



1 Shake Off the Road Dust

First, acknowledge that it likely took some effort and planning to arrive to this walk. Before you begin, do whatever you need to "shake of the road dust." How might you release any stress or preoccupations you might be carrying? After stressful times, some animals in the wild for example, shake their bodies for a few quick seconds as a way of releasing stress and lowering cortisol. If you feel called, take a few breaths, give your body a brisk shake, or use any method you would like to arrive to the present moment.

2 Gratitude

Close your eyes, and stop to reflect on what in your life you feel gratitude for.

To take this a step further, notice the natural environment around you and follow your intuition, allowing your body to guide you to a tree or plant that calls to you. In your own way, offer a moment of gratitude to the tree or plant for its presence. This can be a nice way of "introducing yourself" to the forest.

3 Pleasures of Presence

Close your eyes and notice your feet on the Earth. Take a deep breath. Notice how your body feels in this moment. The purpose of this invitation is to notice how pleasurable the senses can be. Gently sway and move your arms to get a sense of your body in space. Tune your attention to your skin: Experience the temperature of the air. Can you feel air movement? Tune your attention to your hearing: Notice the quietest sound you can hear? Is it near or far away? Tune into your sense of smell: Notice the scents that are present. Can you pick up any from the breeze? Tune your attention to your sense of taste: Stick out your tongue. What do you notice with your tongue exposed? Lastly, with your eyes still closed and holding your hands slightly out with palms exposed, begin to gently rotate your body in a circle until you arrive at a knowing of what direction you want to face. When you feel ready, open your eyes and take in the world as though this is the first time you are seeing with your two eyes. What are you noticing?

4 What's in Motion

What is the pace of nature? See if you can notice some of the things around you that are in motion. You may wish to be still for a moment and simply observe. What things are moving near you? What movement can you spot in the distance? Do you see blades of grass swaying in the wind? Are the leaves waving back and forth? Notice the different speeds of motion around you. Perhaps move towards something that doesn't look like it's in motion and observe until you notice movement. So often we don't notice things because of our fast pace.

5 Fox Walking

Walk as silently as possible, with all your senses on full alert, like a fox moving through the landscape. Try

putting your toes down first, then the outside edge of your foot and finally easing onto the heel of your foot as you shift your weight forward. Pause when something catches your attention, and give it your full attention, as if your life depends upon it. As if, if you don't pay attention, you will miss your daily meal, or become the daily meal for something else. If you feel moved to do so, walk on all fours.

6 Close Gazing

Find something nearby that is fairly small; no more than about the size of a grapefruit. Even smaller can be better, something like a leaf or twig. Make it something that won't get away from you for five full minutes; a living butterfly is not suitable for this activity, but a crawling critter without wings might be. Give it your full attention, gazing at it without looking away. Notice small details you might not have previously noticed. What happened as you gazed at your object? What about this object stands out for you? What is your relationship like to this object? Is it different now than when we started? What can we learn from this activity?

7 Deer Ears

Cup your hands behind your ears to make them larger. Walk quietly and slowly like a deer, alert for the subtle sounds of the forest around you. Turn your 'deer ears' towards sounds that catch your attention. Did you notice anything new with your amplified hearing?

8 Sniff It

The main invitation here is to engage the sense of smell in relation with the natural environment. Be vigilant so as not to pluck toxic plants to smell! (We recommend only smelling plants that you are certain are safe). You may wish to crush leaves to release the scent of plants. What does this smell remind you of? How would you describe it? Based on smell alone, does it seem like it might be medicinal or otherwise useful?

9 A Gift for the Forest

Find items that you are drawn to -- leaves, sticks, moss, rocks, flowers -- anything in the forest that appeals to you. With these natural materials and in a place of your choosing, create a gift of your expression for the forest. Let go of any worry about the end result or the need to make it perfect. Allow yourself to enjoy the process of creating and simply playing like a child. How do you want to create your gift for the forest? What ways of designing and assembling your items give you pleasure? When your piece feels complete, notice what came up for you in that process and any changes from before.

10 Thank the Forest

Before leaving, thank the forest for welcoming you and providing you with healing. The forest is an ecosystem -- alive with all sorts of beings -- and you've just entered and passed through someone's home. What's different for you after visiting this place? What did you most enjoy about this space and process? Is there anything in particular you want to thank the forest for?