

GUIDEBOOK

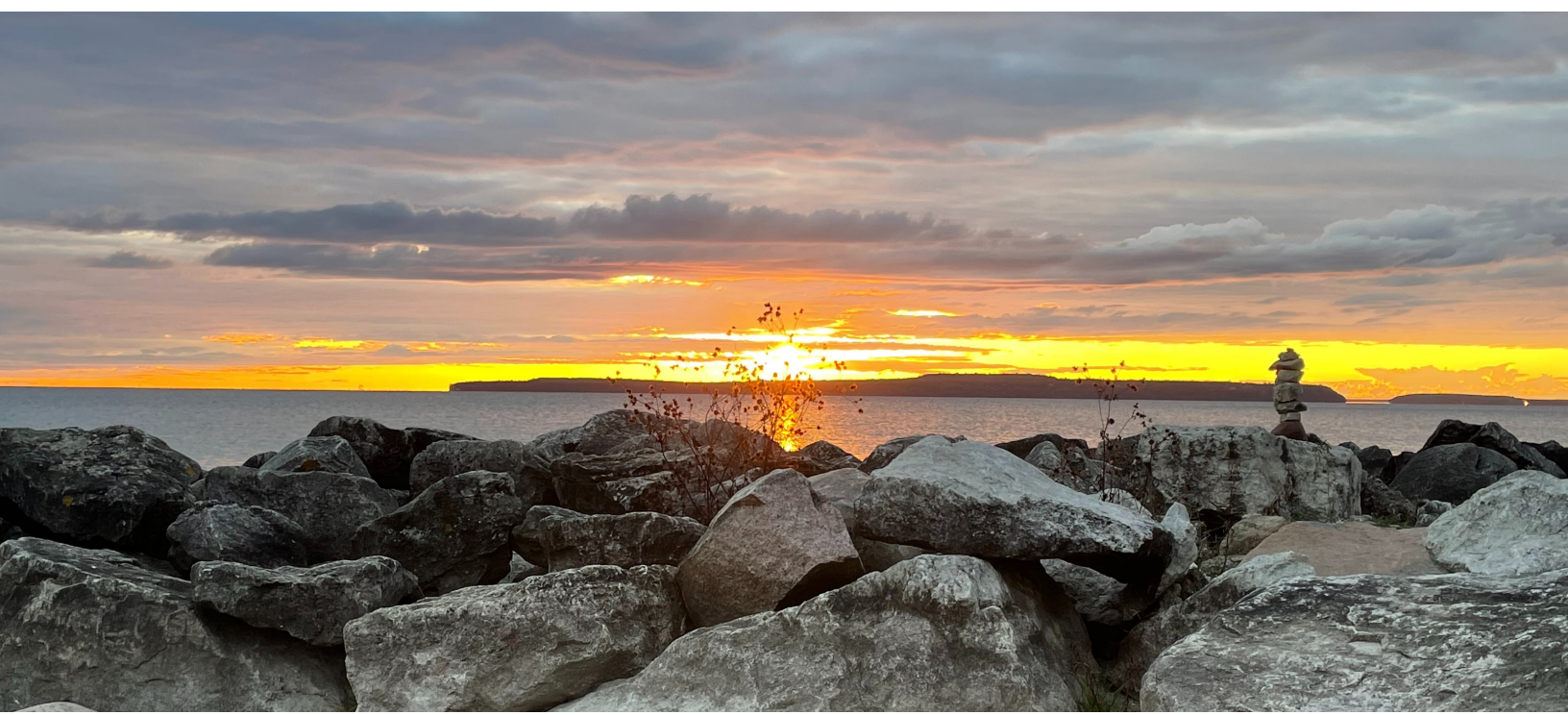
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Nature's Way Open

An eight week course to build connection to self, soul, and spirit with
Nature's Way

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Nature's Way Open: Your Journey Home

What is home? It is your true nature.

