



Emotion

AUGUST CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY BOOK

AN ADVENTURE IN NATURE CONNECTION FOR HUMAN X NATURE WELLBEING

AN ADVENTURE IN NATURE CONNECTION
FOR HUMAN X NATURE WELLBEING



It's time to Rewild Yourself



JOURNEY THROUGH THE FIVE PATHWAYS WITH US...

Five Pathways to Nature Connection

Connecting with Nature has never been more crucial. Expert research has shown that building a relationship with the natural world boosts our wellbeing, and makes us more likely to help Nature. So how do we build closer relationships with Nature? Research has found that connecting with Nature involves

more than just spending a few minutes outside. The Nature Connectedness Research Group at University of Derby identified five pathways to Nature connection – ways of experiencing and engaging with the natural world that help us grow stronger and deeper relationships with the rest of Nature.



Emotion

Find happiness and wonder. Find an emotional bond with, and love, for Nature
e.g. talking about, and reflecting on your feelings about Nature.



Meaning

Consider what Nature means to you. Using natural symbolism (e.g. language and metaphors) to represent an idea, thinking about the meaning and signs of Nature, *e.g. the first swallow of summer.*



Beauty

Take time to appreciate the beauty of Mother Nature. Engage with the aesthetic qualities *e.g. appreciating natural scenery or connecting through the arts.*



Senses

Explore, take a closer look and get in touch with the natural world. Engage with Nature through the senses for pleasure *e.g. listening to birdsong, smelling wild flowers, watching the sunset.*



Compassion

Think about what you could do for Nature. Extending the self to include Nature, leading to a moral and ethical concern *e.g. making ethical product choices, concerned with animal welfare.*



SOURCE: The Nature Connectedness Research Group, University of Derby.

Let's go...



Emotion

Your checklist for a mini adventure
connecting with Nature

A few moments of pause is all you need...

Let's connect to Nature
through EMOTION...

What *emotions* does
Nature inspire in us?

- Get your equipment ready to roll
Grab a pen and paper or just your phone will do.
- Less thinking, more feeling
Send your brain on a holiday, and get ready to connect with your breath and body instead.
- Pack your curiosity
The world is awe-inspiring and full of wonder... Our feelings and responses to Nature can be just as interesting.
- Know there's not 'one' way to feel
Nature can make us feel many things, sometimes all at once. We may be fearful of a bee's sting, we may feel deeply curious of their ability to fly... they may also fill us with gratitude. We won't all feel the same things. That's okay!
- Allow yourself to be surprised
Nature is unexpected and ever-changing... Sometimes our response to Nature can be unexpected too. Our feelings towards things in Nature may change over time too.



Emotion

REFLECTIONS CHALLENGE: *How does Nature make you feel?*

This pathway might be the most accessible of all the five pathways, for you can tap into it from the comfort of your home or by stepping outside.

FOLLOW THE BELOW STEPS AND SEND US YOUR REFLECTIONS – HANDWRITTEN, RECORDED OR TYPED IN!



If you are down for an outdoors adventure...

Pick a comfortable spot – under a tree or on the flat-side of a rock are our top choices!

... If you can't get outdoors today – jump over to the indoors option.



Look around you. Do you feel calm or in awe? How does your sitting spot make you feel? Can you detect any little critters? Do they make you nervous or curious? Does one of them bring you more joy than others? Why?



Spend some time with the feeling (or feelings!) that Nature awakens in you.

Write or record your reflections and share it with us to have a chance to be part of our shared Community Journal!



STAYING INDOORS TODAY?

Follow these steps for #1 and #2

Sit in a comfortable position. Breathe deeply. In. And out. Think of something in or from Nature that moves you. It can be a memory, a smell, a colour, an animal... Anything that causes an emotional reaction in you. Does it bring you joy or calm? Perhaps it surprises you, instead? Why?



We are curious to know, how does Nature make YOU feel? Focus on love and/or wonder, and let us know.

Ps. You'll have an extra chance to be part of the ReWild Yourself Community Journal if you keep the submission to less than 80 words or under 40 seconds.



A WORTHWHILE NOTE:

Nature can make us feel many things and we want to welcome and accept every emotion. However, if certain emotions feel overwhelming, please check out our resources at the end of this book to get in contact and/or check out practitioners that specialise in eco-therapy and connecting the outdoors with our wellbeing.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Share your 'How Nature makes you feel' via our website...

www.rewildyourself.com/time/nature-reflections-challenge

Or submit via email at...

hello@voicefornature.com



Meet Michéal and Rhonda from Natural Academy



Michéal Connors

Director, Natural Academy

Michéal is an eco-psychologist, mountain leader, author and holistic health and wellbeing professional. He is a qualified psychotherapist, supervisor and lecturer. He has a specialist interest in Nature-based approaches to holistic cancer care and mental health. For over 25 years Michéal has been advocating and developing Nature based and holistic approaches to mental and physical health. He has published writings and research and offers music as another gateway to Nature connectedness.



