COMPASSION, EMPATHY, AND OTHER PROSOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Nurture Nature Community Connections

Exploring Themes for Deepening Connection to and Resilience for Nature
By Sharing a Wild Journey for Loving Animal Nature

Nurture Nature
Yours, Ours, Theirs, Earth's

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Published by One Earth Conservation, www.oneearthconservation.org
info@oneearthconservation.org

Thanks to Rev. Meredith Garmon and Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation (http://www.cucwp.org/) for compiling some of these materials as part of their Journey Group program.

Format for Nurture Nature Community

We speak and listen deeply with our hearts and minds, allowing each to speak without interruptions, questions, or advice (unless solicited). The facilitator will help guide us in this so we can make the deepest connections possible to ourselves, other, earth, and earth's beings.

Arriving/Warm Up – As you arrive, make a name tag and draw a picture or write a word representing a species that is meaningful or important to you. Share with one another why cherish this animal.

Opening Words

Accepting our kinship with all life on earth is not only solid science...in my view, it's also a soaring spiritual experience. - Neil deGrasse Tyson

Check In

What's been happening in your life? How is it with your soul today?

Shared Learning

Watch "Born to Love - Transpecies Relationships" - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUPF_bzMnUY

Our Shared Nurture Nature Practice of Reflection and Discussion

You are invited to share a story from your own life - a relationship you have with another species (flora or fauna) that was meaningful and/or transformative, and where they or you exhibited compassion, care, empathy, or another prosocial behavior. Discuss what these stories, video and transpecies/multispecies relationships mean to you (to guide reflection - see Reflection Questions)

Our Action

What does your deepening on this theme ask of you to do? Of us together?

Business/Next Steps

Explanation of Nurture Nature Community Goals, Vision

Our Nurture Nature Practice (embodiment) – Nurturing Inner and Outer Wildness with a Walk

Check Out

From everything we've shared during this time together, what overall message stands out for you? What gratitude and affirmation would you like someone else to know?

Chalice Extinguishing / Closing Words

We can't change the world for animals without changing our ideas about animals. We have to move from the idea that animals are things, tools, machines, commodities, resources here for our use to the idea that as sentient beings they have their own inherent value and dignity. (and by animals, I mean human animals as well - LoraKim Joyner) - Andrew Linzey

Prosocial Behaviors: A Multispecies Perspective

Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner

The more we look, the more we discover prosocial behaviors in a variety of species. Here is a short list:

Cooperating
Mourning/Burying the Dead
Grieving
Consoling
Empathy
Caring/Nurturing
Parenting
Teaching
Protecting
Fairness
Justice
Trust
Friendships
Others?

We did not see these behaviors in the past, perhaps in part because we push part of ourselves away, setting up disconnection. We also allow a dualism that invites seeing one group being better than others – my tribe, my nation, my skin color, my species against all others.

One check to this "othering" and inherent tribalism, is to develop our multispecies intelligence. Multispecies intelligence is the ability to understand and use emotional intelligence, communication, and behavior across species lines for the mutual benefit of all. It requires understanding species needs, behavior, motivations, and interconnecting relations with others and their habitat. In short, we ask, what is the individual feeling and needing? We do this in part by seeking to know the motivations for the behaviors, such as understanding their subjective experience (emotions and internal processing) and needs. This means employing what is known as critical anthropomorphism: **"Critical anthropomorphism refers to a perspective in the study of animal behavior that encompasses using the sentience of the observer to generate hypotheses in light of scientific knowledge of the species, its perceptual world, and ecological and evolutionary history**."

