

PARTNERING WITH NATURE



**CLAIRE
VANDERPLANK**
Partnering with Nature



Acknowledgements

Partnering with Nature was held on 20-22 July 2022 at KampOng, Tenghilan and aims to equip participants with the knowledge and understanding to enter into a conscious partnership with Nature. The programme was designed and facilitated by Claire Vanderplank with the support of Forever Sabah Institute (FSI).

FSI | Forever Sabah Institute is an integral part of Forever Sabah (FS): the transition towards a diversified, equitable circular economy in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sabah.

A significant suite of activities for FSI is “Forever Sabah Institute For Forever Sabah” (FSI4FS), under which FSI designs and offers learning activities for staff, teams and partners from the Forever Sabah web. Other programs are generated through formal and informal partnerships, requests or relevance for specific learning and offers of teaching/ sharing.

FS | Forever Sabah is a 25 year programme to support Sabah’s transition to a diversified, equitable, circular economy.

Forever Sabah, a civil society entity, serves as a collaborative social movement rather than a bureaucracy or NGO. It is an initiative rooted in local aspirations, built by an enthusiastic team who believe in utilising Sabahan knowledge and experience, and working with others and across sectors to build a better Sabah.

Programme by: **Claire Vanderplank**

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Do you have any questions or reflections? Do get in touch.

E-mail: fsi@foreversabah.org

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HOW TO USE THIS COURSEBOOK?

This coursebook and facilitation manual is published with the intention of it being a free resource for sharing, learning and training. It can be used as guidance to allow you to facilitate your own programme on Partnering With Nature within your community or setting, while sessions and activities listed here are intentionally designed to allow for flexibility when adapting the content for both **personal and non-commercial use**.

Introduction

This programme will initiate the practice of tuning-in and communing with nature. The first day focuses on fundamental principles of connectedness with nature, while the second day focuses on conscious communication and partnering with nature. Through practice and reflection, sharing and solo time, we will explore the breath, body awareness, presence, healing, grieving, sacred activism and play, and learn to be in reciprocal relationship with Nature.

Learning Outcomes

- Learn to cultivate a deeper relationship with Nature.
- To develop capacities such as presence and mindfulness; cognitive flexibility, pliability of awareness and perception; self-awareness; empathy; listening and relating; self-regulation, stress recovery and relaxation; resilience and capacity to hold energy.

Meet The Facilitator!

Based in Noongar Boodja, South-West Western Australia, Claire first began her career as an Occupational Therapist. In 2012, she was hit by a truck, an experience which gave her the 'gentle nudge' to go on her first week-long wilderness Quest. From then, her understanding of what it means to be human in relationship with Earth changed forever and her work changed with it.

Her work centres around 'Partnering with Nature'; how we can deepen connection with inner, outer and true Nature; and how we can integrate the lessons and generative patterns of nature into our collective systems and communities, as an imperative for this transitional period in human history.

She is a facilitator and shamanic practitioner, and guides people in nature-based spiritual cultivation practices through the Way of Nature lineage, including multi-day wilderness quests.