Rhoda Brandrick

Nature-based Practitioner, Natural Academy

Rhonda is a nature-based practitioner, supervisor, author, therapist, teacher and guide. She brings a wealth of experience and deep curiosity to our human-Nature reciprocal relationship with the Earth and our ongoing personal and collective development within this. She has worked with individuals, couples and groups for over 25 years. Rhonda is dedicated to making a difference to human health and the health of the natural world by bringing individuals and communities into connection and healthy balance.

Michéal and Rhonda work at Natural Academy, a not for profit community interest company, whose mission over the past 16 years has been to help people and Nature recover and flourish together.

TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE NATURAL ACADEMY,
VISIT NATURALACADEMY.ORG AND YOUTUBE.COM/@NATURALACADEMY6969

Connecting through Emotion: Tips for Nature Reflections

Michéal Connors and Rhonda Brandrick of Natural Academy

Emotion is a wonderful pathway that can lead us into the deep connectedness we feel in the natural world. It of course includes more challenging, but natural feelings, like fear, anger, sadness (which we share with other animals) and these are important and necessary in our life at times

and can be used in a positive way. For the It's Time to ReWild Yourself Campaign, we encourage you to explore the feelings of delight that emerge when we connect to Nature and how this leads us to a deeper love of Nature.



1.

Take some time to ground yourself, you might want to listen to our grounding on YouTube.

This is ideally outdoors but can be indoors and you can use the sounds and images to help with the grounding.

[LISTEN TO GROUNDING](#)

2.

Ideally go into Nature, it can be a garden, a small green space, or even look out the window.

Take time to notice Nature and what it is that brings that feeling of delight.



3.

Take a journal — and reflect on how delight affects your mood and can bring a sense of wellbeing.



4.

You might even, mindfully, take a photo of what filled you with delight in Nature and keep this to remind you.*

If there are many things that bring delight, look at making a Nature mandala or collage of these.

**When using your phone in Nature, consider putting it on aeroplane mode so as not to get distracted.*



5.

Notice how you can feel a deep connection, empathy, care and connection to what brought you delight.

Inspiration cues for the Reflections Challenge

Michéal Connors and Rhonda Brandrick of Natural Academy



Creatures

There may be an animal that you are connected to that offers you delight, play and fun. Maybe it is a pet but also notice wildlife creatures, watch a snail, a bird.



Wonder

Nature connectedness can offer a sense of wonder and awe. For a moment we can be totally captivated and absorbed in a place, space, creature or animal and this can deeply change our mood.



Natural Academy works with individuals and organisations to deliver accredited training courses and ongoing support to help them work with people in Nature. Their training practitioners facilitate the health, healing and recovery of people and support them to return to a deepening connectedness to the natural world.

[VISIT PARTNER PAGE](#)



Slowing down

Take time to slow yourself down, go for a mindful walk, wonder and be curious, allowing yourself to be guided by curiosity and noticing how different spaces, creatures, trees, plants make you feel.



Tuning in

Tune into bird song and notice how this affects how you are feeling, or any sounds in Nature can shift our mood.

TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE NATURAL ACADEMY,
[VISIT NATURALACADEMY.ORG](http://NATURALACADEMY.ORG) AND [YOUTUBE.COM/@NATURALACADEMY6969](https://www.youtube.com/@NATURALACADEMY6969)



Meet Nicola *Nicola Chester*

Nicola is a Nature writer, school librarian and “imperfect community activist”! From her “leaky rural cottage” in rural West Berkshire, she writes on belonging, protest, access and connection to Nature, with compelling prose that will have you reaching for both your binoculars and a protest placard. Nicola writes regular columns for the RSPB, Guardian, BBC Countryfile Magazine

and has contributed essays to numerous anthologies, including this year’s ‘Wild Service, Why Nature Needs You.’ Her beautiful award-winning memoir, ‘On Gallows Down’ was published in 2021. She still finds time to run writing workshops and for “activism in the gaps of life”, passionately promoting causes such as a responsible Right to Roam and Wild Service.



NICOLA IS A 2024 REWILD YOURSELF CHAMPION...

DISCOVER ALL TEN CHAMPIONS, EACH INSPIRING QUALITY NATURE CONNECTION IN THEIR OWN WAY.