By engaging in critical anthropomorphism, we avoid two errors on either end of the spectrum of multispecies understanding: one is to say that other species are nothing like humans (anthrocentrism), and the other is to say they are exactly like us (uncritical anthropomorphism). Critical anthropomorphism means that we imagine what it is like to be in the shoes, paws, hooves, wings, claws, feet, and skin of another, and then to check ourselves where we might have made either of the two types of errors. We put on our scientific lens, and ask, what is this individual feeling and needing? We put on our empathetic, embodied lens, and ask, what is this individual feeling and needing? We employ all the science and sensory and body resonance that

is available to us, study, reflect, discuss, check our assumptions, and then ask: How might my perception of another lead to more harm than good?

A prime example of how we wrongfully see humans in multispecies community is the statement, "Humans are the only ones who _____." In terms of prosocial behavior, I have heard it said that humans are the only ones who can choose to beneficially act on another's behalf. Other animals are using instinct or subconscious automatic behavior patterns. Perhaps they are only acting thusly because of human intervention. **If ever you are tempted to say "only humans do X," or "humans have greater choice or do similar behaviors for different reasons," or if you read, "what sets humans apart from animals" become immediately suspicious of why you or others are saying that**. You ask yourself if such a phrase is to promote human exceptionalism, where humans are better than other animals. There is another kind of human exceptionalism: where humans aren't better than others because of behaviors and intent, but are actually worse. Either way we are committing multispecies errors, distancing ourselves from ourselves and others, and setting up harm to others, and inviting despair, depression, and debilitating disconnection that disempowers us.

Prosocial behaviors are shared widely throughout life and go back deep into our evolutionary history. To understand this, I believe allows us to see how our minds are hard wired to easily lay down neural networks for prosocial behaviors. Our prosocial behaviors connect us to other animals and to all of life. Knowing how great is our inheritance to act on another's behalf, perhaps gives us greater compulsion and choice to develop our own prosocial behaviors, towards ourselves and towards other species. It also awakens in us a world of wonder and beauty, to offset the harm and tragedy that is interwoven into existence, and into us.

To understand prosociality in others and ourselves offers hope, and tools for a world of greater flourishing for our multispecies communities. Human aspects of compassion to keep in mind:

1. Compassion is more easily elicited when we feel safe
2. Compassion feels good (impacts pleasure centers of brain, increases life span and sense of well-being)
3. Compassion is catching in a social context
4. Mindfulness increases compassion
5. We like helping the group more than ourselves
6. We evolved to help one person at a time

Keeping these aspects in mind, we can grow our prosocial behaviors, towards ourselves and others of all species. We design a schedule of self-nurturing practices that allow us the greatest change to embody compassion, and we also seek to grow our empathy and understanding of others. Later in this booklet are some Nurture Nature practices, one of which is especially important for multispecies intelligence: "Multispecies Empathy." Empathy helps us grow our understanding of other beings, as do cognitive processes such as research, study, reflection, and learning. To answer the basic question that multispecies intelligence posits, "What is this individual feeling and needing?" we require understanding the being's biology, ecology, physiology, behavior, health and welfare status. We want our empathy to be informed, or "entangled" from author Lori Gruen's book "Entangled Empathy." Empathy happens best

when we are emotionally and cognitively engaged, similar to Paul Bloom's rational compassion in his book "Against Empathy." The "Five Domains Model" helps us grow what we know about animals, utilizing the cognitive operations of our mind so that our compassionate response is based less on the errors of anthropomorphism and anthrocentrism to which we are prone. We can never remove ourselves entirely from our subconscious self-interest and bias, our internalized cultural stories, or our own emotional entanglements based on our life experiences, but we can diminish the harm that these cause. We do this by constantly reflecting upon our behavior, emotions, and thoughts, and being able to do through a supportive community, such as this Nurture Nature Community.