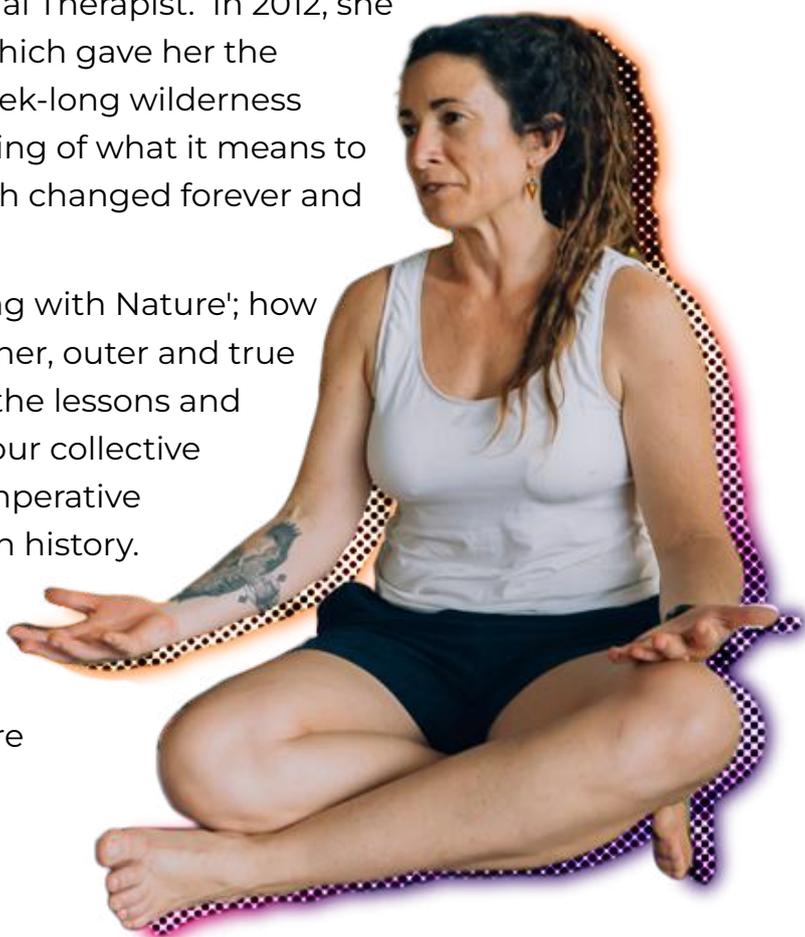


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Setting Your Intentions

Intention setting is a ritual of commitment and saying it aloud allows participants to form an understanding of why they have shown up, as well as a reciprocal relationship within the circle.

At the start of the programme, welcome participants by asking each and every one to set their intention for the programme. As a facilitator, ask participants the following:

- Their names
- One main reason for being at the programme today

Attunement Meditation

You are encouraged to first guide them through a meditation practice to tune into their intentions. To do this:

1. Get the participants to settle into a comfortable position – they can choose to sit or lie down.
2. Once settled, invite them to close their eyes and shift their attention to their breath, breathing in deeply and slowly.
3. To better ground and connect to the practice, guide participants into a rhythmic breathing exercise. *Inhale for four seconds, exhale for six seconds.*

BONUS INFO: This exercise with extended exhales helps to improve your heart rate variability (HRV), i.e. the oscillation of your heart rate occurring with your breath. When we inhale, our heart rate is faster. When we exhale, it slows down. Higher HRV is associated with a greater ability to recover from difficult situations. On the other hand, lower HRV is associated with prolonged stress, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation. You can also improve your HRV through somatic meditation, where you progressively focus your awareness on sensations you are feeling from different parts of your body.

4. After a few rounds of breathing, invite participants to shift their attention from their breath to their surroundings. *What do you hear? What do you see? What do you feel? What do you want Nature to teach you today?*
5. As everyone tunes in and is ready to proceed, invite them to reflect on and write down their answers to the following questions:
6. Once everyone is done, invite them to share.



Prepare & Align | Introduction & Setting Your Intention <https://youtu.be/XQYL48lgJ3Y>

SESSION 1 What Would Nature Do? — Nature's Inherent Intelligence

In the first session, Claire prepares us for the upcoming nature quest by guiding us in reimagining our relationship to Nature and what we can learn from it. The Partnering with Nature programme aims to equip participants with the knowledge and understanding to enter into a conscious partnership with Nature. It recognises that we are a part of Nature and that Nature is alive and in constant dynamic exchange with us.

Here, we learn about the wisdom of Nature and Nature's intrinsic thread through our true, inner, and outer worlds. We ask ourselves, "What would Nature do?" and "Why would we want to learn from Nature?"

Nature is an incredible teacher, with patterns of Creation expressed purely and

observably in Nature. Nature embodies generativity, with life always seeking to create more life and move towards increasing levels of ordered complexity. We recognise this ordered, generative patterning as beauty.

Take a look around. Notice all the places you see beauty.

If we want our work as human beings to contribute to a (re)generative future, we can both learn from Nature in a cognitive way, i.e. by studying and mimicking the principles of living systems, and by connecting with Nature in an embodied way, so that we too become expressions of the patterns of Nature.



Nature's pattern is fractal and repeating. Images credit (from L-R): [Flickr](#), [Pinterest](#), [Pinterest](#).

