

Facilitating nature connection means creating space for participants to slow down, awaken their senses and build a personal, emotional relationship with the natural world while feeling safe, listened to and engaged. The facilitator's role is to hold space, create an open atmosphere where participants can connect with nature in their own

unique and meaningful ways. The facilitator can do this if s/he is fully present with participants and nature, listening beyond words, and adapts intuitively to the group's energy and the natural surroundings, allowing the process to unfold organically.

## EXPERIENCE: CONNECT TO A TREE

Make sure people stand relaxed and alert when you read through the following instructions. Ensure them that it is OK just listen to the invitation and remember as much as they can. Use a natural tone, and give instructions in a slow and steady rhythm. You may alter the sequence of the instructions, or choose only parts of it.

"Choose a tree that awakens your interest, one that speaks to you, that ignites your curiosity. Stand in front of the tree. Take a few minutes to ground yourself with your eyes closed. Scan throughout your body parts from the soles of your feet to the top of your head, recognize your bodily sensations, breath through them and let your full body relax. Feel your connection to the ground.

Then open your eyes, and observe the tree in front of you. See how it is rooted in the ground, how its trunk meets the surrounding plants. Feel your own connection to the ground and imagine you are also rooted deep into the forest soil.

Observe the trunk of the tree, with eyes open, then closed. Touch the trunk and feel the texture and shapes. See the details and patterns, scars and imprints on the tree's skin.

Observe the branches as they strive towards the sky. Notice the movements of the branches in the wind, and their sounds. Feel your own body erected and stretching upwards, taking the space, move your arms and touch the thin air around you.

Observe buds, blossoms, or leafs, maybe fruits, discover their shapes, textures, fragrances and the energy you may sense in and around them. Take them in, through your eyes, your touches, your breath.

Observe life that is connected to the tree: insects, moth, fungus, plants, birds, maybe mammals. Take in the tree as a whole, try to identify its story, its species, its place in the surrounding ecosystem.

Take a step back and feel how your relationship has changed throughout the activity. In what ways is your connection different from when you first met?"

## CLOSING REFLECTION QUESTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY

- How do your own relationship with nature and inner state influence the depth and quality of the participants' experience?
- In what ways are you creating space for authentic connection, and where might you be unintentionally directing or limiting the process?

