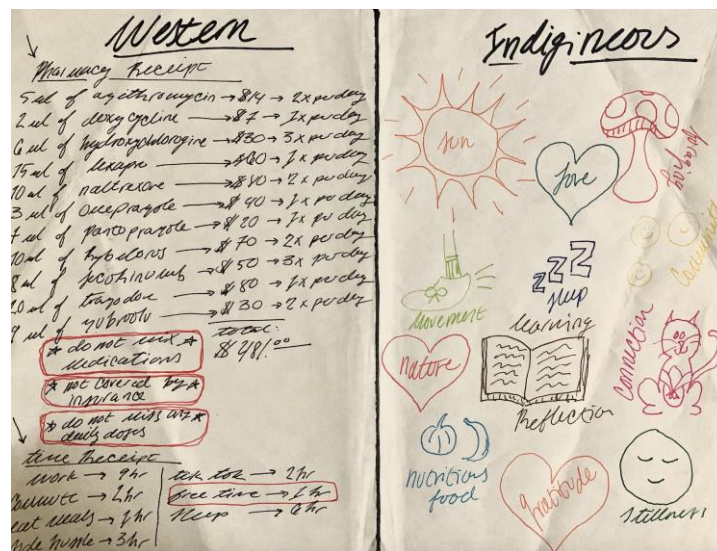
Talk to people about naturopathic healing options (acupuncture, herbs, homeopathy, exercises, meditations, nutritional support, and bodywork therapies). Explore which ones may be beneficial to them or yourself and see what is available in your area. Research common conditions these doctors treat, so that

you can have awareness of the possibilities. Finally, write down some herbs that might help your health and wellbeing. Many of these treatments and remedies have multiple uses and purposes and might help the mind to better respond to stress. They might also help your spirit by supporting your emotions through the knowledge of the earth and by exploring your connections to the natural world. You will be able to begin the healing process for yourself and others.

Take this space to record your findings

Western vs Indigenous Medicine

Ace Sholtes



In this drawing I compare how I feel western culture perceives medicine and how I feel indigenous culture perceives medicine.

On the western side I have a "Pharmacy Receipt" That lists all of the prescribed medications, their doses and the price. Of course, this is not accurate at all but I wanted to exaggerate it because it

What is sustainable is getting medicine from Mother Earth. There are countless forms of medicine free of cost, or at least money. I mentioned in my Mind: Medicine section how important it is to maintain balance with Mother Earth. So instead of you getting medication and

amplifies the difference between western and indigenous. The names of the medications are very lengthy and very hard to pronounce. We live in a society now where we are so accustomed to putting things in our body where we can't even read or know what they actually mean. The total is \$481, which is quite a lot of money. There is also a "Time Receipt". It always seems that "there is not enough time in a day". Well, what do you have prioritized? In my example, this person from the western culture is working 9 hour days and only has 1 hour of free time. Is this person supposed to heal themselves in that one hour? Is that why people turn to quick fixes like tylenol? This is not a sustainable behavior to have, actually no, this is not a sustainable culture to be in.

giving money in return, maybe you take a flower and water the other flowers in return. It doesn't cost money but it does cost energy. What I am trying to say is that Mother Earth is here to help us and provide us medicine, all she asks is for some kindness in return. In my drawing on the indigenous section, I just gave examples of what I think are different forms of medicine from the Earth and even from within ourselves.

An example is reflection/learning. It is important to take time to reflect on what is going on in your life. We live in such a go-go-go society that looks down upon taking time to pause and rest. We are constantly overstimulated with infinite amounts of information from our phones and in the media. It distracted us from where we came from, the Earth, and where we will end up in, the Earth again.

Activity: Journaling as Medicine

Ace Sholtes

There is no doubt that our culture deals with many different types of illnesses, both physical and mental. We are told to take pill after pill. Not only can we not pronounce the medications prescribed to us but the side effects can be very dangerous. Why is it that we mindlessly trust health care providers who barely know us to "heal our health issue", when in reality they are just giving us quick fixes to mask the symptoms we experience.

Healing, to me, is when you make a conscious effort to help yourself. They can look different for many people. Maybe for some healing is going outside, or playing a sport, or baking, or screaming a song in the car, or journaling. Healing, to me, is not depending only on medication to rid your health issues. Of course, there are definitely situations when prescribed medication is necessary. But I am writing this to help open a new perspective for you. To help you see that healing is not something you do alone, and it is not only for you. Healing is for everyone and helping everyone.

"The story of how a person becomes a healer opens a window into the world of relationships among health, wholeness, plants, and animals, as well as into what happens when proper relationships are lost and disease occurs" (page 125, Native Science). Healing starts with being connected to everything around you. You are not alone. I apologize on behalf of whoever said you had to heal by yourself. The relationship you have with yourself, with your friends, with the plants you walk by, with the animals that live in our backyards, are so essential. Without these relationships disease creeps in, slowly and quietly, until it is too late.

Embodiment is so important when it comes to healing. I invite you to try a journaling embodiment activity to help you with healing (get yourself a nice journal to use). Pick a space that you will help inspire your mind, maybe that is at the desk in your room, under a tree if it's not too cold, or in a cafe. When you're at the place you picked, take out a journal. Now I'll ask some questions you can respond to. Keep in mind it is important to just write and not think. It doesn't have to sound like poetry. The purpose of journaling is to get your thoughts out of your head and onto paper. In doing so you are slowly processing your thoughts and creating a stable relationship with yourself, a beautiful form of healing.

How are you feeling today? Is there anything that seems to be troubling you lately, if so what is? Maybe it's an exam, a friend that doesn't listen to you, climate change, family matters or maybe lack of self-confidence. How does this make you feel? If it doesn't inspire you or respectfully challenge you, maybe you need to heal from this.

What can you do for yourself to help heal from this trouble? That's a loaded question, I understand. If you don't know how to answer that, start with this. Write a list of 50 things that you love, or inspire you, or interest you, or always make you wonder, or make you feel good, or can't live without. If 50 things came really easy to you or even too challenging, I encourage you to just keep writing the list until you have absolutely no more ideas (feel free to add to it in the future too)! Now with your list, make three categories and divide every item into one of the three categories. Maybe you found that your items could fit into categories like "Going outside and exploring new places" or "Connecting with friends, family and strangers" or "Moving my body". When you have your categories these will act like the pillars of your healing journey. Sometimes healing just looks like doing the things that you love and connecting with others and yourself.

Next in your journal, talk about how you can incorporate your pillars into helping you heal and process from the things that you listed above that are troubling you. It is important to understand that healing does not happen overnight, it takes drive and consistency and action. Healing is a form of self love and love to the world we experience.

I hope journaling gave you some sort of insight and guidance. If it feels awkward or uncomfortable, that is ok! Journaling is like exercising a part of your brain that we rarely use. The more you interact with it the more confident you will become with you and your relationship with your healing journey.



Chapter 9: Astronomy

Jacob Drena

“Each morning upon rising, and each evening before sleeping, give thanks for the life within you and for all life, for the good things the Creator has given you and others the opportunity to grow a little more each day.” (Bopp, et al., 1984, p. 75)

Native Astronomy

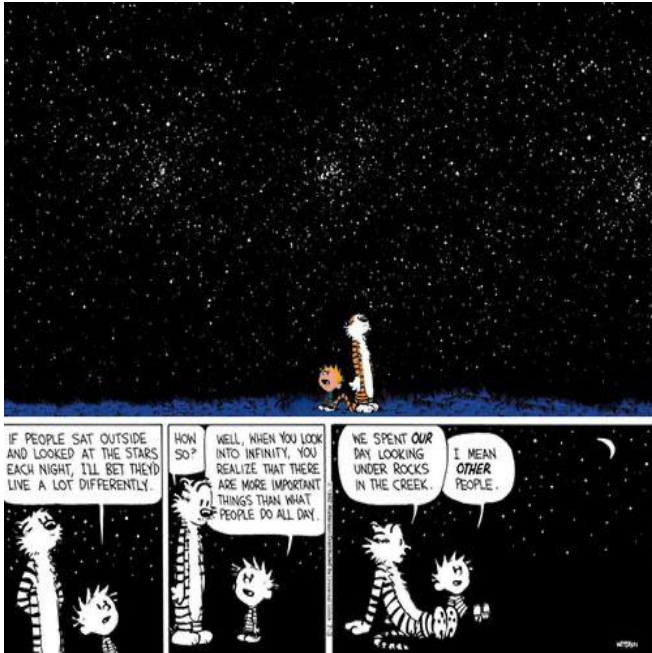
Edison Escobar

Native Astronomy:

“In those stories, there is a deeply felt sense that humans do have a direct and ancient relationship with the heavens.” (Cajete, 2000, p.226)

Native astronomy is different from western astronomy in that there is a close connection with nature and the skies. A lot of stories from native astronomy involve animals, showing the intimate relationship and reverence that native astronomy has for nature. It is very different from the strictly scientific western view of astronomy.