Some principles of living systems include:

- Nature uses only the energy it needs and relies on freely available energy, eg. condor soaring uses the same energy as sitting on the nest, abalone shell is 200 times stronger than our most high-tech ceramics.
- Nature is resilient to disturbances – nature uses diversity, redundancy, decentralisation, self-renewal, and self-repair to foster resiliency.
- Nature tends to optimise rather than maximise, e.g. bone builds in response to stress, and the ‘use it or lose it’ principle with neurons, muscles.
- Nature provides mutual benefit; it has syntrophic relationships.
- Nature runs on information via signalling and feedback loops, e.g. songbird chicks have brightly coloured mouths for parents to feed.
- Nature is locally attuned and responsive.

The above principles are drawn from The Biomimicry Institute: [An Introduction to Life’s Principles](#)

In what ways does your organisation use principles of living systems?

As the Roman Stoic philosopher, Seneca, once said, “True wisdom consists in not departing from nature, but in moulding our conduct according to her laws and model.”



Session 1 | What Would Nature Do? (WWND) – Nature’s Inherent Intelligence
https://youtu.be/8dTW5a0A_Kk

Activity 1: Taking Your Intention to Your Sit Spot | Solo I

“THE GOAL OF LIFE IS TO MATCH YOUR HEARTBEAT WITH THE BEAT OF THE UNIVERSE, TO MATCH YOUR NATURE WITH NATURE.” – JOSEPH CAMPBELL

In the solo sessions, participants will be spending their time at their sit spots, each chosen in their own specific and unique way through this first activity. They are to allow themselves to be drawn to a spot in Nature and ask permission when they get there.

Participants are encouraged to choose a spot that is not too isolated from each other but distant enough that they do not disrupt each other’s solo time.

Duration: One hour

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Before heading out on their search, ask participants to each find a buddy. They are to keep an eye out for each other when heading in and out of their

- spot. They are also to alert the facilitators if they do not return from any of the solo sessions.
2. To guide participants in finding their solo spot, you may prompt them to:
 - a. Use the 'yin' approach – by facing outdoors and asking where they should go. Their feet may want to move in one direction, or they may feel a pull of feeling in your gut. Something may suddenly jump out at them, calling them over. Encourage them to keep going until they find a place they feel called to.
 - b. Use the 'yang' approach – by picking a place they would like to be and asking for permission when they get there.
 - c. Finish the site selection by asking permission from Nature to be there.
 - d. If it is a 'yes', you may feel a warming, opening sensation, or feel like you're being pulled into a site.
 - e. If it is a 'no', you may feel a cold, closing sensation or feel pushed away from the spot. Don't take it personally if you feel a 'no' – just like humans, beings in Nature can sometimes prefer to be left alone.
 - f. The facilitators will call out, "Cooee!" when the solo hour is up. Participants are to repeat the call when they hear it to ensure that others hear it too.
 3. Invite participants to find their spot using the techniques described above.
 4. Participants are to acquaint themselves with their spot and find a way to genuinely express their intention to Nature and ask Nature to partner with them on their learning journey. Rest in stillness, listening for what comes back to you.
 5. Once the time is up, gather everyone back by calling out, "Cooee!"
 6. Once everyone is back and settled in, invite participants to share their experience. Some questions you may ask:
 - a. How did you end up finding your spot?
 - b. What was your experience asking for permission?
 - c. What was your experience after settling in?



Activity 1 | Taking Your Intention to Your Sit Spot (Solo I)

<https://youtu.be/5jurv5mtnXo>

SESSION 2 Foundational Principles | The Nine Experiential Fields

In the second session, we begin to explore different experiential fields to build connection with Nature. Everything you connect with in life you do so through particular fields of experience. The nine experiential fields explored in this programme are:

- Sight
- Sound
- Touch
- Taste
- Smell
- Interoception, movement, and balance
- Energy
- Thoughts
- Emotions

Making connections – whether with humans or with Nature – can be tricky. Some core principles that can guide you in building connection with Nature are:

Presence

Connection relies on awareness. When distractions arise, be conscious of them. The flow of distractions should begin to slow down with time, patience, and awareness. Focus on the here and now.

Relaxation

Without relaxation, we cannot open and go deeper into connection. When we are tense, we are easily distracted. Pay attention to where you hold contractions and tensions in the body, mind, and emotions – then learn how to relax them, letting go of old ideas, judgements, emotions, structures, expectations, and

insecurities in the process.

