

Silvana Candreia

back to
nature

a workbook

Hey!

How nice that you're here and welcome to your return to nature!

When I left the city a few years ago to move across the country to live in a small mountain village, I followed a longing that has always been there, but was so suppressed and overheard that I didn't even know this was the life I craved anymore. Nature called me and finally I followed that call. By living in and with nature I not only learned so much about myself, but I also found a home, I arrived. Never will I forget the moment in the river when I suddenly felt one with the water and the forest. I knew that I belonged here, that I was part of nature and that there's no separation between us. It was like coming home. Simply marvelous.



With this workbook I want to support you on your return to nature. Nature is our mother, she nourishes us, holds us, offers us our living ground. But oftentimes we forget that we are nature and that what we are destroying right now, is actually ourselves. That's why each and every one of us is needed. We can change

something small that might become something great. And by getting to know and connect to nature and therefore ourselves, we tap into an incredible treasure, we become quieter and more content, we start a deep relationship with nature and hence we protect what we love. Nature. I call that *spiritual nature conservation* and already now I thank you for your contribution in protecting our home!

I have chosen the aspects I found most important in helping me return to nature and I invite you to work with them. Of course there are many, many more, but with this workbook I want to show that it's not that hard to reconnect to yourself and nature. We all still have that access inside of us and are able to find it with those simple thoughts and exercises.

It's a workbook, a starter kit. Contemplate the questions, write down your thoughts, try the exercises and adapt them to your liking. And so I wish you a lot of fun working with «back to nature» and a good return to a life with nature!

1. Being in nature

In order to return to nature in the first place, we have to get in touch with her again. It's as easy as it sounds: we have to spend time in and with her. It's like with a relationship to another person. We have to get to know each other and nurse our common time.

- ✳️ Consciously take time to be in nature. Perhaps you can integrate it into your daily life, perhaps it's 1 to 2 times per week. If it's difficult for you to commit to spending time in nature, note it in your calendar as if you are meeting a friend.
- ✳️ Take a walk in nature with the only intention of being in nature. You are not here to do sports, but to connect with Mother Earth. I also don't recommend listening to music, speaking on the phone or answering voice mails. Be fully present, fully here. While being in nature you walk slowly, you stay at a place for a while, you open your senses and you are very mindful. You don't have to have a specific goal, you just want to spend time with yourself and nature. You'll find more about that if you look into Shinrin Yoku, the Japanese art of forest bathing.
- ✳️ Take nature in with all your senses:
 - What do you see? How many hues of green? Can you focus your gaze on the bigger picture? Can you make the picture very small and only see the details?
 - What do you hear? Close your eyes and focus on your hearing for a moment. What loud noises can you make out? Can you hear subtler tones beneath the louder layers?
 - What do you smell? Keep your eyes closed. What smells does the wind carry to your nose? Can you recognize them without looking?
 - What do you feel? Maybe you take your shoes off and walk barefoot for a while. How does the ground feel under your feet?
 - What do you taste? If you can identify a plant with certainty and you know that it's edible, take it into your mouth and guide your awareness to your sense of taste. Is it bitter or maybe sweet? Sour or tart?



2. Finding «my» place

To enter into deep relationship with Mother Earth it's helpful to choose a place you feel welcome in and you can return to again and again. By spending time there you get to know «your» place, you can learn from it, care for it and tend to it. Just think again about the comparison to the relationship with another person.

✳ Perhaps you already know of places in nature (in the woods, by the lake, on the field, in the garden...) that you like and feel good in. If that's not the case, take time in the beginning to explore your surroundings. It's best if you take some walks close to your home and by doing so finding out what places call to you.

Spend some time at your places. Notice what trees grow there, what the air smells like, what you hear and how you feel. Take a seat and stay for a while. You don't have to do anything else other than just be.

✳ It might be helpful to write your thoughts and observations at and on «your» place down. Here are some journaling prompts:

- ☺ ○ A plant that interests me is..., because...
- Looking around, I see...
- I like this place so much, because...
- If this place was a person, I would tell her that...
- Today I'm feeling...
- A question I have been pondering is...

✳ Introduce yourself to the place. Tell the trees, flowers, rocks or the river who you are, why you're here, how you're feeling and what has been going on in your life. They are good listeners and sometimes they also bring answers. =)



3. Living with my rhythm

We are cyclical beings and nature's rhythms can be found in us as well. We, too, notice the different qualities of the seasons inside of us. We are more active, extroverted and outgoing in spring and summer, while feeling the need to calm down, going inward and taking a break in autumn and winter. The same rhythms we can find in the mooncycle, the menstruation cycle and during the course of a day.