A Wise Little Boy Once Said. .

Ace Sholtes

A wise little boy, whose best friend was a tiger, once said “ ‘If people sat outside and looked at the stars each night, I’d bet they’d live a lot differently’ ‘How so?’ ‘Well when you look into infinity, you realize that there are more important things than what people do all day’”

I remember when I was a senior in high school staring at my blank graduation cap. I felt like whatever I chose to express on this cap had to reflect my whole life ahead of me. In my mind everything in my life was getting me ready for college. Every essay I wrote, every outfit I wore, every meeting with a teacher, every ounce of my energy was to have a good resume and good grades to get into a good school for college. How was I supposed to decorate my cap that represented my future when I had no idea why I was doing any of it. There had to have been a reason.

Four years later, one would think I feel different. One would think I have “everything figured out”, whatever that even means.

One would think I know exactly what I want to do when I graduate in a few months, considering everything I have done in my life this far was to get good grades and have an impressive resume so that I can get an interview for a job, so that I can get a job ... and then what? Sit behind a desk all day? There has to be a better way or better yet, a different way. There are more important things, like the stars. Maybe the stars hold all of our answers that we long for. Maybe the stars live in our sky to guide us.

Maria Montessori says “The stars, Earth, stones, life of all kinds, form a whole in relation to each other and so close is this relationship that we cannot understand a stone without some understanding of the great sun”. We are all interconnected no matter how different we may seem. Our existence is a reflection of the existence of the stars.

Maybe “If people sat outside and looked at the stars each night, I’d bet they’d live a lot differently”. Maybe then people would understand that there is more to life than grades and resumes and trying to look good for people that don’t even know us. There is more to life than busy schedules and homework. But there are people out there that will argue with me. Saying “in order to live life you need to be successful”. Ok well my success is different from your success.

My success is taking the time to appreciate the world around me, the stars, the animals, the cultures all around the world. What does success look like for you? The stars are in the sky for a reason, so that everyone can see them. Look at the sky right now, there most definitely is someone in a different state, or even country looking at that same sky as you. But what is beautiful is that you each have different perspectives of the stars in the same sky. Neither perspective is right or wrong they just -are-. That is what brings beauty to the world. Life is about creating beauty in everything you do, because in doing so you spread love. Isn’t that what the stars are, love? Look at how corrupt parts of our culture have become; the stars still choose to stay. They don’t have to shine in our sky, they owe us nothing. Yet, they stay because they love us.

Maybe next time you feel overwhelmed with how the world works, go out beneath the sky, look at the stars, the sun, the moon, the clouds, the birds, the airplanes. And just -be-. Just like the stars.



Larger Than Life. . .

Jacob Drena

It is far too easy in today's world to become completely detached from the space and universe around us. We forget that we are on a planet that is surrounded by ever expanding space. Within that space are millions of stars, our companions in the cosmos. Reconnecting with the stars can bring about profound spiritual awareness and change. Take one night where you can set up a nice fire, bring some good music that speaks to your soul and just exist with the sky. Really try to feel connected and understand that we aren't underneath the sky, but within it. Note how connected you feel. Don't feel small, on the contrary, feel massive. Feel as though you are a part of something much larger than your life on Earth.

Activity: Star Poetry

Rory Monaco

For this section of astronomy, I encourage you to spend a few minutes sitting by yourself, without any distractions, and think of astronomy, outer space, the possibility of outside life—all of it, what it means to you. Do you use any of the planets or stars and their place in the universe to guide your life? Do you find solace thinking of how small our place is in this universe in comparison to all else out there? After spending a few moments in reflection, come back to this page and write a poem using the words I provided as a prompt. They are not there to restrict your writing flow, but instead to encourage new thoughts or ideas that perhaps you didn't have before. I've included a poem that I wrote using these words as a starting point, to illustrate what I mean.

words to use:

Ether, Boundless, Space, Divine, Exist, Starlight

*grew up with the earth beneath my feet and
the sky above my head*

*grew up knowing this boundless love that circles between me
and the trees / the trees and the flowers / the flowers and the grass /*

*so much beauty in the bounty
could never grasp how some see this as separate from ourselves*

*as a child i layed on the hill in my backyard
blades of grass tickled my shins
as i looked above at what they said was outer space*

*an ether ; they said it was a vacuum ; i told them it was a tunnel
(a place to carry our love)*

because when the sun sets and the moon's glow lights our paths
how else could we feel the starlight on our skins,
if there was nothing to carry it to us?

a silver platter made for each and everyone one of us
of this light that shines within and outward
///// what you see externally is what exists internally /////

grew up knowing that life is more than what it seems
beyond the layers there are pauses and held breaths and moments in between.
beyond the stars there is life and there is beauty and there is hope.
there is there is there is.

Activity: Draw the Stars

Jacob Drena

The stars are our guide. The stars are made up of the same materials as our bodies are. They have taught generation after generation about the nature of the universe. It is easy to forget about the stars in our light-polluted society. We rarely look above us and appreciate the massiveness of the cosmos in which we live. Some cultures even hypothesize that the "Creator" comes from the stars and the cosmos. Therefore, find a night where the sky is clear. Draw the stars as you see them. Then, draw some constellations that you see. They don't have to be real to anyone but you. Draw them with meaning and purpose.

Draw them how your mind tells you to.

Embrace their infiniteness.



Chapter 10: Food

Native Planting Techniques

Kirill O'Neil

Native Americans believed the spirits would look after their crops. They were much more connected to the spiritual world and would give offerings like tobacco or sweetgrass in exchange for protection. They were doing much more than just planting seeds in the ground and waiting for something to sprout. They worked with the elements such as air, water, fire, and earth to receive blessings from higher powers for their communities' harvest. Their techniques in terms of planting were seen as superior compared to the European techniques. Native Indians have a greater connection to plants than we do. For instance, they were able to learn how to control pollination of plants, so that they could combine characteristics in desired ways and to create different types of foods or plants. They were the first true masters of the hybridization before researchers exposed the technique. Native Americans passed on their knowledge to future generations. These traditions gave them a sense of spirituality when working with the plants they use as food. In the past they often embodied themselves through dances such as the corn dance which honored the god that controlled the growth of corn. They used this ritual to purify and renew themselves to prepare for a plentiful harvest.

Connections to Food

Summer Wells

“People learned how to use food plants occurring in their environment in the most productive, effective, and ecologically sound ways.” (Cajete, 2000, p. 115)

Such a huge part of Western culture revolves around food. Food is usually the focal point of social gatherings, holidays, health disparities, and economic class. You can often tell one's social status by the types of foods they purchase and eat. Mass agriculture has created a rift between the personal connection and appreciation for food. As opposed to taking months out of the year to grow your own ingredients, mass agriculture and economic competition has allowed for stores to be packed with foods, often genetically modified and sold for a certain price. This personal disconnect between humans and food has allowed room for unethical and unsustainable methods to take over how we produce and acquire the ingredients that make up our meals. On the bright side, you have the personal liberty to make better choices regarding attitude and consumption. In Native Science, appreciation and reverence for each food and its origin is acknowledged. By practicing these values, you grow a deeper appreciation for the food on your plate and the resources you have access to. The food you consume fuels your body, and the choices you make can affect your mind and spirit.