Background Readings

1. Wikipedia Prosocial Behavior:

Prosocial behavior, or "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another" is a social behavior that "benefit[s] other people or society as a whole, "such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering." Obeying the rules and conforming to socially accepted behaviors (such as stopping at a "Stop" sign or paying for groceries) are also regarded as prosocial behaviors. These actions may be motivated by empathy and by concern about the welfare and rights of others, as well as for egoistic or practical concerns, such as one's social status or reputation, hope for direct or indirect reciprocity, or adherence to one's perceived system of fairness.[1] It may also be motivated by altruism, though the existence of pure altruism is somewhat disputed, and some have argued that this falls into philosophical rather than psychological realm of debate.[6] Evidence suggests that prosociality is central to the well-being of social groups across a range of scales. Empathy is a strong motive in eliciting prosocial behavior, and has deep evolutionary roots.

Prosocial behavior fosters positive traits that are beneficial for children and society. Evolutionary psychologists use theories such as kin-selection theory and inclusive fitness as an explanation for why prosocial behavioral tendencies are passed down generationally, according to the evolutionary fitness displayed by those who engaged in prosocial acts. Encouraging prosocial behavior may also require decreasing or eliminating undesirable social behaviors. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosocial_behavior.

2. Wikipedia Altruism Examples (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altruism_(biology)

Mammals

- Wolves and wild dogs bring meat back to members of the pack not present at the kill]
- Mongooses support elderly, sick, or injured animals.
- Meerkats often have one standing guard to warn while the rest feed in case of predator attack.
- Raccoons inform conspecifics about feeding grounds by droppings left on commonly shared latrines. A similar information system has been observed to be used by common ravens.

- Male baboons threaten predators and cover the rear as the troop retreats.
- Gibbons and chimpanzees with food will, in response to a gesture, share their food with others of the group. Chimpanzees will help humans and conspecifics without any reward in return.
- Bonobos have been observed aiding injured or handicapped bonobos.
- Vampire bats commonly regurgitate blood to share with unlucky or sick roost mates that have been unable to find a meal, often forming a buddy system.
- Vervet monkeys give alarm calls to warn fellow monkeys of the presence of predators, even though in doing so they attract attention to themselves, increasing their personal chance of being attacked.
- Lemurs of all ages and of both sexes will take care of infants unrelated to them
- Dolphins support sick or injured animals, swimming under them for hours at a time and pushing them to the surface so they can breathe.
- Walruses have been seen adopting orphans who lost their parents to predators.[
- African buffalo will rescue a member of the herd captured by predators. (Battle at Kruger)
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Birds

- In numerous bird species, a breeding pair receives support in raising its young from other "helper" birds, including help with the feeding of its fledglings. Some will even go as far as protecting an unrelated bird's young from predators.

Fish

- *Harpagifer bispinis*, a species of fish, live in social groups in the harsh environment of the Antarctic Peninsula. If the parent guarding the nest of eggs is removed, a usually male replacement unrelated to the parents guards the nest from predators and prevents fungal growth that would kill off the brood. There is no clear benefit to the male so the act may be considered altruistic.

Invertebrates

- Some termites and ants release a sticky secretion by fatally rupturing a specialized gland. This autothysis altruistically aids the colony at the expense of the individual insect. For example, defending against invading ants by creating a tar baby effect. This can be attributed to the fact that ants share their genes with the entire colony, and so this behavior is evolutionarily beneficial (not necessarily for the individual ant but for the continuation of its specific genetic make-up).
- Synalpheus regalis is a species of eusocial marine snapping shrimp that lives in sponges in coral reefs. They live in colonies of about 300 individuals with one reproductive female. Other colony members defend the colony against intruders, forage, and care for the young. Eusociality in this system entails an adaptive division of labor which results in enhanced reproductive output of the breeders and inclusive fitness benefits for the nonbreeding helpers. *S. regalis* are exceptionally tolerant of conspecifics within their colonies due to close genetic relatedness among nest mates. Allozyme data reveals that relatedness within colonies is high, which is an indication that colonies in this species

represent close kin groups. The existence of such groups is an important prerequisite of explanations of social evolution based on kin selection.

Protists

An interesting example of altruism is found in the cellular slime molds, such as *Dictyostelium mucoroides*. These protists live as individual amoebae until starved, at which point they aggregate and form a multicellular fruiting body in which some cells sacrifice themselves to promote the survival of other cells in the fruiting body.