It is where you know you are not separate from life itself.

It is a place of peace, love, wonder, and beauty.

It is where you feel connected to all that is.

It is where you belong.

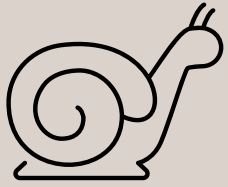
This eight-week guided course will take you on a journey toward your true nature. Through Nature's Way, you will learn to connect to self, soul, and spirit. Although the course is setup at a pace of one week at a time, you may find that you want to spend multiple weeks on any one exercise. This is fine. The course is also setup to engage with more than once! Each time you will surely gain new insights and grow.

Recommendations to benefit from this course:

Each week will take you into nature for a different purpose. I recommend one hour of solitude in nature each day, but do what you are able. Most importantly, bring only yourself. Don't count your steps, don't listen to music, don't monitor texts and social media, and don't exercise. Just be. Let me say that again. *Just be.* The breathing technique listed on the following page will be used throughout your journey. Refer to it often!

Welcome to Nature's Way! I am so excited for you.

True Nature Breathing Routine



Slow

Either slow your steps or pause walking. Breathe once deeply and tell the mind to slow.



Connect

Look up to the sky, place the hand on the heart, feel the Earth beneath the feet. Become aware you are connected to the above and below. Take one slow breath.



Be

In this state of sky-to-earth connection, close your eyes, breathe deeply and slowly and say to yourself, "Sky above, Earth below, presence and peace within."



01 Beauty

This week's nature focus is *beauty*. As you spend your daily time in nature this week, what is beautiful? Notice beauty with more than just the eyes. What do you hear? What do you smell? What might you be able to safely taste? (A tip: the sassafras leaf has a wonderful lemon taste!) Wander slowly, and maybe even without direction. Notice your heart as you walk. Where is it leading you? If this question feels impossible to answer, it's okay. You will see that improve throughout the course.

While on your nature exploration, open to full presence. That means our thoughts are solely focused on the *here and now*. If you notice your mind drifting to anything other than the *here and now*, practice the true nature breathing routine (see page 2) as long as needed to bring you back to the *now*. Smile for the ability to come back to presence, and carry on. Repeat this true nature sky-to-earth breathing routine whenever needed along your exploration of beauty, and be grateful to yourself each time you are able to bring the self, soul, and spirit back to presence. That expression of self gratitude is also an example of beauty, and part of the path toward Nature's Way Open.

Reflections to complete throughout week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Beauty

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What did it feel like for the mind, body, and your sense of soul to spend time in nature noticing beauty? Based on what you experienced, how is this helpful for the mind, body, and soul? What did you notice in the mind and body as you focused on being fully present? How is this helpful to your wellbeing? Lastly, did you have any awareness of feelings of being among or part of something bigger than yourself? (That's spirit.) How did that feel? Write about your feelings and experience.



02 Patterns

This week's nature focus is *patterns*. As you spend your daily time in nature this week, what patterns do you notice? Whether it's being fully present to the interesting pattern of the sun rays swirling through the trees like in the photo above, the patterns found in networks carrying nutrients to the leaf of a plant or tree, or the pattern found in the sounds of waves rolling into the shore, the patterns you find are evidence of a system of connection far greater than we imagine.

As you notice your patterns, be present to each one for some time and allow space for wonder and awe of this pattern. Then, right there in nature, turn that awe and wonder to your *self*. Before continuing your walk, notice a pattern present on your own human body. Look at the palms of your hand. Notice the network of veins along your hands and arms that carry nutrients throughout your body. Close your eyes and put your hand on your heart, feeling the pattern of the consistent beat that breathes you life. Notice the pattern of your breath.

This is your true nature. A mind, body, and soul that is a network of interdependent connections. You also are connected to spirit, because that is Nature's Way. Close your eyes and ask silently to feel this connection.

