

INTO THE WOODS

**AN APPROACHABLE WAY TO
RECONNECT WITH NATURE**

SARAH SKEDSVOLD

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YES, THIS IS FOR YOU

IF YOU ARE CURIOUS AT ALL ABOUT GOING INTO THE WOODS, THIS IS FOR YOU.

EVEN IF IT IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER DONE OR THOUGHT YOURSELF TO BE, THIS IS FOR YOU

IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO THE INCLINATION TO STOP, EVEN FOR A MINUTE BECAUSE YOU HAVE A FULL SCHEDULE, PLACES TO BE, WORK TO DO, PEOPLE RELY ON YOU TO BE WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN...THIS IS FOR YOU

IF YOU "SHOULD KNOW" HOW TO GO INTO THE WOODS AND DON'T KNOW HOW TO ASK HOW TO START, OR FEEL "LESS THAN" BECAUSE YOU WANT TO ASK HOW TO START...THIS IS FOR YOU

HOW COULD I POSSIBLY KNOW?

I'VE BEEN THERE. I THOUGHT HAD PLACES TO BE, ROLES TO FILL, WORK TO DO.

I THOUGHT I NEEDED TO BE THE PERSON I HAD ALWAYS BEEN AND DO THE THINGS I HAD ALWAYS DONE

SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED ONE PERSON TO SHOW YOU WHAT'S POSSIBLE WHEN YOU REALIZE THAT DR. SEUSS WAS RIGHT, "THE ONES THAT MIND DON'T MATTER AND THE ONES WHO MATTER DON'T MIND"

OUTDOOR MINDFULNESS "EXPLAINED"

I CAN'T TELL YOU WHY IT WORKS, I CAN ONLY TELL YOU THAT IT WORKS.

I WILL EXPLAIN THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSE OF OUTDOOR MINDFULNESS

STEP OUTSIDE, INTO THE ELEMENTS, FOR ONE MOMENT

THAT IS IT.

OUTDOOR MINDFULNESS IS SIMPLY GETTING INTO WHATEVER OUTDOOR SPACE YOU CAN FIND, FOR AS LONG AS FEELS COMFORTABLE, GETTING AS QUITE AS FEELS RIGHT

HOW COULD THAT POSSIBLY WORK?

I HAVE NO IDEA, BUT IT DOES.

YOU MAY EXPERIENCE LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE, MENTAL CLARITY, FOCUS, AND INCREASED ENERGY

THERE IS THIS SMALL PART OF EACH OF US THAT FEELS CALLED INTO NATURE, FOLLOW THAT FEELING AS FAR AS FEELS COMFORTABLE TO YOU, THAT IS OUTDOOR MINDFULNESS

WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT THEN?

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT PRACTICE

USE THIS AS A GUIDE TO EXPLORE OUTDOOR MINDFULNESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE JAPANESE ART OF SHINRIN YOKU, WHICH TRANSLATES TO FOREST BATHING

FOREST BATHING INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- **ENTER THE WOODS**
 - **GROUNDING PRACTICE AND INTENTION SETTING**
- **NAVIGATE WITHIN THE WOODS**
 - **INVITATIONS (5 - 20MIN ACTIVE MEDITATIONS) DESIGNED TO ENGAGE ALL OF YOUR SENSES AS YOU SLOWLY NAVIGATE THROUGH THE WOODS**
- **REENTER TAME SOCIETY**
 - **CLOSING TEA SERVICE, JOURNALING PRACTICE**

THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF ANY MINDFULNESS PRACTICE IS IT IS YOUR PRACTICE. THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO PRACTICE

THIS IS A GUIDE, TAKE WHAT YOU WANT AND LEAVE THE REST

THE BASICS: WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

DRESS FOR THE WEATHER, YOU WILL BE WALKING AT A RELATIVELY SLOW PACE, TAKING BREAKS, OBSERVING. TO START, I RECOMMEND PRIORITIZING YOUR PHYSICAL COMFORT

WATER? YOUR CALL, YOU MAY BE IN THE WOODS FOR AN HOUR OR MORE

SPECIALIZED SHOES OR GEAR? NOT REALLY...

ELECTRONICS? BRING WHAT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH, MAYBE YOU WANT TO LISTEN TO MUSIC, MAYBE YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO TAKE PHOTOS OR NOTES, MAYBE YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO CALL IF YOU GET LOST?