3. Katherine Cronin "Prosocial behavior in animals: the influence of social relationships, communication and rewards" - Animal Behavior 84(5):2012, 1085-1093

Overall, primates in close relationships were more likely to behave prosocially. In many species, prosociality was more likely to be shown by dominant individuals. When recipients showed interest in rewards, prosociality was less likely. A greater benefit for the recipient than the donor often inhibited prosociality. Acknowledging these trends will aid in the reconstruction of prosocial evolution

Mylene Quervel-Chaumette et al. "Familiarity affects other-regarding preferences in pet dogs" - Scientific Reports 5:2015

Dogs donate to familiar partners more often than to unfamiliar ones. Whether the donor dogs knew the recipient made a difference. Donor dogs pulled the giving tray more often for familiar dogs than for unfamiliar ones. "Dogs truly behave prosocially toward other dogs. That had never been experimentally demonstrated before. What we also found was that the degree of familiarity among the dogs further influenced this behavior. Prosocial behavior was exhibited less frequently toward unfamiliar dogs than toward familiar ones.

4. Pinker, Stephen. The Better Angels of Our Nature. Penguin Books, 2011.

Stephen Pinker discusses these causes as being responsible for the decrease in violence over the many millennia of human evolution:
Empathy
Self control
Recent Biologic Evolution "
Morality and Taboo (laws, childhood development, cultural expectations)
Reason

"The growing scientific evidence that we are a fundamentally empathetic species has profound and far-reaching consequences for society, and may well determine our fate as a species.... The decline of violence may owe something to an expansion of empathy, but it also owes much to harder-boiled faculties like prudence, reason, fairness, self-control, norms and taboos, and conceptions of human rights.

The overall picture that has emerged from the study of the compassionate brain is that there is no empathy center with empathy neurons, but complex patterns of activation and modulation that depend on perceivers' interpretations of the traits of another person and the nature of their

relationship with the person. Neediness, like cuteness, is a general elicitor of sympathy. With less easily helped individuals, a perception of shared values and other kinds of similarity makes a big difference...Empathy can be switched on and off, or thrown into reverse, by our construal of the relationship we have with a person.

Empathy is a “contagious emotion"

5. Peter Wohlleben. "The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from a Secret World" 2016.

The answer is that trees need to communicate, and electrical impulses are just one of their many means of communication. Trees also use the senses of smell and taste for communication. If a giraffe starts eating an African acacia, the tree releases a chemical into the air that signals that a threat is at hand. As the chemical drifts through the air and reaches other trees, they “smell” it and are warned of the danger. Even before the giraffe reaches them, they begin producing toxic chemicals. Insect pests are dealt with slightly differently. The saliva of leaf-eating insects can be “tasted” by the leaf being eaten. In response, the tree sends out a chemical signal that attracts predators that feed on that particular leaf-eating insect. Life in the slow lane is clearly not always dull.

But the most astonishing thing about trees is how social they are. The trees in a forest care for each other, sometimes even going so far as to nourish the stump of a felled tree for centuries after it was cut down by feeding it sugars and other nutrients, and so keeping it alive. Only some stumps are thus nourished. Perhaps they are the parents of the trees that make up the forest of today. A tree’s most important means of staying connected to other trees is a “wood wide web” of soil fungi that connects vegetation in an intimate network that allows the sharing of an enormous amount of information and goods. Scientific research aimed at understanding the astonishing abilities of this partnership between fungi and plant has only just begun.

The reason trees share food and communicate is that they need each other. It takes a forest to create a microclimate suitable for tree growth and sustenance. So it’s not surprising that isolated trees have far shorter lives than those living connected together in forests. Perhaps the saddest plants of all are those we have enslaved in our agricultural systems. They seem to have lost the ability to communicate, and, as Wohlleben says, are thus rendered deaf and dumb. “Perhaps farmers can learn from the forests and breed a little more wildness back into their grain and potatoes,” he advocates, “so that they’ll be more talkative in the future.”