Reflections to complete throughout the week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Patterns

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What senses did you notice in your mind, body, and soul as you were present to the patterns you found in nature? Wonder? Awe? Curiosity? Connection? How did you feel as you noticed patterns on and within yourself? What sensations did that noticing produce? Lastly, did you have any awareness of feelings of being among or a part of something bigger than yourself? (That's spirit.) How did that feel? Write about your feelings and experience.



03 *Life*

This week's nature focus is *life*. As you spend your daily time in nature this week, how is life showing up in odd places or interesting ways? Do you notice a flower still growing in the ground among decaying leaves? Do you notice the life of a bright red cardinal on a barren tree?

How might you be able to use your time in nature this week to also expand your perspective on what is life? Do the ripples flowing in a pond seem to have a life of their own? Might the rays of the sun seem to be truly alive and moving as they shine between the branches of the tree? Might the calls of birds you hear seem to be a network of authentic communication?

Notice how the attention given to new and interesting aspects of life give space to expand your perspective on reality. Life is so much grander than to which we often give our attention. As you have these moments of awareness of a reality of life larger than meets the eye, right there among nature, close your eyes and feel your heart with your awareness. Notice the breath as it is the obvious that gives you life. But feel deeper and see if you can become aware of a larger, more expansive view of the heart. The heart isn't just the life force of your body, it is also where the energy of your soul and the connection to spirit lies. It is as expansive as all of the life found in nature, for that is Nature's Way.

Reflections to complete throughout the week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Life

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What beautiful aspects of life did you find in nature? What surprising aspects of life did you notice? How did your perspective on life grow or change? What did you feel as you stood in nature and noticed the breath of your own life? Were you able to begin to become aware of a larger life force found in the area of your heart? What sensations, ideas, images, etc., did you experience as that awareness increased?



04 Inspiration

This week's nature focus is *inspiration*. This week is very personal and presents the opportunity to connect intentionally with your soul rather than the mind. Be patient with yourself this week, and as you embark on your nature explorations, notice what is inspiring because your mind tells you it is (a sunset), versus an inspiration you may notice coming from your heart energy (your soul). This isn't to say that a sunset cannot be inspiring to the soul, as it surely can, but we want to notice the difference this week between *mind* and *soul*. This week is about tuning in to your *true nature*, and the way here is through the heart. You may find that you need to do the true nature breathing routine (described on page two) often this week, not to only remain present, but to grow in your awareness of what is arising from your heart energy (this is the soul). This week also may unfold differently from weeks past as you may spend some days in nature without finding something particularly inspiring to the soul. That is okay. Your soul will take the time it needs to speak to you, or rather, to work with you as you grow in your awareness of its presence. The soul is always talking to you. We only need to grow in our awareness of its communication.

As you spend your daily time in nature this week, what do you notice that is personally inspiring? Why does this inspiration speak to your soul? As you find your own nature's inspirations, you may need time to sit and reflect on what message this inspiration is providing you. In the above photo, a ladybug is finding protection in this feather from a strong wind coming in from the lake. For me, this symbolized my journey, at that time, learning to trust spirit.

Reflections to complete throughout the week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Inspiration

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What did you find in nature that was personally inspiring? Did you notice a difference when your mind said something was inspiring versus your heart? How did it feel different when your soul found something inspiring? How would you explain the difference to someone else? For those soulful inspirations, what messages was nature's inspiration providing you? How does this matter for your personal growth?



05 Joy

This week's nature focus is *joy*, the bridge between soul and spirit! Last week you learned to connect and listen to your soul. This week, we are building on that as we begin to bridge the connection to spirit.

