

Unraveling the *Mystery* in Nature Based Therapies

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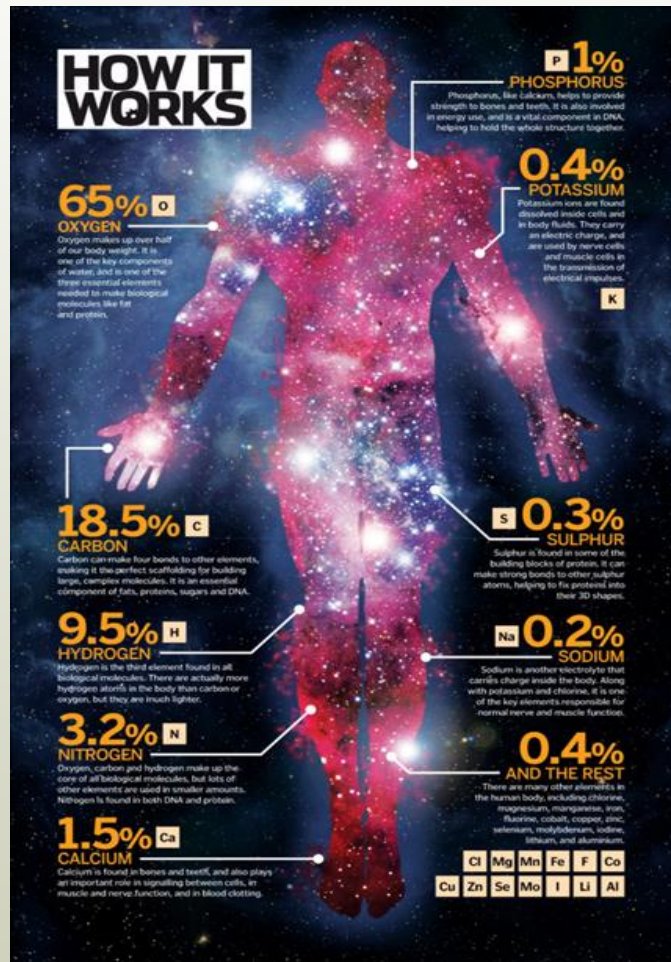


Who am I?





Human Evolution



“we have stripped all things of their mystery and numinosity; nothing is holy any longer,” and as a result, “our psyche is profoundly disturbed” (Jung).



**Attachment-
Disconnection**



“Illness is a normal response to an abnormal culture that is not meeting basic human needs” Dr. Gabor Mate

What do we want to Re-Cover (Heal)

* Indifference - separation * Anamnesis * Anesthesia



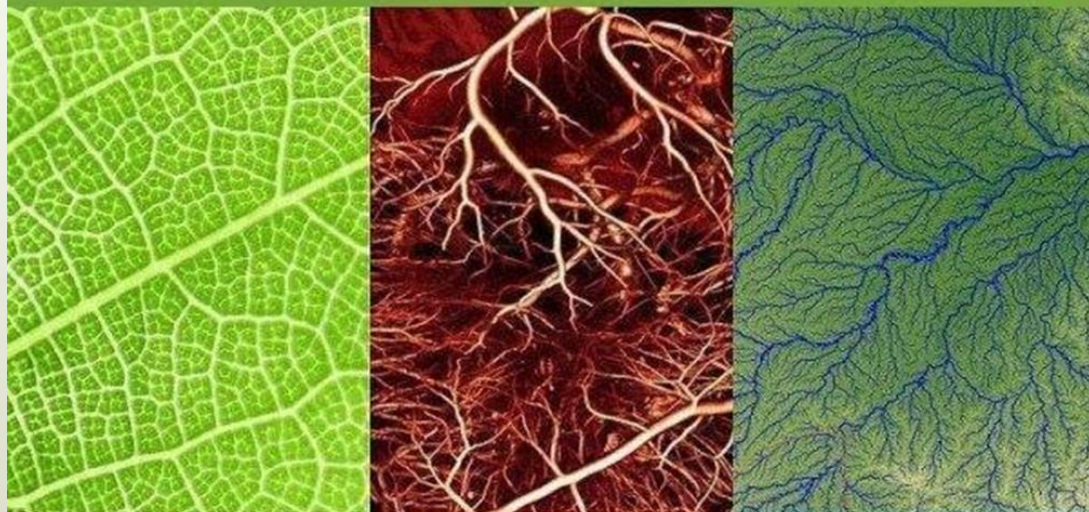
To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul“ (Simone Weil)

So how do we discover who we are?