Opening this book, you are about to enter a wonderland. Enjoy it.

6. Zbigniew Herbert. "Mr. Cogito Reads the Newspaper."

120 soldiers were killed

the war was long
you get used to it

right next to this news
of a spectacular crime
with the killer’s photo

Mr. Cogito’s gaze
moves with indifference
over the soldiers’ hecatomb
to plunge with great relish

into the quotidian macabre

a thirty-year-old farmworker
in a state of manic depression
murdered his own wife
and two small children

we are told the exact
way they were killed
the position of the bodies
and the other details

it's no use trying to find
120 lost men on a map
a distance too remote
hides them like a jungle

they don't speak to the imagination
there are too many of them
the numeral zero on the end
turns them into an abstraction

a theme for further reflection:
the arithmetic of compassion

7. Susan Clayton. "Conservation Psychology" Wiley Blackwell, 2016.

"The likelihood of an empathic response to another varies with the perceived familiarity and similarity of the other to us, as well as with the salience of the cues about the other's state, the range of our own past emotional experiences, and the extent to which our knowledge helps us take the perspective of the other. Studies have shown higher concern for animals with anthropomorphic traits. Conflicts, resources dependency, or aversive emotional reactions may decrease empathy.

Research suggests that emotion is a particularly important predictor of sustainable behavior. Berenguer, for example, was able to increase emotions associated with empathy (e.g. sympathy, compassion, warmth) by encouraging students to "try to imagine how [a bird or tree] feels." this empathic response, in turn, was related to a greater willingness to allocate funds to an environmental protection organization and to a stronger perceived obligation to help nature."

8. David Mellor. The Five Domains: Extending the 'Five Domains' model for animal welfare assessment to incorporate positive welfare states.

Contemporary animal welfare thinking is increasingly emphasizing the promotion of positive states. There is a need for existing assessment frameworks to accommodate this shift in emphasis. This paper describes extensions to the Five Domains model, originally devised to

assess welfare compromise, that facilitate consideration of positive experiences that may enhance welfare. As originally configured, the model provided a systematic method for identifying compromise in four physical/functional domains (nutrition, environment, health, behaviour) and in one mental domain that reflects the animal's overall welfare state understood in terms of its affective experiences. The specific modifications described here now facilitate additional identification in each domain of experiences animals have which may be accompanied by positive affects that would enhance welfare. It is explained why the grading scale and indices for evaluating welfare compromise necessarily differ from those for assessing welfare enhancement. Also, it is shown that the compromise and enhancement grades can be combined to provide a single informative symbol, the scaled use of which covers the range from severe welfare compromise and no enhancement to no compromise and high-level enhancement. Adapted thus, the Five Domains model facilitates systematic and structured assessment of positive as well as negative welfare-related affects, the circumstances that give rise to them and potential interactions between both types of affect, all of which extend the utility of the model. Moreover, clarification of the extended conceptual framework of the model itself contributes to the growing contextual shift in animal welfare science towards the promotion of positive states whilst continuing to minimize negative states.

Physical/Functional Domains							
Survival-related factors						***Situation-related factors***	
1: Nutrition		***2: Environment***		***3: Health***		***4: Behaviour***	
Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
Restricted water and food. Poor quality food	Enough water and food. Balanced and varied diet	Uncomfortable or unpleasant features of physical environment	Physical environment comfortable or pleasant	Disease, injury and/or functional impairment	Healthy, fit and/or uninjured	Behavourial expression restricted	Able to express rewarding behaviours
Affective Experience Domains							
5: Mental State							
Negative Experiences				Positive Experiences			
Thirst	Breathlessness	Anger, frustration		Drinking pleasures	Vigour of good	Calmness, in control	
Hunger	Pain	Boredom, helplessness		Taste pleasures	Health & fitness	Affectionate sociability	
Malnutrition malaise	Debility, weakness	Loneliness, depression		Chewing pleasures	Reward	Maternally rewarded	
Chilling/overheating	Nausea, sickness	Anxiety, fearfulness		Satiety	Goad-directed	Excited playfulness	
Hearing discomfort	Dizziness	Panic, exhaustion		Physical comforts	Engagement	Sexually gratified	
Welfare Status							