As you take your nature explorations this week, complete the true nature breathing routine we've been practicing all along, and with your eyes closed and connected to your heart energy, ask spirit to show you JOY. Release any expectations of what that should look like. Your mind may say "rainbow" or "butterfly." But this isn't about the mind. This is about letting go and reaching out to the *life* that is beyond *self*. It is Nature's Way. Trust that you'll see *joy* when you are supposed to. How will you know? Your heart will tell you so. Your mind may doubt, and that is normal, but a tug in your heart energy (your soul), will say "this is joy." This is why it is a bridge week. Spirit will offer the *joy*, and your soul will do the talking. Have no expectation of how often to see joy this week. Maybe it will happen every day, maybe it will occur only once. What needs to be will be. That is Nature's Way.

Reflections to complete throughout the week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Joy

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

How did it feel each time you asked the life that is greater than yourself to present you with joy?
Did that feeling change at all throughout the week? What is there to learn from this?
How did it feel when you were gifted joy? What do you want to remember about this week's experiences?



06 Magic

This week's nature focus is *magic*, and it's all about trust!

As you take your nature explorations this week, complete the true nature breathing routine we've been practicing all along, and with your eyes closed and connected to your heart energy, ask spirit to bring *magic* to your exploration this week. Release any expectations of what that should look like. Focus on your heart energy, feeling love and gratitude for the opportunity to experience *magic*. Maybe this will present as an abnormally close encounter with an animal on your walk. Maybe you'll notice something extremely out of ordinary. Be excited and grateful in advance. It may happen today, or it may happen tomorrow, but life is magical and the universe is unfolding as it should. This is the beginning of a relationship with Nature's Way.

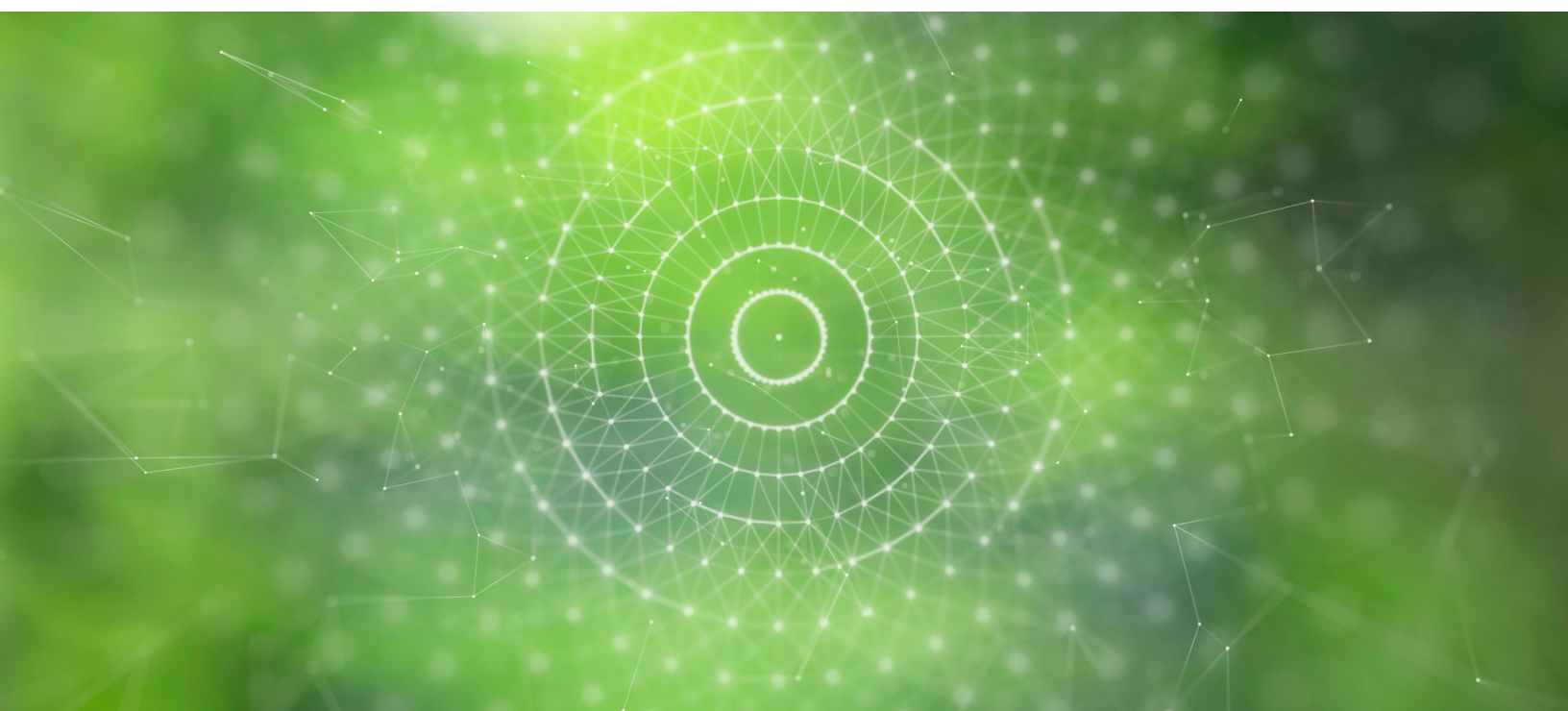
In the photo above, this rainbow cloud was only visible in the view of the camera each time I took a picture. It was not visible to the naked eye. The sun coming through the trees happen to catch my eye, but the photo results (I took a few photos) were so unexpected. Just magical!