Pears

Kirill O'Neil

I drew these pears to illustrate the importance of eating healthy food. Fruits are full of nutrients and can help you diminish your cravings for unhealthy sweets. The picture are in a dark setting often not eaten everyday. Ever bite a juicy pear? Sometimes craving reveals to us that it is needed in our diet. We tend to eat more packaged and prepared foods that are not wrapped in plastics or in containers help limit waste. Eating foods that are grown on farms will give you a sense that you made a good decision on what to eat. We tend to eat things that are visually appealing. This food is more likely to have a positive effect on us mentally and physically. There are not a lot of people who eat 1 ½ to 2 cups of fruit daily. Let this picture be a reminder to eat more fruit!



importance of vitamins and diminish your pears in the because they are into a super certain foods diet. We tend to eat more packaged and prepared foods than fresh vegetables because they spoil faster. Eating plastics or in

Eat Your Fruits and Veggies

Summer Wells

In this piece of art, I used my favorite fruits and important to incorporate into and health benefits it provides. It foods most healthy for our veggies, come from the earth. I the drawing to represent the regarding the resources that our Native Science, we should animal that makes up our diet. minds, but the food we eat has negatively affect our body and fruits and veggies, reflect on love the earth!



colored pencils to draw some vegetables. Produce is so one's diet due to the nutrition is not a coincidence that the bodies, like fruits and incorporated hearts all around need for appreciation lovely earth provides. Like in appreciate every plant and Not only is this good for our the potential to positively or spirit. All in all, eat your where they come from, and

Activity: Cook!

Summer Wells

What you put in your body is a precedent for how you are going to feel. I challenge you to think about your favorite meals, and what ingredients are incorporated into each dish. After collecting your thoughts, pick your favorite ingredient, grow it yourself, and make a homemade meal out of it! Some of the ingredients you can choose include basil, tomato, avocado, peppers, etc. My favorite is cilantro! Once you have picked your ingredient, go to the store and get your supplies. You will need the base materials like a cute pot, soil, and seeds, but you can also get enhancing materials like fertilizer and plant food that will help the growth of your ingredient. Once your ingredient is ready for harvesting, think of what you want to cook. The beauty of this challenge is that you can make anything you like and there are so many options! Connecting with nature and what you eat first hand can be a refreshing venture for your mind and spirit. Happy growing!

Activity: Did You Know?

Zhiyue Meng Star



There are more than you think that humans eat. For example, do you know any insects that humans eat? Have you ever seen any of them below? Do you know the following insects are also food for people?

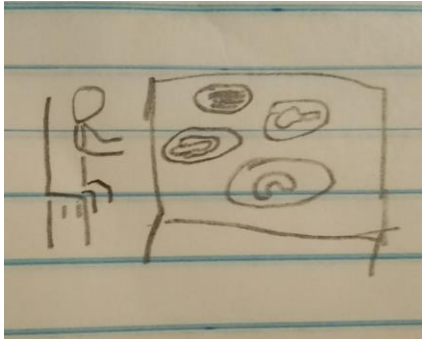
There is a huge range of what humans eat. You might not think insects are edible but some people enjoy eating them. We get our energy from eating a

variety of foods, like insects do support protein that people need.



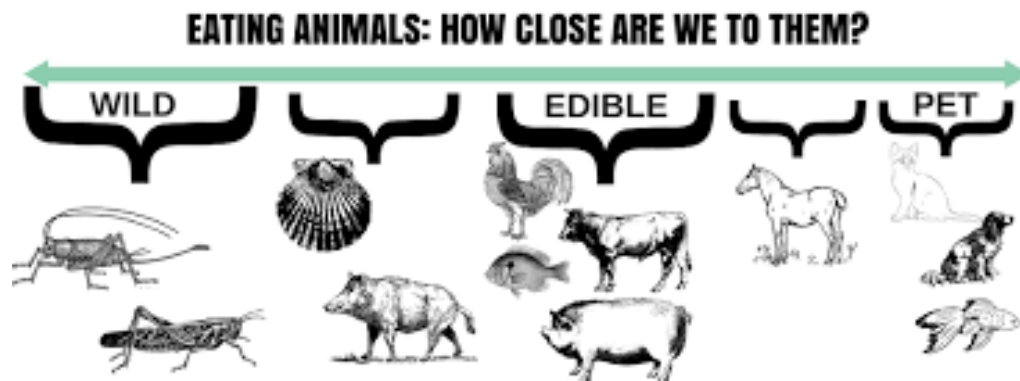
Animals as Food

Zhiyue Meng Star



Our relationship with other creatures is complex. They could be our soul mates or be our food. Take rabbits for example. Rabbits are really cute and are a popular pet for most people around the world. But it is also known as a delicious food for SICHUAN people in China. Also, pork is a common meat that people eat, while Guinea pigs are cute and a popular animal for pets.

How do we choose? Some it depends how close we are to them...



Chapter 11: Mental Health



Activity: Mental Health In and Out

Summer Wells

Internal and external factors can have a huge impact on a person's mental health and well-being. For this body exercise, I challenge you to pick two activities, one external and one internal, that you believe will have positive effects on your personal mental health. If possible, you should try to incorporate at least one activity from BOTH categories at least once per week, or as much as you please! Examples of internal activities that are great for reflection and mental health include but are not limited to journaling, having an expressive conversation with a loved one, and prayer/meditation. Some examples of external activities include getting a massage, exercising, or taking a bubble bath! The point of including these dynamic activities into your week is to set time aside in order to nurture both your physical body and your inner spirit.

Health and Healing

Edison Escobar

"To us, health is about so much more than simply not being sick. It's about a balance between physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual health. Health and healing are interwoven, which means that one can't be separated from another." -Dr. Tamara Maclean, Australian First Female Aboriginal Doctor

If 2021 had an overall theme, I would say it is healing. Healing from a worldwide pandemic, emotional turmoil, and physical damage. This quote captures the layered intricacies of healing. We must always take care of ourselves internally and externally.

Healing Trauma

Elijah Jeffreys

“Healing happens when a place of trauma or pain is given full attention”.

To me, this means when we pay attention to our traumas, pain, triggers etc, we have the ability to acknowledge them. By acknowledging them we can identify what exactly is causing us to feel this way and then be able to find new coping mechanisms. When we give our full attention to something, all of our energy is geared toward that. Accepting your trauma and really working on it will always be the start to healing.

Activity: Fire Meditation

Elijah Jeffreys

Light your favorite candle, sit comfortably, and watch the flame sway and flicker. Gaze at the candle for five to 10 minutes and let your mind wander. Observe your thoughts and let them pass without judgement.



A Poem to Ask For Help

Elijah Jeffreys

when the world comes crashing at your feet
it's okay to let others
help pick up the pieces
if we're present to take part in your happiness
when your circumstances are great
we are more than capable
of sharing your pain
-Rupi Kaur

What this poem means to me is that it is okay to ask for help. You are not alone; we are in this together. Those we are there for you at your best moments should also and are more than capable of being there for you when you need it most.

On How to Live

Ace Sholtes

It seems that a paradigm shift is happening in our western culture. People are starting to have conversations about mental health and really making it a priority in their lives. What took so long? Ishmael says it may be because “It is your culture’s deep-seated perception that wisdom is not to be found among you. That is what your daydream reveals. You know how to build marvelous electronic gadgets. But the simplest and most needful knowledge of all - the knowledge of how to live - simply doesn’t exist among you” (page 37). Our culture uses an immense amount of energy looking for knowledge and answers everywhere except within ourselves. When in reality the answer is always within us, we just have to remember it.