Ways of knowing

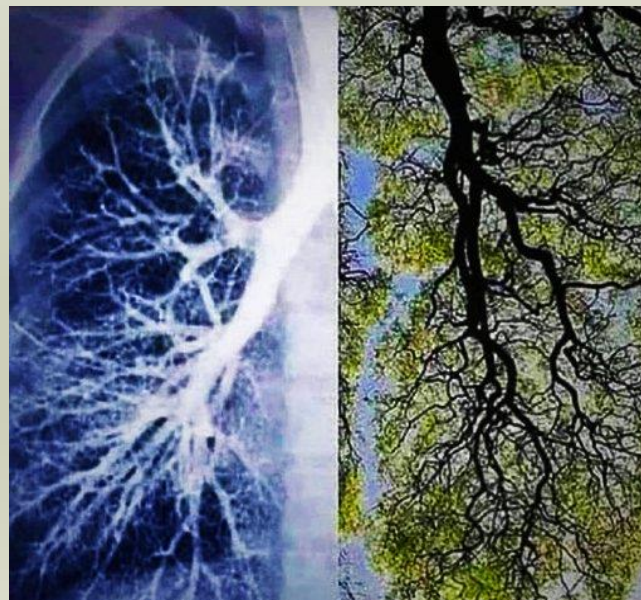
WE ARE NATURE



Close-up of a small leaf

Blood vessels of a human heart

River network of the Amazon





Recall a meaningful memory in nature

Nature based therapies is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches that conduct therapy outdoors including Adventure therapy (Gass, Gillis, & Russell, 2012).

These approaches rest on the basic belief that human beings have a psychological need for a belonging and connectedness, which can shield us from isolation and despair and provide us with a sense of purpose or meaning (Greenleaf, Bryant & Pollock, 2014).

Research to date has shown these programs to be effective in treating a range of behavioral and mental health problems in psychological, behavioral, emotional, and interpersonal domains and that these changes appear to be maintained in the longer term (Bowen & Neill, 2013)

Examples of positive outcomes include the development of a positive therapeutic alliance (Harper, 2009), increased self-evaluation and positive sense of self (Cook, 2008), lasting self-reported positive impact on a client's life (Davis- Berman & Berman, 2012), reduced symptom distress and improved perceptions of social role and interpersonal performance (Roberts et al. 2017), and overall positive outcomes related to client wellness, during adolescent and young adult stages of development and also later in life (e.g. Harper, Russell, Cooley, & Cupples, 2007; Russell, 2005).

Research Design

Method: Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was chosen as a well-established methodology among counseling and psychotherapy researchers to gain a better understanding of what is unique in NBTs, specifically regarding beneficial outcome.

Participants: 26 adults, 16 men and 10 women, ages 34 to 75, from 6 countries, who facilitate therapeutic processes in nature in private practice and in well-established programs. Participants with expertise and experience were chosen from various practices (e.g., adventure and wilderness therapy, ecotherapy, and expressive arts therapy). 18 licensed practitioners, seven wilderness guides (background in education) and one nature based shamanic facilitator.

Tools: Interviews and detailed field accounts of six nature-based workshops in Europe and the United States, involving extensive field notes and memo writing (Morse, 2001).

The natural environment, delineated as a unique growth-oriented setting fostering health and wholeness



Mystery embodied by nature Nature Spirituality



Spirituality has been defined as the universal human desire to connect with some larger, sacred reality beyond ourselves (Piedmont & Leach, 2002; Steinhauser et al., 2017).



Experiencing the immensity of nature leading to an expansive personal perspective

Inner aspects reflected by nature providing unconditional acceptance linked to self discovery(truth, wisdom, soul)



Interconnectedness linked to a sense of deep
unconditional belonging



How does nature heal?

