

Week 1: Nature/ The Elements / Cycles

“Our indigenous herbalists say to pay attention when plants come to you; they’re bringing you something you need to learn.”

“Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.”

Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

When I connect to Mother Earth, the rhythms of nature and my inner heart, help me to let go of the fast pace that I often have lived. To support my creativity, I allow for puttering around, maybe taking a walk or gardening to connect to Mother Earth, feeling the sun on my face or my bare feet on the grass. I allow my eyes to look around, noticing which animals come to visit me and cheer my heart. Birds, sun, trees speak to me, and I may sing back to the birds, bask in the sun’s rays on my face, or notice the wind rustle through the branches of trees, as if the trees are waving for me to notice them. I realize how I fit in the wide world of Mother Earth’s bounty, and it frees me to be fully grounded in this moment and feel what is bubbling up for me that day and focus on that. I may get a flash of an image of what to do, or see colors, or a phrase of words suddenly come to me. Sometimes I ask my “cooking angels” to help me put together a meal for the day. From this time in nature, I know which creative process to give some time to that day.

WATER: Allow the Flow

When water is moving, as in the movement of a river’s path, naturally and organically, it is part of Mother Earth’s rhythm and movement. If you put up an artificial wall or dam that river, it stops her natural flow. Even if you redirect water, once a large storm comes, water will often find another way to move around it.

**Water seeks a path to move forward, in any way it can.
Can we be like water?**

That is how I see abundance and flow. It wants to move and to find its way to you.

**What unnecessary walls have you placed in your own creative flow?
Connect with Mother Earth's flow and see where it will take you.
Connect with your inner flow, beyond the senses, and rest there.
Notice where that rest takes you.**

**Be. Allow for any breath meditation or prayer that you like.
Take a moment and tune in to each element in nature.
You may have a different experience of the elements...
Pick one element that needs attention and journal what you feel is
happening in your life right now.
You can also pick one of the following guided meditations in the links,
and/or the guided meditation below to support that element for you:**

Water: Sounds of rain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD2d6isxzM0&list=PLgLawu8F6q1eJlls8ZqsdjbiTw7pBKToL&index=25>

Meditation

**Notice which element in nature wants to connect with you more today.
Do you need more fire (passion), earth (grounding), water (flow), air
(speak clear truths to yourself or others), or Spirit (connect more in
stillness, prayer, meditation, or be outside more)?**

Or

**Do you feel fire (burned to the ground or burned out), earth
(dryness/parched, disconnected to your body's wisdom), water
(flooded with emotions or need release of emotions), air (blown wide
open or have uncontrolled outbursts of both truth and wounding),
Spirit (feel stuck in how to nourish your Spirit, distract or numb
yourself)?**

Go into nature in your meditation.

**What place in nature is your inner guidance taking you? (You are not
limited to where you go... it could be outer space; it could be inside a
volcano.)**

**Look down at your feet. Where are you led to go? Is it fiery, watery, in
the air, of the earth, or other-worldly?**

**Describe where you are led to visit, in your own words.
What is that place's effect on you?
What does that place want to offer you?
Write down in your journal what you saw.**

Collage

Create a collage choosing nature images from the meditation or a favorite place in nature, and notice which one of the elements (earth, air, fire, water, Spirit/Ether) is showing itself or calling you by images that speak to you as you do your collage. (Instead of a collage, you can always create a short writing...maybe create a list poem of what you gathered and how you felt when you held each piece of nature or remembered a time in nature, or danced or moved a place you loved to visit in nature).

Journal Questions:

- 1. Looking at your collage or creative piece (or if you wrote words in your journal, read them aloud or recite your words or poetry). Notice. Describe what you see and feel.**
- 2. What does your soul want you to know in this cycle of your life, about this season you are in? What is flowering or emerging from you and your body now, or from this year's growth?**
- 3. What does Mother Earth want to offer you?**
- 4. What does the Divine within you want to offer you?**
- 5. Connect with Mother Earth's flow and see where it will take you. Water seeks a path to move forward, in any way it can. How can you be more like moving water? Invite more awareness to the abundance and flow that want to find its way to you.**
- 6. What unnecessary walls have you placed in your own creative flow? Use your breath to breathe with focused intention at those walls, and feel and see the walls dissolve.**
- 7. Connect with your inner flow, in your silent meditation or contemplation. Go beyond the senses, beyond desire and form, and rest there. Notice where that rest takes you.**

