

CHAPTER 9

Become a Relative to All that Is

DISCIPLINE NUMBER NINE

The noble warrior becomes a relative to the earth and to all that it is.



Lesson

Many people who have grown up in the Western Judeo-Christian culture have lost touch with their connection to the earth and all that is in it. Perhaps because there has been so much emphasis in particular religions on the value of the spiritual as opposed to the natural, people have fallen into a sense of alienation from nature, even a fear of it. Add to this the birth of science and technology, with its accompanying philosophy, which preaches to us that there is no real mystery in the world around us, and that any notion of nature as being a reflection and connection to the spiritual world is purely superstition perpetuated by the ignorant and uneducated. No wonder people feel so disconnected. This has been an unfortunate circumstance, and has led to much of the disrespect and outright abuse of mother earth.

This has begun to turn around among those who are awakening to their responsibility towards the earth, and those who are reconnecting through exposure to various spiritual philosophies and religions of what are often called “primitive cultures” more in touch with nature. The philosophy of the warrior, as it is collected from a variety of cultures around the world, is one such philosophy which honors the earth and integrates with it. The warrior knows the earth and sky, intimately, and on many different levels.

The fact is that the human race is a relative to all that is. The warrior senses this and respects all aspects of nature because of this kinship. The warrior not only honors mother earth but does everything possible to protect the earth, and to teach others to do so. This is because the warrior of the spirit recognizes that the earth is not only kin, but is a great teacher and supporter. The earth is as a mirror in which the warrior can not only see reflections of self and the spirit, but behold the face of God. Through a knowledge of symbolism, that each component of nature has a corresponding value and meaning on a spiritual level, the warrior is able to use nature as a teacher and mentor, confirming truths of revelation and insights from meditative thought. Nature, as an ally, sparks new thought and awareness. It comforts, consoles, and offers healing to the spiritual warrior.

Becoming intimately familiar with the earth, and respecting nature as an ally, the warrior is never alone and is always at home. The sun is always there to remind the warrior of God’s love, or of the vitality of the human heart and spirit. The moon reminds the warrior of the faith that can lighten the darkest mind and give hope in times of confusion and despair. The earth, grass, trees, and herb bring the warrior assurance of stability and the promise of growth. The variety of animals and birds who inhabit the earth are so many living symbols of myriads of thoughts and feelings, guides on the spiritual journey as it unfolds on the natural plane. All of these containing countless meanings and lessons from the Creator, because the Creator constantly moves and breathes life into each and every aspect of creation, allowing for perpetual existence, and meaning.

The spiritual warrior is urged to awaken to not only the spirit, but the natural world surrounding all of us, to honor, respect, learn from this world, to sense and know with deep understanding that we are not strangers, but a relative to all that is.

Gems from the Masters

To come to know the world is to be wise.
To come to know oneself is to be enlightened.
To come to know the Universe is to be one with all.

Blackwolf (Robert Jones)

If you know the other, and know yourself,
Victory will not be at risk;
If you know the earth, and know the sky,
Victory can be total.

Sun Tzu

Hear me, four quarters of the world-
A relative I am!
Give me the strength to walk the soft earth,
A relative to all that is!
Give me the eyes to see and the strength to understand,
That I may be like you.
With your power only can I face the winds.

Black Elk

The voice of the Great Spirit is heard
In the twittering of the birds,
The rippling of mighty waters,
And the sweet breathing of flowers.
If this is Paganism,
Then at present,
At least,
I am a Pagan.

Gertrude Simmons Bonnin

The earth and myself
Are of one mind.
The measure of the land
And the measure of our bodies
Are the same.

Chief Joseph

For a warrior,
Respect begins with our relationship
to Grandmother earth.
The reason our respect begins here
has to do with the fact that
Without the support of the earth
We can't survive.
Just as the health of an infant
is dependent on the health of the mother,
So our well-being
is dependent on the health of Grandmother Earth.
Without this basic understanding
The warrior's training is incomplete.

Dawn Callan

To achieve the mood of a warrior
Is not a simple matter.
It is a revolution.
To regard the lion
And the water rats
And our fellow men
as equals
Is a magnificent act
of the warrior's spirit.
It takes power to do that.

Carlos Castaneda

To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

William Blake



Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion

What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited, and why did it strike you as such?

Are there particular animals with which you feel a strong connection? Which and why?

What can you do to help preserve Mother Earth that you are not doing already?

Meditation

You can experience this meditation while sitting comfortably, or you may want to actually stand up and follow the directions. We are going to do an adapted Native American process of honoring the directions. The directions are symbolic of different directions of our lives, different states of mind that we experience and the realities associated with them.

Relax and take a deep breath. Let it out. Let yourself be present right here and right now. All of creation is your friend and ally. It is beautiful and like beholding God in a mirror. Honor that beautiful image. In your mind's eye see yourself on the top of a mountain. The sky is above you and the earth under your feet below.

Stand up. Now look up into the beautiful sky. See the blue sky, the clouds, the sun, moon and stars. Raise your hands to the sky. The sky is symbolic of the Creator, the force of life which lives and moves in all things, the creator of life and the source of spirit. We honor the sky and ask for its blessings. We thank the Creator for breathing into us the breath of life that we may be living beings. May the sky watch over us and bless us and guide us in all that we do.