I experienced depression and anxiety for about two years, and in that time period it felt like my mental health was a full-time job. It took most of my energy to try to stay afloat, but with the little bit of extra energy I had I used to research ways to get better. I must have read countless articles and tried every prescribed medication, but nothing seemed to help me. I felt so alone. One day I just started listening to my thoughts and my body. I forced myself to pause and reflect, what was -really- going on in my head? Why am I feeling like this? What am I feeling? Once I started listening, I started to slowly slowly understand what I needed to do to get better. I started going on walks every day. I started practicing gratitude and mindfulness. These changes in my mental habits really changed my life and how I perceive mental health. I had the knowledge inside all along. Understanding that one’s knowledge comes within helps one learn what it means to -live

Activity: Mindfulness



Ace Sholtes

Carlos Santana once said “There is never one sunset the same or one sunrise the same”. He’s right! And I can attest to this because I watch the sunset and sunrise as a way to manage my mental health. I have struggled with depression and anxiety for a few years. I use to be so tired of being tired but had no energy or drive to help myself. I started to push people away and as a result my relationships with friends and family started to wither away. I was so overwhelmed, lonely, scared and didn’t know where to start to get better.

About a year ago, I started to go for a walk every day. Some days I would only walk for five minutes and other days I would walk for an hour. Regardless, I always listened to my body and how I was feeling. Was I able to push myself to do another lap? Or was walking for five minutes enough? Making efforts to connect with my body through movement and thought really helped me learn how to overcome the intruding thoughts from the mental monsters I had.

Eventually, I started walking around the time the sun would set. I loved this time of day because the sky was so dynamic with life, as colors illuminated off of the clouds. Birds sang their song and chased each other piercing through the air. Bugs hum in unison vibrating the earth around me. My heart beat becoming the dance to my walk. It just felt so magical to watch the sunset and say goodnight to “Mr. Sun”, being that the sun has masculine energy. That’s what my mom started to say, “are you going to say goodnight to Mr. Sun now?” I made it a ritual and would even build my schedule around it. Seeing the sunset was how I showed up for myself. At one point it was the only priority I had.

At school Horsebarn Hill is a beautiful place to say goodnight to Mr.Sun. There is a quote that says “every time an artist dies, God lets them paint the sky to say goodbye”. I love going and just sitting on the hill and watching the sunset, thinking about who is painting the sky, what was their inspiration? I feel so connected to myself and also the land around me.

Maybe you deal with mental challenges too. If you do, an embodiment activity could be to go

somewhere to watch the sunset or if you’re up for it the sunrise! Find a place where nature surrounds you, and watch the sunset. I invite you to try to just -be-. It may be very difficult to just sit and watch nature and that is ok! Maybe check in with yourself. How am I -really- feeling today? If Birds fly by, maybe ask, I wonder where they’re going? If the sunset gives off a pink hue, maybe think about why it’s pink. Maybe it’s really cold, tell yourself that you are proud of yourself and appreciate the efforts of being in the cold! Ask yourself, how is my mental health today? Do I feel overwhelmed? What was the most amazing part of my day so far? What was the most unexpected part of my day so far? Did I have any self-deprecating thoughts today? If so, what were those thoughts? How can you learn to respond to those thoughts and not react to them? Is reacting to them giving them the power to keep coming back? As you watch the sunset try to connect with yourself. The only person you spend all of your waking hours and sleeping hours with yourself.

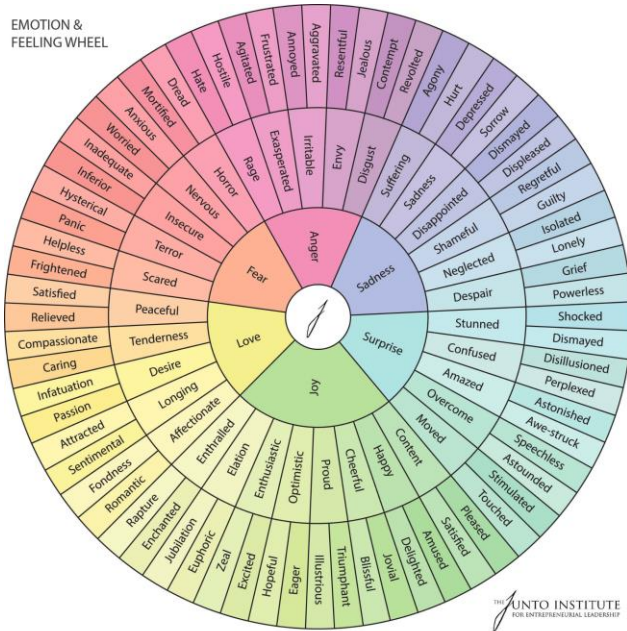
There is nobody else that spends as much time with you, other than yourself. So why not try to get to know yourself, connect with yourself?



Activity: Feeling Wheel Journal Exercise

Sophie Lindsay

EMOTION & FEELING WHEEL



Sometimes we have a difficult time giving names to our feelings. In turn, this makes it difficult to verbalize to ourselves and others our emotions.

As a self-reflection exercise, I challenge you to reflect on the past week. In a journal entry, think about one moment where you felt: **anger**, **sadness**, **surprise**, **joy**, **love** and **fear**. In your journal, write one sentence for each ring of the feelings wheel, beginning from the inside and working outward.

For example: On Friday, my friend **surprised** me with a coffee. This experience made me feel **moved** by their gesture, since it is not often

that someone brings me a gift out of the blue. I was **touched** that my friend thought to bring me a coffee when they knew I was having a tough week of classes.

When you are finished with the exercise, make a conscious effort to analyze and explain your feelings to yourself and others in a more comprehensive way, just like you were able to do in your journal entry!

“There are times when our unflinching honesty, vulnerability, and empathy will create a transformative portal, an opening to a completely new way of living” - Sonya Renee Taylor (The Body Is Not an Apology, xv)

When we are honest and vulnerable about our feelings, we open the door for others to follow suit. When we allow ourselves to experience our emotions and be honest with our heart, we begin to live our truth and embark on a journey of radical self-love. ♥

Activity: Stress Relief

Zhiyue Meng Star

An easy technology for releasing stress: make a fist for as hard as you could and count for 5 while breathing in, then release it, open your hand and relax for the next 5. Do it 3 times, and you might feel a bit relaxed.

It is a small one I would do before the test begins to feel calmer. I think it would break the cycle of the thoughts that made you stressed and told the brain to relax. Of course, if you could look at some trees or nature views while doing that, it would be more effective, as nature views also made people feel comfortable.



Activity: Releasing Anger

Jenny Ofray

Anger, along with other feelings, is heavily shamed in Western culture. Many of us don't know how to respond to or even identify our own anger. However, anger is a valuable messenger. Anger shows us our standards, boundaries, limits and is a natural human emotion to experience. Your anger deserves healthy release like all other emotions, so try these tips the next time you're raging. Bonus points if you get outside!

- *Box breathing (4 seconds in, 4 second hold, 4 seconds out)*
- *Scream in the car (or into a pillow)*
- *Punch said pillow*
- *Talk to someone you trust*
- *Mindfully assert a boundary (with yourself or someone else)*
- *Paintball fights/art*
- *Personal winter favorite: Throw snowballs at a wall (the cold helps ground into your body too!)*
- *Meditate while you break sticks*
- *Bite a lemon (so serious. its another sensory thing.)*
- *Exercise*

Remember: Your nervous system tries to protect you! Self-sooth and then problem-solve.

The Environment and Mental Health

Shannon Laughlin

In capitalism, we are alienated from ourselves (Marx), others, and the environment. We are an extremely un-empathetic culture. Since capitalism steals our time, we don't take time to learn about each other. For Indigenous people, "the less you know about something, the less value it has to you, and the easier it is to destroy" (Nemonte Nenquimo, Waorani woman, see <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/12/western-worldyour-civilisation-killing-life-on-earth-indigenous-amazon-planet>).