Open Heart

The heart naturally opens in Nature. It is so easy to find beauty and things to be grateful for. We can assist this by practising reciprocity, gratitude, honouring, and asking for permission. As you deepen into this practice, the separation between self and other gradually dissolves.

Energy Cultivation

If there are blockages in our energy flow, it is much harder for us to receive the gifts and information Nature has to offer us. Qigong is included in this programme to assist with this.

These core principles are adapted from the Way of Nature's Twelve Guiding Principles of Natural Liberation, a multi-faceted matrix and a central part of Claire's own training. Its founder and creator John P. Milton combined ancient teachings of Buddhism, Taoism, Dzogchen, Tantra, Vedanta, and several Shamanic paths with decades worth of his own solo immersions and spiritual practice in Nature to put these principles together.

For more information: [The Twelve Guiding Principles of Natural Liberation](#)



Participants practicing Qigong in the morning with Mount Kinabalu as the backdrop.

Qigong

A system of movement, breathing, and meditation, qigong helps participants to deepen their presence and relaxation – as naturally happens in Nature – to enable their energy bodies to refine themselves.

Relaxation allows your body to release any physical, emotional, energetic, and mental blockages it holds to free up bound life force, i.e. Qi. Qigong combines present-centred awareness with relaxation to further deepen the unblocking and bring your awareness into deeper levels of body, emotion, and mind.



Qi Gong Exercise | <https://youtu.be/Oi3yCeTl1fM>

Heart Centred Meditation

The heart is crucial in enabling partnership with Nature as it opens up a major pathway for communication. It has a magnetic field more than 100 times greater in strength than the brain, detectable up to three feet away from the body.

But to open up the heart can be easier said than done, especially for those who struggle with stress, anxiety, or pervasive thought processes.

Facilitation Instructions:

1. To begin, guide participants in repeating steps 1, 2, and 3 in Attunement Meditation.
2. After a few rounds of breathing, ask participants to shift their awareness from their minds – where we spend most of our time worrying and rationalising – to their hearts. Imagine you are in an elevator, travelling down floor-to-floor from your mind all the way down to your heart.
3. Once everyone is ready to proceed, ask them to lift their hands up to their heart centres and hold delicately. Hold your heart centre as if you were holding a newly born infant.

4. As they hold their hands and awareness to their heart, invite them to begin focusing their awareness on an energy or emotion that comes from the heart. This can be feelings of love, hope, peace, joy, compassion, empathy, or anything else that feels right. Harness that energy in your hands, holding as much as you can.
5. Once they feel like they have harnessed enough open heart energy, invite them to lower their hands back down with palms up, releasing the energy they have harnessed and opening themselves up to receive whatever Nature has to offer in return.



**Session 2 | Foundational Principles –
The Nine Experiential Fields**
<https://youtu.be/1nISgW3ICcY>

Activity 2: Practice with the Experiential Field | Solo II

In the second solo session, participants are to go through the nine experiential fields mentioned in Session 2 at their sit spot. There are various ways they can go about this session as they begin to ground themselves and explore pathways to connect with Nature.

Duration: One hour

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Before they head out to their solo spots, remind participants to take note of the buddy they paired with in *Activity 1*.
2. At their sit spots, some ways participants can choose to experiment with the experiential fields are:
 - ▶ Narrow-focused awareness – applying all the fields to one subject in Nature
 - ▶ Open-field awareness – taking in all the sensory information from one experiential field coming from all surrounding components of Nature
3. To ease participants into connecting with the various fields, invite them to start with the easy ones – sight, sound, and touch.
4. They can begin to tune in to these fields through:
 - ▶ Listening meditation
 - Pay attention to the field of sound surrounding you from every direction. Allow the sounds to come to you without labelling them.*

► Standing meditation

Stand facing nature, either feet together or hip-width apart, with a slight bend in the knees. Relax every muscle but keep the crown of your head lifted up as if by a string. Turn your palms out and soften your gaze as you take in the full field of vision.

