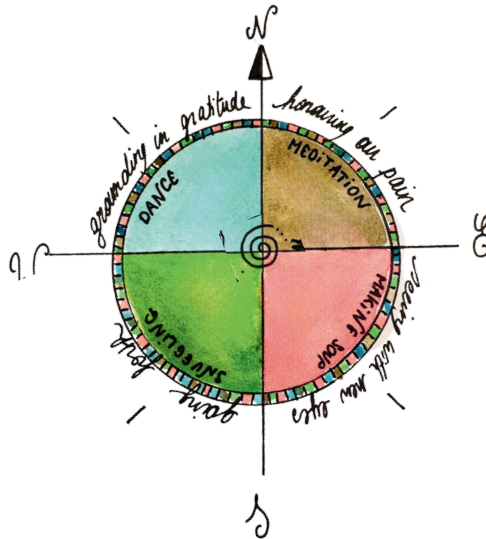


compass for climate chaos

How to navigate through the difficult emotions of the climate crisis and give space for self-care and reconnection



Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare

compass for climate chaos

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introduction

The climate crisis is also a care crisis.

The collapse of the ecosystems, the loss of biodiversity, the pollution, the natural disasters - just to name a few : there are plenty of reasons to be mourning, anxious, enraged, sad, apathetic, depressed...

But, in our society, difficult emotions are not meant to be experienced together. On the contrary, you would be encouraged to visit a psychologist or start an individual therapy to take care of yourself.

This booklet is an attempt to equip you with methods, practices, thoughts and ideas to take care of yourself in climate chaotic times, but also to care for others and for nature. It seeks to support and help you deal with climate concerns in a healthy way by offering readings, meditations, recipes and projects that may sway you in the direction of hope and empowerment.

Audre Lorde said “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare”

The content of the book is inspired by the text ‘Anxiety soup’ by Alice Walker and Work That Reconnects (WTR) - initially developed by Joanna Macy. Drawing on insights from system thinking, deep ecology and spiritual practices, WTR offers a spiralling journey through four steps to serve the healing of the world and our own relationship with it.

compass rose

how to use the book

A compass rose, sometimes called a wind rose, rose of the winds or compass star, is a figure on a compass, map, nautical chart, or monument used to display the orientation of the cardinal directions (north, east, south, and west) and their intermediate points.

We wanted to create a book which would be like a compass to help you navigate in the feelings related to the climate crisis.

As part of the Summer camp “Compass for Climate Chaos” running from the 20.-24th of June the book was made with the intention to support the participants of this camp as it unfolds - each chapter mimicking the activities through the days.

The book invites you to share activities, practices and reflections with other people as climate anxiety is not an individual problem.

You can use this material for support groups, with friends and fellow activists - share with others to combat your aloneness and to create a sense of collective responsibility and care.

You can also use the book for and by yourself, as a self-help book.

Following the model of WTR, you can colour code or number code your own four-step practice. You can read the book from cover to cover or approach it more arbitrarily and intuitively. You can choose one practice, text or ritual that you go back to again and again for support.

Feel free to colour in the book and fill in the pages.



The work that reconnects

Joanna Macy is an American thinker who has developed, since 1996, the practice of the Work that Reconnects (WTR): a spiral process of four stages inspired by Buddhism and deep ecology philosophy.

She observed that there is a lot of depression and discouragement among the environmental activists because of the challenges and bad news they have to face in their everyday life. On the radio, we hear about the extinction of the animals, the acidification of the oceans or the death of thousand of people. She noted that in our societies there is limited space for sorrows nor any kind of pain.

Joanna Macy thought that we needed to create a space to acknowledge our despair in order to empower ourselves; because it is in the darkest place that you can find a brighter sun. Thus the Work That Reconnects was developed to help us reconnect with our emotions, our nature, ourselves. She writes:

“The central purpose of the Work that Reconnects is to help people uncover and experience their innate connection with each other and with the systemic, self-healing powers of the web of life, so that they may be enlivened and motivated to play their part in creating a sustainable civilization.”

The four stages of WTR support one another, and work best when experienced in sequence. They help us experience first hand that we are larger, stronger, deeper, and more creative than we have been brought up to believe.

The spiral is fractal in nature. The sequence can repeat itself in ever new ways, and even within a particular stage of the spiral. The spiral can be discerned over the span of a lifetime or a project, and it can also happen in a day or several times a day. We come back to it again and again as a source of strength and fresh perspectives.

The spiral begins with gratitude, because that quiets the frantic mind and brings us back to source, stimulating our empathy and confidence. It helps us to be more fully present and opens psychic space for acknowledging the pain we carry for our world.

Anxiety soup

Anxiety soup is a text from Alice Walker, a African American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. She is famous for the novel “the Color Purple” and has written extensively many different kinds of texts, among which : “the Anxiety Soup”. Alice Walker offers a recipe to deal with anxious times, which is made of dance, meditation, soup and snuggling.

Anxiety Soup:

In the recent election we chose leaders who will be required to stand with us through perhaps the most difficult period, for humans, in planet Earth’s history. No matter how much faith we might have in the country’s new leadership, our anxiety about the situation is understandable, because we know that no matter what we do we cannot avoid the karma that is coming—especially the karma that is coming to the United States. Even a cursory meandering through our history and a glance at how our government has treated others, for centuries, would make us throw in the towel, climb into our beds, pull the covers over our heads, and wail.

I would be remiss, as an elder of the planet, to remain silent at this point about some of the ways to deal with this period of emotional, psychological, ideological, and financial instability. For I have by now lived relatively long, compared to some of you who are mere children, though you might be in your twenties and thirties. I am definitely at a plateau that makes the teenage years seem doable. The late twenties and all of one’s thirties are hellish for everyone, as far as I can tell, but at least you’ve been warned. And so I wish to offer a medicine that I take myself (which is the only kind I offer): Anxiety Soup.

Anxiety Soup keeps growing and expanding; it is eclectic, it is self-choosing, and it is already within your reach. The main thing it assumes is that you are coming to it in your right mind—that you’ve put the liquor bottle back on the shelf, said no to drugs of all kinds, and made the manly or womanly decision not to pick fights. In fact, it assumes you consider yourself free. That being so, you are ready for ingredient number one.

Ingredient number one is dance. Actually, it is a toss-up between dance and meditation, but for me, during this period, I find dance trumps meditation, at least sitting meditation, because while listening to the news I find it increasingly difficult to sit still. That is when I put on one of the most instructive, intelligent, historical, and danceable CDs ever made, *Back on the Block*, by Quincy Jones and a host of fabulous musicians who tell us the wonderful history of our most soulful American music while rocking us into a drenching sweat. I also use this *Medicine* CD, along with Tina Turner's astonishingly mature, dark-souled, and survival-oriented *Twenty-Four Seven*, to pump me through five or six miles on my exercise bike. There is also *Deep Forest*, the reassuring CD that features the voices of our rainforest ancestors, and almost anything by Oliver Mtukudzi.

But you will make your own list, and many of you, feeling the need for this medicine, have already done so. Having made the list, use it. The best time for dancing and biking, I find, is the morning. If I can get up early enough to spend at least an hour enjoying this medicine, I can listen to most troubling news with a relatively detached mind.

Ingredient number two, in other times, would be ingredient number one: sitting meditation. In my experience, nothing beats meditation, for everything. No matter what the problem, my opinion is: meditation is the solution. I share this belief with a lot of people, most of them more disciplined than I am. I began meditating as a child—and it still seems to me the most natural human state—and learned formal meditation in my thirties. It has saved my life.

For this, any private corner of your house or car will do. When I lived in Mississippi, and the Klan occasionally left its card in our mailbox, I used to meditate in motel rooms. What I like best about meditation is an experience that we can also achieve by sitting on the ground and allowing ourselves to drift into the trees: the taste of eternity. It is this taste that reminds us we will be around longer than however many years we face of anxiety, confusion, and the consequences of our national karma. In fact, once we slip out of mere time and into eternity, fear leaves us entirely.

We become aware that we've always been, in some form; that we're not likely to be going anywhere, since the universe, though vast, is probably a closed system. So we might as well relax. There may well be catastrophies in our future, but who dies, ultimately? No one. Of course you and I might, and that would be regrettable, but after a million years, even plutonium will be turned into fertilizer and I'll probably see you out of the eye of an amoeba. Whatever that eye looks like by then.

Ingredient number three: I just read a statement from my financial planner, who happens to be a good writer, luckily for me. While dealing out the horrid news of financial loss from the Wall Street meltdown, he mentioned one stock that had not gone down, but, in fact, had gone up: Campbell's Soup. And that brings me to ingredient number three of Anxiety Soup, which is actual soup. But it is soup you make yourself, from scratch. Soup is an amazing food because, like salads (using only fresh ingredients for those), you can make it out of anything: dead or dying lettuce stalks, shriveled up tomatoes and potatoes, crinkled-up mushrooms, sour-pussed rutabagas and turnips, dried-out beans. Whatever you have on hand will do. And soup, no matter what's in it, always tastes good. No old shoes! But this is a part of soup's magic: you can only go wrong if you have no sense of taste whatsoever and put in a cup of cumin when you should add a pinch.

Choose your biggest pot, concentrate on cleaning out your entire refrigerator. If you don't have anything in there, go out and shop. Buy lots of different vegetables, even some you've never seen before. Spend an hour chopping off heads and splitting things down the middle; this will relieve tension you weren't aware you had. Put in lots of onion and garlic; you want to have strong breath. Let your tears fall into the pot—you're crying for your country. Put on music as you chop and stir, or use the time to do silent meditation, thanking the vegetables for appearing in your kitchen, ready to sacrifice themselves for you. Invite someone to share the soup with you; ladle it out in big earthy bowls. Add brown rice or quinoa if you have it, nutritional yeast (for your nerves), and if you can, eat it in front of a nice homemade fire.

And now, for the last ingredient: snuggling. I have friends who sleep with their dogs who laughed at me because I didn't understand why the band Three Dog Night called itself that. My dog was always too heavy and hot for me to feel comfortable sleeping with her, but I have enjoyed sleeping with my cat, which is perfect except I become so conscious of her comfort I cease to move, leaving me with various cricks in the joints.

The best snuggling is often with a human; this I have found through much trial and error. So if there are animals around, or a human, you are in good shape. And if your person or animal isn't a snuggler and you are, this is serious business. You want someone who adores a big fluffy bed, someone who likes the look of lamp or candle glow, someone who enjoys the sound of rain and turns over and smiles when you say I think it will snow. Snuggling is the best ingredient of all for Anxiety Soup because it is free, it is fun, it goes well with old movies, it goes well with pizza, it goes well with two people reading great novels or listening to great tapes. It goes really well with drowsing and snoozing and hugging and cuddling and the flinging over of arms and legs and the intermingling of delicious breaths and the deep peace of happy snoring!

