

The purpose of a nature journal is to get you outside! Your nature journal gives you the opportunity to write about what you observe and experience in nature.

Three benefits of nature journaling that I wish for you:

1) **Enhanced self-awareness** as you write about your thoughts and feelings in response to what you observe and experience.

2) **Enhanced mood**

Have you ever gone for a walk or visited your garden and experienced a positive shift in your mood? It's amazing how little as 15-20 minutes of exposure to natural vegetation can help reduce stress and relax muscles.

3) **A Grounding tool**

We can all recall a moment in nature at some point in our life that made us feel joy. Wouldn't it be nice to capture that joy and visit it at any time, especially when you need to be uplifted?

Each time you go outside to nature journal you are able to capture that moment. Simply revisit journal entries containing enjoyable moments in your life whenever you experience distressful emotions to help you "ride a wave of emotion safely to shore". Using a grounding tool, such as this, can help you feel more present and safe by pulling your thoughts to the very moment that you're in.

Create a theme for each journal entry to help you come up with ideas of things to write or sketch in response to what you observe and experience outside.

Nature Journal Themes:

- Connecting with your senses
- 5 different leaf shapes
- What's blooming?
- What do you appreciate about the season?
- Five things that caught your attention
- Look for insects and discover which plants they visit

Sample Nature Journal Exercise

Where ever you end up outside today, bring a journal and pencil with you. Allow yourself 15-20 minutes to open to the experience of connecting with nature. During this time, focus your attention on your senses. Pay attention to what you 1) see 2) touch 3) smell. As you connect with your senses acknowledge how they make you feel. For example: feeling awestruck by the setting sun; feeling hopeful by the sight of a butterfly; feeling relaxed by the scent of lavender; or feeling curious by the discovery of seeds. Find a comfortable place and give yourself some time to write about what you observed and experienced. You may simply want to write single words or you may be inspired to write poetry. Include drawings to illustrate that moment in time. Place no judgement on what you draw. Your drawing is an expression of you and in the moment it is as it should be. Further enhance your journal entry by collecting bits of nature such as flowers, seeds, leaves or bark and add them to your journal.