



by Tracey Burns, PCC

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Natural Love: Getting Outside for Your Well-Being

I wrap my arms

around the trunk of the giant

Douglas fir, my eyes following its massive trunk skyward. As I exhale I take in all of its majesty. There was something about this tree that had me stop my hike and take up this crazy embrace. I breathe deeply, smelling the sweet mixture of a freshly misted forest, briny air and warm cedar, and feel myself relax. My mind travels to my childhood where I spent equal amounts of my time cradled in the boughs of Garry oaks reading one of my favourite books, *The Folk of the Faraway Tree*, and dangling precariously from the skinny toppers of the local fir trees. Perched as high as my fear would allow, I would rock back and forth enjoying the vista and the rush of adrenaline as I tested the limits of the tree top. As the memory fades I return to the present and press my ear against the tree. Engaging in a bit of adult make believe, I implore the tree to reveal the wisdom of its years. What have you seen? What have you heard? What do you know that we do not?

The people of Tsawout First Nation believe that the four winds, the trees, the birds, the animals, and the fishes were people at one time long ago and that these living things can understand us if we speak to them using special words. Today I haven't found those words and the tree remains silent, its secrets safely tucked away for another day.

It's a ritual I've repeated many times; the forest is where I go to ground, to connect myself energetically with the healing properties of the earth. When I feel myself unhinged by the roar of our

technologically driven world nature beckons me and reminds me to just be. When I emerge from my forest forays, I'm focused and in tune with the creative innovator in me.

Over the years and as is predictable in a life well lived, puzzles of the heart have emerged. It's during these times that my intuition takes over and Island View beach beckons. The scattered drift and rocks serve as nature's meditation pillows. The wind in my hair and the spritz of ocean mist on my skin is a tonic that simply can't be bottled. I've made many a personal discovery on that magical beach, reconciled relationship struggles and solved entrepreneurial riddles. The smell of the ocean breeze soothing, the repetitive break of the waves hypnotic and calming, the sand and pebbles beneath my bare feet relaxing. Science supports what I instinctively know to be true: ocean air (lakes, rivers, streams and waterfalls too) contains negative ions and oxygen atoms that contain an extra electron useful to treat symptoms such as seasonal affective disorder.

Taking these well-being time outs may seem counter intuitive when you're faced with deadlines, bills to pay and a determination to drive yourself to produce results. What these excuses fail to address is the cost and long-term effects of habitually putting our well-being aside. A well-being intervention, a brisk walk to the pier, a walk in the woods or even stepping out into the many accessible parks we have here on our beloved Peninsula is an investment with high returns that far outweigh the cost of time. If you spot me hugging a tree in your neighbourhood, give me a high five at www.traceyburns.com. ✨

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by adopting healthy lifestyles.



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daily



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& vegetables



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enough
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