VISIT [REWILDYOURSELF.COM](https://www.rewildyourself.com)

Writing tips from Nicola *Nicola Chester*

Forming an emotional bond to Nature should be an evolutionary default, a survival tactic — and also a thing of affirmation: joy, hope, love and awe. We need Nature in order to live of course — the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink. The health and wellbeing effects from being physically close to Nature are well-documented too. We are hard-wired to seek this out, but that’s sometimes hard if we are not exposed to Nature or don’t have access to it. If we become emotionally involved with Nature, we learn to seek it out — and also serve it back.

ourselves and our experiences through Nature. It brings us closer to a better understanding of who we are, how we are and what that means. We share our one planet with Nature — we are Nature; more weather pattern and environment than we fully know. And if we begin to see it that way, of course it becomes part of our own personal and unique history, our present and future, family, community, and our own ‘storytelling.’ From keeping a Nature journal to writing short poems, stories, social media posts that really connect, or memoiristic life pieces, here are a few writing prompts to get (and keep) you going.

Writing about Nature requires us to really observe, to delve deeper, to use all our senses and make connections with



1.

Awe

Awe for awe’s sake — find something natural on a regular route you take — it could be an iconic tree, a week of sunsets, the birds you see or hear on a walk or your lunchbreak, the way the light changes on a distant landscape, or the growth of a plant growing wild in an unexpected urban setting. Observe it, make little notes on every aspect of it, take pictures on your phone and then discover all you can about

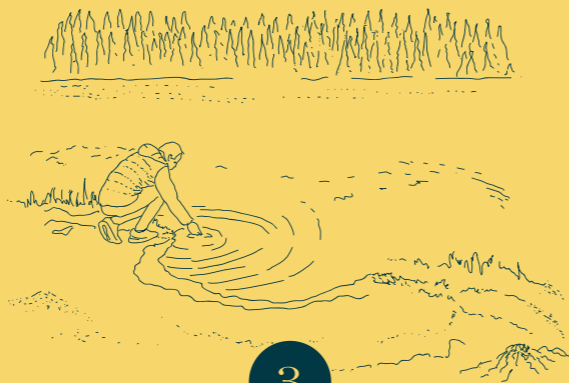
it. What’s its (species) name, what is it doing right now and why, how is it connected in the world (what other creatures live with it and how) has it any connections with the place it’s in, or some human history? Any myths, or legends attached? Anything ridiculously gross or funny? Somewhere in here, you’ll find something that makes you go ‘wow’ that makes you feel wonder and awe. It all starts with a name, don’t stop there ...



2.

Memory

Memory – Portal Writing – think of a memorable encounter with Nature, back in time, that still lingers (a fox glimpsed from a train a decade ago, the brilliant flash of a magpie’s wings in sunlight last week, when you saw that they weren’t just black-and-white, they were blue and violet and green; some birdsong that stopped you in your tracks. Use all your senses. Scent is a strong memory trigger. Does the smell of freshly cut grass take you somewhere? The smell of summer pavement after rain (that smell is ‘petrichor’, that means the blood or tears of the gods falling on stone.) Follow that memory and that wild thing back – what were you doing then? What was going on with your life? Can you associate it with a strong memory, a person? Change? And ending or beginning? What do you feel about it, wonder about it now? Use it as a gateway to take you somewhere.



3.

Rage, anger, grief, loss – and love!

All strong emotions from which good things can spring. Writing can be hugely cathartic. It’s good for working things out, expressing ourselves and it’s good for our mental health. If we fall in love with Nature, sooner or later in the wildlife and climate crisis we’re living through, we’re going to be feeling the pain of loss, grief or anger. Chanel it. Vent your fury that some destruction has taken place, use and move the reader with your words, show your vulnerability, your love and what it means or meant to you. Bear witness. Then feel the power of words to change things, to express your love for something and heal. And get up and do it all over again.



4.

Hope

‘Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches in the soul’ wrote poet Emily Dickinson in around 1861. Look to Nature and you will almost always find something hopeful, something regenerative or useful – something to begin again, even when Nature is sometimes so red in tooth and claw! Use it to show the resilience and desire to live and thrive on this wondrous, diverse and surprising planet. Marvel at it, even if it is a small thing, celebrate it through words and see how you can relate it to hope, persistence, learning from our mistakes and moving on.



5.

