

# *Nature Journaling for the Skeptics*

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Maybe you're not so sure about carrying a notebook when you go out somewhere or taking the time to write or draw. You've heard that journaling has benefits:

- Help you pay attention to the present moment and notice more
- Strengthen what you will remember and recall it with more clarity
- Get you to reflect on the meaning you take from that experience

Maybe that sounds good, but it still might not be worth the extra time, or perhaps you don't think it would turn out well. "I can't draw," or "I can't write well" might be what you are telling yourself. Try the steps below to see if nature journaling is for you.

## *First*

Get a notebook that could be your journal and take it with you on an outing. Bring a good pen and a pencil with you. When you get there, you could write the following:

- *Date, location, what time you started, and weather conditions (sunny, cloudy, windy, etc.)*

You walk a trail for a while or you go to a spot where you may sit, whatever you want to do in nature. Take out your notebook and:

- *Write down a couple of things that you noticed and liked - a particular bird, a dragonfly of a particular color*
- *If you like, you could draw something you noticed, or sketch a map of your route*

Continue on your walk or your outing. Have fun. You could add more to your journal any time you feel like it. At the end of your outing, before leaving, take the journal out and write:

- *At least one feeling, perception, or thought you had during your outing. "The leaves were beautiful," or "I felt relaxed and free during my walk," or anything else*

And there's your first nature journal entry. The idea is to make it interesting and not a burden.

## *Second*

Bring your notebook along on your next outing, and do the same things you did the first time but add a little more, like this:

- *When you find a good place, stop long enough to get still and quiet. You will notice more*
- *Write a comment about the thing(s) you noticed, a little more description of it or what you thought about it*
- *If you wondered about anything you noticed, write it down ("Was that clump of green up in the tree branches mistletoe?" or "Where do these frogs go in the winter?" etc.). Maybe you can find the answer later.*
- *You might wonder about things like, "why do I like places like this?" or "if I was to say something to this place, what would it be?"*

After you have done this a time or two, it's a good time to think about how your journal is going. If it adds something positive to your time in nature, expand it as much as you would like. You could use the nature journaling prompts on the back of this page as suggestions for what you might include.

# Nature Journaling Prompts

These are things to think about, and they may give you ideas for writing. Respond to *as many (or as few)* as you like in your journal entry.

## *This Day*

Date .....

Time(s) .....

Where am I? .....

With whom? .....

## *Air & sky*

Sky Colors .....

Clouds & wind .....

Temperature & humidity .....

Precipitation .....

## *I Notice*

Shape of the land .....

Any water .....

Trees & shrubs .....

Grasses & flowering plants .....

Movement .....

Insects, birds, other animals .....

## *Senses & Attention*

I'm drawn to .....

I especially notice .....

How I use my senses .....

## *Gratitude*

In this place & this time, I'm grateful for .....

## *Talking to Nature*

Speaking (or writing) to this place, what I might say .....