5. Once they feel comfortable with those, they can further challenge themselves by trying to tune into two fields. And if they feel so inclined, they may challenge themselves to three, four, five, and so on, until they are able to tune in to all nine at once.
6. If any participants feel lost, frustrated or uncertain in their practice, remind them to refer back to the core principles mentioned in *Session 2*. Stay present, relaxed, openhearted, and conscious of any blockages in energy flow.
7. Once time is up, gather everyone back by calling out, “Cooee!”
8. Once everyone has settled back into the group, invite them to share their experience. Some questions you may ask include:
 - What did you do in your solo hour?
 - How far did you go with connecting to the experiential fields?
 - Which of the practices you have learned (qigong, meditation, etc.) did you find useful in your session?
 - Did you encounter any challenges in trying to connect?
 - Did any thoughts or observations jump out at you during your solo hour?



Activity 2 | Practice with the Experiential Field (Solo II)
<https://youtu.be/DFLkz-0igsQ>



During Solo time, participants can interact with Nature in any way they like.

SESSION 3 The Connection Sequence

“WHEN ONE TUGS AT A SINGLE THING IN NATURE, YOU FIND IT ATTACHED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.” – JOHN MUIR

In this session, Claire introduces us to the connection sequence that invites participants to further deepen their understanding of their connection with Nature. This sequence sees connectedness not as a static, two-dimensional exchange but rather a spectrum of varying degrees. The sequence is:

1. Noticing you are disconnected

2. Connection

- ▶ Placing your awareness on Nature
- ▶ Connecting through your senses

3. Communion

- ▶ Experiencing feelings of commonality with a being of Nature
- ▶ Co-creating a sense of unity
- ▶ Distinct sense of separate selves still remain

4. Union

- ▶ Deepening your connection to where you cannot tell where one begins and the other ends

5. Mandalic Awareness

- ▶ Experiencing union with all beings in the sphere of experience around you

6. Source Awareness

- ▶ You are the Great Mystery

This sequence – adapted from Way of Nature – is not meant to be a rigid set of criteria for how your solo sessions should go but rather a gentle reminder that there is always further to go. Boredom

may arise during your solo time – that’s natural. Don’t be disheartened, as boredom heralds the arrival of the teacher. There are many wonders to be discovered in going further.

When do you feel the most connected in Nature? What are the inner and outer conditions?

Your state of being plays a significant role in the quality and experience of connection you are able to have. Harnessing a playful and childlike essence, gratitude, reciprocity, and curiosity are helpful in shifting your state of being in the right direction. Breathing techniques are useful here too.

What about Nature are you becoming curious about as you spend time in your solo spot?



Session 3 | The Connection Sequence
<https://youtu.be/GR946gyk06U>

Activity 3: Gratitude & Appreciation | Solo III

In this next solo session, participants work with their heart, further exploring their connection to Nature and building a reciprocal relationship through practices of gratitude and openness. Here, participants can use the learnings from past sessions to help them settle into their solo hour.

Duration: One hour

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Before they head out to their solo spots, remind participants to take note of the buddy they paired with in *Activity 1*.
2. The purpose of this third solo session is to practise reciprocity with Nature. Remind participants that communication is a two-way street; and communication with Nature is the same. It is not just about what we stand to receive, but also what we are able to offer in return.
3. Invite participants to take a gratitude and appreciation walk on their way to their respective spots. With each step, they are to think of something they are grateful for by placing their awareness on something new in Nature and using that as inspiration.
4. When they have reached their spot and settled in, they may begin with some rhythmic breathing. Inhale for four seconds, exhale for six seconds.
5. If they so wish, they may also practise Qigong or Heart Centred Meditation to open up, harness positive energy, and maintain a relaxed, present, and grounded state of being.

6. Participants may also choose to experiment with any of the tools and guidelines mentioned in *Activity 1* and *Activity 2*.

7. Once time is up, gather everyone back by calling out, "Cooee!"

8. Once everyone has returned to the group, invite them to share their experience. Some questions you may ask include:

- How did your solo session go?
- What did you notice during your gratitude walk?
- In what way did you choose to practise reciprocity with Nature?
- What tools or practices from previous sessions did you find most useful in this session?
- Did you encounter any challenges in deepening your connection?



Activity 3 | Gratitude & Appreciation (Solo III) <https://youtu.be/GR946gyk06U>

SESSION 4 Foundational Principles | The 'Yin' and 'Yang' Approach

All human beings are designed in their own unique individual ways and will experience connection and communication differently as a result. Do not worry if you are having a different experience from other participants. Through this programme, you are to find your own 'connection signature'.

