

Cultivating a Sense of Wonder with the Natural World Through the Practice of Mindfulness

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Abstract

We begin with the assumption that our wellbeing benefits from both *experiencing a sense of wonder* and an *engagement with the natural world*. We explore the current divide between humans and nature, as well as the importance of a close relationship with nature. Humans are part of the natural world and completely dependent upon it. However, as our world becomes more urbanized we find ourselves increasingly alienated from nature. Bai has suggested that by the time we reach adulthood, many of us are largely emptied of that “animated sensuous perception of the world.” In order to reanimate that perception it is necessary to not merely be *in* nature, but to be *with* nature. We propose that if our engagement with the natural world has the quality of *being with nature*, that is, seeing oneself as wholly interconnected with nature, then this may lead to the cultivation of *a sense of wonder* with the natural world. The practice of mindfulness, or focusing our awareness and attention, can contribute to the ability to experience a sense of wonder with nature and the quality of that experience. The implications with regards to the field of education for sustainable wellbeing are explored.