Dating back to the European explorers, Western culture tends to rank ourselves higher than animals/nature; therefore, we do not find value in knowing the names/behaviors of animals. We seek to change this...



Activity: Reflection therapy

Kirill O'Neil

This exercise is designed to release fear and help you respond better in situations that cause you stress in your daily lives. It combines the use of body motions and positive thoughts to release pressure from your spiritual being. Think and internalize about what you're most afraid of. Now I invite you to free yourself from this being in your way.

Letting go of fear

1. Place one hand on your heart
2. Close your eyes
3. Reach out with the other arm straight ahead
4. Make a fist with the hand which is reaching out
5. Put a thought in your head " I am afraid of nothing. "
6. Repeat the thought ten for repetitions
7. Now, reach out with the same arm above your head.
8. Open and close your fist ten repetitions
9. Then keep your hand in a fist
10. Put a thought in your mind: "I am afraid of no one. "
11. Lower both arms and open year hands. Open your eyes.

On Wildness

Zhiyue Meng Star

"Plants and animals come to be treated as objects of human will, incorporated into the social structure of human communities where they become objects of ownership, purchase and exchange... progressively "improved" in human terms, and stripped of what came to be called their "wildness" (Totton, 2011, p .17)

Our culture, Western culture, told us that we need to live in a lifestyle that is inside of a box and follow the rules that others have made. DE wildness, don't show emotion and be in control of our lives. "Separate", "boundary", "object" which might make people think of a house that has walls on the 4 sides that protect people but also lock them. Culture told us to separate everything, draw distinguished boundaries about what is

acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, we also objective nature would, having different treatment toward human and other creatures. However, being blocked in a place like that is not helpful to mental health. As said, today's society is a stressful one. a higher rate of people who have mental problems in my generation than ever before.

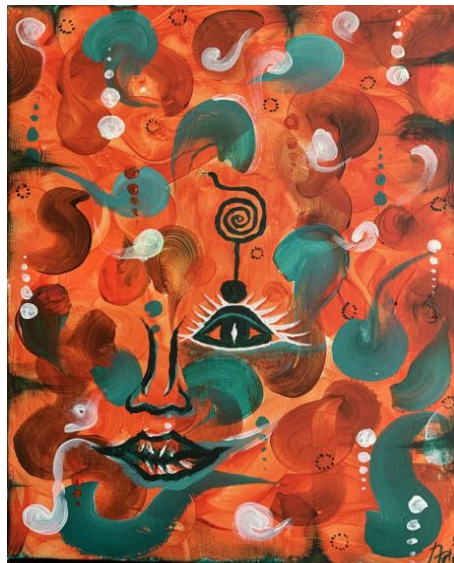
People need wildness,

they need to have a pause

to release the pressure, they / we have.

Making Sense of the Chaos

Ace Sholtes

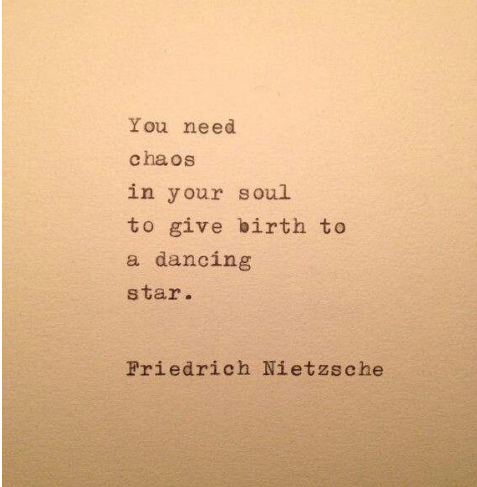


This painting is called "Making sense of the Chaos". Sometimes I feel like a mental health journey is a lot like learning how to coexist with chaos. In the center is a person meditating, finding peace inside the chaos. Drew from the top of their head is a spiraled snake. Spiritually speaking, spirals represent a connectedness to the divine. Just as the outside of the spiral portrays the outside world, the inside of the spiral portrays the inside of one's soul. They are interconnected and require balance. It is important to understand that both outside and inside variables affect our mental health. The snake simply represents rebirth. I think this is one of my favorite parts of this piece because it is subtle but critical.

When going through mental health challenges it can feel a lot like dying. The stress, the trauma, the pressure, all of these heavy emotions snowballing on you all at once and it seems unbearable. But then there is rebirth, there are lessons to learn from and with, there is the shedding of the skin. The spiral coming out from the meditating person's head is key as one's relationship with their own mental health starts in the mind. As I kept creating this piece I saw a face, where the meditating person was the eye. I painted my nose and lips but never completed the face. This face brings stillness and a sense of tranquility to the piece. The chaos of orange and turquoise waves and ascending and descending dots

brings a lot of movement to the piece. It reminds me of how anxiety or depression can make you feel so many emotions all at once. This face seems to not be bothered by the chaos and has made sense of it. Even though I created this piece, I wonder who this face belongs to. What have they experienced? What is chaos to them? How did they find stillness and beauty in the mess others would be too terrified to be around? It is so easy to just distract ourselves with

our phones or food or people or what have you. Why is it almost scary to stop....sit.....breathe.....and...listen. What is the chaos saying? What can you learn from it? How can you continue this beauty, this stillness, this bliss forward to your community? How can you make sense of the chaos within you? How can you make sense of the chaos within this crazy world we live in now?



You need
chaos
in your soul
to give birth to
a dancing
star.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Chapter 12: Land

Dal'Mont Gourdine

Humans beings are spiritual as well as physical. We as a whole need to connect ourselves to the land that we live, eat and drink off. I believe if we do this spiritually, we would see a change inside of us physically because it would transfer over and feed off of each other. If we do this, I believe we all may start to live a better life.

Activity: Environment recognition

Ace Sholtes

How well do you know your neighbors or the animals in your environment? How well do you know the land around you? Maybe you don't know much because you're like me and love to listen to music everywhere you go. Or maybe you know every squirrel and flower that you pass on your way to class. What is your relationship with the land around you? Do you know which hill the sun sets behind? If an ant crawls up your shoe, do you smack it or carefully place it back on the ground?

The land of which you are on is your home. It is said that "...people make a place as much as a place makes them" (Cajete, 2000, p.1870). If you have a very disconnected relationship with the land around you, what does that make the land with you? This idea of being connected and having a relationship with the nature around you is "...reinforced by a kind of physical 'mimracy', a 'geopsyche', or that interaction between the inner and outer realities that often takes place when a group of people live in a particular place for a long period of time" (page 187, Native Science). It is so interesting how when there is a stable connection between you and the land of which you are among, there is a positive geopsyche relationship, meaning a link between location and personality or physical features.

Do you think the land around you is reflected within you? Do you think it is important to build a sustainable connection with the land and yourself? How does our culture value our land? Does our culture have a sustainable relationship with the land? Do you believe that "...people make a place as much as a place makes them"?

In order to embody the land around you, I invite you to go for a walk. While you're walking try to not listen to music or a podcast or call someone. Just walk and only listen to the sounds of your surroundings. A nice way to try to connect to the earth around you is to use all of your senses.

List five things you can see. What colors do you see? List four things you can touch. What do they feel like? List three things you can hear. If you hear something and don't recognize it, maybe go follow it. List two things you can smell. Are there any new smells? List one thing you can taste. But, don't eat anything poisonous! This exercise will help you understand the land around you.

While on your walk you can also pick a color and use that to guide your walk. Maybe you choose blue. Every time you see something blue, use that to determine which way you walk. Did you discover anything?

Run into somebody you know? Did you learn anything new?

By taking time out of your day to be fully present with nature, you begin to grow an essential relationship with the land around you.

Wisdom is Inside Us and Around Us

Rory Monaco

As Greg Cajete states in his book *Native Science*, “The sacred tree of life, as an analogy for the evolving process of Native science and quest for knowledge, presents a cosmological and structural symbol for Native science that embodies its life...” (Cajete, 2000, p. 58). How can we find knowledge outside of textbooks? How can we find wisdom in seemingly ordinary objects around us, such as trees?