And so, here is a recipe for Anxiety Soup! May we continue to be a hardy race that outlives our tormentors, as one of my grandmothers outlived a century of people who thought they owned her. She did this simply by living to be a hundred and twenty-five. As we might, for all our problems. Part of her Anxiety Soup was the belief that we must never cover up the pulse at our throat, and even in deepest winter she left her own throat bare. Proving, during one of the darkest periods of our Republic—when people were owned by regular folks they saw every day (and were often related to), and not by faceless corporations that hide behind their advertising—that a good Anxiety Soup can be made out of anything.

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get to know your anxiety

Emotions are there to give you information, to help us connect with others, to motivate us and prepare us for action.

To know your emotions is essential for dealing with them, soothing them and respecting them.

Anxiety is an emotion which is characterised by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, worry, nervousness and includes feelings of fear and dread over anticipated events. Anxiety is different from fear in that fear is defined as the emotional response to a present threat, whereas anxiety is the anticipation of a future one. It can be a normal reaction to stress.

What is climate anxiety?

- Forward-looking emotions and uncertainty related to the global climate crisis and the threat of a natural disaster
- Normal natural adaptation response to what is happening
- Emotional, mental, and physical expressions in response to dangerous changes in the Earth's ecosystem
- Stress and unease caused by an awareness of global and systemic problems and the prospect of overcoming them

Reactions to the climate change may be different

Ecologically maladaptive coping responses could include:

- denial of ecological crisis (e.g. rejecting, deflecting, ignoring)
- distortion of facts (e.g. reducing size of threat, putting threat into the future)
- shifting responsibility (e.g. blame-shifting, denial of guilt, splitting, projection)
- avoidance of difficult emotions (e.g. suppression, escapism, numbing, pleasure-seeking)
- diversionary activity (e.g. minor behaviour change or displaced commitment)
- non-action (e.g. resignation, passivity, lazy catastrophism)
- self-deception (e.g. wishful/magical thinking, unrealistic optimism)
- active catastrophism and self-destructive acts, and
- self-enhancement values orientation (e.g. materialistic behaviour to enhance self-esteem, or self-protection to enhance sense of security and being in control)

Ecologically adaptive coping responses could include:

- seeking information, engagement with facts about ecological crisis
- engaging with and regulating associated emotions (e.g. through mindfulness)
- compassion, self-transcendence, values orientation (care for human and non-human others)
- connecting with nature
- considered reflection on death and impermanence, and
- collaborative problem-solving

Normalizing emotions

Always acknowledge the feelings a person has and don't try to take them away.

Practice : Active listening

- Be fully present
- Keep eye contact (if the other is comfortable with that)
- Pay attention both to verbal and to non-verbal communication
- Ask open-ended questions when appropriate
- Reflect on what has been said (both words and emotions)
- Don't be quick to judge or give advice (if you want to suggest an idea, ask for permission first! "Would you like to hear an idea I got?" or "Would you like my advice?")
- Understanding is more important than responding



which climate-profile are you?

Take the quiz :

Choose one answer among the 5 propositions

1. What is your climate care habit?

- a. You distribute flyers for the next conference about degrowth
- b. You learn to name the birds by their name
- c. You train your knot-tying skills to secure your hammock
- d. You change your browser to Ecosia
- e. You built a compost toilet

2. Which is your "climate book"?

- a. "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer - the Bible to reconnect with nature
- b. "The case for Degrowth" by Giorgio Kallis, Susan Paulson , Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico DeMaria - changing the economic system
- c. "Another End of the World Is Possible: Living the Collapse and Not Merely Surviving It" by Pablo Servigne, Raphaël Stevens and Gauthier Chapelle - or how to live radically differently
- d. "The Survival Manual" by Jason Polley - a guide to survive in the wild
- e. "The Carbon Footprint of Everything" by Mike Berners-Lee - learning about footprints

3. After a long day of climate activism your go-to meal is...

- a. A comforting nettle soup and a dandelion salad
- b. A juicy pea protein burger
- c. A canned ravioli on a bonfire
- d. A quick durum falafel on the way to the next demonstration
- e. Carrot houmous and roasted cabbage head with tahini sauce
- vegan, homemade and from the garden

4. You need a break. You decide to go on holiday for a few days, you...

- a. fly to Amsterdam (by offsetting your Co2 emissions, of course), and you enjoy the green slow life of the city for few days - biking around, drinking local sodas and visiting museums.
- b. go to a holistic nature camp, about yoga, spirituality and forest bathing.
- c. have a staycation at home and you invite your neighbours for a camping night and an outside long table dinner
- d. go on an out training program where you learn about fishing, climbing and hunting
- e. go on an activist school about how to tackle the 1% and tackle the system, arranged by an NGO

5. What is in your wardrobe?

- a. Home knitted sweaters, with local wool
- b. A new jumper with recycled polyester from an organic brand
- c. A hyper thermic and waterproof Patagonia jacket which can resist to hard weathers
- d. A second hand cardigan found in the local free shop
- e. A t-shirt with hand-printed slogan

6. What is concerning you the most about the climate?

- a. Surviving the collapse
- b. How to reduce the greenhouse gases
- c. The inevitable societal breakdown
- d. Changing the system and fight neoliberal economics and growth
- e. Going beyond dualisms and get a better human-nature relationship

7. What does your dream future look like?

- a. Living in smaller resilient, self-sufficient anarchistic communities
- b. A boost of new technologies that will allow us to maintain our current level of comfort
- c. There is no future
- d. A revolution that combats global inequality
- e. A world where everyone has realised and nourished their inter-species connections

8. How climate-anxious are you?

- a. You are very anxious and therefore really prepared. You have a plan and have already built a network, in case the society collapses
- b. You are pretty anxious, but you believe that soon the 99% will unite against the 1%.
- c. There is no need to be anxious when you are ready.
- d. You are accepting slowly the mass extinction and are therefore more grieving than anxious.
- e. You are pretty anxious about what the media and the IPCC report but you are even more worried that the governments are not doing anything fast enough.

9. How do you prefer to hang out with friends?

- a. You go to a Terra Preta meditation where you get your hands dirty
- b. You start a debate over a beer about whether you are a marxist or a anarchist
- c. You go to a nature wine tasting
- d. You organise a festival for your neighbouring community, with DIY workshops, dance and music
- e. You go fly-fishing and eat homemade beef jerky

10. How do you keep warm?

- a. You make a fire with recycled paper or tinder fungus
- b. You built a DIY rocket-stove and a mass-oven, a very smart way to save wood and spread heat around
- c. You believe in nuclear energy and biomass as alternatives to fossil fuels industry
- d. You arrange a workshop for citizens about solar and wind energy owned by the community
- e. You take care of your inner fire and spread it around the ones you love

11. How does your garden look like?

- a. 1 hectare of regenerative land where you can be self-sufficient
- b. A communal garden with some friends where you grow a few carrots and discuss politics
- c. A biodynamic garden with mostly space for other species
- d. A garden? The forest is my home.
- e. It's actually a balcony in the city. If it wasn't because of the limited space I would have installed solar panels

Questions	Bright greens	Dark greens	System Changers	Deep adapters	Preppers
1	d	b	a	e	c
2	e	a	b	c	d
3	b	a	d	e	c
4	a	b	e	c	d
5	b	d	e	a	c
6	b	e	d	c	a
7	b	e	d	a	c
8	e	d	b	a	c
9	c	a	b	d	e
10	c	e	d	b	a
11	e	c	b	a	d

Bright greens

You are a climate activist who is navigating in climate science, technology breakthroughs and political discussions. You wonder how we are going to reach the 1.5 degree goals of the Paris Agreement and are a bit disillusioned that the politics don't really do their jobs. Indeed, a bit more financial support to the green technology could help both the economy and the climate.

Dark greens

You have understood that the climate crisis is deeper than only tech-fixes. For you, it is about the lost connection to nature and you are grieving deeply the loss of the wild life. You are very inspired by the resilience of indigenous people and their lifestyles and you wish, with nostalgia, that the Global North societies would have been different. You recharge when you are outside, with the more-than-human world.

System changers

“System change, not the climate” is definitely what we hear from your mouth when you are at a demo. For you, capitalism is the root of the system - and patriarchy, and neocolonialism and extractivism... to mention only those. Your analysis is very sharp and your conclusion, simple : degrowth is the only way. You are concerned that the governments are just wasting time, and damaging the planet even more than before with support to the 1%. Revolution now!

Deep adapters

You are prepared for the worst case scenario. If the world is burning now, how will it be in a few years? You are very aware of the potential wars, famine, natural disasters that are accompanying climate change. You know all of it will collapse. But it's not enough to think, you need to adapt and to act! Therefore, you are rebuilding the future you want in your own local community - more collectives and regenerative farming.

Preppers

Blah blah blah, enough talking, more acting.

You are ready for what is happening and is going to happen. A backpack with seeds, a rope and a knife, a hammock, a tear gas bottle in case you face an enemy... you are equipped to survive if needed. Better safe than sorry - if you can be - you are not counting on anyone else to save your ass in the climate chaos.

Dialogue:

Find a person of a different climate anxiety type than the one you got on the test. Get to know each other's positions.

Grounding in Gratitude

“The spiral begins with gratitude, because that quiets the frantic mind and brings us back to source, stimulating our empathy and confidence. It helps us to be more fully present and opens psychic space for acknowledging the pain we carry for our world”

-The work that reconnects



As bell hooks suggests, to truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients—care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication.

The gift of strawberries

Summary of the chapter 3 from *Braiding Sweetgrass*
by Robin Wall Kimmerer

If the best way of interacting with the natural world is through a lens of reciprocity, as *Braiding Sweetgrass* asserts, then this is best exhibited through the way that Kimmerer thinks about gifts, gratitude for those gifts, and the responsibilities and relationships that accompany the giving and receiving of gifts.

Kimmerer explains how the earth gifts people with food, shelter, and beauty, and each individual being offers its own gifts as part of this. Our gifts to give as human beings, Kimmerer suggests, include offering gratitude and the ability to take responsibility for the care of all the other beings who are so generous to us. This makes the web of reciprocity not just about an equal exchange of commodities, but about a relationship of generosity and gratitude.

In “The Gift of Strawberries,” Kimmerer describes how picking wild strawberries in her childhood instilled her with the idea of the world as a generous place—she thinks of the strawberries as being like personal gifts given to people from the land itself. She then compares this gift economy to the market economy of capitalism, which requires the idea of constant scarcity and attempts to make everything into a saleable commodity. Seeing something as a gift rather than a commodity changes one’s worldview, Kimmerer claims, as gifts create a relationship between the giver and receiver—the kind of relationship that she believes people should have with the land.