NOTEBOOK AND PEN? THE FINAL INVITATION TO THIS PRACTICE IS A REFLECTION EXERCISE, YOU MAY WANT TO PONDER, WRITE OR BOTH

THE BASICS: WHAT TO LEAVE BEHIND

EXPECTATIONS. WHAT IS THERE IS WHAT IS THERE FOR YOU IN YOUR PRACTICE. THERE IS NO "GETTING BETTER" AT THE PRACTICE. YOUR LAST PRACTICE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NEXT ONE

DEVICES? JUST LIKE IN THE "WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU" SECTION, THIS IS HIGHLY UNIQUE TO YOU. PHONE, NO PHONE? WATCH, NO WATCH? MUSIC, NO MUSIC? CAMERA, NO CAMERA?

CRITICISM. YOU ARE EXPERIENCING THE WOODS MAYBE A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU HAVE IN THE PAST. SOME SELF-CRITICISM MAY BE PRESENT. YOU MAY BE WONDERING WHAT "OTHERS" ARE THINKING...THEY ARE NOT. THEY ARE NOT THINKING ABOUT YOU OR WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR ONE SECOND. THEY ARE IN THEIR OWN HEAD WONDERING WHAT YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT THEM...

INVITATIONS EXPLAINED

THIS NEXT SECTION IS INVITATIONS, THEY ARE ACTIVE MEDITATIONS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO ENGAGE ALL OF YOUR SENSES WHILE NAVIGATING THE WOODS

THESE ARE AVAILABLE THEY ARE NOT A PRESCRIPTION.

LIKE ALL INVITATIONS, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THEM OR NOT. THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY

EXAMPLE PRACTICE SESSION

ENTER THE WOODS (1-2 INVITATIONS)

5-15 MINS FOR EACH

NAVIGATE WITHIN THE WOODS (2-4 INVITATIONS)

10-20 MINS FOR EACH

**REENTERING TAME SOCIETY (1 REFLECTION +
TEA)**

10-20 MINS FOR REFLECTION

15-20 MINS FOR TEA

ENTERING THE WOODS-1

**STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND
COMFORTABLE TO YOU**

CLOSE YOUR EYES

**TAKE 4 DEEP SLOW BREATHS THROUGH YOUR
NOSE, INTO YOUR BELLY**

**FEEL THE WEATHER ON YOUR SKIN, HOW DOES
IT FEEL?**

LISTEN TO THE SOUNDS

**WIGGLE YOUR TOES, HOW DOES THE GROUND
FEEL IN YOUR SHOES, OR ON YOU FEET?**

**TAKE ONE MORE BREATH, FIND STILLNESS
AGAIN**

**OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND YOU AS IF
YOU WERE SEEING YOUR SURROUNDINGS FOR
THE FIRST TIME**

ENTERING THE WOODS-2

STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE TO YOU

FIND A ROCK THAT IS CALLING TO YOU

ASK PERMISSION FOR THE ROCK TO BE YOUR ROCK FOR THE DAY, WHEN IT FEELS RIGHT, PICK IT UP

TAKE 4 DEEP SLOW BREATHS

GET TO KNOW THE ROCK, FEEL ITS TEXTURE, WEIGHT, TEMPERATURE...

NOW, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND THINK OF WHAT'S WORRYING YOU, OR ON YOUR MIND RIGHT NOW

ASK THE ROCK IF IT WOULD HOLD THAT WORRY FOR YOU WHILE YOU GO INTO THE WOODS

AFTER GIVING YOUR WORRY OVER TO THE ROCK, TAKE ONE MORE SLOW DEEP BREATH

OPEN YOUR EYES, THANK THE ROCK, PLACE THE ROCK ON THE GROUND

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-1

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

MOVE. VERY. VERY. SLOWLY

**NOTICE AND OBSERVE EVERYTHING THAT IS IN
MOTION**

EVERYTHING. IN. MOTION.