- Accepting growth oriented environment mirroring growth and wholeness
- Unconditional belonging (interconnectedness -our lives have meaning)
- To be seen (we are known through reflection)
- We are part of a larger context- story



Nature invites us







What would mental health issues we deal with look like from nature's perspective?



Could our ailments be asking us to be attentive to unhealthy ways of being? Asking us to develop sensitivity, genius and connection - expanding us to healthy (not normal stress based) life styles? Maybe we are being invited to Re-Member



EVOLUTION

Polygonal wireframe style

the Great Turning

The Great Transition

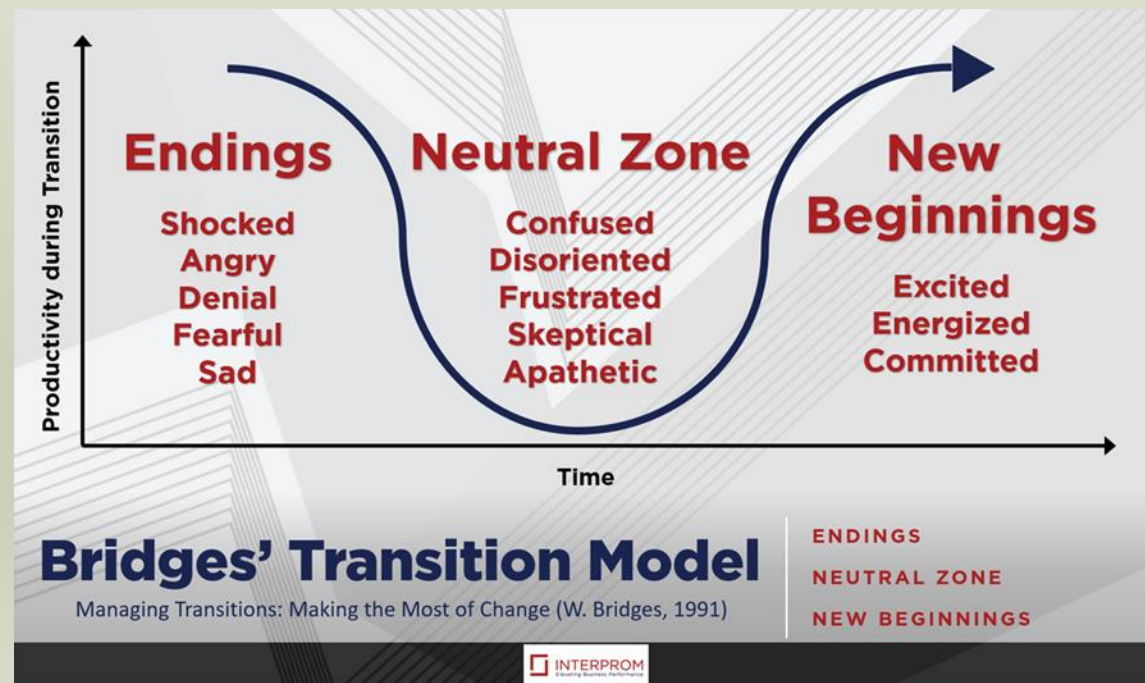
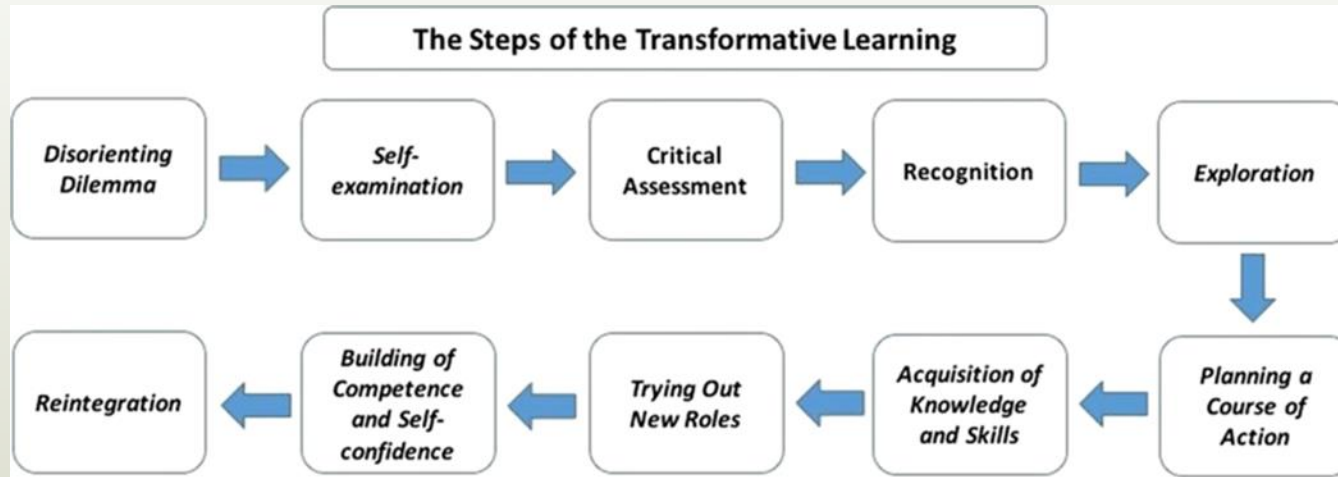