To carry a gift is to carry a responsibility to give back and to pass on one’s own gifts, which itself creates the web of reciprocity that is essential to a healthy community. These ideas are also distilled in the traditional Haudenosaunee “Thanksgiving Address,” which lists all the beings and gifts of the world and gives thanks for them. The Address thus not only presents the world as a place of plenty, but also makes us take stock of all these gifts and consider our responsibilities to them.

strawberry marmelade

Recipe adapted and translated from La Table d'Aline

For a medium jar of jam:

- 500g hulled strawberries
- 350g sugar
- Juice of half a lemon (optional)
- Half a glass of water
- Half a teaspoon of agar-agar (that's the secret, but I've noticed that you can do without it anyway...)

Make a light syrup (in a thick-bottomed saucepan, like Le Creuset, top of the range...) with the sugar and water.

When all the sugar has melted, gently add the strawberries and wait for it to boil gently.

Then you've got two options:

- If you're in a hurry, you can leave it to boil for 30 minutes or so, while keeping an eye on it, until you get a texture that suits your taste (bearing in mind that it becomes more solid as it cools, all you need is for the syrup to coat your wooden spoon properly, and then you're done).
- And if you have time, you can leave the jam on a low heat for 1 hour.

At this point, add the agar-agar and stir for a few minutes before setting aside and putting in the jar.

The fact that it is not very sweet means that this jam will not keep for ever.

List of what you are grateful for

grounding exercises

Practice to relieve anxiety for the feelings, suggested by Peeasi

Five Senses Exercise

Notice five things that you can see. Look around you. ...

Notice four things that you can feel. Tune in to your sense of touch. ...

Notice three things you can hear. Listen carefully. ...

Notice two things you can smell. Notice and name two smells you recognize.

Notice one thing you can taste.

Anchor to the ground

This exercise helps the young person to anchor his/her awareness into the present moment. When anxious, we tend to get lost in our heads, so it is a good technique to fix your awareness into the farthest point possible from your head. That is, your feet. This is a good alternative for people who do not like breathing exercises. The best way is to do this while standing, but it can be adapted to a sitting position. Then, awareness should be focused on the buttocks. This can be done both with the eyes open and the eyes closed.

Short version:

1. Stand with your feet firmly on the ground.
2. Feel the ground under your feet. Feel the gravity pulling you towards the earth.
3. Sense the tension in your feet and legs as you hold yourself upright.
4. Sense how your feet are holding the weight of your whole body. This feeling of heaviness flows from your head, through your spine into your legs and feet.
5. Now broaden your awareness. Take a note of what you hear and see. Where are you?



Rock gratitude

A LOVER IS HEAVY BUT / NOT TOO HEAVY TO HOLD

By Frances Grimshaw

These rocks were in the mud by the shore. I was walking on them. I was speaking to them. Then I was holding them in my hand.

One is round like the stomach, it is for digesting with, it is to be placed in the right hand.

One is square like a step, it is for waiting with, is it to be placed in the left hand.

One is small like a message, it is for listening, it is to be placed at the base of the throat.

Did you know that rocks hold down the earth, or more precisely, that their density creates gravity. Without them, we would not hold enough density. We need the rocks. They are heavy, but not too heavy to carry. They are heavy like the body of a lover. They are heavy like a grocery bag. They are heavy like compassion. We need the rocks. I imagine I have a stone in my womb. It is a sure thing. To be heavy between the hips. To be heavy and to sink into the moss. To sink into the soil. To sink into the clay. To be sure, that even a stone craves covering.

Do you know? Do you know? Do you know how the earth moves?

I think you know how to move like that, too.

To slow to stillness, stillness, stillness.

Tip:

Turn this into your own grounding exercise. Pick three rocks that speak to you. That carries the shape and weight of a stomach, a step and a message. Lay down and place them accordingly. Feel the weight of them. Reflect on what they carry. What is digesting, what is waiting, what is listening? Remember to return them to where you found them when you are done.

sit-spot

A practice inspired by ULEX courses in Catalonia and described by the blog journalingwithnature.com

A sit-spot is a place you go regularly, to connect inwardly, to yourself, and outwardly, to nature. Time spent in your sit-spot is a form of active meditation. It is a mindfulness practice that will help you be calm, happy and healthy in mind and body. Let the practice become part of your daily routine of self-care; a way to slow down, connect deeply with nature and with yourself.

where to find your sit-spot

Ideally your sit-spot will be close to home, in your backyard, if you have one, or in a nearby park or green space. It needs to be a place that is easily accessible, somewhere you can go regularly.

To find a sit-spot, take a short walk around your yard or neighbourhood. While you're walking, look for a place that speaks to you. Keep your mind and your senses open. If sitting on the ground is difficult for you, look for a park bench, or a fallen log or large rock that could support you. Once you have found your sit-spot, go there as often as you can to reap the many benefits of this beautiful practice.

how to use your sit-spot

Your aim is to tune in as much as you can. Your time here should be distraction free. Turn your phone on silent and put it in your bag or away from view.

Begin by noticing your body and your breathing. How does the air feel as it enters and leaves your nostrils? Is it warm or cool? How does your body feel in the place where your legs rest against the earth?

When thoughts come into your mind, don't push them away but also don't follow them. Let them drift past you like clouds in the sky and gently bring your mind back to your senses and the things you can see, hear and feel around you.

Sit quietly in your sit-spot as often as you can. Daily is best. Try for 10 minutes at first and work towards 20-30 minutes, if you can. This gives nature time to accept your presence. You will notice that after you have been sitting quietly in your sit-spot for a while, the animals begin to behave in their natural way. You will begin to feel yourself to be part of nature, not separate, like we can so often feel.

Location literacy

A practice designed by and translated from Emmy Laura Perez Fjalland in the book "Jordbo".

What does it mean to know where I am? Author Ursula K. Le Guin writes: "for all our self-awareness, we have very little sense of where we live, where we are right here, right now." It's a phrase that has accompanied me in my work, a phrase I return to again and again.

Because what does it mean to know where you are?

Humans are sensitive and sensory creatures, but sensations should not stand alone. A landscape is an entanglement of biological, cultural, atmospheric, economic, geological, physical, historical, archaeological and aesthetic conditions and processes. An entanglement that connects to both the deep and recent past, the troublesome present and even the longing future.

First, we can develop a curiosity and awareness of how one place differs from another:

- Pick a location and decide how large an area you want to investigate. It can be anything from 1x1 meter - or smaller - to several hundred meters.
- Decide how you want to observe - with your eyes, ears, skin or nose.
- Decide what or who (hereafter 'O') you want to observe. You don't need to know the 'real' name of a terrain, vegetation, wildlife, building or ancient monument - that can be learned later.
- Describe how O forms and moves.
- Ask how O relates to its surroundings.
- Look for borders and boundaries, and every time you find a boundary, ask yourself why it is a boundary.
- And ask what moves across borders? Maybe someone else is creating boundaries?
- Find some landmarks: If you have some paper and drawing utensils, or maybe a camera or this journal, find five elements that you want to remember this place by and document them. It could be an ancient monument, a small new plant you've come to know, a rock, a hill, a special tree, a stream. Then write three or four words to describe the feelings you experienced here, what you thought.
- If necessary, go home and study why and how this place came to be. What is its historical development - the last 50 years, 200 years, 500 years, 2000 years, maybe all the way back to Paleolithic times?

forest bath

An inspiration and an invitation to go out and connect with nature, inspired from Japan.

Forest bathing (or Shinrin-yoku in Japanese) is a therapeutic practice of deep sensory engagement with the forest. It is practiced all over the world as it has gained popularity due to its soothing effects.

Walking in the forest, listening to it and bathing in the essential oils that certain trees and plants emits, is believed to lead to a variety of health benefits including general mental health and mood improvement and decrease of stress and anxiety levels.

The act of forest bathing usually includes leaving your electronics behind and walking through a forest in a slow pace, allowing yourself the time to notice and engage with the forest environment in new ways. Paying attention to all five senses it involves:

- Touching - the ground, the leaves, the bark, the soft leaves of spring or the crisp ones of autumn
- Listening - to the birds, insects, the sound of the leaves moving in the wind
- Smelling - the flowers, the soil, the oils, the resin slowly dripping from the bark
- Tasting - the air as you breathe, a nibble of an edible plant, a berry or fruit
- Observing - zoom out and observe the movement of the forest, zoom in and look closely at one leaf, one bird, one nut



Practice : open sentences

To enter the first step of the spiral, here is a simple practice to ground in gratitude.

This is a highly pleasurable activity, and you may want to invent your own open sentences.

Some things I love about being alive in Earth are ...

A place that was magical (or wonderful) to me as a child was ...

A person who helped me believe in myself is or was ...

Some things I enjoy doing and making are ...

Some things I appreciate about myself are ...

A practice from the Work That Reconnects

Moroccan-inspired harira with Ingrid peas

Super flavourful soup with Ingrid peas. Serve with lemon wedges, coriander, mint and your own chilli sauce.

Quantity: 6 people

Preparation duration: approx. 3 hours + 1 day for soaking the Ingrid peas

Ingredients:

5 dl of dried Ingrid peas
3 l of water for the Ingrid peas
1 dl of olive oil
4 finely chopped onions

Vegetables

(depending on the season):

4-5 red peppers or carrots
2 celery stalks - or ¼ celeriac
1 garlic clove
150 gr lentils
0.5 dl tomato puree

Spices

A little turmeric
1 large knob of freshly grated ginger
2 finely chopped red chillies (or less, depending on how much spice you want)
Paprika
Cumin seeds
Crushed cardamom seeds
Coriander seeds
Pinch of salt
Ground pepper
1 can of good peeled tomatoes
A little bit of water



Preparation:

Soak the snow peas overnight. Discard the water and boil the peas until tender in plenty of water and a little salt.

Heat a large pan and fry the onion, vegetables, garlic and spices in the oil until golden. Add the tomato puree and fry again. Pour in the tomatoes, lentils and water. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for about an hour.

Pour the Ingrid peas into the soup, add cooking water to a suitable consistency and season with salt, pepper, lemon and any other spices. The soup should be nice and deep in flavour and slightly smooth in texture. Serve with lemons, herbs and chilli sauce.

Honouring our pain for the world

In owning and honoring our pain, and daring to experience it, we learn the true meaning of compassion: to “suffer with”. We begin to know the immensity of our heart-mind. What had isolated us in private anguish now opens outward and delivers us into the wider reaches of our inter-existence.

-The Work that Reconnects



“Joanna Macy writes that until we can grieve for our planet we cannot love it – grieving is a sign of spiritual health.” – Robin Wall Kimmerer

Emotional Environmentalism

A text by Maja Lintrup on interconnections between emotions and the environment.

