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## Mirror of Nature & Threshold Walk

Mon, 20/10/2014 - 21:38 -- Steven Gasgarth

### **Type of tool:**

Activity

### **Duration:**

60-90 min

### **Topics addressed:**

Evaluation

Personal development

Communication

The Mirror of Nature and Threshold Walk are Nature-Based methods adapted and developed from modern rites of passage and vision quest work, themselves adapted and developed from traditional cultures.

### **Aim:**

The aim is to provide a nature-based method to help deal with ambiguity, decision making, self development, reflection - any number of things! The idea is that whatever is happening inside of ourselves is reflected out in the world, and vice versa.

### **Methodology:**

The methods are rooted in Nature-Based learning. It can be seen as part of outdoor education but is more connected to 'Deep Ecology' (Joanna Macey) and Ecopsychology.

### **Step by step process:**

MIRROR OF NATURE: (15 mins) The exercise is done in pairs, and you will follow these steps. (1) Person 1 walks and looks around until something catches their attention. It could be anything - something big, small, a colour, a part of something, a group of trees, the sky etc. (2) When they have found something they stop and indicate to their partner that they have found something. (3) Person 2 asks "What do you see?". (4) Person 1 describes, literally, what they are looking at, for example "I see a group of small trees with the blue sky behind". (5) Person 2 then asks "What does it mean to you?". (6) Person 1 checks inside and says what it means to them. This can include their reaction to it, what it made them feel, if it triggered a memory, saying how what they see represents what is happening inside them, or how it relates to something happening in their lives now. (7) Person 2 does not need to comment on this, just listen (there will be time for discussion after). (8) When person 1 has finished they can show they are ready, and then walk, looking around again until the next thing catches their attention. (9) Repeat these steps for 5 minutes, then swap over so Person 2 is looking and Person 1 asking the questions - for 5 minutes also. (10). After the 10 minutes is over, ask people to discuss in pairs how the exercise was for them and if it was useful in any way. They can swap pairs for this.

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**THRESHOLD WALK (35 minutes)**. This walk can last from around 15 minutes to many hours (or more!). We have used it as a step in preparing for a 24 solo, which is like a 24 hour threshold walk. The 24 solo is also adapted from 'Vision Quest' or 'Vision Fast' work. You can use this to ask any questions - and they can be as light, easy or deep, serious as you want - just remember the time limit. Of course you can find insights fast... or in time.

**The steps.** (1) Find a question about something in your life or work. It can be a big or small question - it is up to you, and this is a short version of the method. For example "How do I develop my career?", "What is my passion?" or "What is my next step in life?". Take 1-2 minutes for this. (2) Create your own threshold from the resources around you. You can use an everyday object, as it is, or create something using natural materials. You can also find something that already exists to use (a tree root, a park bench - whatever). The threshold marks your entrance and exit to a space where nature is your mirror. You can choose how it is for you. (3) In this space & time where nature is more consciously your mirror - you can take it or see it as you choose. Some choose to see it as a magical world, some an opportunity for a different perspective, for some a space where you are more open to answers and for some it is a special time where they are alone with nature. It is up to you, and you can also experiment. (4) Remember your question/s. When on your walk, look to what catches your attention and ask yourself the questions from the Mirror of Nature method - "What do I see" and "What does it mean to me". You can also follow your body. You might feel like your legs want to take you in another direction than your mind does, so let them, and see what you find. (5) You will have around 15 minutes for your walk. After 15 minutes the facilitator will make a non-verbal sound - for example using tibetan meditation bells is nice! If you are too far away you might not be able to hear them. SO, you can either remain within sight of me and in hearing range of the bells, or those of you with watches or phones, you can set an alarm for 15 minutes and go your own way, and come back after the alarm (or just notice the time) - keeping in mind that it is good to be back with the group within a few minutes so we can finish together! (6) Remember when you come back, to cross your own threshold again - and mark the transition back to the "normal" world, and the end of your walk. (7) When you are ready, you can cross your threshold. You can also do this how you like - just by crossing, by acknowledging it somehow, by something more spiritual - it is up to you and your own feelings. You can always try something new or more edgy - something outside your usual comfort zone. (7) After 15 minutes call participants back with the non verbal sound (bells or what you choose). (8) When back, and everyone has crossed their threshold, share in new groups of 2 or 3 - each share 3 things that were interesting, inspiring or useful during your walk. You can share 1 thing at a time each to take care of time. This last step can be done on the walk back to the venue - especially if it is cold!

### **Materials and resources:**

Access to outdoors, preferably nature space.

This method can be applied anywhere however - in a city, inside - however to begin with the more varied and interesting visual stimuli there is, the easier it may be for some people to access.

I personally like the use of outdoor natural spaces as for me it gives the added values of connecting directly to nature, being outside in the fresh air and it is easier to be alone when surrounded by engaging nature.

### **Outcomes:**

Clarity or insight into a current issue or question.

Increased understanding of self.

Non-verbal experience.

### **Evaluation:**

Not evaluated.

Feedback from the session at the Tool Fair should be posted below.

I would like to hear more where this could be used - and any adaptations!

I have uploaded a word document in addition to the PDF so you can use/adapt/translate etc however you wish.

### Notes for further use:

Exercises adapted from Joanna Macey's work - by LPCS.

For more information on Nature-Based methods...

[www.joannamacy.net](http://www.joannamacy.net) [1]

[www.schooloflostborders.org](http://www.schooloflostborders.org) [2]

[www.JonYoung.org](http://www.JonYoung.org) [3]

[www.naturalchange.co.uk](http://www.naturalchange.co.uk) [4]

[stevengasgarth@gmail.com](mailto:stevengasgarth@gmail.com) [5]

AND...

Check this from the new ONLINE Tools for Learning magazine - an article from a colleague and friend of mine - we work together using these kinds of tools & methods...

[www.toolsforlearning.org/entering-rabbit-hole](http://www.toolsforlearning.org/entering-rabbit-hole) [6]

### Rating:

Average: 4 (3 votes)

### Documents/handouts:

 [Mirror of Nature & Threshold Walk.doc](#) [7]

 [Mirror of Nature & Threshold Walk.pdf](#) [8]

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### Links

[1] <http://www.joannamacy.net>

[2] <http://www.schooloflostborders.org>

[3] <http://www.JonYoung.org>

[4] <http://www.naturalchange.co.uk>

[5] <mailto:stevengasgarth@gmail.com>

[6] <http://www.toolsforlearning.org/entering-rabbit-hole>

[7] [http://educationaltoolsportal.eu/en/system/files/documents-handouts/Mirror%20of%20Nature%20%26%20Threshold%20Walk\\_0.doc](http://educationaltoolsportal.eu/en/system/files/documents-handouts/Mirror%20of%20Nature%20%26%20Threshold%20Walk_0.doc)

[8] <http://educationaltoolsportal.eu/en/system/files/documents-handouts/Mirror%20of%20Nature%20%26%20Threshold%20Walk.pdf>