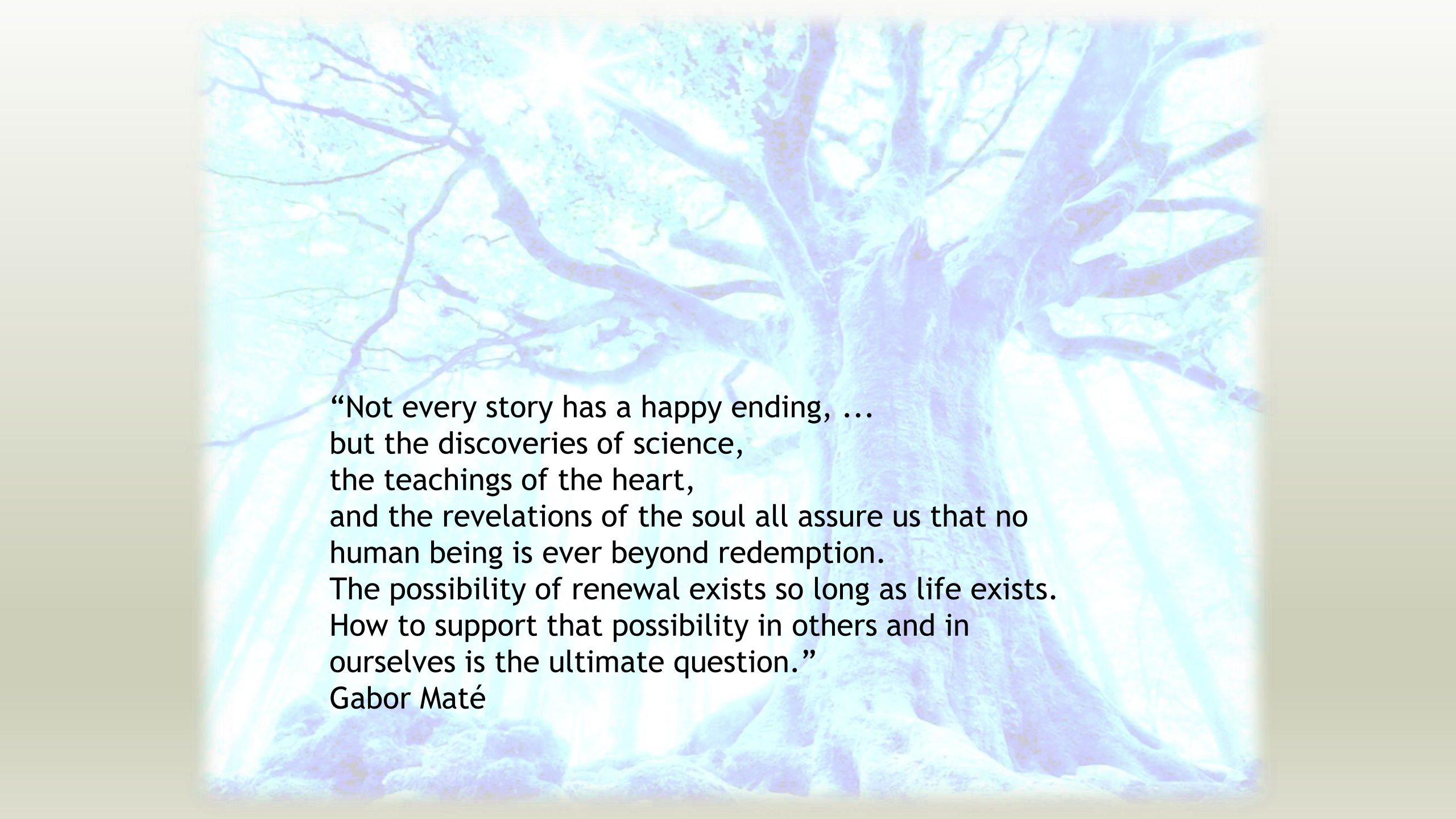
One of the greatest times of change

Transformation

Change and development as the laws of nature







“Not every story has a happy ending, ...
but the discoveries of science,
the teachings of the heart,
and the revelations of the soul all assure us that no
human being is ever beyond redemption.
The possibility of renewal exists so long as life exists.
How to support that possibility in others and in
ourselves is the ultimate question.”