Joy and connection

Revel in the power and joy of your words to create something – paint a picture with them, play with them make them up sometimes! There is great fun and agency to be had in using your own experiences to connect, explain, interrogate and interpret what you see on your way to a deeper relationship with Nature. Have fun describing things. Focus on one sense and then another – what does this thing look like, smell like, sound like; and how do I interpret that for someone that hasn’t seen (or smelt, heard) it before? What is it like compared to something that they – or you – know? Have fun with short descriptions, perhaps haikus or social-media friendly sentences to accompany a photograph, from immediate or on-reflection observations and feelings. Use metaphor and similes and your own particular tools of the trade or knowledge (that might not be connected to Nature as such) to bring it to life. If you’re an engineer or a mechanic for instance, you might describe the great cogs and pistons of a dragster hare running across a field. That sunset? If you’re a seamstress, or into fashion, what colours are those? What fabrics? What ric-rac, ribbons or selvedge edges? Watered silks? Have fun, be irreverent sometimes. Be reverent sometimes. The written word is a wonderful bridge to emotional and lasting Nature connection.



TO DISCOVER MORE OF NICOLA’S WORK,

VISIT [NICOLACHESTER.WORDPRESS.COM](https://www.nicolachester.wordpress.com) OR [INSTAGRAM.COM/NICOLAWRITING](https://www.instagram.com/nicolawriting)

TO DISCOVER MORE OF NICOLA’S WORK,

VISIT [NICOLACHESTER.WORDPRESS.COM](https://www.nicolachester.wordpress.com) OR [INSTAGRAM.COM/NICOLAWRITING](https://www.instagram.com/nicolawriting)

INSPIRATION GALLERY

Here's a few to get you started... We can't wait to hear your reflections!

Find more inspiration at [ReWildYourself.com](https://www.rewildyourself.com)

I have a feathered friend. I pretend it visits me, but it's here with its own agenda — to gobble my unripe tomatoes. Its feathers are electric green and red. Each one is so fine and detailed. So mathematical and intricate. So precise. Wow! What a refined and dazzling creature. It fills me with wonder and awe, to know this bird has evolved... From what? A dinosaur? Or something else?... Who knows! It sure is a relief that I'm not 1cm tall, or I wouldn't be around to comment on such a dainty beast. The tomatoes, clearly, are no longer mine.

~ A failed gardener, Australia

When I see the water kiss the shore it feels like a hug and it sparks joy. I feel calm and serene when it's sunset time and the sun reflects on the black sand, like a mirror looking up at the sky.

The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean in the world and its vastness can be terrifying but I find love and comfort in its waves.

Stretching from the Americas to the coastlines of Asia and Australia, it is a bridge between cultures, and a common ground for us all.

~ Maria, El Salvador

Big old tree in mum's back yard;
I tried to climb you decades ago
but you were too tall then
and too tall still.
Your canopy of green and brown is home
to families of furry friends
who sing to us each day.
I touch your skin, flaky and dry,
wondering how many rings you hold inside.
I'll take off my shoes and press feet to feet, forever.

~ Cat, United Kingdom

Mirror of the sky,
cosmos of our Earth.
Like a blanket covering us,
with an infuriating passion involving us.

Foam lashes fluttering at the shore;
what a lovers' game you've got with the rocks.
Chamber of all the masterpieces of the past,
stage of all the misfortunes of the present.
Museums bowing down to the greatness of all the
antiquities revolving beneath you.
Embraced in salty arms, at last shall we understand.
What was good, what is now, what we could see if we just
slow down.

Layers of your strength will pull us down,
layers of your strength will hurl us up.
All at once, all in a child's play.

Sprinkles of your spirit will pat our heads,
once we see your turquoise green again.

~ Vermilia, Ecuador

I like to imagine each grain of sand at the beach is a galaxy... To try to imagine how big the universe is... I love looking at the stars, and thinking about how huge space is. It makes me love all of the things on Earth more — the ocean, the trees, and all of the animals.

~ Minny, United Kingdom

Is there anything better than the smell of a rainforest?
A tree towering
A tree crumbling back into the earth
Growth
Decay
Crucial components
Cycles of life
Give permission
To rise
To fall
And rise again
The exhale of rich, abundant soil
It permeates all
I feel a deep sense of calm in rainforests
... At least, the ones that don't have crocodiles in them
Some sort of feeling that time has paused,
yet time is infinite
A feeling to remember

~ Jess, Australia

FIELD NOTES



What is the first emotion you feel when being in or thinking about Nature? Why did it come up?

Find five natural things you're grateful for...

Have you spotted any critters?
What are they up to? How would it feel to be like them and do what they are doing?