Now look down and squat down and touch the earth with both hands. The earth is like our mother, feeding, supporting and sustaining us. We honor mother earth for her love, beauty, protection, groundedness. We pray that people may awaken to the responsibilities of the earth, to protect her so that she may continue to bear fruit and to sustain all the life upon her. We ask for the blessings of the earth, for centeredness, strength, creativity, enduring love.

Stand and face the north. The north is associated with the color white. It is the winter time, the night. It is the land of the two-legged and four-legged, of the great white bear, wolf and coyote. The north is cold and filled with snow. In our lives the north represents the struggle. It is often called the hard road, where we trudge through the snow, we fall and rise again. It is often a place of obscurity when the wind blows hard and we cannot see our way through the blinding storm. But it is through this time in our lives that we can learn much. The north often teaches us the hard lessons of life. We learn when we fall and get back up again. We learn from our mistakes, and the storms are often followed by those crystal clear and cold winter days when we can see for miles. We do not hide from the north. We know that we will struggle, make mistakes, sometimes lose our way. But we also know that we will rise, continue our journey, and learn from the struggle. The truths we learn are lessons we never forget, for these lessons have been earned by our pain. We honor the north, this necessary time in our lives, and we do not refuse its blessings.

Turn and face the east. The east is often associated with the color red. It is the morning when the sun rises and chases away the darkness of night. It is the springtime and the beginning of new life. It is the land of the eagle, which soars above, with keen sight and steadfast resolution. The east is where many temples face in love and reverence to the Divine. It is symbolic of rebirth, enlightenment, the budding of love and integrity. We enter the east in our lives when we truly begin to not only see the way but to walk in that way. New beginnings, new love, new hope is born within us. The east of our lives is a time of not only understanding the nature of our lives but perceiving the purpose of our lives. May we be filled with gladness and relief and the sun rises in our lives, and we no longer shiver in the darkness. May we rejoice as the ice melts, the earth thaws, and new life grows within us in the warmth of the spring's sun. We honor the east, and we ask that we may live in the light of this spiritual sun, and have the sight of the eagle, the freedom of flight, and the joy of growth.

Turn and face the south. The south is often associated with the color yellow. The south is the summer and midday, and also a time of growth, fruitfulness, and success. In some cultures it is symbolic of true wisdom. In others it is a time happiness and prosperity. Some Native American cultures say this is the land of the "mice people" who have lived for ages and ages, humble creatures, unassuming, adaptable, content with their lot while others struggle. It is also called the land of many waters. The south is symbolic of the richness and joy in our lives. It is a time when we break through and have victory over our shortcomings. We make good progress. It is a time when we do seem to be filled with wisdom, not only believing, or seeing, but

knowing the way, and feeling the presence of the Creator gently leading us. It is a time of good success, when things go right for us. We eat of the fruit of the land, and there is abundance. We honor this southern state of our lives, and we rejoice with great joy when we dwell in the south.

Turn and face the west. The west is associated with the color black. It is the fall and the evening. The west is associated with death. Death is a natural part of life. We should not fear it. Things die so that they may be reborn. Many things in us need to die, our mistaken wants and desires, our pride, selfishness, fears. The old person must die so that the new one can be conceived. Therefore we do not fear the west, but welcome it. We pray for courage to let go of those things within us that harm us. We ask for the courage to pass through the darkness into the light. Though death comes to all things, rebirth follows. We honor the west and welcome the changes that must necessarily take place in our lives so that passing through the west we find new life. Now look down at your heart, and place your hands on your chest. Some cultures honor the final direction. It is the direction within. Honor that place in your heart where life flows into you from the Creator. Honor the birth of spirit, your origin in the Creator, and source of your being.

Open your eyes and see the world around you. Do you feel more connected to it? How could you not? You are a kin to all that is.



Process

You are going to travel outside to do this process. If you are in the country, go into your back yard or somewhere nearby where nature surrounds you. If you live in the city, you may have to make a field trip for this process, or at least walk to a nearby park. Get out into nature. You are going to spend a very brief time in a sacred and meditative observance of nature. Find a spot in nature which seems like a good place to sit. Perhaps under a tree, on a rock, on a bench overlooking a field, river, etc.. Sit quietly for one half hour. (If you have time, do it for an hour.) As you sit observe what you see. Really observe. Move your head occasionally in order to scan the entire 365 degree horizon around you. Notice the wind on the grass and trees. Listen to the wind. Notice the birds. Listen intently. After awhile animals may appear from their hiding places, chipmunks, squirrels, perhaps even deer or other animals depending upon your location. You must pay attention. Meditation is awareness. This is a nature meditation. Continue to observe what you see. When your mind begins to wander, bring it back to the nature around you. Ask the Creator or the universe to show you things you have never seen before. Open not only your eyes but your spirit to receiving what is around you. Work through any anxiousness that may develop. Your body and spirit may not be used to sitting quietly for so long. Let the pace of nature which surrounds you enter into you and become your pace. Be still. Sit quietly for the allotted time and note what you see and what you learn. Notice the changes in your disposition and in your body. If in a group, return after the allotted time and share your experience. Perhaps you can make this process a regular part of your week. Nature is an ally and a healer. Respect it. Love it. Learn from it.



What are your closing thoughts about becoming a Relative to All that Is?

End this lesson with a prayer.