



Reconnecting with the More Than Human World: A Gratitude Practice Toolkit and Discussion.

Overview

Participants will explore and experience the power, beauty, and benefit of a gratitude practice. Together we will co-create an Earth Invocation and participants will leave with practical tools and discussion questions that can be locally adapted and shared with friends, family, and community. Ideally, the practice will shift our collective awareness.

"Everything is determined, every beginning and ending, by forces over which we have no control. It is determined for the insect, as well as for the star. Human beings, vegetables, or cosmic dust, we all dance to a mysterious tune, intoned in the distance by an invisible piper." Albert Einstein

"The land is the real teacher. All we need as students is mindfulness. Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the living world, receiving the gifts with open eyes and open heart." Robin Wall Kimmerer
Author and Director of the Centre for Native Peoples and the Environment SUNY

Getting Ready:

Before stepping into this practice familiarize yourself with the Earth Invocation prompts through [this link](#). Simply read the invitation and these instruction to get a feel of the intention of the practice. Notice that there are three core questions:

- 1) What in the natural world are you grateful for?
- 2) Why do you feel grateful? (feel into this one: **Why** is this relationship important to you? **What** or **how** does this part of the natural world make you feel? What or **how** does it help nourish or sustain you?)
- 3) How do you care and nurture this relationship?

Tools:

- Quiet
- A pen and paper. A journal is ideal.
- Internet access if you'd like to contribute to the creation of an invocation through the One Sacred Earth Project (see invocation example [here](#)).

Helpful Tips:

- Consider a regular timeframe
- Find some internal and external quiet
- Allow yourself to imagine the world is alive
- Allow yourself to see the gifts of nature around you either directly (flowers, water, air, soil, plants, birds, animals, insects, other humans, etc.) or indirectly (food, clothing, shelter, etc.).
- Invite yourself to feel.
- Have a pen and paper (or link to the practice open) ready beforehand so that you can immediately capture your responses to the three questions right away, and any other feelings or reflections.
- There is no right way or wrong way to do this practice

The Practice

One Time Practice (8-10 min)

Settle yourself in a comfortable place. If you are participating online, perhaps settle yourself in front, or near a computer. Take some time to imagine and focus on a particular gift of nature. Take a long as you want. As you focus explore what is arising and what are you feeling and sensing. Once you feel ready, respond to the three prompts above (what are you grateful for, why do you feel grateful, how do tend this relationship?). It may help to first write these questions down. Some like to simply enter their responses one at a time online. Walking into this practice with intention is core. This is not a contest or endurance test. Invite yourself to explore whatever else is arising.

Weeklong Practice (Daily 8-10 minutes)

Each day find some time to focus on a particular gift of nature. This can be 1-3 minutes long. You can focus on the same gift or you can focus on a different gift of nature each day. As you focus explore what is arising and what are you feeling and sensing. Once you feel ready, respond to the three prompts in a journal (or online). Try to commit and stick to a daily practice. Walking into this practice with intention and sticking to it is core. Don't try something you know you can't do. This is not a contest or endurance test. Invite yourself to explore whatever else is arising.

Creating an Earth Invocation

The Earth Invocation is an amalgamation of the **“what are you grateful for”** responses merged with the **“why are you grateful”** responses. The individual or group assembling the invocation takes some creative license. There is no right or wrong way to do so. Together we can create an invocation. To contribute through the One Sacred Earth website submit your responses to the core questions [on this link](#). Alternatively, self-organize with friends, colleagues and assemble a gratitude invocation together. Remember, there is no right or wrong way.

Discussion Questions

The following are some questions that you might explore together after completing the practice:

- What, if anything has shifted for you?
- What surprised you?
- What have you learned about yourself and about your relationships with the more-than-human world?
- What have you learned from this practice?
- Is this practice that you might use with friends and/or colleagues?
- If you assembled an invocation with others, was the process easy or hard? Explain.
- Do you have any discussion questions that might help you or your group?
- What was the process like?
- How might the process be improved?

The One Sacred Earth Project welcomes the opportunity to learn from your experience. If you created an invocation or discussed the practice together, we'd love to learn from you, so that we can improve our process and shared your learnings with other. Please reach out at [One Sacred Earth website](#).

Suggested Readings and Explorations:

Books

- [Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm: Beyond the Doors of Perception Into the Dreaming of Earth](#) by Stephen Harrod Buhner
- [Braiding Sweetgrass](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- [The Light Eaters: How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth](#) Hardcover by Zoë Schlanger
- [An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us](#) by Ed Yong

Short Articles

- [How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain](#) UC Berkeley
- [7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude](#) Psychology Today
- [Giving thanks can make you happier](#) Harvard Health