

Class 3 – Illuminating Human Potential

Reconnecting with Nature

1. Why Nature Is So Good for Us

Our bodies are ancient hardware running modern software. Nature supports us on multiple levels at once.

Nervous System Regulation

- Lowers cortisol (stress hormone)
- Activates parasympathetic “rest and digest” response
- Slows heart rate and deepens breathing
- Reduces muscle tension

Mental Clarity & Focus

- Nature creates **soft fascination** (effortless attention)
- Improves creativity, memory, and concentration
- Gives the brain a break from constant stimulation

Light & Mood

- Sunlight regulates circadian rhythm
- Supports vitamin D production
- Associated with lower anxiety and depressive symptoms

Immune Support

- Trees release phytoncides → boost natural killer cell activity
- Even viewing trees improves healing and recovery

Natural Movement

- Engages stabilising muscles
 - Feels more like play than exercise
 - Builds resilience
-

2. How Much Nature Do We Need?

You don't need to live in a forest.

- **5–10 minutes** outdoors can lower stress
- **120 minutes per week** linked to better wellbeing
- Consistency matters more than intensity

Examples:

- 20 minutes daily
 - Two longer weekend walks
 - “Nature snacks” throughout the week
-

3. If You Don't Have Access to Wilderness

Think **green exposure**, not wilderness.

- Parks, gardens, tree-lined streets
- Water features (fountains, rivers, canals)
- Houseplants indoors
- Natural light and organic textures

Micro-Noticing Practice

- Watch leaves move
- Follow clouds for 30 seconds
- Notice changing light
- Listen for birds or wind

Mindful attention turns outdoor time into nervous-system medicine.

4. We Are Not Separate from Nature

Scientifically

- Your body is made of stardust elements
- Atoms are constantly recycled
- You are in continuous exchange with air, water, food
- You are an ecosystem (microbiome)

Biologically

- Circadian rhythm synced to sunlight
- Hormones respond to seasons
- Nervous system evolved for wind, birdsong, water—not notifications

Philosophically

- The self is relational, not separate
- You are a temporary pattern in nature

Reminder:

I am not in nature. I am nature, momentarily busy.

5. Why Modern Life Feels Disconnected

This is structural, not personal.

Modern demands:

- Notifications
- Deadlines
- Artificial light
- Sedentary living
- Constant output

Your biology expects:

- Intensity → completion → rest
- Seasonal variation
- Day/night cycles
- Movement and sunlight

Without this rhythm:

- Anxiety = mobilisation without movement
- Burnout = shutdown when rest never comes

Neither means you're broken.

6. Seasonal Living

Humans are circadian and circannual beings.

Spring

- Emergence, curiosity
- Start small projects
- Eat tender greens

Summer

- Expression, collaboration
- Social energy
- Eat hydrating fruits & vegetables

Autumn

- Completion, integration
- Declutter and review
- Eat root vegetables & nuts

Winter

- Rest, reflection, repair
- Lower output is natural
- Eat hearty, warming foods

Modern culture lives in permanent summer. Your body doesn't.

7. Seasonal Eating (Quick Guide)

| Season | Foods | Supports |
|--------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Spring | Leafy greens, herbs | Renewal, digestion |
| Summer | Berries, tomatoes, melons | Hydration, energy |
| Autumn | Squash, roots, apples | Immunity, grounding |
| Winter | Grains, soups, fatty fish | Warmth, sustenance |

Seasonal eating supports:

- Digestive efficiency
- Energy balance
- Mood regulation
- Ecological alignment

8. Green & Blue Environments

Green (Forests, Gardens)

- Lowers blood pressure
- Promotes safety & shelter
- Supports focus and regulation

Green says: “You’re held. You can relax.”

Blue (Water, Sky)

- Induces calm alertness
- Reduces rumination
- Expands perspective
- Encourages awe

Blue says: “You’re okay — and there’s more.”

Together: Green grounds the body - Blue opens the mind

Even brief blue exposure helps:

- Look at the sky for 60 seconds
- Sit near water
- Watch rain
- Use natural daylight

9. Small Daily Practices

Anchor to the Sky

Look up once or twice daily for 30–60 seconds.

Walk Without Optimising

No podcast. No destination pressure.

Touch Real Things

Soil, wood, stone, water.

Mark Transitions

Pause between tasks. Exhale slowly. Feel your feet on the ground.

Let Awe Land

Don't immediately photograph it.

Prompt:

- Recall a time in nature when you felt calm or clear.
- What did you see, hear, feel?

Questions:

- What shifted in your body just remembering it?
- What qualities did that environment provide
- Highlight nervous system shift.
- Notice how quickly memory triggers regulation.

“The body remembers safety faster than the mind believes it.”

10. Guided Reflection

Imagine your life as a landscape moving through seasons.

Spring comes — you begin, you explore.

Summer comes — you create, you express.

Autumn comes — you integrate, you release.

Winter comes — you rest, you withdraw.

See them passing.

Now ask yourself:

What remains when all the seasons move through?

If your energy changes... what doesn't change?

If your motivation rises and falls... what is still here?

If roles fall away — job, identity, expectations — what remains?"

Pause.

Is it awareness?

Curiosity?

Compassion?

Steadiness?

Presence?

“If your life is weather... what is the sky?”

Let silence sit for 60–90 seconds.

“If green represents safety and blue represents openness...

What colour is your eternal season?”

Let this statement settle in - “I am not my season. I am the space the season moves through.”

write freely:

- My eternal season feels like...
 - When everything changes, this remains...
 - The quality in me that doesn't disappear is...
 - When I'm not striving or collapsing, I am...
-

Questions

- What did you discover?
 - Was it easy or difficult to access?
 - How often do you relate to yourself from this deeper place?
-

Integration

- How does remembering your “eternal season” change your relationship to burnout?
- How does it shift your experience of anxiety?
- What happens when identity is not tied to productivity?

Remember -Seasons change – And the sky does not panic about weather.

Why This Exercise Works

Modern life train's identity around output and energy.

This exercise:

- Reduces over-identification with productivity
- Supports nervous system stability
- Builds resilience during low-energy phases
- Encourages non-reactive self-awareness

You are allowed to have seasons, and you are allowed to be more than them.

