
Creating a memory of a place

Take your time doing this activity and go with how you feel about a place. Explore until you find somewhere you feel drawn to being in, at ease and safe.

You're going to create a memory for yourself. You can use this memory in the future if you are trying to relax. It needs to be a rich memory so that you could close your eyes and imagine yourself back here.

One of the best ways to create a memory for yourself is to focus on all the different senses. This is so you can recall what you could see, hear, smell, taste and touch, as well as your feelings.

Later you can use this sheet to prompt yourself to recall all the sensory experiences. You can write or draw on the sheet to remind yourself of all these things later. Or you can just create a memory in your head.

Start by spending a few minutes relaxing in this place. Focus on your breathing and let any thoughts drift away.

What can you see?

Take in the whole picture - what view do you have? What things make up the view? What can you see close up? What shapes and colours can you see? What are the plants and animals that live here? What can you see that you like?

What can you hear?

Close your eyes and explore the sounds around you. Which direction does a sound come from and how far or near is it, do you think? Do you know what makes each sound? Which sounds do you like?

What can you touch?

What can your hands touch? Spend time exploring the different textures and shapes - rough or smooth, soft or firm, wet or dry.

What does your body feel like?

Feel your feet or bottom on the ground. Can you become aware of your whole body? Can you feel the air on your body?

What can you smell?

Reach around yourself and explore the different smells in your place. Try smelling the air, plants and trees, the ground, yourself.

What can you taste?

This is a tricky one! Be adventurous within limits!

How does it feel to be here?

What emotions do you have? What thoughts come up while you're here? Is there anything you want to try to remember? Any words of wisdom for yourself?

Join the group after about 20 minutes or when I call you with the whistle.

Later - when you want to evoke the memory

Let's imagine you are somewhere else, at home maybe, and you want to go back into your mind to your special place in nature. Make sure you are on your own and won't be interrupted. Sit down and take yourself through a physical relaxation exercise such as the tighten/relax muscles routine. Then see how well you can evoke your memory of the special place in nature. Go through all the senses: what does it look like, how does it sound, feel, smell, taste, how does your body feel, and what emotions are associated with the place?

Getting to know another life form

I want to encourage you to closely observe something living in nature.

NB: Read this side of the paper first and only read the other side once you have completed the activity written here.

Take your time and be open to what you experience.

Find another living thing, a plant or creature, and get to know it.

Spend time really looking at this other life form, which is dealing with all the basic processes of life as you are.

What are its colours, textures, smell?

Explore its growth and patterns.

How is it growing or moving?

Can you figure out how it gets what it needs to stay alive: food, water, warmth, etc.?

Any indication how it reproduces?

What about its surroundings? Where does it live, who does it live with?

When you feel you have studied and got to know your other life form turn over this sheet.

When you have taken time to really get to know your unique life form ask yourself the following variations on one theme (print the next page on the back of the handout):

What is wrong with it?

Is it ugly or beautiful?

Is it a bad or a good plant/animal?

Is it badly behaved or good? Is it doing things properly?

Can you see it just for itself?

Interview with nature

Instructions

For some people this exercise might seem a bit unusual. If it does seem odd to you I suggest you treat it like an imaginative experiment or fantasy. Assume it is possible and see what comes up. I'm asking you to interview something in the park that isn't a person!

Go for a short exploratory walk near where we are and choose a natural feature, a rock, plant or animal that catches your eye.

Treat your choice as a fellow traveller who like you is living out their life on planet Earth. In your interview try to see the world from this new point of view as you write the answers to your questions. Take your time to get into it.

You can use your imagination to come up with answers, and if you like, you can listen quietly for thoughts that tell you how your fellow traveller might respond. Feel free to adapt and make up your own questions as well. Number the answers on a blank sheet to match the questions.

I won't ask you to read anything out afterwards, this is for you.

Take your time and come back to me when you have finished.

My interview subject is _____

Suggested questions

For natural features, plants and rocks

1. *How old are you?*

2. *Have you always been the size you are now?*

3. *Where did you come from?*

4. *What is it like living in this particular place?*

5. *Who comes to visit you?*

6. *What events have you seen in your life?*

7. *Is there something special you would like to tell me?*

8. *Any other questions you want to ask?*

For animals

1. *Where are you going?*

2. *What are you trying to accomplish?*

3. *Are there any predators you need to look out for?*

4. *What do you eat, and how do you find your food?*

5. *Where do you live? Alone or with others?*

6. *Do you ever travel to other places?*

7. *What would you like to tell others about yourself?*

8. *Any other questions you want to ask?*

My special place in nature

Take a short walk from here and wander around until you find a place where you feel comfortable. Find somewhere to sit down and consider these questions.

What are some of the first things you notice about your special place?

How do you feel being here?

Draw a sketch of your special place.

What can you hear? Can you hear at least five sounds? See if you can figure out who or what is making them.

Find something that makes you smile. What is it?

Why is it important to you to spend time in nature? Can you express that in a poetic or persuasive way?

Scavenger list

An oak leaf
A seed
Something round
Something sharp
Something perfectly straight
A chewed leaf (not by you!)
Something white
Something hollow
Something that makes a noise
Something soft
Something dead
Something that begins with the letter B
A leaf that has hairs on

Additional items which could be added

Feather
One seed dispersed by the wind
Exactly 100 of something
A beech leaf
A thorn
A bone
Three different kinds of seeds
One camouflaged animal or insect
Part of an egg
Something fuzzy
A piece of fur
Five pieces of litter left by people (avoid anything harmful, such as broken glass, sharp metal or needles)
Something beautiful
Something that is of no use in nature
Something important in nature
Something that reminds you of yourself
If you live by the sea you can create a beach version of this activity.

A story from your experience in nature today

What has come up for you today? What has today's time in nature stirred up in you? I want you to weave a story as a response to today's time in nature.

Can you sense something in you that has come up: a person, thing, element, thought, feeling? Spend some time waiting for something to arise within you. Trust your intuition. This is for you alone. Maybe you can't *think* anything. That's OK, maybe you only feel it.

I want you to respond to six questions in turn using words, drawings or symbols. See if you can create an imaginative story with your responses, using these questions as prompts. It is for you and no one else to look at. Go with your creative imagination. Don't rush, take your time, enjoy.

- *Where did she/he/it come from? Far away/close up, long time ago, recent/now, future, eternal.*

- *What does she/he/it want? Its goal, what is it seeking/asking of you, where is it trying to reach?*

- *What helps her/him/it or the issue on the way?*

- *What is the first obstacle, challenge on the way? What stops him/her/it?*

- How does she/he/it overcome, cope, deal, with the obstacle?

- What happens then? And how does it end?

Spend some time *writing down your story* on your own. You can begin on this sheet. If you need more paper ask the leader.

When you have finished writing you can make a sculpture, exploring one aspect of the story. You can use natural materials you find in the wood.

When you have finished let the leader know and come back to the group for the last part of this activity.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.