Feelings of shame, anxiety, anger or hopelessness towards the state of the world coexists amongst many climate activists with feelings of excitement and fondness. To grieve the world exposes our love for it. In many ways, involving yourself in climate and environmental activism is an emotional endeavour.

In honouring our pain for the world we can spend some time reflecting on the gifts our emotions bring (also the difficult and uncomfortable ones) and why we shouldn't shy away from them when confronting environmental and ecological dilemmas.

When Rachel Carson came out with her book *Silent Spring* in 1962 documenting the dangers of using certain pesticides, many of her points were dismissed because her phrasings in the book were deemed "too emotional". She had "facts and figures" but *Time* wrote that her "emotional and inaccurate outburst" might do more harm than good "by alarming a nontechnical public".

Carson has since been vindicated but the example goes to show how easily even well-researched and well-documented scientific work can be ruled out if considered worded in a "too emotional" or "too passionate" manner. It exposes an established dualistic machinery at work, one where reason and science is fundamentally different from and mutually exclusive from emotion – if it is science, it cannot be emotional, and if it is emotional, it cannot be scientific.

The fact that Carson was a woman is likely to also have influenced the harsh reading of the book. Emotion as something irrational or even wild and dangerous, and ultimately feminine, in contrast to the masculine reason and control is a dualism exposed and criticized by many feminist writers.

Biologist and gender theorist Donna Haraway has thoroughly challenged these dualisms by pointing out the absurdity of the “God-trick” – the illusion that we can see everything from nowhere. Knowledge, also scientific knowledge, is always situated. The scientist looking through the microscope is always an embodied, emotional being. What she looks for, what she sees and how she interprets it is always to some degree influenced by her situation - her moods, interests, worries, and biases.

However, the idea of science as stripped of emotion still dominates.

In order to be taken seriously and listened to by the general public it can be tempting to shed as much of our emotional commitment as possible and reach for the scientific language of numbers and models more commonly acknowledged as a source of true information about the world. But in this desire, we should not forget the power of our emotions as what puts us in connection with the things we seek to protect, nourish, and care for in the first place. Otherwise, as Neil Evernden puts it in his book *The Natural Alien* (1985), we might end up with something as contradictory as a dispassionate environmentalist.

Philosopher Edmund Husserl pointed out as early as in 1936 that the sciences alone could not solve all our problems. The greater questions about our place in the world, the meaning or meaninglessness of our existence is left unanswered. This ultimately ties into the discussion of science as a poor starting point for ethical incentives. As a mathematical abstraction it is too far removed from the world we actually inhabit – one of dripping resin and swarming mosquitos - to give us any knowledge on how to move forward as ethical beings.

But emotions do. Our sense of responsibility for the world is highly encouraged by our close and personal relationship with it. Passionate involvement such as calls for preservation and conservation of certain areas reflect the value experienced by our immediate and emotional encounter with our environment. Simply put: our emotions compel us to act.

TIPP

A practice to relieve anxiety for the behaviour suggested by Peeasi.

temperature: change the temperature.

This can be done many ways, such as splashing cold water on your face, filling a sink up with very cold water, or you could even use water from the fridge or add ice cubes to your tap water. When doing the sink technique, lean forward and dunk your head into the water, making sure your temples are covered, hold your breath and count to the highest number that you are comfortable with and then remove your head from the sink to breathe again. Please do NOT use the Temperature skill without talking to your doctor if you have heart problems, bulimia or anorexia nervosa.

intense exercise:

Preferably, you would do aerobic exercise for at least 20 minutes. I have found even a quick intense run on the spot or some star jumps can help me if I don't have 20 minutes free at the time. This one is great for releasing built up frustration or anger, it's also great to bring a low mood up and energise you.

Paced breathing:

This is when you breathe out slower and longer than when you breathe in. You can start with a 1-second difference and work your way up. For example; breathing in for 4 seconds and out for 5 seconds. Once you are comfortable with this you can increase the breath in for 5 seconds and out for 7 seconds. Finding what works best for you. This action communicates to your body that you are safe. Sometimes we get triggered and our body truly thinks we are in danger, by using our paced breathing we are communicating to our body that 'if I am safe enough to take the time to breathe like this, then I am safe'.

paired muscle relaxation:

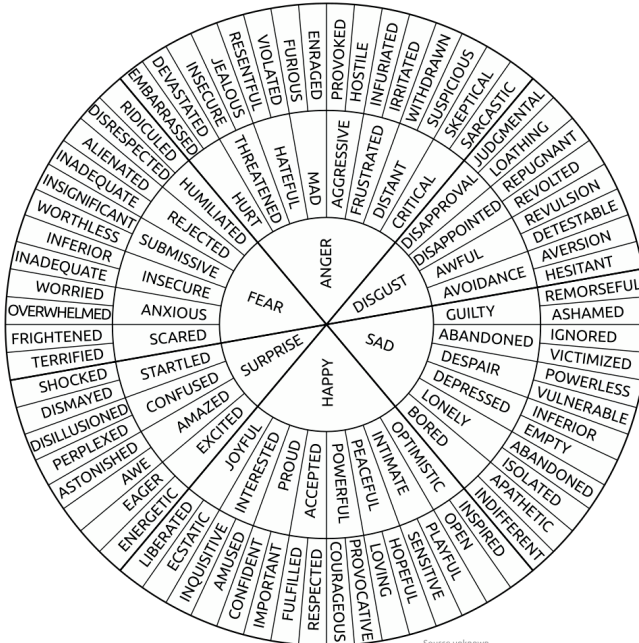
This is great for relaxing at night time or if you are feeling anxiety on something like public transport. You can work from toe to head or head to toe or pick body parts that work for you. Notice the tension in your muscle, then tense that muscle as hard as you can while you breathe in, as you breathe out say the word 'relax' in your mind and release the tension. Notice how much more relaxed the muscle feels now.

Emotional compass

In a chaotic world, it can be a good idea to be able to map your emotions and name them. Here is a wheel of emotions, which is not exhaustive but is a good start to navigate in the complexity of what you can feel.

what emotions drive you?

- The word “Emotion” has its roots in Latin and originally was written as - emovere, from e- (variant of ex-) ‘out’ + movere ‘move’, which literally meant original “to move out”. The nature of our emotions and feelings are sensations, they are felt and experienced in our bodies. Therefore, emotion is something that moves in us and from us - an energy that is in constant motion.”
- Why do we need emotions?
 - Emotions are a source of information
 - Emotions help us interact with others
 - Emotions motivate us and prepare us for action



Source unknown

mood tracker

To trace back your emotions and monitor how you feel, it can be a good idea to write down everyday how is your mood. Here is an example of how it could look like. Give it a personal twist and some colors.

YOUR PERSONAL ORGANIZER

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YEAR: _____

MOODS

- AMAZING
- GOOD
- AVERAGE
- DEPRESSED
- PRODUCTIVE
- EXHAUSTED
- RELAXED
- BORED
- SICK
-
-
-

**IN THE ORCHESTRA
OF MY EMOTIONS,
MY MOOD IS THE
CONDUCTOR,
GUIDING THE
MELODY OF MY DAY.**

dreaming the dark

When we hear horrific stories of violence and oppression, the darkness they hold can seem barren and hopeless. We may question the value of telling these stories again and again, as Starhawk does so in her book 'Dreaming the Dark'.

A conversation with a friend holds an opening: "the torture stories and the rage come from the dark. But if you retell the horror without creating the dark anew, you feed it."

"Yet the power we sense in a seed, in the growth of a child, the power we feel writing, weaving, working, creating, making choices, has nothing to do with threats of annihilation. It has more to do with the root meaning of the word power, from the (late popular) Latin, *podere* ("to be able"). It is the power that comes from within." Starhawk, 'Dreaming the Dark'.

In the book the question is posed: How do we face the dark on the edge of annihilation? How do we find the dark within and transform it, own it as our own power? How do we dream it into a new image, dream it into actions that will change the world into a place where no more horror stories happen, where there are no more victims? Where the dark is kind and charged with a friendly power.

In breaking the mold for darkness, in reshaping it, you can for example dream the dark as *The Velvet Dark* – a soft touch in the night, skin and flesh, touch, joy and mortality. Or as *Hecate's Birth-Giving Dark* – the darkness that the seeds are planted in, the dark womb, the potentiality – the life that forms itself in hidden places.

To Starhawk the friendly power means overthrowing the principle of "power-over." Rethinking power as something else than domination – as something that comes from within. We do not hold power, as one holds a knife, it is to be thought of as coiled up "in the heart of every cell of every living thing, who is the spark of every nerve and the life of every breath."

According to Starhawk this change of consciousness at will is an act of magic and can help us close the dark space between the spiritual and the political.

journaling your dream

A way to connect with your unconscious is to pay attention to the messages it sends you in your dreams. Your inner self sends you images to tell you how you relate to the world. Writing them down can help you understand some parts of yourself. Here is a template.

date

Notes

Dream status

NEW **Recurring**

Feelings when waking up

significant imagery

interpretation

soothing through the senses

When upset, soothing sensual experiences can be of great help. It is good to do a brainstorming exercise to help a person discover experiences related to each sense that he/she/they likes. Afterwards, you can give the following list for further inspiration.

- Sight: Look at something pretty, Watch People, Look at a shop window, Go to an art gallery, Go to the cinema or watch a beautiful video
- Hearing: Listen to soothing music, Pay attention to sounds, Sing your favourite song, Play an instrument
- Touch: Take a hot bath or shower, Pet your dog or cat, Hug someone, Put comfy clothes on
- Smell: Use your favourite soap/perfume, Burn a scented candle, Smell flowers, Make popcorn, Peel an orange
- Taste: Chew your favourite gum, Eat your favourite food, Eat mindfully, Drink hot chocolate



Hydrofeminism

A text by Maja Lintrup.

Opening our private anguish outward to the world, to suffer with the world, means to understand on a deeper level our inter-existence.

Hydrofeminists have focused on our being in the world, not as separate entities with sharply drawn, closed-up borders but as interwoven with our surroundings, passing into them as they pass into us. They argue that this point is most clearly demonstrated in our watery-embodiment. As beings consisting of mostly water we seep, leak, emit and absorb through our semi-permeable “skin sac.”

As harmful chemicals such as PFAS find their ways into our waters, our soil and the vegetables we grow, they find their ways into our bodies. Depending on where you live and how you eat the harm done will vary. Some places mothers might be advised not to breastfeed their children as the chemicals are passed onto the baby through the milk. In the oceans mammals such as seals and otters will pass on the dangerous chemical as they breastfeed their puppies too.

Stretching and extending the ‘we’ through streams of planetary waterways without it washing away differences is essential for the hydrofeminist.