**CONTINUE UNTIL YOU FEEL COMPLETE WITH THE
INVITATION**

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-2

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

STOP WHEN YOU NOTICE

TEMPERATURE, SMELL, LIGHT, OR BREEZE

OBSERVE IT

**WHEN YOU ARE READY, MOVE UNTIL YOU
NOTICE A CHANGE**

IN TEMPERATURE, SMELL, LIGHT, OR BREEZE

**CONTINUE UNTIL YOU FEEL COMPLETE WITH THE
INVITATION**

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-3

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

STOP WHEN YOU NOTICE

A COLOR

OBSERVE IT

**WHEN YOU ARE READY, MOVE UNTIL YOU
NOTICE A DIFFERENT COLOR**

**HOW IS IT SIMILAR TO THE PREVIOUS COLOR?
HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?**

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

**HOW IS THE FEELING SIMILAR? HOW IS IT
DIFFERENT?**

**CONTINUE UNTIL YOU FEEL COMPLETE WITH THE
INVITATION**

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-4

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

STOP WHEN YOU NOTICE

A TEXTURE YOU CAN GENTLY TOUCH

OBSEVE

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

**ARE YOU USING YOUR FINGERS, PALM, BACK OF
YOUR HAND?**

**BEING GENTLE AND CONSIDERATE, MEANDER
FROM ONE TEXTURE TO ANOTHER**

**CONTINUE UNTIL YOU FEEL COMPLETE WITH THE
INVITATION**

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-5

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

STOP WHEN YOU NOTICE

A SCENE

THE PERFECT FRAME

**AS THOUGH YOU WERE A PAINTER OR
PHOTOGRAPHER, OBSERVE THE ENTIRE FRAME**

**WHAT COLORS ARE PRESENT? WHAT
TEMPERATURES? WHAT TEXTURES?**

WHAT MESSAGE IS AVAILABLE?

**CONTINUE OBSERVING UNTIL YOU FEEL
COMPLETE WITH THE INVITATION**

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-6

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

STOP WHEN YOU NOTICE

CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT

WATER WAVES, WATER CURRENT

RAINFALL, SNOWFALL

**TRY TO WATCH JUST ONE (WAVE, CURRENT,
RAINDROP, SNOWFLAKE) ALL THE WAY
THROUGH YOUR LINE OF SIGHT**

MOVE TO THE NEXT

OBSERVE THE WHOLE SCENE

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

**CONTINUE OBSERVING UNTIL YOU FEEL
COMPLETE WITH THE INVITATION**

NAVIGATING WITHIN THE WOODS-7

**SLOWLY MOVE IN A DIRECTION THAT FEELS
RIGHT TO YOU**

STOP WHEN YOU NOTICE

A BIRD

CAN YOU SEE IT OR JUST HEAR IT? HOW MANY?

DIFFERENT KINDS?

**CONTINUE OBSERVING UNTIL YOU FEEL
COMPLETE WITH THE INVITATION**

REFLECTION EXERCISES

**FIND A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE
FOR YOU TO SIT**

**CHOOSE ONE OF THE REFLECTION EXERCISES
BELOW**

**FIND A TREE, WHAT IS ITS STORY? WHY DID IT CALL
TO YOU, HOW ARE YOU SIMILAR, HOW ARE YOU
DIFFERENT?**

**HOW DID THIS EXPERIENCE COME ABOUT? HOW
WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU HADN'T
TAKEN IT?**

**WHAT IS ONE THING THAT YOU CAN TAKE FROM THE
FOREST INTO TAME SOCIETY?**

**REFLECT ON EVERY DETAIL OF THE BEST DAY OR
MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE**

**WRITE A LETTER TO SOMEONE (YOU DON'T HAVE TO
SEND IT)**

WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR FUTURE SELF

WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR PAST SELF

REENTERING TAME SOCIETY

**STAND STILL IN A PLACE THAT FEELS SAFE AND
COMFORTABLE TO YOU**

CLOSE YOUR EYES, TAKE 4 DEEP SLOW BREATHS

BRING YOUR FOCUS TO YOUR FEET

**FEEL THE SOLES OF YOUR SHOES, THE GROUND
BENEATH YOUR FEET**

FEEL THE EARTH SUPPORTING YOU

**IMAGINE ROOTS EXTENDING INTO THE GROUND,
DEEP INTO THE EARTH**

**WHAT ARE YOU RECEIVING, WHAT ARE YOU
PROVIDING?**

**WHEN YOU FEEL COMPLETE WITH THE
INVITATION, OPEN YOUR EYES AS THOUGH YOU
ARE SEEING YOUR SURROUNDINGS FOR THE
FIRST TIME**

TEA?

**AT THE END OF THE PRACTICE, IT'S CUSTOMARY
TO ENJOY A TEA CEREMONY, IF POSSIBLE
STEEPED WITH SOME INGREDIENTS FOUND
DURING YOUR PRACTICE**

**IF YOU ARE WITH OTHERS, IT'S AN
OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN SHARING YOUR
EXPERIENCES**

**IF YOU ARE BY YOURSELF, IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY
TO NOURISH YOUR BODY AND FULLY PREPARE
TO REENTER TAME SOCIETY**

RESOURCES

GUIDED OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FARGO-MOORHEAD AREA

- NATURE OF THE NORTH

SOUNDS (VIA SPOTIFY)

- INTO THE WOODS
- THE ART OF FOREST BATHING: NATURE SOUNDS

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

- FARGO PARKS
- MOORHEAD PARKS
- NORTH DAKOTA STATE PARKS
- MINNESOTA STATE PARKS

DEEPER STUDY

- ASSOCIATION OF NATURE AND FOREST THERAPY
- LIFE OUT OF BOUNDS