Chart by David J. Mellor, published by MDPI in Animals, *March 14, 2016.*

Reflection Questions

Don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that "hooks" you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what prosocial behaviors mean in the abstract, but to figure out what, if anything, the concept means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?

1. What examples of prosocial behaviors have you seen in your own species, and in others? How does witnessing these behaviors impact your own behavior and thinking?

2. Does the long evolutionary history of prosociality offer you hope and tools in your own life, and in your relationships with others of all species?

3. Where do you imagine wrong doing or judge others (of any species) for not being more prosocial? (look at previous discussion guide "Evil/harm/bad"). Are some species less worthy or more blameworthy because they are less social towards their own species or others?

4. Where do you project human behavior onto other animals, perhaps misinterpreting their feelings, needs, motivation, and behavior in terms of prosociality?

5. What might you do to improve your multispecies intelligence?

6. Are you prone to, or have you seen, examples of "the arithmetic of compassion" where humans tend to have compassion for lesser numbers of individuals?"

7. What drives or limits your own prosocial behaviors?

Our Nurture Nature Practices

Option A: Face Your Participation in the Goodness of the World

Part 1: Journal. Each day for 10 days, at the end of the day, take inventory in your journal:
In what ways were you blind to that which is most life-giving?
Who or what did you refuse to see?
How or when did you neglect the magnificence of interconnected living?

Part 2: Find a “spiritual buddy” and practice your confession. At least once in the middle of the 10 days and once at the end, face your own participation in the beauty and care of the world by speaking it aloud to someone else. (This may work better if your buddy is also doing this exercise and you can take turns confessing to each other.)

Option B: Answer Misunderstanding and Judgment with Empathy

Martin Luther King said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” So, this exercise asks you to try empathizing with individuals, not by judging what they do as being "good" or "bad," but by guessing their feelings, subjective experience, and needs.

Every day for 10 days, collect or recall a story of an individual (of any species) doing beneficial or prosocial behaviors. You might recall a famous person from history who committed momentous beneficial acts, or an animal you admire. You might leaf through the morning newspaper for accounts of people behaving in ways that strike you as good, helpful, or compassionate. Begin by sketching in your journal each day one thing that that individual did that struck you as "good,"

Then: empathize. This is likely to be an exercise of your imagination. *Imagine* what the purported good-doer or individual was feeling and needing that produced the “beneficial”

behavior? (Note: “feeling” here refers to emotions experienced, and “needing” refers to any universally shared desire, keeping in mind that “universally shared” doesn’t mean “universally indulged or pursued.”) Describe those feelings (which you, too, have felt) and those needs (the wants that you, too, are prone to have) that, as best you can guess, account for the behavior in question.

No matter the species, find academic or informational resources that can shed light on the behavior in terms of causes, needs, desires, evolution, and neurobiology.

Does this practice shift the way you think and act towards yourself and others?

Option C: Do Something!

Kindness and compassion is catching. When people observe an act of this sort, they are more likely to do the same. Whether in your personal life, or in a more public sphere, do something beyond what is normal for you. As you act, so you impact others.

Multispecies Empathy

Journal and Reflection Exercise

It's not all bad news out there for the beings on earth. For instance, there is decreasing violence in the world writes Steven Pinker in the book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. One of the main reasons he cites is empathy. Empathy functions to help humans see each other's inherent worth and dignity, and then to enact society practices, expectations, and laws that curb our biological propensities. Just because we can, doesn't mean that we do!