In the book ‘Bodies of Water’ Astrida Neimanis writes:

To figure ourselves as bodies of water not only rejects a human separation from Nature ‘out there’; it also torques many of our accepted cartographies of space, time, and species, and implicates a specifically watery movement of difference and repetition. Always aswim in these explorations is a call to consider our ethical responsibility towards the many other bodies of water we are becoming all the time.

meditation on water

A text by Emmeline Werner

Face a body of water : the ocean, a lake, a bathtub or a glass of water on a table.

Breathe deeply. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.

Close your eyes. Can you feel your inner water? 70% of your body is water and vibrates with the outerwater.

Do you know how old this water is? For how long it has been there? Since the old times of the Earth's creation, there was the same body of water, exactly the same quantity, which went on a long cyclic journey, through evaporation, condensation, precipitation and collection.

The first beings came from the water, and life started where the ecosystems met.

We are all just as a simple drop of water.

Going through the different stages of the cycles. We were born in the water of the wombs, which evaporated and went back to the cycle.

We cried our despair, our rage or our sadness, and our tears evaporated and went back to the cycle.

We can be quiet, we can be in a flow, we can be destructive, we can give life, we can take it away.

As a drop or a snow flake, you are unique. As the snow or the wave, we are millions and we can change the face of the world.



open sentences

In owning and honoring our pain, and daring to experience it, we learn the true meaning of compassion: to “suffer with”. We begin to know the immensity of our heart-mind. What had isolated us in private anguish now opens outward and delivers us into the wider reaches of our inter-existence.

Practice: open sentences

- Feel free to make up your own, remembering to keep them as unbiased and non-leading as possible.
- What concerns me most about the world today is...
- When I see what’s happening to the natural world, what breaks my heart is....
- When I see what’s happening to our society, what breaks my heart is...
- When I think of the world we will leave our children, it looks like...
- Feelings about all this, that I carry around with me, are...
- Ways I avoid these feelings are...
- Ways I use these feelings are...
- Working with teachers or parents, this practice can include:
- If I withhold from my children my concerns for the future, I do so because...
- If I tell the children my concerns for the future, I do so because ...
- In talking with the children about the news, what I want is ...

Practice from the Work That Reconnects

nettle soup recipe

Inspired by a recipe from Forager Chef.

As spring comes to an end and summer peaks its head out the season of the stinging, nettle begins. Harvest them while they are still young, no more than 10 centimetres tall (at this stage they might have a purple hue) or pluck off only the tender, fresh top of older plants. Remember gloves. On older plants the seeds can also be harvested, toasted and used as a sprinkle on soups or in granolas.

This section of the book reminds us of the power of difficult feelings and the nettle carries this message in its body. What stings you can also nourish you – covered with spiky trichome the nettle burns the naked skin, but the plant is rich and full of protein, iron and important vitamins. Once you steam, dry or blanch it the stinging will go away and you can enjoy its health benefits and delicious spinach-y and slightly oceanic flavours.

recipe for a classic nettle soup:

Roughly half a grocery bag of nettles
1 l of vegetable stock
1 dl of vegan cream
1 boiled large potato
2 leeks
1-2 celery stems
1 yellow onion
A nob of oil
Salt and pepper to taste

optional toppings for serving:

Chopped mint or dill
Extra virgin olive oil
Toasted nettle seeds

Preparation

- Wash the nettles thoroughly in cold water, pat them dry with a clean dishtowel
- Prepare a steamer (a large pot with a few inches of water, a steamer basket or sift and a lid will do). Steaming the nettles instead of blanching them will keep more of their flavour.
- Steam the nettles in batches for around two minutes pr batch.
- Squeeze the nettles free of water and chop them finely. Set aside a handful of the steamed nettles.
- One large, diced potato or a few smaller ones is what thickens the soup. Boil extra so you have some for a potato salad. The idea with boiling the potatoes separately and adding them later brings the flavour of the nettle in the center and avoids the gumminess of too much potato starch in the soup.
- Cook diced celery, onion and leeks in a pot on medium heat. Add stock and cook until vegetables are tender.
- Add the base of the soup, the diced, boiled potato and the prepared nettles to a blender. Add the cream and puree until desired texture is reached. Work in batches if needed.
- Add a nob of oil and season with salt and pepper
- Add the handful of nettles that were set aside for a bit of bite.
- Serve with desired toppings



cairn of mourning

This ritual practice allows you to express your grief for what is happening to the world. In knowing the depth of this sorrow, you can know the depth of your belonging, from which comes the power to endure hardship and to act for the well-being of all.

personal practice:

What is being lost in our world that you mourn for? While out for a walk, reflect on this question and find a small object you can bring home that symbolises this. Each time you do this, place your object in a special place you've set up in your home or garden to mark significant losses you mourn. Over time, such objects add together to create a cairn of mourning to honour the grief you feel.

collective practice:

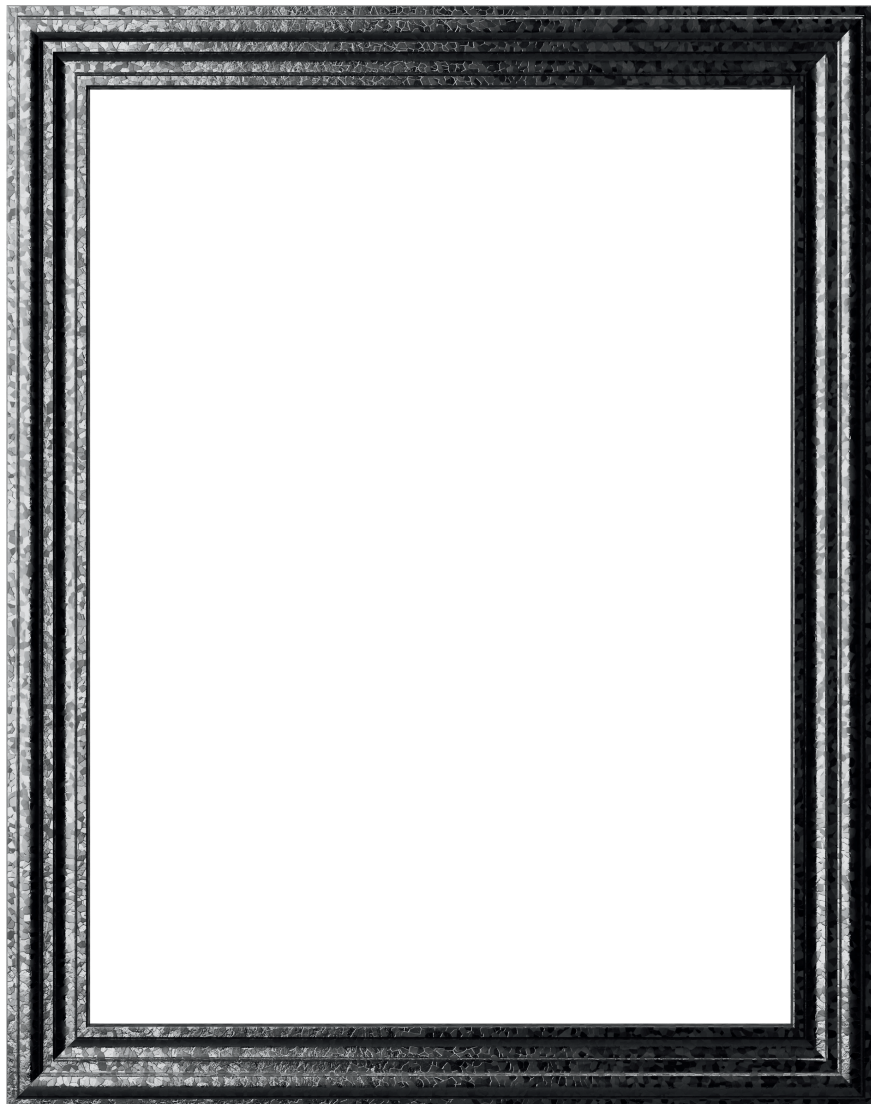
The Cairn of Mourning is often done out of doors, though the process can be held inside as well. Invite people to wander outside, alone, calling to mind a particular part of their world, a place or being precious to them that is lost now or disappearing from their life. They find an object – say, a rock, a cluster of leaves, a stick – to symbolize what they mourn, and bring it with them when they rejoin the group.

When all are seated in a circle, the simple ritual begins. One by one, at random, people arise, walk to the center and place their object. As they do, they speak. They describe the loss that the object represents – family farm, paved over creek, neighborhood store – and their feelings about it; then they formally say good-bye to it. As each offering is made and the objects pile up to form a heap or “cairn,” all in the circle serve as witnesses and acknowledge the speaker by saying, “We hear you.”

The ritual can end with people sitting in twos or threes to express more fully the grief they felt as objects were added to the cairn. Or it can close with people holding hands as they sound together.

portrait of your anxiety

Inspired by an original idea from Annika Nilsson.
How would your anxiety look like, if you had to
draw it in a frame?



Head holding

This is an exercise that you can do with an old or new friend, family member, neighbour, partner or fellow activist.

Find a person you would like to share a moment of care with. In uncertain and worrisome times the head is heavy, but it can be held.

what to do:

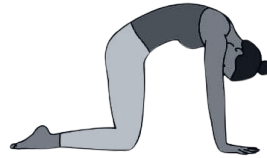
- One person lays down on the ground, flat on their back, the other finds a comfortable sitting position behind their head.
- The person sitting holds the head of the person laying down in the cup of their palms - the hands hovering just a bit above the ground.
- The person laying down must try to relax the body, surrendering the weight of the head into the hands of the partner.
- The relaxed head should be heavy like a bowling ball to the person holding it. If the person holding the head can feel that the person laying down is holding back, ask them to let go a bit more.
- Hold the head and let the head be held for as long as desired.
- The headholder can move the head from side to side in a soft swinging motion, before gently lowering the head to rest on the ground.
- Switch positions when the time is right.

Additional steps can be added with other parts of the body. Hold each other's legs, one or two at the time - or arms. Hold them for a while before giving them a shake and gentle lower to the ground.

yoga poses for hard times



Child's Pose



Cat & Cow



Downward Dog



Pretzel



Pigeon



Knees to Chest



Corpse

RAIN: A Practice of Radical compassion

The acronym RAIN is an easy-to-remember tool for bringing mindfulness and compassion to emotional difficulty.

You can take your time and explore RAIN as a stand-alone meditation or move through the steps whenever challenging feelings arise.

R—Recognize what’s going on

Recognizing means consciously acknowledging, in any given moment, the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are affecting you. This can be done with a simple mental whisper, noting what you are most aware of.

A—Allow the experience to be there, just as it is

Allowing means letting the thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations you have recognized simply be there, without trying to fix or avoid anything. You might recognize fear, and allow by mentally whispering “it’s ok” or “this belongs” or “yes.” Allowing creates a pause that makes it possible to deepen attention.