**TO WATCH
THE PATHWAYS COME
TO LIFE IN ANIMATION
VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

www.rewildyourself.com/time



If you would like to share your insights with us on Instagram, go to [@rewildyourself](https://www.instagram.com/rewildyourself) #ItsTimeToReWildYourself

FIELD NOTES

Are the sounds, colours, smells or scenery particularly beautiful or strange? Does any of it bring you joy or wonder?



How would you describe your emotional relationship with Nature? Is it different now from what you thought it was before this exercise?



If you would like to share your insights with us on Instagram, go to [#ItsTimeToReWildYourself](https://www.instagram.com/rewildyourself)

Resources / Reach Out

Nature can make us feel many things, and we want to welcome and accept every emotion. However, certain emotions can feel overwhelming and challenging to manage. To support you, we have created a list of resources to help you understand, navigate, and process these emotions. This list also includes practitioners specialising in eco-therapy and integrating outdoor experiences with well-being.

*These resources have been handpicked by our team to support you, however, we have no direct affiliation with these external organisations unless otherwise stated.**



Natural Academy's NatureWell approach

Natural Academy's NatureWell approach focuses on working with people's health and wellbeing in natural settings, to support people and Nature to recover and flourish together.

[VISIT PAGE](#)



NASP – National Academy for Social Prescribing

A hub that links to other organisations and resources.

[VISIT PAGE](#)



Eco Anxious Stories

Eco-Anxious Stories is a creative collaborative space that aims to normalise eco-anxiety and build capacity for change through the lens of story. You can find a range of resources on their website including their [worksheets](#) aimed to help you understand and navigate your emotions in relation to eco-anxiety.

[VISIT PAGE](#)



28-days of climate emotions – Force of Nature

Ahead of COP26, Force of Nature created a 28-day challenge incorporating reflection prompts and exercises to help people understand their climate emotions, how to use them for change, and finding resilience in community by allowing young people to connect with others who share the same passions.

[VISIT PAGE](#)



Mind – Nature and mental health

Mind Organisation explains how Nature can help your mental health. This resource gives tips and ideas to try, and suggests where to go for more information.

[VISIT PAGE](#)



Mind – Illustrating Nature helped heal my mind

Bella blogs (and illustrates) how appreciating the tiny things in nature and interpreting them in her own art helped her mental health.

[VISIT PAGE](#)



Force of Nature

Force of Nature is a global youth-led organisation mobilising mindsets for climate action, with a student network of 1000+ in over 50 countries. They empower young people to turn their climate anxiety into agency, and decision-makers to shift from climate apathy to action.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

**Note: Natural Academy is a partner organisation of the It's Time to ReWild Yourself Campaign.*

ReWild Yourself

Brought to you by Voice for Nature Foundation, ReWild Yourself is a global programme creating opportunities for individuals and communities to connect with Nature and wild places, uniting both humanity and Nature's wellbeing.

By connecting to the land, we connect back to ourselves, however, access to Nature remains deeply inequitable. We want to bridge that gap, and reunite human and Nature's wellbeing.

Nature Connectedness Network

The Nature Connectedness Network, from the University of Derby, brings together individuals and organisations whose professional work is focused on helping people grow closer relationships with the more-than-human world, for the mutual wellbeing of people and planet.

Vision: A happier and more fulfilled society with a thriving natural environment, forged through a closer relationship with nature.

Mission: To discover, share and deliver evidence-based approaches for nurturing closer relationships between people and nature, ensuring a scaling up of nature connection across the UK.



It's time to ReWild Yourself

Join the community and spread the word...

'It's Time to ReWild Yourself' PARTNERS



Special Acknowledgments

Svabhu Kohli – *full colour artwork*

Nicola Chester

Michéal Connors and Rhonda Brandrick – Natural Academy

Thank you for being a Voice for Nature!



Scan the QR with your smart phone for more Nature connection fun and resources



It's time to ReWild Yourself

An adventure in Nature connection for human x Nature wellbeing

5 CHALLENGES | 5 MONTHS | 5 PATHWAYS

Voice for Nature Foundation and the Nature Connectedness Network are on a mission to improve the UK's relationship with the natural world and release our inner wild. An experience for individuals, schools, and families, supported by an exceptional cohort of partners, scientists, explorers, and artists.

This June – October, journey through the five pathways with us and connect more deeply with Nature...

BEAUTY | SENSES | EMOTION | MEANING | COMPASSION

We all crave that sense of aliveness and awe that Nature makes us feel. Join us in a series of small yet mighty personal challenges – spaced over 5 months – that will help us unlock our imagination, and find the magic and healing hidden within time in Nature.



rewildyourself.com

voicefornaturefoundation.org

© 2024 VOICE FOR NATURE FOUNDATION