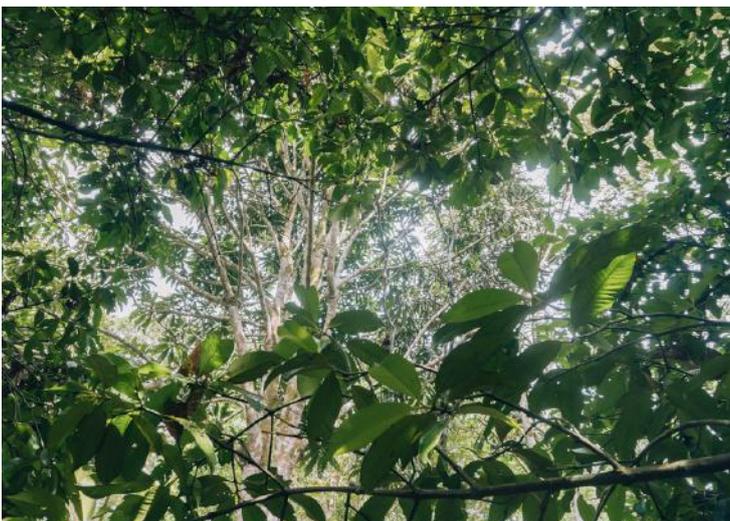
In our best communication experiences with other human beings, what are the conditions typically present? How might that translate to our communication with Nature?

Increasing Our Ability to Communicate with Nature

Communication with Nature is based on a foundation of connection. Here, our inner state of being is crucial.

We are able to receive information through a flow of energy (*qi*), most primarily through the heart. As mentioned earlier, its magnetic field is far greater than that of the brain, and has an electrical field far greater as well.

For more information: McCraty, Rollin. Science of the Heart - Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance. Movement Publishing, 2015. <https://www.heartmath.org/research/science-of-the-heart/energetic-communication/>



Attunement of energy fields enables communication when words and language do not. It is crucial that we maintain a relaxed and open state of being, 'smooth' out our respective energy fields to remove any static that might interfere with the flow of energy between us and the beings we hope to attune to. Think of a crumpled sheet of paper – it is the same paper as a flat sheet but it is much harder to write on.

When in our lives have we felt a direct communication with Nature?

The ways which this communication might be perceived include:

- ▶ 'Hearing' words – most likely translations of energy impulses
- ▶ Feelings – sometimes can be simply a 'yes' or 'no', like when we practised choosing our sit-spots
- ▶ Dreams – waking or sleeping
- ▶ Signs, symbols, or synchronicities
- ▶ Inner vision



**Session 4 | Foundational Principles –
The 'Yin' and 'Yang' Approach**
<https://youtu.be/3QFcWqjv6wQ>

Communication with Nature can be received in many ways. We might ask direct questions but we may also receive what we need before we even think to ask it. In a present and grounded state, these sorts of messages can come through intentions, daydreaming, and quiet observations.

Activity 4: Asking a Question | Solo IV

For the fourth solo session, participants are to practise asking Nature a personal question using both the 'yin' and 'yang' approach, opening themselves up to receive and invite any and all beings of Nature to offer up an answer.

Duration: One hour and ten minutes

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Ask participants to pair up with someone they would like to get to know better. They may choose to go directly up to someone or wait for someone to approach.
2. Once paired, participants are to share with their partner a question they would like them to help ask in Nature.
3. Once both have shared, participants are to split up, carrying with them their partner's question, to get an answer for them from Nature using the 'yang' approach.
4. Participants are to pick a spot that calls to them and offer their partner's question to a being there – this might be a dragonfly, a leaf, a mountain, a gust of wind.
5. Using the tools and methods taught in previous sessions, they are to open themselves up to whatever answer their being has to offer.
6. After ten minutes, participants are to return and share their answers and experiences with their partners and the group at large, before heading out for their solo hours.
7. Before they head out to their solo spots, remind participants to take note of the buddy they paired with in *Activity 1*.