“In its root sense, *wealth* isn’t a synonym for *money*, it’s a synonym for *wellness*. In terms of products, you are of course fabulously wealthy, but in terms of human wealth, you are pathetically poor” (Quinn, 1997, p.233).

In what ways could you cultivate this personal wealth? What ways do you lack in personal wellness? How do you spread this form of wellness with other people?

‘...how many of you realize that your ancestors had a way of living that worked very well for people? People who lived this way weren’t perpetually struggling with crime, madness, depression, injustice, poverty, and rage...’ (Quinn, 1997, p.192).

How can we honor the beliefs and traditions of our ancestors? How can we integrate their practices and community care into our society today? What is something you can do, every day, something small and manageable, to work toward this more just future?

Activity: Mindful Walk

Rory Monaco

Go on a mindful walk. Take note of the similarities and differences between yourself and your surroundings.

Are there more differences? Similarities? Are the lines between yourself and nature as distinct as you originally thought?



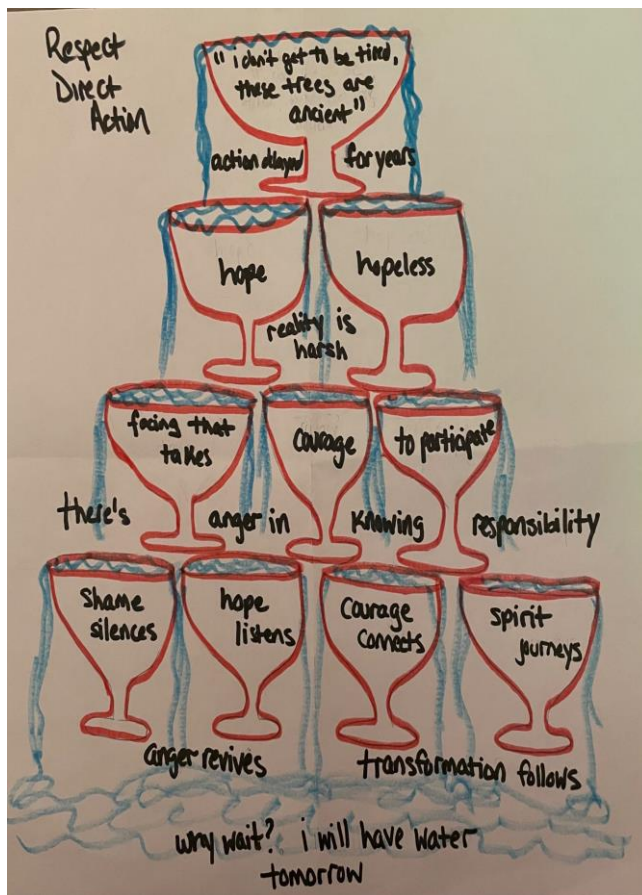
Activity: Nature Connection

Dal'Mont Gourdine

Something we all need to do is connect with the land more and some may be confused when hearing "connect with the land more". I think connecting with the land can bring you peace and closer to yourself. Something I do a lot to connect with the land is walk around campus. These walks take place during my free time. We all walk every day but most of the time we look down at our phones and don't try to connect with the land. On my walks I put my phone on to not disturb and put it inside my pocket. As I walk, I try to notice things I haven't seen or something that sticks out to me. Then I may go touch something or get a closer look at it and move on to the next. Peace is something I get from this and it helps clear my body of negativity.

Respect Direct Action

Jenny Ofray



We watched the movie "L'EAU EST LA VIE (Water is Life)" (see <https://vimeo.com/343900691>) and I was impacted by how the narrator finds hope to continue fighting legal battles for the environment and for their culture's way of life by looking to the strength of the surrounding environment. Trees and people included. Make connections to climate anxiety and how you can spread that hope.

Note: *The cups represent the spillover economics concept that is supposed to distribute wealth, but usually leads to externalities (of climate change especially). It's also important in combating climate anxiety to fill your own cup first.*

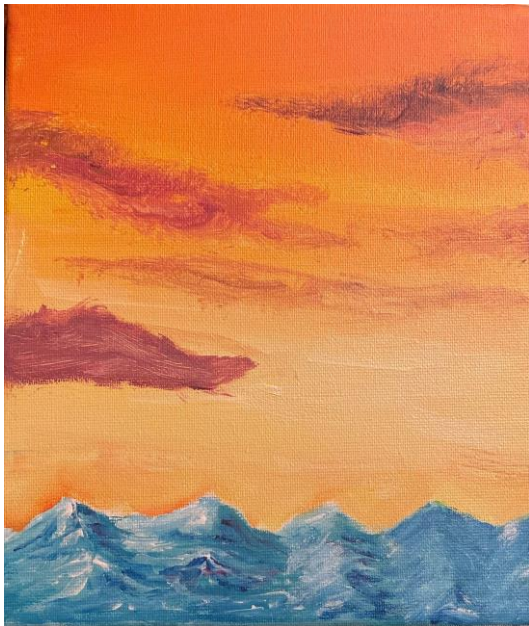


The Beauty of the Earth

The land that makes up the Earth is the foundation under our feet. Without land, we would be floating in endless space. In this painting, the importance of land is enhanced through a simplistic design and bright colors. A healthy Earth and landscape consists of bold hues and a lively atmosphere. On the contrary, land that has been destroyed has very little color and no diversity of life. Being amongst nature physically and embracing its beauty is a great way to restore your mind. This concept is what I aimed to portray through this painting of a hilly landscape at night, with a full moon shining on the tips of the mountains.

The Energy of the Ocean

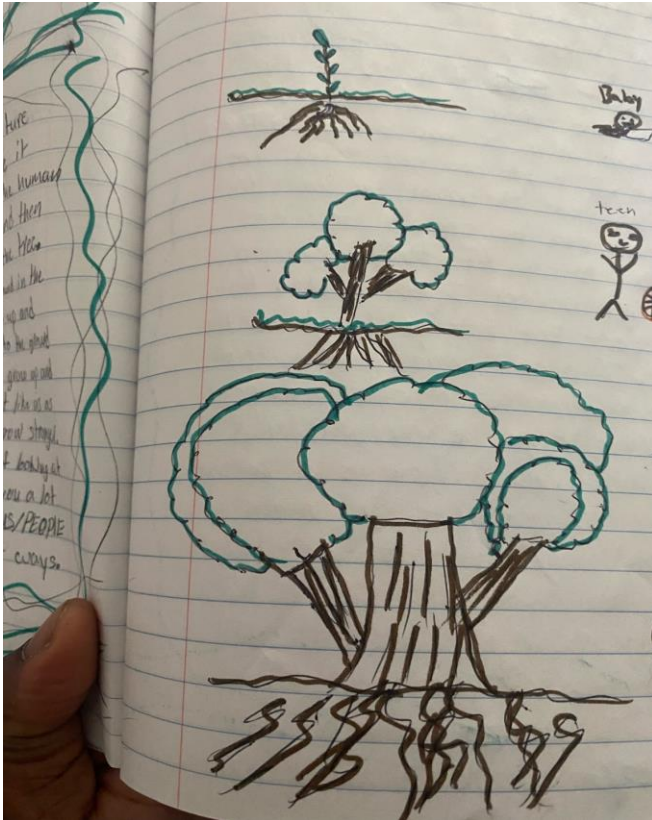
Kirill O'Neil



I drew this painting to illustrate the beauty of our oceans and how the waves are always in constant motion. The waves, wind, and tides move and impact me in very positive ways. The ocean impacts consciousness unlike any other force allowing for us to develop and self-actualize ourselves and allows us to take a step back and re-evaluate ourselves. The waves, the wind, and forces of gravity are sources of energy. The ocean's motions are pure energy and a potential healing force for us as humans. Ever experience the ocean by taking in its energy? Has it caused you to feel altered or soothed by it? The smell of the salts in the air is invigorating as wind gusts by brushing against your skin. Ever watch dogs and

children at the ocean? They are completely energized and intoxicated by the forces around the waves and the sea. The ocean makes people alive by providing an energy dynamic that is much larger than any individual being. Oftentimes people go to the sea just to watch the waves in order to be set free from