☺ What rhythms do I notice in my life?
What do they look, feel like?

✳ No matter if you're menstruating or not, if you're a woman or not, during the course of a few weeks you will be observing your energy levels. Note on which days or what times of day you feel energized and when you tend to be more tired or you want to retreat. It takes a while to get to know your own rhythm. If you're menstruating, you can also observe how you feel during the different stages of your cycle. In addition the moon can help you to recognize your own rhythm.

☺ How do I feel on a new moon? On a waning moon? On a full moon? On a waxing moon?

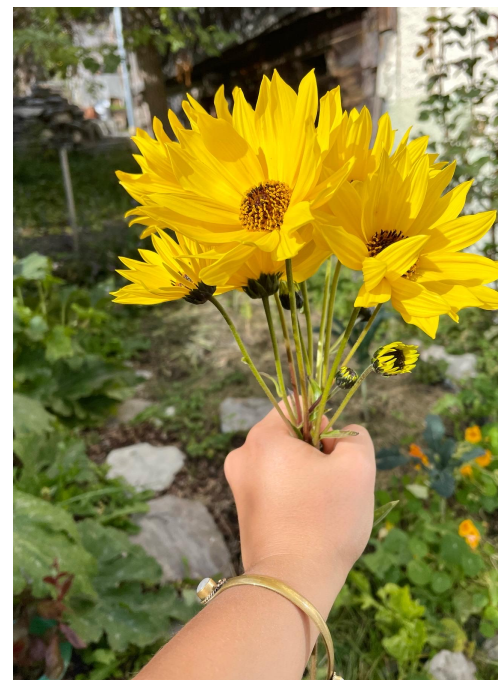
✳ I know that it's often not possible, but as soon as you know your rhythm, start to shape your day, week or month accordingly. Probably it's not possible to take a break for a whole week when your cycle is in inner winter, but by being aware of your energy levels during this season of calmness you can schedule your activities and pay attention that you don't have too much going on, that you postpone difficult talks and that you go to bed early. On the contrary you can be more active during your inner summer if you like, realize your plans and exercise more.



4. Connect to the land

Whether it's at «your» place, in your garden, on the land your house is built on, connect to the land. This doesn't only mean spending time in nature, but it's an invitation to create a reciprocity between you and nature.

- ☺ What do I know about this land? Do I know its history? Can I find out more about the flora and fauna? What were the plants growing here used for in earlier days?
- ✳ Express your gratitude for the land. Tell the land stories, create mandalas from nature materials, bring little bouquets of flowers as a thank you. Find small, but meaningful rituals to show the land your gratitude.
- ☺ I am so grateful for/that...
- ✳ Support the land, whether that's by collecting waste or by gardening. By sowing flowers in your garden, on your balcony or on free spaces in your city, you offer protection and nourishment to many insects. By organizing a river or forest clean up, you reduce the harmful plastic and other waste in nature. You help animals to not ingest it and the soil to not absorb it. By gardening nature orientated you tend to the soil with all its creatures and you give it back its nutrients while the soil nourishes you.



5. Be inspired (& and talk about it)

There already are so many people who live connected to nature and who talk about it. I always feel so relieved knowing that I'm not alone and that there are others who do their part for a better world.

✳️ Let the thoughts, practices and tools of others inspire you. Some instagram accounts I find inspiring are:

- plantfolk
- woodspell.apothecary
- christine.kjaer
- susanagarciaferreira
- pflanzengeist_und_seelenzauber
- heilpflanzen_naturakademie
- marievonwurzelwerk
- randomactsofselflove

🌱 These practices I want to incorporate into my daily life/my time in nature:

✳️ Document your process. Whether that's in a diary for yourself, by taking pictures and creating a beautiful album or by writing about it on instagram. Please feel free to use the hashtag #spiritualnatureconservation.

Just as you get inspired by other people, other people get inspired by you and your actions. In German we have a saying which goes something like this: « Do good things and talk about it.» Your connection to nature might feel very private and intimate in the beginning, but start talking about what has been changing within you through your regular time in nature and how you are feeling with the people closest to you and perhaps you're also ready to speak on your practices and experiences in and with nature and therefore becoming a role model for someone who wants to live a life connected to themselves and to nature.

back to *nature*



Let's stay in touch!

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