



Nature

W*e are* Nature

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Bringing therapy to life.

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A G_{rounding} M_{oment}.

(A different kind of AGM!)

Find somewhere comfy, where you can sit, lie, or stand for a few moments.

Let's begin by grounding down into our feet. Notice where your body is in contact with the ground beneath you. If you're standing, maybe spread your toes. If you're sitting or lying down, allow your body to soften into the ground. Maybe imagine you're like a strong tree, anchored into the ground by its roots. If that image speaks to you, follow it and see where it leads. Perhaps picture your own roots plugged in to the earth, drawing nourishment from the ground; allow yourself to let go of anything that isn't serving you, let that compost down into the ground.

Notice how gravity is holding you in place. Beneath you, there is rock that is billions of years old. Above you, there are stars and planets that go further than we can even imagine. We are tiny specks of life in a vast universe.

Most of the elements in our human bodies were formed in the stars. Our bodies are up to 75% water. Some of the water in your body right now is billions of years old, perhaps you are part waterfall, or ocean.

Before we end this short meditation, I'd like to invite you to consider all of the ways that you are a part of nature. What do you share in common with a tree, or a butterfly, or an ocean?

When you open your eyes, see if you can notice some different examples of nature in your immediate surroundings.



Defining Nature

I was curious about how nature is defined in the English Dictionary - here are a couple of definitions.

Nature: *Noun*

“The phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the world, as opposed to humans or human creations”.

“All the animals, plants, rocks etc. in the world and all the features, forces, and processes that happen or exist independently of people, such as the weather, the sea, mountains, the production of young animals or plants, and growth”.

“The force that is responsible for physical life and that is sometimes spoken of as a person”.

Self-Reflection Prompts

- *What comes to mind when you think of nature?*
- *How would **you** define nature?*
- *Would you make a distinction between humans and nature, or do you see them as connected?*
- *Do you personally feel a part of nature, or does it feel something separate to you?*
- *How would you describe your relationship with nature (if indeed you feel that you have one)?*



Self-Discovery Prompts

These questions are designed to help you reflect on what nature means to you personally, the role it plays in your day to day life, and your experiences of nature. You don't have to answer all of them, and certainly not all in one go, unless you want to!

- When you reflect on your childhood or younger years, did you spend much time outdoors/in nature?
- What are some of your childhood memories of times in nature?

(I can remember a handful of occasions at primary school, on warm, summery days when the teacher took us outside for the lesson. We sat under the shade of a tree and it felt like such a treat!).

- Do you feel a connection with nature? How strong is that connection nowadays? And when you were younger?
- How much time do you typically spend outdoors? Does it feel like enough?
- What does nature (your definition) bring to your life
- How important is nature to you?
- What are your favourite activities to enjoy outdoors?
- Do you celebrate or mark any events in nature, for example, the summer or winter solstice, a Strawberry Moon, May Day, the Spring or Autumn equinox, or local phenomena like the Mackerel season in Hastings etc?



Self-Reflection Prompts

- Do you have a favourite season/time of year? When? What do you love about it?
- Do you have a least favourite season/time of year? When? Can you think of one thing that you enjoy about this period?
- When / where do you feel most at-one with nature?
- Do you have a favourite place in nature? The beach, the hills, a lake, a mountain, a forest, a garden?
- How do you feel when you're there?
- How/do you enjoy nature in your home?
- What has nature taught you over the years? What lessons have you taken from time spent in nature?
- What are some of the things that get in the way of you spending more time outdoors/in nature (if this is something you would like to do more of)?
- How do your friends/family/colleagues enjoy or benefit from time in nature?
- How/would you like to build nature-time into your life?



The Biophilia Hypothesis - The human affinity with the natural, living world.

Back in 1984, a biologist named Edward O. Wilson introduced the biophilia hypothesis, proposing that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life.

These days there is plenty of research to suggest that time in nature helps us to recover from stress, and improves our sense of well-being. Therapists and mindfulness practitioners regularly build in nature informed approaches to augment treatment plans for clients with struggles ranging from psychosis, through to depression, anxiety, stress and burn-out.