8. **What part of your life has either been immersed in water, come up for air, been emerging from the soil, or burned to make way for something new?**
9. **In your life, how can you EXPRESS/SHARE more fire (passion), earth (grounding), water (release of emotions), air (speak truths to yourself or others), or Spirit (connect more in stillness, prayer, meditation, or be outside more)?**
10. **Which element matches you?**

Water

When you are feeling emotional, can you allow yourself to trust the flow of your inner process to guide you (just like you cannot fight the current of river that is overflowing the banks)? Can you allow a deeper surrender of your body and emotion and Spirit to heal you as you release your feelings?

If you are flooded with emotions that are overwhelming, place your hands on your heart and breathe deeply with the long deep breathing meditation, or tap your heart with your fingertips until you begin to calm your mind and nervous system. Let go what is not yours and come back to you.

Earth

Dryness and parched desert—What is the magic of life forms you can see in the desert (the green, the animals, when you adjust your eyes to see)? Likewise, what is the magic that you can see if you really look closely within your dry and empty moments of your spiritual life? Can we nourish the dryness by connecting in silence or allowing that which is deep inside of us to fill the gaps and holes, actively looking not outside of us but inside of us when that dryness overtakes us?

Groundedness—if you feel like you can't find steady ground, with so many changes going on in your life, can you stop and feel your bare feet on the ground, or let Mother Earth steady you with your breath?

Air

What has blown you wide open and challenged you to your core? What are some of the glimmers of strengths you see from being blowing open? Are you speaking from a strong voice and it surprises

you, feeling like a tornado is coming out of your mouth? Write out: what is true from my words that needs to be said in this moment for me to thrive? From my words, what is a wound or old conditioning that is from the past and needs attention and nurturing from me? Give yourself compassion as you make room for more truth and clarity.

Fire

Sun—Do you need warmth to shine upon your face, to rest your tired bones in the light, a light that is both inside of you, or the light of the sun to wash over you? Can you make time for warmth in all the ways it wants to come to you?

What is being burned away from inside of you that is old and holding you back from new growth? What burned that you held dear for many, many years? Write out the foundation that is being built inside of you, what is being seeded from that burning down (even if it feels uncomfortable)?

“Whereas a yellow pine forest may take hundreds of years to recover to its pre-burn state, it may take only ten years for coastal sage scrub to recover following a fire. ... Fire treats the seeds of these species which flourish in an environment cleared of litter, high in available nutrients, and bathed in sunlight. It is during these years that spectacular displays of wildflowers abound. Species such as California Poppies, Blue Dicks, Mariposa Lily, Fire Hearts, Lupines and many others carpet the post-burn environment.”

<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/fire/ucsbfire.html>

Homework:

- 1. Spend time with your collage in meditation, using the Visio Divina steps or your own process. Continue with one or two journal questions that speak to you. Spend time to look at, feel, recite, or experience your collage/creation this week.
Sit with it. Be with it. Take your time.**
- 2. Spend time in nature and notice what nature wants to show you. Take your time. Journal about what you encountered.**
- 3. More about the Earth elements connect with you:**

Watch this video on Hermit crabs housing exchange process, to see what nature is showing us in how we can support one another in our communities, too:

<https://vimeo.com/118575964>

4. **Read any book on Mother Nature**, and discover what peoples who respect and connect to Earth can teach you. You can journal about how this wisdom can also be applied to your own life.

“The land knows you, even when you are lost.”

— **Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants**

5. **Look over the quotes from this book in the link below, and choose at least one quote that speaks to you and then journal from it. Then meet it in nature / live it some way in your world:**

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/24362458-braiding-sweetgrass-indigenous-wisdom-scientific-knowledge-and-the-tea?fbclid=IwAR0VnGgSmlfnSZjmdCTRHZg2dlyMGrS8ASJ8L39GMziQWu8UJnwig9R1y8A>