



The Druid Network

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The Practice of Connection

by Jo van der Hoeven

All too often in today's society we can feel disconnected from nature, our conceptions of the "real world" and the spiritual world ever growing further apart. Druidry teaches us that the two are really one world, where spirit is real and reality is spirit. Incorporating exercises to help keep that connection strong are very useful in maintaining a holistic worldview. Here I provide some examples of things you can do every day to remind yourself that that the two are one, that connection with time, place, spirit and reality can and is achieved through everyday actions.

- Watch the sunrise/sunset every day. This is an invaluable exercise in connection with the solar tides, which in turn reflect the seasonal and yearly tides of life. Fitting in the time to either watch the sun rise or set will depend on certain factors, the main factors being work and family. If your schedule doesn't allow you to watch the sunset during the short winter days, then try watching the sunrise instead. If even this isn't an option, then try at least to get outside at least once, at the same time, perhaps during your lunch break, to notice where the sun is in the sky. Notice what quality of light there is at that time of year, and how it is reflected in the world around you.



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- Similarly, try and watch the moonrise/moonset, if possible. Or, go outside every night and try to find the moon, watch its course through the sky in all the seasons. Watch the stars wheeling overhead, keep track of what is where during which time or season.
- Bathing can be seen as connecting with the very important spirit of water. A ritual that can be done every day, really feel water upon your skin, whether it is a bath, shower or simply washing your face. Immerse your hands into the water and feel its energy, the power that it holds. Find out where your water comes from, and visit that place if at all possible. Learn about your water – it doesn't just magically come out of the tap from nowhere! This will help you to connect with water in a very positive way.
- Cooking is a good example of connecting with your food, and your loved ones. Finding out where your food comes from, who grew it, are all important factors to consider. Get back in touch with your food – literally. Don't just peel a potato – feel its skin, the mud and dirt clinging to it, smell the woody, earthy smell, look at it with all its lumps and bumps and colours. This can be done with all food – as children, we explore our food, yet as adults we lose that curiosity and become complacent. When preparing your meal, know that what you are preparing will nourish you, and any others that you are feeding. Give back a little of your meal to the earth in thanks for what you have received.



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- Grow something from seed. This really connects you to the power that is life – by watching something throughout its cycle, by tending and caring for it, you will find a connection with that spark that inspires all things to live.
- Meditate every day. Whether inside or outside, taking this time out for yourself to connect with nature and your environment is invaluable. You will feel calmer, more at peace, losing that sense of dis-ease that so pervades our society. Listen to the world around you, feel and see what is happening. A small meditation every day is like a mini-ritual – it is simply taking time out to be, to notice and to honour that specific moment.

Having that connection with the natural world naturally leads us to living a more honourable and sustainable relationship. By taking time out to pause, to notice and to honour our world will help strengthen and nourish that relationship. Think about things you might to do further your connection with the natural world – then go out and do it! You will find yourself blessed with knowledge and a richness in spirit.

Joanna van der Hoeven (Autumn Song)