I—Investigate with interest and care

To investigate, call on your natural curiosity—the desire to know truth—and direct a more focused attention to your present experience. You might ask yourself: What most wants attention? How am I experiencing this in my body? What am I believing? What does this vulnerable place want from me? What does it most need? Whatever the inquiry, your investigation will be most transformational if you step away from conceptualizing and bring your primary attention to the felt-sense in the body.

N—nurture with self-compassion

Self-compassion begins to naturally arise in the moments that you recognize you are suffering. It comes into fullness as you intentionally nurture your inner life with self-care. To do this, try to sense what the wounded, frightened or hurting place inside you most needs, and then offer some gesture of active care that might address this need.

Does it need a message of reassurance? Of forgiveness? Of companionship? Of love?

Experiment and see which intentional gesture of kindness most helps to comfort, soften or open your heart. It might be the mental whisper, I'm here with you. I'm sorry, and I love you. I love you, and I'm listening. It's not your fault. Trust in your goodness.

In addition to a whispered message of care, many people find healing by gently placing a hand on the heart or cheek; or by envisioning being bathed in or embraced by warm, radiant light. If it feels difficult to offer yourself love, bring to mind a loving being—spiritual figure, family member, friend or pet—and imagine that being's love and wisdom flowing into you.

After the RAIN

When you've completed the active steps of RAIN, it's important to notice the quality of your own presence and rest in that wakeful, tender space of awareness.

The fruit of RAIN is realizing that you are no longer imprisoned in or identified with any limiting sense of self. Give yourself the gift of becoming familiar with the truth and natural freedom of your being; it is mysterious and precious!

Resource: Guided Meditation – The Practice of RAIN - Copyright © 2020 by Tara Brach, Ph.D.

seeing with new eyes

Experiencing the reality of our inter-existence helps us see with new eyes. We can sense how intimately and inextricably we are related to all that is. We can taste our own power to change, and feel the texture of our living connections with past and future generations, and with our brother/sister species.

-The Work that Reconnects



But it is not enough to weep for our lost landscapes; we have to put our hands in the earth to make ourselves whole again. Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Robin Wall Kimmerer

saint john's eve

A text by Maja Lintrup.

Saint John's eve is commonly celebrated on the night of June 23rd. It marks the time of summer solstice, the day of the year with most sunlight - the longest day, and the shortest night - as well as the saint's day of John the Baptist. Despite carrying the name of the saint, the tradition of celebrating the height of summer reaches further back than its Christian connotations. The earth's seasonal tilt towards the sun has been honoured since pagan times through song, dance, fire, flowers, and food. Some of these rituals and traditions are still being carried out today. For most, the celebration of Saint John's eve continues to be far more associated with bonfires, witches and songs, than with the Christian saint himself.

It is a mystical time. The air on the night of summer solstice is said to be particularly rich with magic. At this time plants and herbs will hold more power, and it is a good night to harvest the seasonal gifts. Springs will flow thick with healing powers, and if you visit them during the solstice, drink their water and rest at their side, your chances of getting better are particularly promising.

A big bonfire is common. In some places, it is tradition to burn a dummy of a witch. If you are not excited by this thought, you can burn other things - like the feminist writer Starhawk who made a big sun out of twigs for the fire. She writes on her blog:

"At the peak of the ritual, we tossed the sun into the fire. It blazed up with showers of sparks, looking like the flaming head of a God with green hair that slowly came alive with red fire. As the flowers burn in that glorious blaze, we experience in one compressed moment all the poignancy of summer, of fleeting beauty, of blossoms that have to die for seed to set and fruit to form. And now it's summer. The wind is howling, the sky is gray, the rain is lowering."

In the year 2024, the exact time for the solstice will be on the 20th of June at 22:51 CEST.

Medicinal herbs

A text adapted from *Plants allies 4 anxiety*, a zine by Hydra Community Care for Det Bløde Rum.

Hops

Hops has calming abilities. Their temperature is cooling, and they are good for people that have issues with their digestion when they are stressed or anxious. It is a fairly strong herb, and an antispasmodic, which means it helps relax spasms in the muscles. In the stomach we have smooth muscles that hops especially help with. It can be a heavy effect for some people. For some it helps as a substitute for pot if you use pot to control your anxiety or for sleeping. For some people it helps with their sleep.

chamomile

Chamomile's temperature is warm, and can feel drying if used very frequently. Use as a tea or tincture to help with nervousness and tingly anxiety that wears you out. Chamomile is also good for tension in the stomach and smooth muscles, but can also push acid reflux response if you have issues with that, because of its bitter properties. It is an herb that is great for sleep, and helps with releasing fear and anger.

Lavender

It relieves tension in the body and may help with insomnia. Its energy is one of slowly dispersing tension, cooling you down from the inside with slow, chill pats. If you feel stifled, heavy or frozen by your anxiety and exhaustion, lavender might help you become lighter emotionally.

Linden tree

If you can connect your anxiety to stress and an elevated pulse, linden may be good. If you feel anxiety around your heart area, or have a tendency to put a hand on your chest in triggered moments, linden could help you. A racing heart, irritation or mild panic may also be helped by linden.

Lemon balm

Lemon balm is a great anxiety disperser and mood lifter. When you feel like you can't let go of your anxiety, lemon balm may help. By inviting joy lemon balm may make it easier to release worry, control and tension. Many experience feeling lighter emotionally.

Bread over the fire

Ingredients:

25g yeast
2 ½ dl water
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon sugar
400 g. wheat flour

For serving:

Ketchup
(vegan) sausages

Preparation:

First find a soothing stick. It should be thick enough to carry the bread and make enough room for a sausage if desired. Clean it by carving the tip. Sticks from pine will transfer flavour whilst wood such as hazel, beech, oak, birch, maple, willow or fruit trees will not.

- Dissolve the yeast in lukewarm water. Add salt and sugar
- Add almost all of the flour and knead it well until smooth. If the dough is sticky add the rest of the flour
- Let it rest under a cloth of fabric for 30 min.
- Take a piece of dough and roll it out into a sausage shape. Wrap it around the carved end of the stick.
- Place the dough over the embers from the fire until cooked

s'mores over the fire

A recipe by Charlotte Vandeleene.

What you will need: Cookies, Biscuits or Crackers (digestive or rich tea), Large Marshmallows, Slab of Dairy or Dark chocolate, one long stick.

Place one piece of chocolate on a biscuit or cracker and set aside. Using a long stick, carefully toast a marshmallow over the flame until golden brown. Place the marshmallow on the chocolate and add one more biscuit or cracker on top. Enjoy!

when did I make a difference

Experiencing the reality of our inter-existence helps us see with new eyes. We can sense how intimately and inextricably we are related to all that is. We can taste our own power to change, and feel the texture of our living connections with past and future generations, and with our brother/sister species.

Practice : When I made a difference:

Think of a time in your life when something important and good happened because of what you said or did. Recapture the scene, play it back for yourself.

Now in groups of three or four, people take turns telling their stories. The guide suggests: As you listen to each story, discern the qualities in that person that were at play.

“I got the principal’s permission to start a recycling program at our school.”

“Instead of backing off, I just stood there and talked to the guard at the nuclear power plant.”

“I was presiding at the board meeting and felt stuck; I decided to relinquish my role as leader, and then everyone was able to decide what to do.”

When the small groups are finished, the guide asks people to call out the qualities they discerned in each other’s stories, and writes them up on newsprint as they are named—empathy, trust, letting go, flexibility. The guide then asks the group to point out those qualities and behaviors that fit new paradigm understanding of power.

A practice from the Work That Reconnects

widening circles

*I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world
I may not complete this last one
But I give myself to it.
I circle around God, the primordial tower.
I have been circling for thousands of years.
And still I don't know: am I a falcon,
a storm, or a great song.
~Rainer Maria Rilke*

Method

People sit in groups of three or four. Ask them each to choose a particular issue or situation that concerns them. After a minute of silence, invite them to take turns speaking about their issue. Each person will speak to their issue from four perspectives, while the others in the group listen.

1. from their own point of view, including their feelings about the issue;
2. from the perspective of a person who holds opposing views on this issue, introducing themselves and speaking as this person, using the pronoun "I";
3. from the viewpoint of a nonhuman being that is affected by that particular situation;
4. and lastly, in the voice of a future human whose life is affected by the choices made now on this issue.

After describing these four perspectives at the outset, the guide provides cues for each perspective as each speaker's turn unfolds, reminding them to always speak in the first person. Allow some two to three minutes for each perspective, perhaps a little longer for the first. People find it helpful and enjoyable to stand up and turn around before moving on to the next voice.

To speak on behalf of another, and identify even briefly with that being's experience and perspective, is an act of moral imagination. It is not difficult to do: as children we knew how to "play-act." Use an uncharged, almost casual tone in your instructions; you are not asking people to channel or be omniscient, but simply to imagine another point of view.

A practice from the Work That Reconnects

staying with the trouble

There are many ways to experience the world. Being alive, belonging to the earth, participating in its regeneration. Learning to value, to listen, to observe our earth, to observe our bodies and minds.

Several philosophers and writers invite us, as humans, to learn how to care for animals, to heal, to know how to grow, to know plants, birds, to make fire, to find water, to participate, to transmit knowledge and skills. Among them, Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing and Starhawk invite us to stay in the trouble, to live in the ruins of capitalism, to dream the darkness.

They teach us how to reconnect to the world, to observe and appreciate the potential of seeds, and the life of micro-organisms. They also teach us to refuse fatalism or catastrophism which would lead to non-action, despair or death, but to look for the good side of life, that is rediscovering hope and meaning by reclaiming know-how, modes of consciousness, enthusiasm and joy.

It is to choose to reweave, to repair rather than to be cynical, it is to celebrate being alive in this world.

Haraway suggests that we pay attention to what she calls ongoingness - "continuation", "perseverance": to continue, we compose here and now with what is already there, a bit like this little Pimoa Cthulhu - a spider from North America - which "never ceases, while pulling her threads, to repair her web, to remake its links or to find new points of attachment".

For Haraway, if there is survival in the ruins, it does not take place individually, nor only between humans : giving oneself the chance to continue is done collectively and without human exceptionalism. She uses the term "Chthulucene" as an alternative for the concept of the Anthropocene era, due to the entangling interconnectedness of all supposedly individual beings.

The whole point of this is to shift our gaze from the properly despairing diagnoses of the state of the world, not to 'reassure' us, still less to allow us to walk away, as if nothing had happened.

mushroom at the end of the world

The Mushroom at the End of the World : On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins is a 2015 book by the Chinese American anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. The book describes and analyzes the globalized commodity chains of matsutake mushrooms in a context of economic precarity and ecological degradation.