Is it possible that we can grow empathy for other species? Yes! A study a few years ago asked students to pretend they were a bird in trouble for 15 minutes. The control group was given no directions. Those who pretended they were the bird showed increased levels of empathy and greater desire to help the environment than the control group.

Putting yourself into the shoes, fins, wings, hoofs, paws, or talons of another is a powerful meditation. It helps us see the inherent worth and dignity of others, and as such, helps us practice the Golden Rule, which is treating others as one would like others to treat oneself. If you are Unitarian Universalist, empathy practices help us embody and act intuitively out of the First Principle (inherent worth and dignity of every being.

You can do this as a longer journal exercise that incorporates science, or by simply going to the imagination step #5. You can do this as an individual or with others.

<u>Preparation:</u>

1. Think of an individual with whom you have a relationship. Write here what you know of the being. What is the species? Individual name? Gender? Age? Life stage (growing, juvenile,

parent, etc.). Health status? If you can't think of an individual, choose a species you would like to get to know better or understand.

2. Thinking of them over a period of time, and imagining their behavior on a given day, or after watching a video or remembering past interactions, explain what you see as if you were a reporter with as little judgment or human projection as possible. In other words, don't try to interpret the behavior at this point. Write down all the behaviors you imagine they do.

3. Now guess what you imagine they are thinking and feeling. List your guesses here.

4. To help you understand what you observed, do some research on the species regarding behavior, communication, feelings, and thoughts. You may find it difficult to find information about emotions and thinking in nonhuman species (refer to references and resources). Use the "Five Domains Model" as a guide to what another individual might be needing, and also use the "Feelings and Needs List" to help you list the feelings and needs of others. After doing research, did you discover any new feelings or thoughts that occurred in the individual? If so, add them to your list.

5. Now imagine that you are the animal. Get into their paws, scales, fur, or feathers for about 15 minutes. Pick an animal that is in your yard or along a walk or a hike. Pick a quiet place where these other beings normally inhabit. You can also watch a video or nature documentary Watch their behavior for a while, and then imitate it. Just be them without analyzing too much why they do what they do If you cannot be in the physical space where the others occur, imagine that you are, and if you cannot see them, imagine what they have done or might be doing now, and then imitate them. Have your body move like the other beings. Do this for five – 15 minutes, watching and then gently discarding any thoughts you have. For instance, if you think of the past, future, "to do list" or stories or thoughts, watch them, and then let them go. Return to be the other species, being them without words, and in beauty. Thoughts might arise that this is a silly exercise, or that you are not a very good ant or tree, or other judgments.

Each time, notice these and then return to being the animal and watch yourself moving and being in a world of beauty. Towards the end of your time with the individual, pay attention to your body, ask yourself what are they thinking, feeling, or doing? What is motivating them to act or be in the ways that they are? How is life striving to manifest itself through their actions and processes? What needs motivate them to act in the way that they do. Share your experience with another.

6. After this sharing and imaginative exercise, continue your research and exploration. Start a list of feelings and needs this species, if you haven't already. Add new needs that you have discovered Again, use the "Five Domain's Model" and the "Feelings and Needs list." Try to be as complete as possible as you go through the behaviors observed or if you have the time, a normal day as this individual. How might these needs be different from another individual of the same species, or from the average needs of this species?

7. What feelings and needs arise in you when you consider the feelings and needs of this individual?

8. What have you discovered about this individual, this species, yourself, or life through this exercise? If you have discovered anything, what needs of yours or the individual does what you have learned meet, or not meet?

9. Go back and spend time connecting to the energy of the other being by reviewing their feelings and needs, and then do the same with yourself. Allow this to be a time of being and connecting to life, without thought of requests or demands.