Reflections to complete throughout the week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Magic

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What magic did you experience? How did it feel? Are you growing in trust of your connection to a life force (nature) that is so much greater than we realize? What is exciting about this? What implications does it have for your *self* and your life?



07 Connection

This week's nature focus is *connection*, and it begins to make self, soul, and spirit whole.

As you take your nature explorations this week, we aren't looking for connections in nature (similar to the week on patterns), but rather, we are walking with the intent to *feel connected* to nature. What do I mean by nature? Nature defined (Merriam Webster):

The natural forces that control what happen in the world; a creative and controlling force in the universe; an inner force or the sum of such forces in an individual; the external world in its entirety.

Complete your true nature breathing routine at the beginning of each day's walk, and set the intention to *feel connected* to all that is (nature). That is Nature's Way. Note what arises (sensations, images in the mind's eye, feelings, thoughts that don't seem to originate from the mind, etc). Note them later in your reflection page as they may become relevant or make more sense as you continue to grow and discover your true nature. This is Nature's Way Open.

Reflections to complete throughout the week appear on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Connection

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What did it feel like to set the intention each day to feel connected to nature (remember the definition of nature on the previous page)? Did you feel connected, or grow in your connection, to nature? What sensations, images, feelings, or thoughts that didn't seem to originate from the mind did you notice? What does your soul tell you to pay attention to?



08 Welcome Home: Nature's Way Open

It's week eight! This isn't the end at all, it's truly a beginning.

As you take your nature explorations this week, seek and notice feelings of integration with nature (the physical and all there is), and your own wholeness. Ask your self, soul, and spirit "what beginnings are in store for me?" Listen to your heart energy (soul) for answers given from the greater nature's spirit. As you walk, ask your heart to lead you toward the needed paths. This can be both literal, where nature can present more opportunities during your exploration to experience beauty, magic, joy, connection, etc., and metaphorical. Be open to answers that may come now, or at a later time.

A final reflection opportunity is found on the following page.

Nature's Way Open: Home

Consider reflecting in the following ways throughout the week:

What soul answers did you receive from the question, "What beginnings are in store for me?" Give gratitude for what was received.

Look back at the beginning of your Nature's Way Open journey. How have you grown? What changes and shifts do you notice? What new perspectives have emerged? How would you like to grow further?

*I'd love to hear from
you!*

What was this experience like for you? How did you grow in connection with self, soul, and spirit through Nature's Way? Feel free to send me a note!
natureswayopen@gmail.com



More opportunities can be found at www.natureswayopen.com