We Are the Land

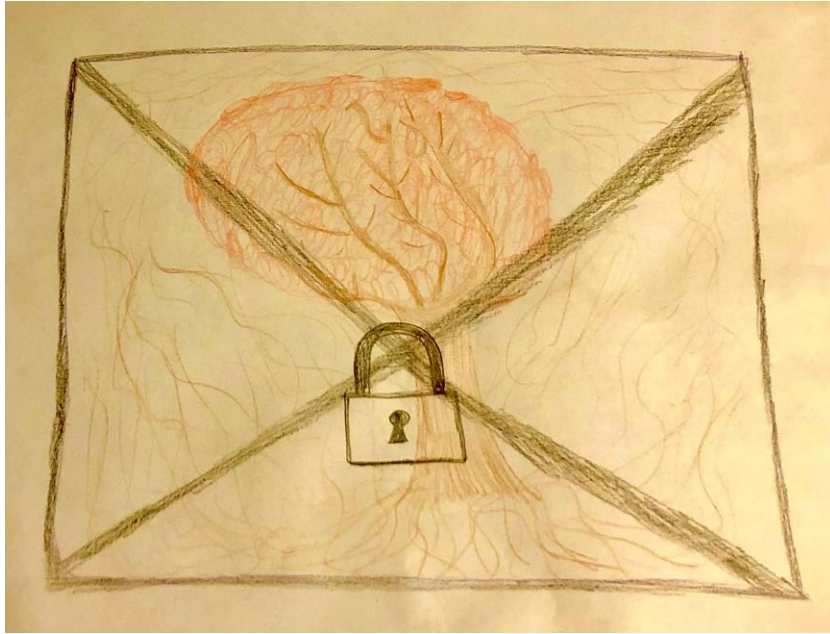


The picture from my journal is a representation of how the land grows just like us. We need to connect to the land more to help us grow as a person spiritually. We will connect each with the land which would help a lot with us being free and at peace.



Chapter 13: Education

Melissa Santos



Do you remember a difference in how much more creative you were as a child, before you started going to school? What happened? Where did that creativity go?

This drawing is meant to demonstrate how the human brain needs room to root, grow, and thrive yet the current Western education system instead locks the mind in a box, preventing it from growing its leaves, so to speak. Its roots are forced to go up and around itself in a tangled mess, like how so many students today suffer from mental health issues. This may be because the current education system may not be the method that works for them. Every student learns differently and needs different amounts of room to grow! Your creativity is still in there, no matter how deep down, try and find it! Break out of that box!

Activity: Work Outside

Melissa Santos

Have any work to do? Try going outside while doing this, if you can. Compare how doing these types of tasks feels when you are outside versus inside, at a desk or in a classroom. Write down your thoughts and feelings. How do the two environments differ? Are you more productive in a certain setting? Are you happier, calmer in a certain setting? Why do you think this is?

The current Western education system is solely classroom based. This setting may not be the most effective, as you may have noticed during your activity. However, this is what is required of almost every school there is, despite the fact that some students may not be benefiting from it at all.

On Competition and Comparison

Melissa Santos

“At the moment, plenty of admissions officers enjoy the convenience of class ranking, apparently because they have confused being better than one’s peers with being good at something; they’re looking for winners rather than learners.” - Alfie Kohn, 2004, What does it mean to be well educated?

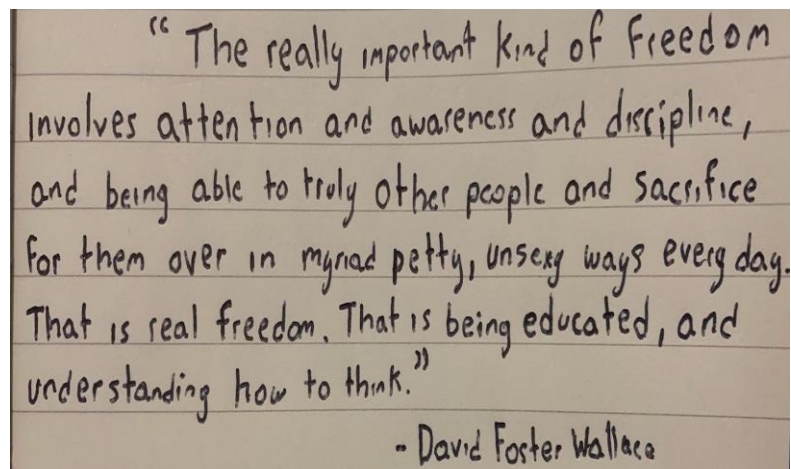
Our education system does not focus on the actual educating part as much as the competing part, as explained by the quote. Our intelligence is measured by numbers, through exam scores, therefore making us believe that that is all we are: numbers and percentages, not people. The current system is based so much on comparison that people can no longer see themselves as individuals. Individuals that require individual, unique needs. This is further explained in Daniel Quinn’s *My Ishmael* (1997):

“Not every child’s education is identical. Why on Earth should it be? . . . Teachers for the most part would be delighted to awaken young minds, but the system within which they must work fundamentally frustrates that desire by insisting that all minds must be opened in the same order, using the same tools, and at the same pace, on a certain schedule.” Every person is different, so why should we expect everyone to learn the same way? And then have their intelligence based off of that singular method and compared to everyone else? This is the fundamental issue within the Western education system and this is why a major change needs to be made. Everyone’s needs should be accommodated so that each person is learning in a way that is best for them, not just best for admission officers.

How does this start, you might ask? It starts with you! Talk to your teachers, your professors, your peers! Fight for a change! There are already some being made!

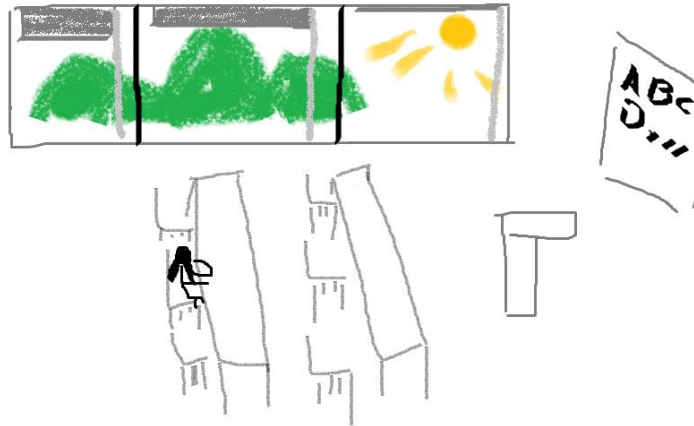
True Freedom

Edison Escobar



What Do We Learn?

Zhiyue Meng Star



A kid in the classroom having class but looking outside of the window, means to question the meaning of our education system and what we actually learned from it.

On Broadening Our Focus

Jenny Ofray

“At the moment, an increasingly narrow view prevents us from seeing the roots of many of our problems; we cannot see the forest for the trees. Western culture depends on experts whose focus of attention grows more and more specialized and immediate at the expense of a broader, long-term perspective.” *Ancient Futures*, Helena Norberg-Hodge

Finding comfort in an expansive view is hard. When we are able to see more of ourselves, our mistakes, values, and feelings become illuminated as well. If we are unable to match frustrations and challenges with compassion, we may become specialists in non-constructive patterns. Our westernized culture teaches that frustration through high expectations, individualism, and technical “fixes”- eventually building stress, fatigue, hopelessness or even self-loathing in both body and spirit. We are essentially taught to bypass trial and error in the name of efficiency. In reality, we may need to recognize repetition and redundancy in ourselves and the world around us in order to truly see those root patterns. Think on it (with acceptance): Where can you allow yourself to learn imperfectly? How do your mistakes show your roots? What have your roots grown into?