8. In practising the 'yin' approach, participants are to use the learnings of previous sessions to settle into a present, open, and receiving state of being.
9. Refer to Step 4, 5, and 6 of the Facilitation Instructions in Activity 3 to carry out this solo session.
10. Once time is up, gather everyone back by calling out, "Cooee!"
11. Once everyone has returned to the group, invite them to share their experience. Some questions you may ask include:
 - How did your solo session go?
 - What was your experience attempting the 'yin' approach in your communication with Nature?
 - How did it compare to the earlier practice with the 'yang' approach?
 - Did you experience any challenges in asking your questions?
 - How did the answer present itself?



Activity 4 | Asking a Question (Solo IV)
<https://youtu.be/3QFcWqjv6wQ>

SESSION 5 Inner Nature | Nature as Healer

Through this programme, you will come to realise Inner Nature, ie. our inner world of experience, cannot be separated from Outer Nature. Nature can be a place of encountering our deepest sources of truth, love, inspiration, and creativity. It can be a place for healing, as well as a training ground to develop essential and practical human capacities.

We were designed in and for Nature. As we become more sensitive and conscious of connecting our inner state of being with the external, we grow more aware of our Inner Nature.

From what you've experienced thus far, what types of skills, qualities, or capacities can you see Nature helping you to develop?

Some examples include:

- Presence and mindfulness
- Cognitive flexibility and pliability of awareness and perception
- Self awareness
- Empathy
- Listening and relating
- Self regulation, stress recovery, and relaxation
- Wellbeing and personal resilience
- Capacity to hold energy and vitality



Session 5 | Inner Nature – Nature as Healer
<https://youtu.be/8yZDoLDklxE>

Activity 5: Finding a Teacher in Nature | Solo V

The fifth solo session invites participants to learn from Nature through meditation, gentle observation and tuning into Nature's surroundings. This Solo session allows us to practise all the tools we've learnt so far and express gratitude to Nature as the journey is slowly coming to an end.

Duration: One hour

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Before they head out to their solo spots, remind participants to take note of the buddy they paired with in *Activity 1*.
2. The purpose of this fifth solo session is to practise reciprocity with Nature. Remind participants that communication is a two-way street; and communication with Nature is the same. It is not just about what we stand to receive, but also what we are able to offer in return.
3. Invite participants to take a gratitude and appreciation walk on their way to their respective spots. With each step, they are to think of something they are grateful for by placing their awareness on something new in Nature and using that as inspiration.
4. When they have reached their spot and settled in, they may begin with some rhythmic breathing. Inhale for four seconds, exhale for six seconds.
5. If they so wish, they may also practise Qigong or Heart Centred Meditation to open up, harness positive energy, and maintain a relaxed, present, and grounded state of being.
6. Participants may also choose to experiment with any of the tools and guidelines mentioned in *Activity 1* and *Activity 2*.
7. Once time is up, gather everyone back by calling out, "Cooee!"
8. Once everyone has returned to the group, invite them to share their experience. Some questions you may ask include:
 - How did your solo session go?
 - What did you notice during your gratitude walk?
 - In what way did you choose to practise reciprocity with Nature?
 - What tools or practices from previous sessions did you find most useful in this session?
 - Did you encounter any challenges in deepening your connection?

Pre-solo journaling questions:

- ▶ Reflect on capacities that Nature helps you to develop. How is this important in your work?
- ▶ What have you been learning about yourself so far?
- ▶ What else do you want or need to learn about yourself?



Activity 5 | Finding a Teacher in Nature (Solo V) <https://youtu.be/IBnxqXnpV8Y>



One of the many sharing circles throughout the whole program. Sharing after solo allows us to decompress and reflect on the many, varied experiences that one shares with Nature.

SESSION 6 WRAP UP | Reflection & Creative Expression – Sacred Activism

Our relationship with Nature mirrors our relationship with life and other humans. However, because our biology is centred around social connections, relating with humans can be the most triggering of all. Nature provides a space to learn about our patterns of relating and make changes to the ones that no longer serve us.

Reflect on your personal patterns of relating. How do they reflect themselves in your relationship with Nature?

When we are in Nature, we gradually attune our energy bodies to the dynamic, free-flowing energy of Nature. This attunement helps to lift any blocked, stagnant, or dense energy and emotional residue out of our system, which arise naturally when we are still and connected with Nature.