The matsutake is considered a delicacy and thrives in human-disturbed forests, foraged by humans in locales as diverse as Oregon, Yunnan, and Lapland. In the book, Tsing follows foragers as they search for matsutakes, the traders who buy and sell them, and the Japanese consumers who especially prize them, largely as gifts. Tsing highlights both the resilience of the matsutake, which humans have found cannot be cultivated, and the entanglements between and co-dependency of various species — or multi-species "assemblages" — in not only surviving precarious and disturbed environments, but in creating new environments. On such assemblages, Tsing writes:

...one could say that pines, matsutake, and humans all cultivate each other unintentionally. They make each other's world-making projects possible. This idiom has allowed me to consider how landscapes more generally are products of unintentional design, that is, the overlapping world-making activities of many agents, human and not human. The design is clear in the landscape's ecosystem. But none of the agents have planned this effect. Humans join others in making land-scapes of unintentional design. As sites for more-than-human dramas, landscapes are radical tools for decentering human hubris. Landscapes are not backdrops for historical action: they are themselves active. Watching landscapes in formation shows humans joining other living beings in shaping worlds.

The author draws on these themes not only to critique capitalism, but also to refute the notion of the utility of a single, "unitary critique" of capitalism, arguing instead for the importance of diverse and contingent responses. Tsing writes that "[t]o understand capitalism (and not just its alternatives)... we can't stay inside the logics of capitalists; we need an ethnographic eye to see the economic diversity through which accumulation is possible."

mushroom soup

An intoxicatingly heady take on the classic Asian soup: central heating for body and soul

A variation on Asian soups such as Thai tom yum or Vietnamese pho. The key is the stock, which must be rich and hearty, with many layers of flavour. That's why the ingredient list is so long, though I have a hunch you'll find it worthwhile. This soup is intentionally light, but can be bulked up with the addition of cooked rice noodle.

Quantity: 4 servings

Ingredients:

3 medium onions, peeled and cut into large pieces
3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into large pieces
6 sticks celery, roughly chopped
6 garlic cloves, peeled
75g ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
Vegetable oil
3 lemongrass stalks, very roughly chopped
12 prunes
3 red chillies, roughly chopped
6 star anise
2 tbsps soy sauce
6 lime leaves

30g chopped coriander root
120g enoki mushrooms
120g white mushrooms, sliced
160g shimeji mushrooms
Juice of 2 limes
20g coriander leaves, plus extra
20g Thai basil leaves
160g bean sprouts
160g green beans, blanched for four minutes and refreshed
4 tsp tamarind paste
½ tsp salt
Toasted sesame oil, to finish



Preparation:

In a large pan, char the onion, carrot, celery, garlic and ginger in a tiny amount of oil. Cook for five minutes, or until the edges begin to colour. Add 2.25 litres of water, the lemongrass, prunes, chillies, star anise, soy, lime leaves and coriander root. Cook on a low simmer for at least 45 minutes, to infuse. Strain the stock, return to the pan (you can discard the vegetables, but I love the carrot and celery) and bring to a very low simmer. Add the enoki and white mushrooms and cook for a minute. Add the remaining ingredients apart from the sesame oil, and heat through for a minute. Taste, adjust the seasoning as needed, and ladle into warm bowls. Finish with sesame oil, not more than a few drops in each bowl, and coriander leaves.

6 minutes slow mindful walk

Practice to relieve anxiety for the feelings, suggested by Peeasi.

Use all your senses, and try to experience everything. Notice what draws your attention. As you walk through the sea of air around you, and as you feel the air move in and out of your lungs, notice the green plants, and consider that they are also breathing, in a complementary way. As you take in oxygen from the air and breathe out carbon dioxide, the green plants take in carbon dioxide from the air and give off oxygen. Experience your connection, through the simple act of breathing, to all the green life on Earth.



going forth

Then, ever again, we go forth into the actions that call each of us, according to our situation, gifts, and limitations. With others whenever and wherever possible, we set a target, lay a plan, step out. We don't wait for a blueprint or fail-proof scheme, for each step will be our teacher, bringing new perspectives and opportunities. Even when we don't succeed in a given venture, we can be grateful for the chance we took and the lessons we learned.

-The Work that Reconnects



Cecilie Rubow says that there is a difference between loving nature - going out skiing in the snow once a year, collecting mushrooms on a fall-Sunday, enjoying the whatever bird noise in the spring or sun-bathing in the summer. Or Caring for the environment. We need to understand that it's not nature and us, but that we are a part of it.

postcards with seeds

materials needed: crafting your seed paper

1. Recycled Paper: The foundation of your seed paper starts with recycled paper. This can include anything from old newspapers, used office paper, and envelopes, to scrapbooking paper and tissue paper. Avoid glossy or heavily inked paper as it doesn't break down as easily. For those wondering how to make recycled paper with seeds, starting with these materials is your first step to sustainability.
2. Seeds: The heart of seed paper lies in the seeds you choose. Opt for non-invasive, small seeds to ensure your paper is plantable and will grow into beautiful flowers or herbs. Popular choices include wildflower mixes, poppy seeds, forget-me-nots, and basil seeds. If you're interested in how to make flower seed paper specifically, select a variety of colourful and attractive flower seeds.
3. Blender: A standard kitchen blender is used to create the pulp by blending the recycled paper with water. If you're dedicated to making lots of seed paper, consider using an old or second-hand blender to avoid wear and tear on your regular one.
4. Water: Essential for blending the paper into pulp and for the later stages of the paper-making process.
5. Screen or Mesh Frame: This is used to shape and dry the seed paper. An old window screen, embroidery hoop with mesh, or even a piece of sheer curtain can work well. The size of the screen will dictate the size of your seed paper sheets.
6. Towels and Sponges: Absorbent towels and sponges are needed to remove excess water from the paper pulp during the drying process. Old towels or paper towels can be very effective.
7. Flat Surface: A flat, waterproof surface such as a large baking tray or a countertop covered with plastic sheeting is necessary for drying the seed paper.
8. Rolling Pin or Bottle: A rolling pin or a smooth bottle can be used to flatten and even out the seed paper once it's on the screen.
9. Decorative Additions (Optional): If you wish to add a personal touch to your seed paper, consider incorporating natural dyes, flower petals, or leaves into the pulp mixture.
10. Storage Container: Once dried, your seed paper needs a dry, cool place for storage until you're ready to use or gift it.

step-by-step guide

Step 1: Prepare Your Paper Pulp

- Begin by tearing your recycled paper into small pieces. This can include anything from old letters, unused printer paper, or newspaper scraps.
- Soak the torn paper in warm water for a few hours or overnight. This softens the paper, making it easier to turn into pulp.
- Once soaked, transfer the paper into a blender. Add water until the paper is well covered. Blend the mixture until it reaches a smooth, pulp-like consistency - think of a thick banana smoothie.

Step 2: Mix in Your Seeds

- Pour the paper pulp into a large mixing bowl. Now, it's time to add your seeds. Sprinkle a generous amount of your chosen seeds into the pulp. Remember, if you're aiming to make flower seed paper, choose your favourite flower seeds.
- Gently mix the seeds into the pulp by hand to avoid damaging them. Ensure they are evenly distributed throughout the pulp.

Step 3: Shape Your Seed Paper

- Lay your screen or mesh frame flat over a towel or another absorbent surface. If you're making plantable seed paper hearts or other shapes, place cookie cutters on the screen as moulds.
- Spoon the seed-infused pulp onto the screen or into the moulds. Spread the pulp evenly with the back of the spoon or your hands to your desired thickness.
- Use another towel or sponge to press down on the pulp gently. This helps remove excess water and helps the seeds adhere to the pulp.

Step 4: Dry Your Seed Paper

- Leave the seed paper on the screen or mesh to dry. This can take 24-48 hours, depending on the thickness of the paper and the humidity. For quicker drying, you can place the paper in a sunny spot or use a hairdryer on a low, cool setting.
- Once the paper feels dry to the touch, gently peel it off the screen. If you used moulds, remove the seed paper shapes carefully.

Step 5: Cut and Store Your Seed Paper

- Once completely dry, you can cut your seed paper into any shape or size you like. Use scissors for custom shapes or a paper cutter for straight edges.
- Store your finished seed paper in a cool, dry place until you're ready to use it. If you've made printable seed paper, ensure your printer can handle the thickness and texture before attempting to print.

Step 6: Planting Instructions

- When you gift your seed paper, include instructions for planting. This typically involves placing the paper on top of soil in a pot or garden, lightly covering it with more soil, and watering it regularly. Ensure the soil is kept moist until the seeds germinate and start to sprout.

tips and tricks for successful seed paper making

1. **Seed Selection:** Choose the right seeds for your paper. Small, non-invasive seeds work best. Consider the growing conditions of the seeds you select – wildflowers are generally hardy and adaptable, making them a popular choice for seed paper.
2. **Paper Thickness:** When spreading the pulp onto your screen or mesh, aim for a consistent thickness. Too thick, and the paper will take a long time to dry and may not plant well; too thin, and the paper may tear easily.
3. **Drying Time:** Be patient with the drying process. Avoid rushing it with too much heat, as this could harm the seeds. Natural, gentle drying will yield the best results.
4. **Testing Germination:** If you're unsure about the quality of your seeds, do a germination test on a small piece of your seed paper before making a large batch. This can save time and ensure that your efforts lead to sprouting plants.
5. **Inclusions:** Adding natural elements like flower petals or leaves can add color and texture to your seed paper. However, ensure these additions are thin and well-distributed to avoid issues with the paper-making process.
6. **Storage:** Keep your seed paper in a cool, dry place. Moisture can trigger germination prematurely.
7. **Gifting and Instructions:** When gifting seed paper, include clear planting instructions. This ensures the recipient knows how to plant the paper correctly to grow the seeds.

what can you do?