School Daze

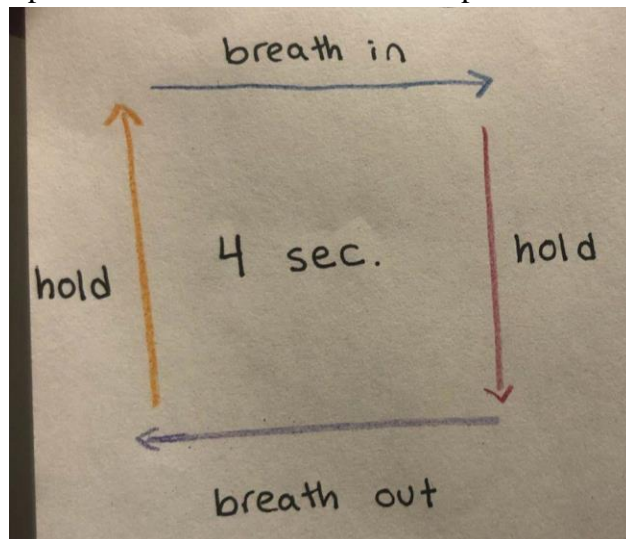
Shannon Laughlin



Activity: Box Breathing

Shannon Laughlin

Freaking out before an exam? It is difficult to take any test while anxious...try this breathing exercise before beginning...Breath in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breath out for four seconds, hold for four seconds, repeat. We tell ourselves we don't have time for meditation/breathing exercises; however, give yourself permission to have 16 seconds of peace before your exam.



Conclusion



Rory Monaco

Living Mundane

*i find myself sitting on concrete sidewalks
plucking at weeds and marveling
at how something so small
can be so destructive*

*i focus on the people coming and going
on the street before me
frowns littering most of their faces
wondering how i can make their day better
from all the way down here*

*i know it's vain but sometimes i pretend
the birds are singing their melodies just for me
their choruses rise up against the traffic in my mind
soon, it became my favorite song*

*i watched the sunset every night for a week
taking note of how the sun is not afraid to move
through different colors each time
wondering if i would be able to do the same
now i sit here and practice being the light*

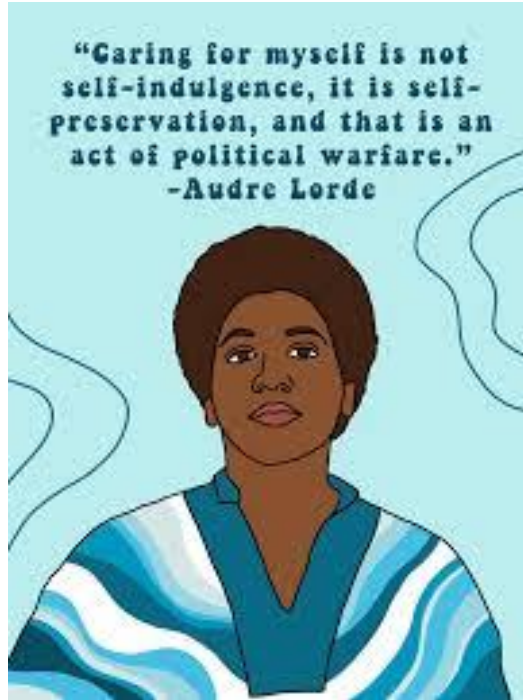
Sophia Stoll

We thank you, and ask you to thank yourself, for taking the time to engage with this book. If you read and worked through every section, now is the time to reflect on that experience. If not, perhaps ask yourself why you chose not to complete all of the activities. Throughout this journey, we have asked you to explore your inner thoughts and emotions as an act of self-healing. Now more than ever, it is vital that we take the time to engage with ourselves in body, mind, and spirit. Every aspect of Western culture tells us not to; We live for others, we live for production, we live to be efficient. But is that truly life? Has this book perhaps shown evidence that there is so much more to living than what we are told to believe?

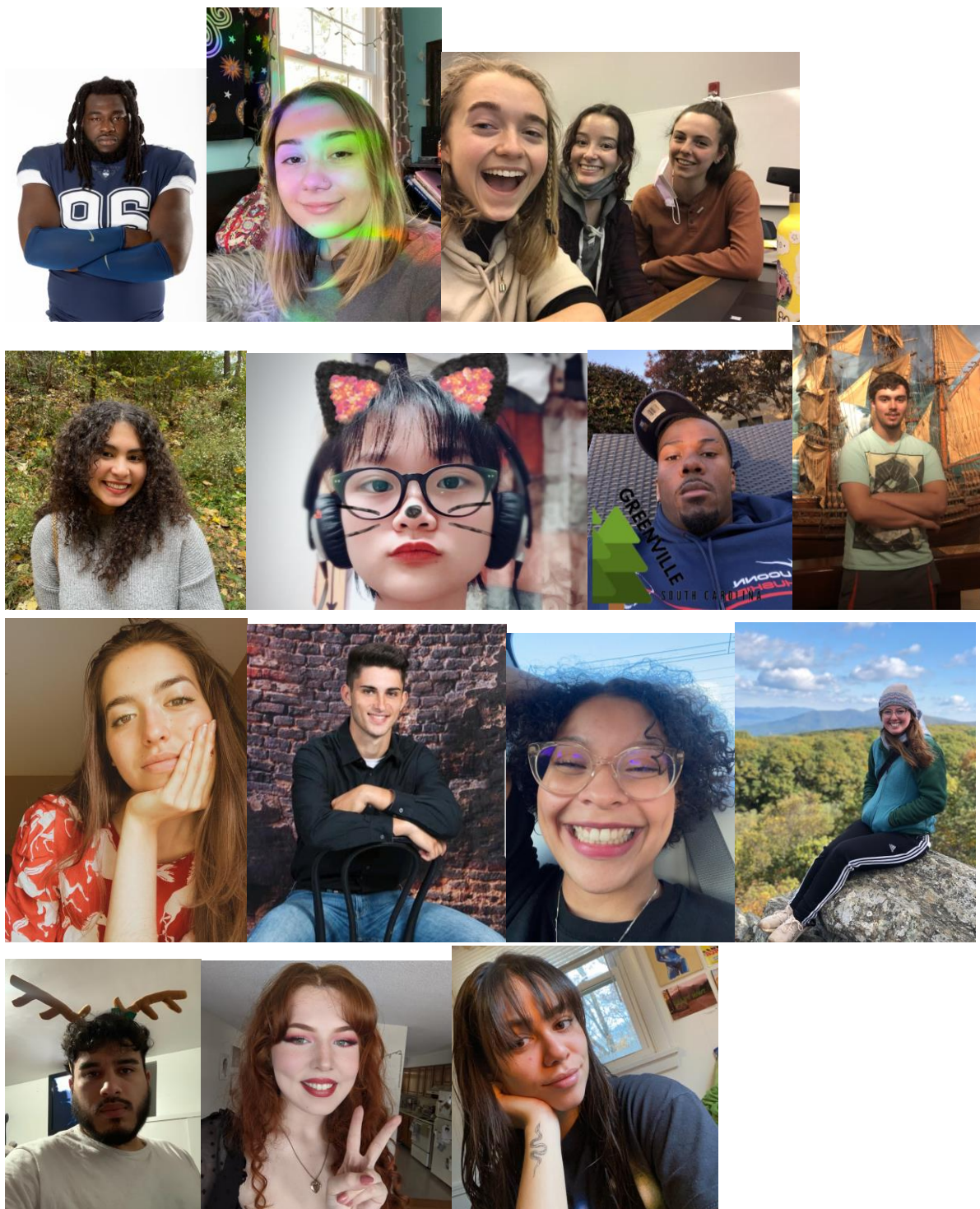
That is up to you, the reader, to decide. We believe that through self-healing- through caring for mind, body, and spirit- true social change can occur.



We end with a quote by Audre Lorde:



Meet the Authors



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Key books that inspired our work..

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