Nature provides a safe space for us to release past traumas, process buried emotions, and grieve for ourselves and the Earth.

Pre-solo journalling questions:

- ▶ From what you have observed in your solo sessions so far, what has your time in Nature been helping you to work through?
- ▶ What are the most important things you have learned here?
- ▶ What are you taking forward with you?

A Note on Sacred Activism

Another way we can communicate with Nature is through prayer. When we empower our prayers with open hearts and commitment to something greater than ourselves, Nature opens us up to surprising and 'non-linear' experiences.

But for that to happen, we must hold space for the non-linear forces of change and let go of how we think something should happen.

We may then experience inspired creativity as a result of our prayers, in the intersection between inspiration and commitment.

"CREATIVITY IS NOT AN OUTCOME, BUT A WAY OF SOURCING GUIDED ACTION FROM THE GROUND OF BEING." - CHARLES EISENSTEIN



Session 6 | Reflection & Creative Expression – Sacred Activism

<https://youtu.be/3u08PXUHYEs>



Activity 6: Reciprocity & Creativity (Solo VI)

In the last activity of the programme, participants say goodbye to their sit-spots using art and creative expression as their common language. This could be a drawing, a song, a photo, a sculpture made of sticks and leaves. Anything it might be – give back, offer prayer, and rest in listening stillness.

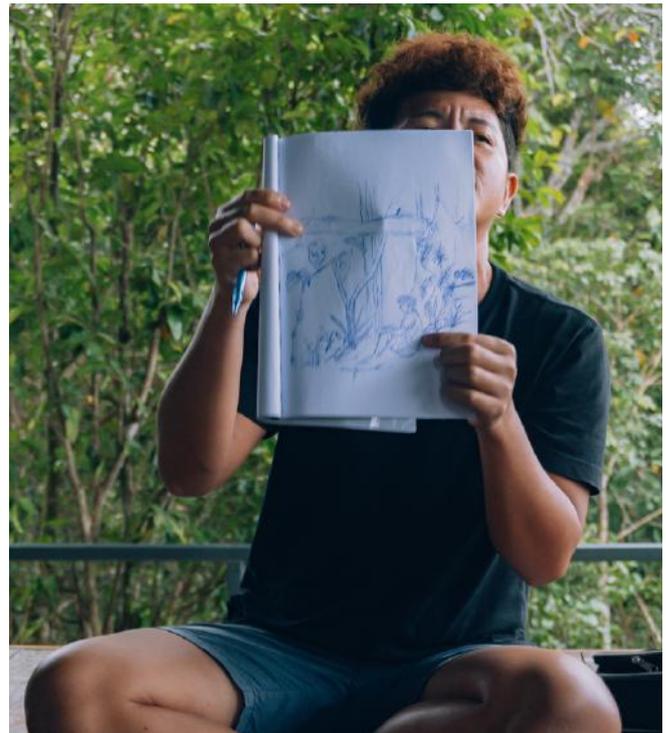
Duration: One hour

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Before they head out to their solo spots, remind participants to take note of the buddy they paired with in Activity 1.
2. As participants settle into their spots for the last time, they are to reflect on their experience throughout the programme and think of something they would like to share or create with Nature. Some might already have an idea they thought of earlier.
3. The many ways in which this hour could go are endless. Invite participants to be boundless in their creativity. There is no wrong way to carry out this activity, as long as it is done in the spirit of love and gratitude.
4. Whatever arises could help participants to process and tie their experience together. It could also be a celebration, or simply a pleasant hour spent creating with Nature. Encourage any and all forms of loving, creative expression.
5. Participants are encouraged to use any of the tools and methods taught in previous sessions to guide this hour of play.
6. Once time is up, gather everyone back

by calling out, “Cooee!”

7. Once everyone has returned to the group, invite them to share their experience. Some questions you may ask include:
 - What was the experience of saying goodbye to your sit spot?
 - What sort of creative expression or sacred activism did you perform?
 - How did you go about finding your expression?
 - What did you reflect on in this last session?
 - What from this experience will you be carrying home with you?



A participant sharing about his process during Solo VI and the artwork that resulted from the solo time spent in Nature.



Activity 6 | Reciprocity & Creativity (Solo VI) <https://youtu.be/3u08PXUHYEs>



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