- Use your bike and demand cars out of the city
- Save water
- Grow parsley on your windowsill
- Find out what additives are in the food you eat
- Make your own compost heap
- Look out for butterflies, bees and other small creatures
- Try to do the things you've been saying for a long time
- Talk to an activist
- Learn to sew
- Seek out new impressions
- Get an older person to talk about the political struggles of their youth
- Get a friend who isn't from your home country
- Plant a vegetable garden
- Call someone who could use a good chat
- Take a walk in the woods
- Explore the possibility of buying your groceries from small producers
- Get involved in your colleagues' lives
- Go to a community kitchen
- Experience people rather than things
- Go to a demonstration
- Seek knowledge about pig production
- Visit a place you've never experienced before
- Change your bank
- Make friends with a plant
- Get involved in a local political issue
- Visit a local small-scale farm
- Write a letter to someone
- Go for a swim
- Invite your neighbour for a cup of tea
- Talk to a stranger on the bus
- Start a book club
- Write a debate post about something
- Ask a local politician a question

- Think of your body as a biotope
- Forget about time
- Educate your parents
- Travel far by train
- Watch films and listen to music from around the world
- Speak your mind
- Write a poem
- Make a friend who is significantly older than you
- Learn to knit
- Become a visiting friend at a nursing home
- Sign a petition
- Start pickling
- Talk to someone you disagree with
- Visit your local library and ask for a book recommendation
- Make life grow
- Go for a walk and listen to the birds
- Play Monopoly and try to tame your inner capitalist
- Bake something vegan
- Write a love letter
- Go to an activist community meeting
- Call your dad
- Fight racism
- Take a stand and face the consequences
- Visit a protected nature area
- Fight sexism
- Use your imagination
- Try to live, the way you think you should
- Think about what a revolution would look like today
- Work more with your hands and less with your head
- Sort out your rubbish
- Satisfy your skin hunger
- Call your mum
- Talk to a police officer
- Dance a rain dance
- Take a break
- Walk barefoot in the grass
- Make a good meal
- Take responsibility
- Send a long text to an old friend
- Say thank you
- Donate some money to an important cause
- Sing in a choir

- Say no
- Practice something you don't master on the first try
- Let a young person know they are good enough
- Buy a NOAH poster
- Raise your voice
- Declare yourself a feminist
- Visit a thrift store
- Read a book written by someone unlike yourself
- Write a nature diary
- Visit a museum
- Be compassionate to yourself and others
- Suggest to your loved ones to skip the Christmas gift rush this year
- Make do every now and then
- Watch less reality TV
- Dance like your life depends on it
- Drink less coffee
- Think for at least a month before you buy new things
- Go for a walk and say hello to people you meet on your way
- Ask a telemarketer how they are doing at the moment
- Offer to look after your friend's child
- Say 'thanks for the ride' when you get off the bus
- Look at the stars
- Read a newspaper
- Buy a rainwater tank
- Boycott something
- Switch off your computer
- Think utopian
- Make a tea from herbs you find in the outdoors
- Say no to advertising
- Set limits
- Become a peacekeeper
- Keep your eyes on the ball
- Think about, how you can help bury capitalism
- Move to the countryside
- Read about the Danish witch trials
- Laugh out loud
- Stop your holey socks
- Cut down on your consumption of products containing palm oil
- Take a slow walk somewhere that makes you happy

- Consider building a composting toilet
- Be civilly disobedient
- Make a hummus from ginger peas
- Turn down the heat and wear a cosy sweater
- Plan something grandiose for the next 8.March
- Get some rest
- Shout all the slogans at the next demonstration you go to
- Move to a cohousing community
- Write an ode to nature
- Think of others
- Give someone a long hug - maybe yourself?
- Embroider something beautiful over the logos on your clothes
- Let the dandelions bloom in your lawn
- Support your friends' passions
- Use your voice
- Swap clothes with someone
- Say to yourself: 'I am more than my achievements'
- Avoid harmful chemicals
- Cook over a campfire
- Try to keep your head cool and your heart warm
- Start a climate care group
- Choose your battles wisely
- Take courage

oikos – bring economy home to the earth!

“Real wealth is our biodiversity and seeds, our soil and our land, our water and clean air, our food and our health. Our real wealth is to care for the earth, to rejuvenate her potential through our care. It is not property to be owned and traded for profit, it is not raw material to be used and thrown away as garbage and waste, polluting and degrading the planet.”

- Vandana Shiva, OIKOS

For Vandana Shiva ecology, economics, and gender “are all intimately connected to the construction of ‘home’ as a metaphor.”

Eco, as in ecology and economy, comes from the Greek work oikos meaning housekeeping. Large scale economy, like national economic affairs, could be conceived as the extension of the housekeeper’s budget. Similarly, she writes: “oecologie’ suggested that the living organisms of the earth formed a single economic unit resembling a household or family living intimately together.”

However, the modern patriarchal models of economies have changed this apparent link – removing the ‘home’ or ‘household’ from the sphere of economy.

According to Shiva this has created a hierarchical divide between domestic production (low value) and commodity production for buying and selling (high value), not unaffiliated with the oppression of women who has often been projected to the invisible household. Similarly, the inherent wealth of our Earth has been forgotten in the new money and profit-oriented economy.

Treating the earth as dead, raw material might make it easier to treat it as an endless economic resource, but as Shiva writes “There is no business on a dead planet, There are no “markets” and “consumers” in a society of disposable people.”

The greed and exploitation of the earth is a war against the future, she writes, a war that has compelled people to strike, to start the Extinction Rebellion. Diverse communities and people of all different backgrounds are coming together. There is a call for action. On a hopeful note, she ends her essay:

“Their power will bring the economy home to the Earth.”

group hand meditation

A practice by Maja Lintrup.

Stand with your group in a circle facing inward.

Make your hands into fists with the back of your hands facing down.

Place your fists on each others wrist so that you right fist lay on top of your neighbours left wrist.

One person starts the blossom by opening their right hand in blooming motion of their choice, passing the motion on to the nearest next hand.

One by one the groups hands open.

Pay good attention to each hand blooming until the circle is complete, and it has reached its full blossom.



terra preta

A text by Emmeline Werner.

We are often told - in the dualistic world - that humans are only doing bad to the earth, that we should let the earth untouched for it to recover.

It is partially true. A lot of counter-examples can be found all over the world.

A good example is the terra preta. Terra preta, also known as Amazonian dark earth, is a type of fertile soils first found in the Amazon Basin. It is characterised by its dark colour, high nutrient content, and ability to retain water. Unlike the surrounding soil, which are often nutrient-poor and prone to erosion, terra preta can support productive and sustainable agriculture and even sustain large populations of people.

Scientists have long been intrigued by terra preta phenomenon, as it seems to defy the conventional wisdom about tropical soils. Instead of being depleted by the hot, humid climate, terra preta soil is enriched with organic matter and nutrients. Recent research suggests that the key to terra preta's fertility lies in the way it was created by indigenous people over centuries.

It is believed that the ancient inhabitants of the Amazon Basin intentionally created terra preta by adding organic matter, such as charcoal, animal bones, and food waste, and crop residues to the soil. This process, known as biochar, involves burning organic matter in a low-oxygen environment, which transforms it into a stable form of carbon that can be stored in the soil for thousands of years.

More local and recent examples exist. In Denmark or in Spain, to preserve the heath and some mountains areas, having sheep or grazing animals helps a lot the landscapes and its biodiversity. Regenerative agriculture offers this kind of thoughts as well - by coming back to the cycle, humans can help a lot nature to get better. This is also the very hopeful message from the book Braiding Sweetgrass : going back to the web of life and spending time understanding what ecosystems need to thrive, and as humans, making space to take care of those.

self care ritual

A self care ritual can look very different from person to person. For some it might be cooking one's favourite meal or walking barefoot in the grass. For others it might be a full night of raving, of moving ones body expressively and intuitively - or curling up in a ball, becoming a stone and allowing oneself not to move at all.

A foot massage is almost always a good idea for self care. The feet are usually an easy place to pay attention to yourself. They are often forgotten as they spend most of their time shoved away in footwear, but they do important work. Take your time to look at and recognize them.

If you can reach your feet give them a gentle rub. Pull each toe, spread them out and gently massage each spot in between them. Draw firm circles on the soles of your feet with your thumb. Stretch the top foot by pulling the foot downwards in an arch. Rotate your ankles.

Pressure point for anxiety:

- Curl your toes. You should see a small depression just below the ball of your foot.
- Place the pad of your thumb on this depression.
- Hold on to the top of your foot with your other hand.
- Massage the area in small circles.
- Alternate this with holding the area firmly and pressing down.

circle of blessings

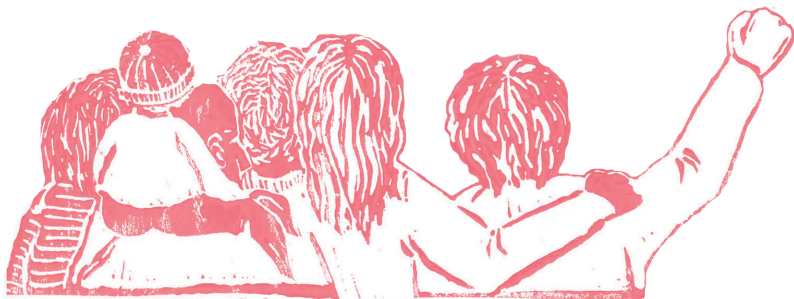
Then, ever again, we go forth into the actions that call each of us, according to our situation, gifts, and limitations. With others whenever and wherever possible, we set a target, lay a plan, step out. We don't wait for a blueprint or fail-proof scheme, for each step will be our teacher, bringing new perspectives and opportunities. Even when we don't succeed in a given venture, we can be grateful for the chance we took and the lessons we learned.

Practicing the method: circle of blessings

Having a circle of participants express their appreciation and good wishes to each other is a fitting conclusion to a Work That Reconnects Workshop.

One at a time, each person steps forward into the circle and declares to the others a particular action or path they intend to pursue. They use these or similar words: "From tomorrow, what I am committing to do"..., "I will...", "...I am going to..." The full circle responds by singing the person's name several times, with spontaneous words of affirmation and encouragement. They may stretch out their hands, palms forward, to transmit their regard energetically. In this way, each participant is held in a field of collective appreciation and support.

A practice from the Work That Reconnects



Party minestrone

Quantity: 10 people

Ingredients:

500 g dried beans (soak overnight)
500 g onions
5 cloves of garlic
750 g carrots
500 g celery leaves
10 tbsp olive oil
3 tbsp tomato paste
3 tsp chilli powder
5 sprigs of rosemary
10 sage leaves
2 tsp fennel seeds
2.5 litres of vegetable stock
500 g Brussels sprouts
250 g wheat kernels
sea salt
Freshly ground pepper
White wine vinegar or other light vinegar
3 handfuls of broadleaf parsley

Preparation:

Cook the beans in a lot of lightly salted water over low heat for 1 hour.

Peel the onion and garlic and peel the carrots. Roughly chop the onion, garlic, carrots and celery. Fry them in olive oil in a pan over low heat for at least 15 minutes, preferably longer, along with tomato paste and chilli powder. Make sure the vegetables don't get too hot, but slowly turn golden and caramelize.

Add the rosemary, sage, fennel seeds and stock/water and simmer for 30 minutes. Cut the Brussels sprouts into quarters, add the Brussels sprouts, pasta and beans to the soup and simmer for a further 10 minutes.

Flavour the soup with salt, pepper and vinegar. Rinse the parsley and chop it coarsely. Sprinkle over the soup just before serving.

How to deal with climate anxiety in your everyday life while not feeling lonely, guilty, angry, depressed or too anxious?

Instead of being catastrophic or fatalistic, there are other ways to navigate in the climate chaos and bring joy back to your everyday life. Explore the world and find alternatives, get curious, learn to be a killjoy.

There are many paths towards hope and empowerment.

The best way out of anxiety is to act.