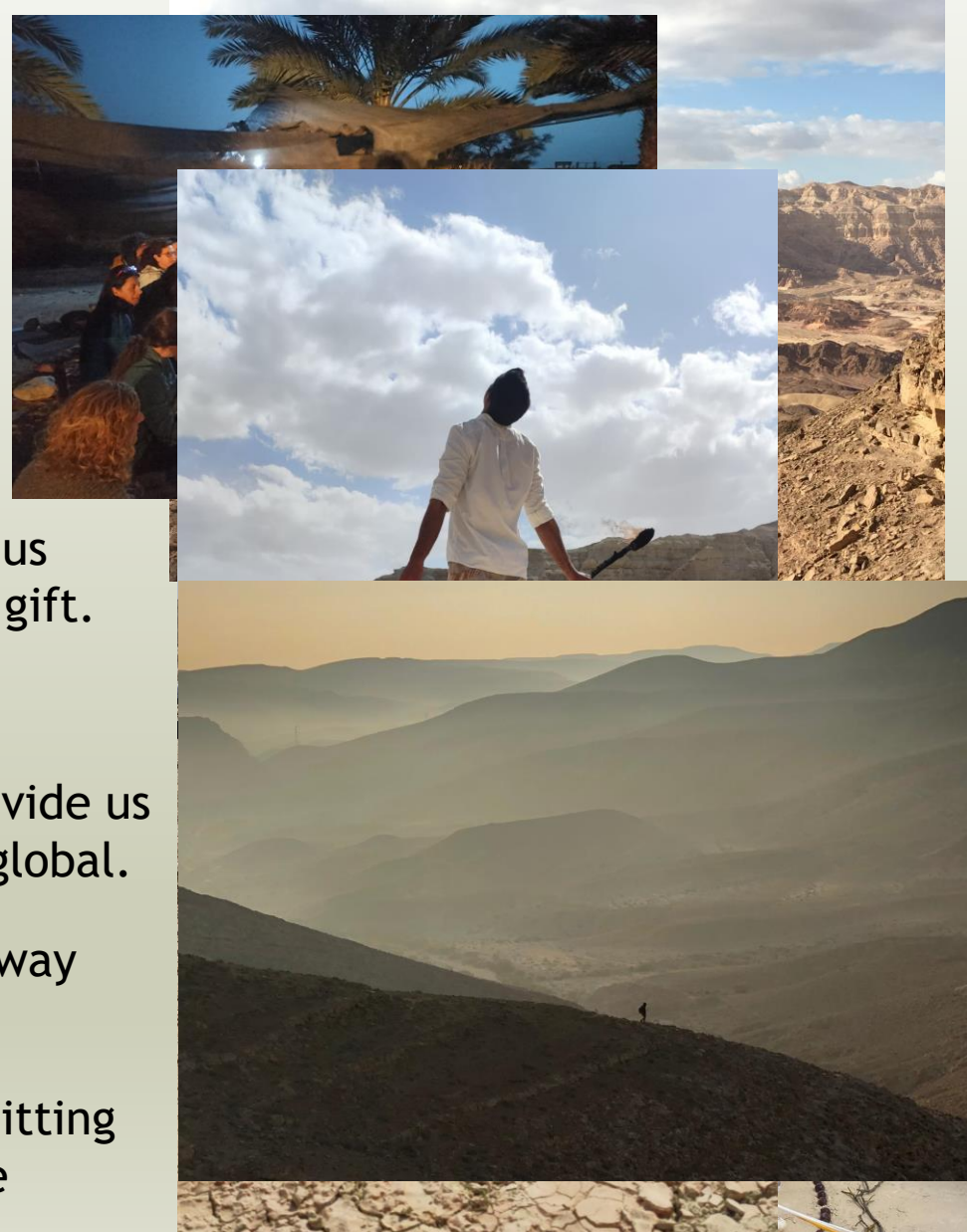
Gabor Maté



INITIATION

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1. **Separation:** Leaving daily mind, rational and duties and connecting to wisdom by which unconditional and mysterious connection to the world is discovered.
2. **Expanding perspective:** Becoming aware of and relating to the larger story and context of our life.
3. **Confrontation:** with what disconnects us from our unique genius/soul identity and gift. The shadows, addictions, avoidances and behaviors that keep us small and “safe”
4. **Dissolving:** of personal borders that divide us from the wider world. From personal to global.
5. **Sharing our gifts:** with the world as a way to anchor them
