



The Rhythm Way Self Guided Course | Nature-Based Practices

For Wild Connection

with Laura Larriva Page

Session II

Shift & Open.



*"The moment when, after many years
of hard work and a long voyage
you stand in the centre of your room,
house, half-acre, square mile, island, country,
knowing at last how you got there,
and say, I own this,*

*.
is the same moment when the trees unloose
their soft arms from around you,
the birds take back their language,
the cliffs fissure and collapse,
the air moves back from you like a wave
and you can't breathe.*

*.
No, they whisper. You own nothing.
You were a visitor, time after time
climbing the hill, planting the flag,
proclaiming.
We never belonged to you.
You never found us.
It was always the other way round."*

— Margaret Atwood



SESSION II | WILD CONNECTION

If you have questions, comments or would like to share what you've discovered so far, you can catch us on Instagram @therhythmway, on Facebook, or send us a message.

This week we turn our attention to the ways we pay attention - and the different states of consciousness we occupy when we do so. For many of us, simply going outside shifts us out of our habitual way of being and perceiving. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors down regulates the nervous system, de-stresses us, and generally allows us to think more creatively and openly.

Because so much of our habitual way of being is characterized by a state of consciousness that can be narrow and fraught with stress, this week we'd like to offer you a few ways you can shift your consciousness to take in more of the world around you when you're outside. And no, we won't be offering you any substances of any kind!

Enjoy!

Opening to Connection

Shifting Consciousness

Margaret Atwood's poem helps to shift my consciousness. In reading it, I can feel more of my capacities come online. I feel stirred emotionally, imaginally, and somatically or physically. I feel I become vulnerable to the poem, as if her words reached out off the page to touch me where it matters. And in the lines of her poem she suggests a shift of perception - that we don't own the land at all. Rather we walk upon it as a visitor. We are found by the spaces and places that catch our attention and our breath. They enter us through our awe and wonder, not through our paperwork. To really feel that, we must shift out of the state of consciousness that says all things - including the land around us - is a commodity to be bought and sold. We might need to feel the intelligence and autonomy of the land itself - its story - in order to relate with it on its terms. When we do open up our perception to hold a greater 'what-if' the land around us may be allured by our curious and open state of being. A greater capacity for intimacy may show up. And if it does with the land, you can be certain it will with our human friends, colleagues and lovers too.

Despite the allure of all kinds of culturally transgressive activities (I can think of a few), you don't need to go so far out of your everyday experience to feel into what it might be like to occupy a different state of mind - and to do it often.

We already shift consciousness all the time and everyday in socially and culturally sanctified ways; certain legal plants and herbs, common pharmaceuticals, and carefully prepared alchemical concoctions are steamed up, percolated, brewed, prescribed, and sold to us all day long, from the boardroom to the bar. Much beloved activities like daily exercise, meditation, wilderness immersions, yoga, music concerts, dance events, sports games, and the whole strange basket of modern mating rituals - among infinite others - are often moments in our day, week, or year that remain absolutely essential for our sense of wellbeing. These kinds of consciousness resets feed inspiration, creativity, insight, and neurochemical nutrients to our body-mind system.

Whether wildly transgressive, or sweetly virtuous, what the above list has in common is that each experience is engaged with the express or tacit intent to shift, to crack open our everyday humdrum way of perceiving, and to give us a taste of something more expansive, something alive. To touch something...at the edge. Potentially risky, and certainly unsettling. Unsettling to what? Our normative identity. The minutiae of our lives. The same ole, same ole. The state we were in when we began. The hello my name is...and the exhausted stories we tell that if asked, we'd all admit to being sick of overhearing ourselves say.

Often my first step when I go out for some time alone on the land is to shift out of the state of mind I was in to get there (just think - Los Angeles traffic!).

The below list are just a few ways you might explore shifting states. My suggesting would be to go out somewhere wild or semi-wild to practice some of these (or one). Notice how you felt before, during, and after the shift and before, during, and after your time on the land. My personal favorite is through drumming, rattling or singing for seven minutes or longer.

- Drum or rattle for 7 minutes or longer
- Breath work, or simply focusing on the breath
- Free form dance
- Strenuous exercise and movement
- Being on the land, sleeping on the land (outside)
- Meditation
- Dropping into the “mind” of the blood, bones or any organ in your body through bringing your awareness to it.
- Receiving and meditating on sensation in the body
- Singing, chanting or sounding
- Lighting sage, or incense, lighting a candle to mark space
- Consciously moving over thresholds (like crossing a stick in the path with intent)
- Adornment with intention, or removal of clothes with intention
- Prayer

- Sensual contact with the other-than-human world
- Darkness
- Moving/walking (carefully/mindfully) on the land
- Any ritual act that has meaning for you

After you give yourself to the practice of shifting, center yourself in your body and your breath - right there in that place. Presence yourself to the sounds you hear, and the sensations in your body. If your eyes are closed, softly open them and let the world around you in with a soft gaze. Notice what you notice. You might sit as if the world around you - all the beings there, are available for relationship, and may be communicating with you in their own ways. Pay particular attention to what you feel arises in your heart - a sense of connection, of reaching out? Of kinship or longing?

You might hold one of your questions or longings close to you as you listen. As if you're offering it like a gift. For example, if I wanted to connect more deeply with what is wild in me, I might keep repeating that wordlessly...just holding it and amplifying the longing there.

The natural world may or may not 'respond' to your question. Remember, they are not oracles that have arrived in our world at the perfect time in order to respond to our needs and questions. Rather, see if you can 'hear' their longings and requests, or stories just as much as you offer yours. Cultivating relationship takes both offering and receiving.

“Walking, I can almost hear the redwoods beating. And the oceans are above me here, rolling clouds, heavy and dark. It is winter and there is smoke from the fires. It is a world of elemental attention, of all things working together, listening to what speaks in the blood. Whichever road I follow, I walk in the land of many gods, and they love and eat one another. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands.”

— Linda Hoga



SESSION II REFLECTION & JOURNALING

Living into questions. This is a life practice. We'll never be short of questions, nor will the best ones we carry ever truly be answered! Let's begin this journey with a few stirring questions for contemplation or journaling. Or - better yet, you might walk with (or as - use your imagination) these questions on the land. Perhaps on your favorite trail or park. As you carry the questions (without trying to force a strategic answer), notice how your body feels, what beings or features you notice, what images or emotions might be present for you. Offer yourself the quality of your presence and attention without needing to make a story up about how you offer it (i.e. good or bad). Just notice.

Next Week We Will :

Explore the power of place. We will learn to track changes, to develop relationship overtime, and to feel at home in ourselves and in the wilds through deep listening and observation.

What did you notice in your body and your emotions before, during and after you shifted consciousness?

What did you perceive in the world around you? What is any different?

Do you feel you could 'hear' the others? Why or why not?

What are some common ways you shift consciousness daily? Are they life-enhancing or do they help you numb out?

How and why might you help shift the consciousness or perception of people you work with or lead?

Any big emotion or resistance come up for you in light of this practice?

What else did you notice about this practice?

Hold these questions close to your heart as we journey forward.

REFERENCES

Bill Plotkin, *Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche*. (New World Library, Novato, CA, 2003)

A Deep Bow to :

- Bill Plotkin of the Animas Valley Institute for his influence shifting consciousness

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Soulcentric Coaching Sessions with Laura](#)

[Join us on the land for our next Wild Immersion](#)

[Check out additional complementary self-guided courses and written resources here.](#)

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