

# Mirror of Nature & Threshold Walk

## THE METHOD

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 the work and practices of traditional cultures. These methods are part of an area of methodologies termed 'Nature-Based'. They can be seen as part of outdoor education but are more connected to the field of 'Deep Ecology' - a term used by Joanna Macey.

## 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.

## RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED

Depending on the space used, participants may need a watch or mobile phone to monitor the time. If the walk is for a longer time, or the environment is potentially noisy - then watches/phones are a good idea. Ideally this session would be held outdoors in a natural space and you would use something like a Djembe drum - something with a nice, soft and deep sound that can be heard far away.

## THE STEPS

### **Preparatory Exercise 1** (2 minutes)

Sit in a circle, and do the following short visualisation exercise - lasting 1 minute. This is a method to bring the group together in 1 minute using what is usually and hopefully a common experience - that also involves a positive experience in nature.

1. Close your eyes
2. Remember a special time when you were outside, in nature, at night - with friends or family... maybe around a camp fire or sleeping outside somewhere.
3. See if you can remember a time when you looked up at the night sky, the stars, and were amazed - in awe of nature and of being alive.
4. Take a look up at those stars again, have a look around you.
5. Notice who is there with you, what is around you.
6. Notice how you feel... and bring that feeling back with you into the room and open your eyes.
5. Thank you.
6. Please share what you imagined with your next door neighbour for 1-2 minutes.
7. Ask for a few snapshots in the large group.

### **Session Overview** (5-10 minutes)

Methods  
Timing  
Aims

### **Mirror of Nature**

The concept of this method is that whatever is happening inside of ourselves is reflected out in the world, and vice versa. It is a method adapted from Psychotherapy, Deep Ecology, Eco Psychology and from nature-based rites of passage work.

### **Threshold Walk**

This method uses the Mirror of Nature method during the format of a walk - usually in nature. It's origins are in the work and practices of traditional cultures all over the world, including around Rites of Passage work.

The 'Threshold' itself marks the point where you start and also finish your walk.

### **Preparatory Exercise 2** (5-10 minutes)

To take place on the way from your meeting place to the place where you will start the Mirror of Nature Exercise.

Give all the instructions before you leave (you will lead the group as they walk).

1. We will walk alone, in silence, to the place where we will start the next exercise. I will lead.
2. As you walk, focus on the sounds around you.
3. Listen for the sounds closest to you.. and the sounds the farthest away.
4. Check if you can hear any natural sounds - see which different ones, and if they are close or far.
5. If you can hear birds, check how many different kinds of birds you can hear.
6. Go on the walk
7. When you finish you can ask for 2-3 comments on what kinds of sounds were heard.

### **Mirror of Nature** (25 minutes)

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.

## **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.

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.
  8. After 15 minutes call participants back with the non verbal sound (bells or what you choose).
  9. 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!***

## **Ending of the session** (10 minutes)

1. Come back into the large group
2. Take 5 minutes in the group for any comments or questions about the session.

## **RESOURCES**

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

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

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

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

[Natural Change WWF Project](#)

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