Whether it's the ancient practice of shirin-yoku (forest bathing), horticultural and surfing programs for ex-veterans experiencing PTSD, or nature-walks for children with ADHD, the restorative effects of time spent in/with nature are well-documented.

Whilst it is unarguably important to spend time outdoors, modern life can make this difficult - In fact, research suggests that in Europe we spend around 85-90% of our time indoors. This is perhaps where biophilic design principles can be helpful.

Biophilic design endeavours to take inspiration from, and incorporate nature in indoor spaces, such as our homes, schools, hospitals, or workplaces.



B Bringing Biophilic Design to your own spaces

There are lots of books and resources available to learn more about this if your interest has been piqued - for now I'll just share a few low cost ideas to help bring nature into your own spaces.

- Clean the windows to let in light
- Position your furniture/desk/chair so that you can see outdoors
- Open your windows to feel a breeze and watch the shadow patterns created on the walls
- Hang/display paintings or photographs of nature
- Use natural materials for haptic pleasure - wood, bamboo, cork, linen etc
- Share your space with plants, pets, and other living things
- Take inspiration for interior decorating from the colours, patterns, and textures found in your favourite places in nature
- Change your screen saver to display images of the natural world; Follow a couple of nature accounts on social media (even looking at a photo of nature online has been shown to have positive effects!)
- Take regular screen breaks - 40/20
- Fairy lights and glitterballs can mimic dappled light, and candle light or open fires are a great source of non-rhythmic sensory stimulation (take care with these!).
- Create a reading nook or cosy corner (or a den!).



Resources

Books

Losing Eden - Why our minds need the wild. Lucy Jones.

Designing a Healthy Home - 100 ways to transform your physical and mental well-being. Oliver Heath

Happy Inside - Michelle Ogundehin

Biophilia - Edward. O. Wilson

Blue Mind - How water makes you happier, more connected and better at what you do. Wallace J Nichols

Mindfulness in Nature -

The Almanac -

Wild and Wellbeing (card deck). Vanessa Bear

Podcasts

Wildheart (The Wild Academy)

Journal of Biophilic Design

Websites

Oliver Heath Design

Apps

Merlin Bird ID

Optional Extras

Activities to try

- Take a nature walk (you can do this on your commute, or a walk to the shops for example, this doesn't need to be a full-on ramble!). Even in cities and built-up areas it's possible to find wildlife and nature. Notice the green tufts and wild flowers growing in the pavement cracks, look out for grass verges packed with daisies and dandelions, spot different types of trees, birds, or insects. Look up to the sky and watch the clouds. You'll be amazed how much you see when you start to look.
- Plant something and nurture it. Herb seeds, cress, a tomato plant, whatever fits with your space. Marvel at the shoots that emerge from the tiny seed you plant, and if you're lucky, maybe you can enjoy the fruits of your labour too!
- Go litter-picking. This can be nice to do as part of an organised group, you can find out what's in your area [here](#) or on Facebook, The UK Litterpicking Groups. Alternatively, you could take a bag and some gloves with you when you go for a walk and gather as you go.
- Try implementing one or two ideas from the biophilic design suggestions in this booklet to harness the restorative effects of the natural world inside your home/work/study space.
- Spend some time with animals - This could be walking your dog, petting your cat or guinea pig, feeding your fish etc. Or if you don't/can't have pets, you could try wildlife-watching, volunteering at a nature reserve or rescue centre, or taking part in a national wildlife survey like one of these: <https://www.countryfile.com/go-outdoors/top-10-wildlife-studies-and-surveys-to-get-involved-with>





I hope you have found this guide helpful. Don't forget that you can :

Follow me on Instagram [@navigationforliving](https://www.instagram.com/navigationforliving)

Come along to an in-person event (See my website for upcoming events and/or sign up for my monthly newsletter - www.makingyourway.co.uk)