6. **Ceremony:** Owning our gift and committing to living in service of what brings us alive





Lars van de Goor Photography Art

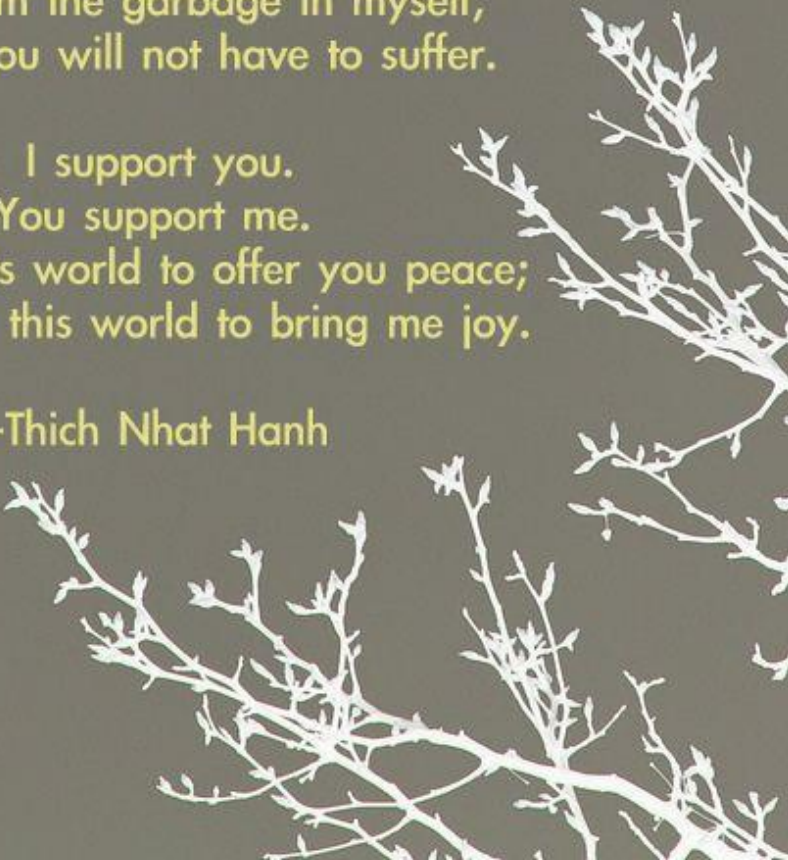
A shift in perspective: Not *What* is it but *Who* is it?

Can you spend the day seeing yourself in the other

You are me, and I am you.
Isn't it obvious that we inter-are?
You cultivate the flower in yourself,
so that I will be beautiful.
I transform the garbage in myself,
so that you will not have to suffer.

I support you.
You support me.
I am in this world to offer you peace;
you are in this world to bring me joy.

-Thich Nhat Hanh





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