

# Learning to fall in love with the land

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## Key points

Viewing the natural world through a purely analytical lens, or through the lens of a 'museum goer' or tourist, creates conditions for separation and disconnection. In contrast, wilderness awareness educator Jon Young identifies eight attributes of people who experience deep nature connection: *presence, happiness, vitality, focus, empathy, vision, aliveness, and love*.

'Pathways to nature connectedness' (sensory contact, emotion, meaning, beauty and compassion) can help to mend the human–nature relationship (Richardson et al. 2020). Some core routines for deep nature connection include, among others, giving thanks, sit spot, expanding our senses, and 'catching' one another's stories (Young et al. 2011).

Efforts to connect to land must not perpetuate harm, appropriate culture, nor support further marginalization or erasure of Indigenous peoples.

## Resources (readings, websites, videos, podcasts)

### Readings

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Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Books.

[Kinship: Belonging in a World of Relations](#). 5 volumes. Centre for Humans and Nature.

Riley, John. *The once and future Great Lakes country: an ecological history*. McGill-Queen's Press.

Young, Jon. [What the Robin Knows](#). - leads us toward a deeper connection to the animals and ourselves

Young, Jon, Haas, Ellen and McGown, E, [Coyote's guide to connecting with nature](#).

Richardson, M., Dobson, J., Abson, D.J., Lumber, R., Hunt, A., Young, R. and Moorhouse, B., 2020. Applying the pathways to nature connectedness at a societal scale: a leverage points perspective. *Ecosystems and People*, 16(1), pp.387-401.

[Sam Thayer's Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants of Eastern and Central North America](#). Forager's Harvest.

Joanna Macy. *Coming Back to Life* (and other books)

de Oliveira, Vanessa. 2021. *Hospicing modernity*. North Atlantic Books.

Women's Earth Alliance & Native Youth Sexual Health Network. "[Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies](#): Building an Indigenous Response to Environmental Violence." - *For Indigenous communities in*

*North America, the links between land and body create a powerful intersection—one that, when overlooked or discounted, can threaten their very existence.*

## Websites

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[The Work that Reconnects network](#), founded by Joanna Macy, helps people discover and experience their innate connections with each other and the self-healing powers of the web of life, transforming despair and overwhelm into inspired, collaborative action. This experiential work follows a spiral sequence flowing through four stages beginning with gratitude, then, honoring our pain for the world, seeing with fresh eyes, and finally, going forth.

[Earth to Tables Legacies](#) - 10 videos and 11 photo essays that use food as an entry to pressing issues, such as Indigenous-settler relations, food justice and food sovereignty.

## Videos

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[The Ohen:ton Karihwatehkwen - Thanksgiving Address in Mohawk and English](#). Earth to Tables Legacies.

Andrew Judge (Conestoga College). [Gathering Hearts and Minds to Restore the Land - Autumn Celebration](#) (7' video) & [Gathering Hearts and Minds Restore the Land Network](#) (5' video).

[Chris Outdoors](#) Chris Gilmour: nature connection, awareness, and skill building (and courses)

[Nature Mentor](#) Brian Mertins: to teach and inspire connection with nature through ancient skills like bird language, animal tracking and nature observation

[The Earth Does Not Belong to Us, sung by Debbie Lou Loudolf](#). (2' video) – a contemplative invitation

## Podcasts

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To Know the Land podcast ~ Canadian Bushcraft podcast ~ For the Wild podcast ~ The Emerald podcast

Red Man Laughing (Ryan McMahon). 2017. [The Wild Rice Wars](#) - Anishinaabe Wild Rice harvester James Whetung talks about his Manoomin Camp, his commitment to ricing, his inherent right to do so and the brewing conflict between Indigenous rights and Ontario cottage country.

## Follow-up practices/invitations

Sit outside (or look out a window) every day for at least 5 mins (preferably more!). What do you notice? What are you grateful for? What brings you a feeling of awe and wonder?

Get to know, in your area, 3 edible, 3 medicinal, & 3 poisonous plants. What shifts within you as you build a relationship with these plants?

Reflect on—and perhaps discuss with a friend—this quote: "*Central to what I have learned thus far is that we need to renew relations with water, trees and the land's Indigenous peoples to do the work of decolonizing relations in times of climatic change.*" –Timothy Leduc

Learn about the treaty that covers the land you now live on: Find out the treaty name, signing parties, dates, and circumstances that led to the signing, territories covered. In what ways are the treaties being honored? In what ways are they not?