[Book a 1:1 therapy session](#) with me

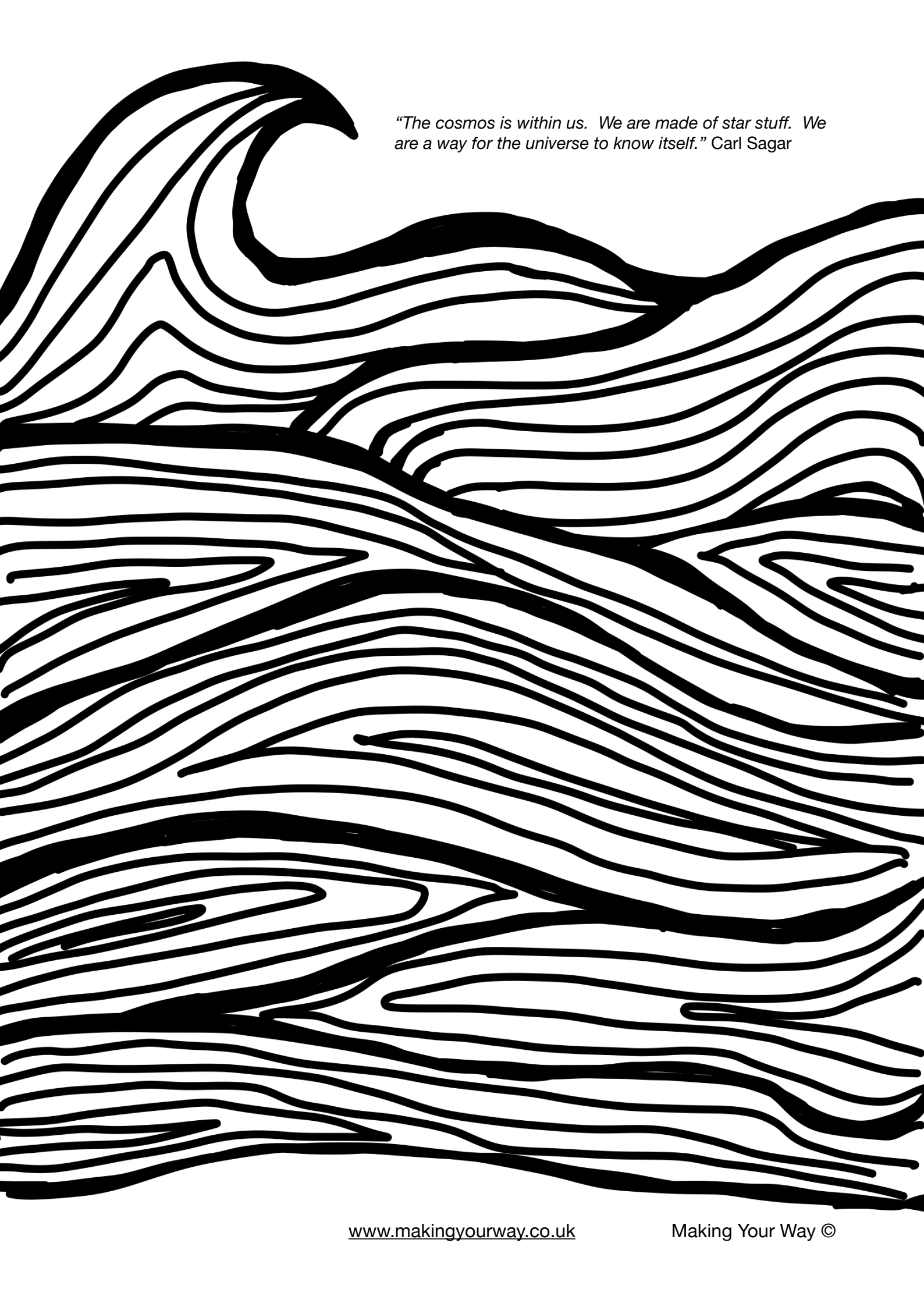
[Get in touch](#) to discuss group sessions (ranging from self-discovery parties through to corporate away-days and workshops or wellness training events).

Check out my [online shop](#) for goodies (including my guided self-discovery journal)

I'd love to hear from you :)

Jo



The image features a large, abstract graphic of black, wavy lines on a white background, resembling ocean waves or a stylized representation of the universe. The lines are thick and fluid, creating a sense of movement and depth. In the upper right corner, there is a quote in a serif font.

"The cosmos is within us. We are made of star stuff. We are a way for the universe to know itself." Carl Sagan