10. Then consider possible actions or steps you might do, or ask of others, based on this multispecies empathy exercise.

11. Share what you have learned or experienced with others and invite them into the exercise.

Words Commonly Used to Express Feelings

These words refer to my own internal experience rather than to external circumstances

FEELINGS WHEN NEEDS ARE NOT MET

Gloomy
Crestfallen
Dejected
Depressed
Despairing
Despondent
Downhearted
Dreary
Forlorn
Hopeless
Melancholic
Miserable
Mopey
Mournful
Pessimistic
Resigned
Somber

Sad
Agony
Disappointed
Discouraged
Distressed
Disenchanted
Dissatisfied
Grief stricken
Heartbroken
Hurt
Morose
Full of pain
Overwhelmed
Sorrowful
Unhappy
Upset
Woeful
Wretched

Afraid
Apprehensive
Cautious
Fearful
Frantic
Guarded
Hesitant
Insecure
Jittery
Leery
Mistrusting
Nervous
On edge
Panicky
Startled
Suspicious
Terrified
Wary
Worried

Longing
Yearning
Desirous
Hungry

Envious
Jealous
Longing

Anxious
Agitated
Concerned
Edgy
Fidgety
Frenzied
Harried
Hysterical
Impatient
Irritable
Overwhelmed
Perturbed
Stressed
Uneasy
Unnerved
Unsteady

Cautious
Hesitant
Reluctant
Resistant
Shy
Skeptical
Tentative
Timid
Unwilling

Alarmed
Appalled
Frantic
Incredulous
Paralyzed
Shocked
Surprised
Upset

Bored
Exhausted
Fatigued
Heavy
Lethargic
Listless
Tense
Tired
Weary

Aloof
Apathetic
Arrogant
Cold
Contemptuous
Detached
Disdainful
Grouchy
Indifferent
Nonchalant
Passive
Prickly
Unconcerned
Withdrawn

Ashamed
Deflated
Embarrassed
Guilty
Insecure
Mortified
Regretful

Annoyed
Angry
Cranky
Cross
Disgusted
Enraged
Exasperated
Fed-up
Frustrated
Hateful
Hostile
Indignant
Infuriated
Irritated
Miffed
Resentful
Resistant
Ticked off
Turbulent
Vengeful
Vexed
Vindictive

Confused
Ambivalent
Bewildered
Curious
Doubtful
Hesitant
Perplexed
Troubled
Uncertain
Unclear
Undecided

FEELINGS WHEN NEEDS ARE MET

Delighted
Amused
Blissful
Ecstatic
Elated
Enchanted
Excited
Exhilarated
Exuberant
Gleeful
Happy
Joyful
Jubilant
Overjoyed
Radiant
Splendid
Tickled

Calm
Carefree
Cheerful
Comfortable
Composed
Confident
Contented
Expansive
Free
Good-humored
Mellow
Peaceful
Relaxed
Relieved
Satisfied
Serene
Tranquil
Trusting
Vulnerable
Warm

Absorbed
Alert
Alive
Animated
Confident
Curious
Eager
Energetic
Engrossed
Enthusiastic
Fascinated
Focused
Hopeful
Inquisitive
Inspired
Interested
Intrigued
Invigorated
Optimistic
Spellbound

Amazed
Adventurous
Affectionate
Astounded
Awe
Compassionate
Confident
Dazzled
Expectant
Friendly
Hopeful
Loving
Open hearted
Playful
Proud
Surprised

Appreciative
Buoyant
Glad
Grateful
Gratified
Effervescent
Exhilarated
Intense
Pleased
Refreshed
Thankful
Touched
Upbeat
Wide-awake

NEEDS

CONNECTION
acceptance
affection
appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
closeness
community
companionship
compassion
consideration
consistency
empathy
inclusion
intimacy
love
mutuality
nurturing
respect/self-respect

CONNECTION continued
safety
security
stability
support
to know and be known
to see and be seen
to understand and be understood
trust
warmth

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
air
food
movement/exercise
rest/sleep
sexual expression
safety
shelter
touch
water

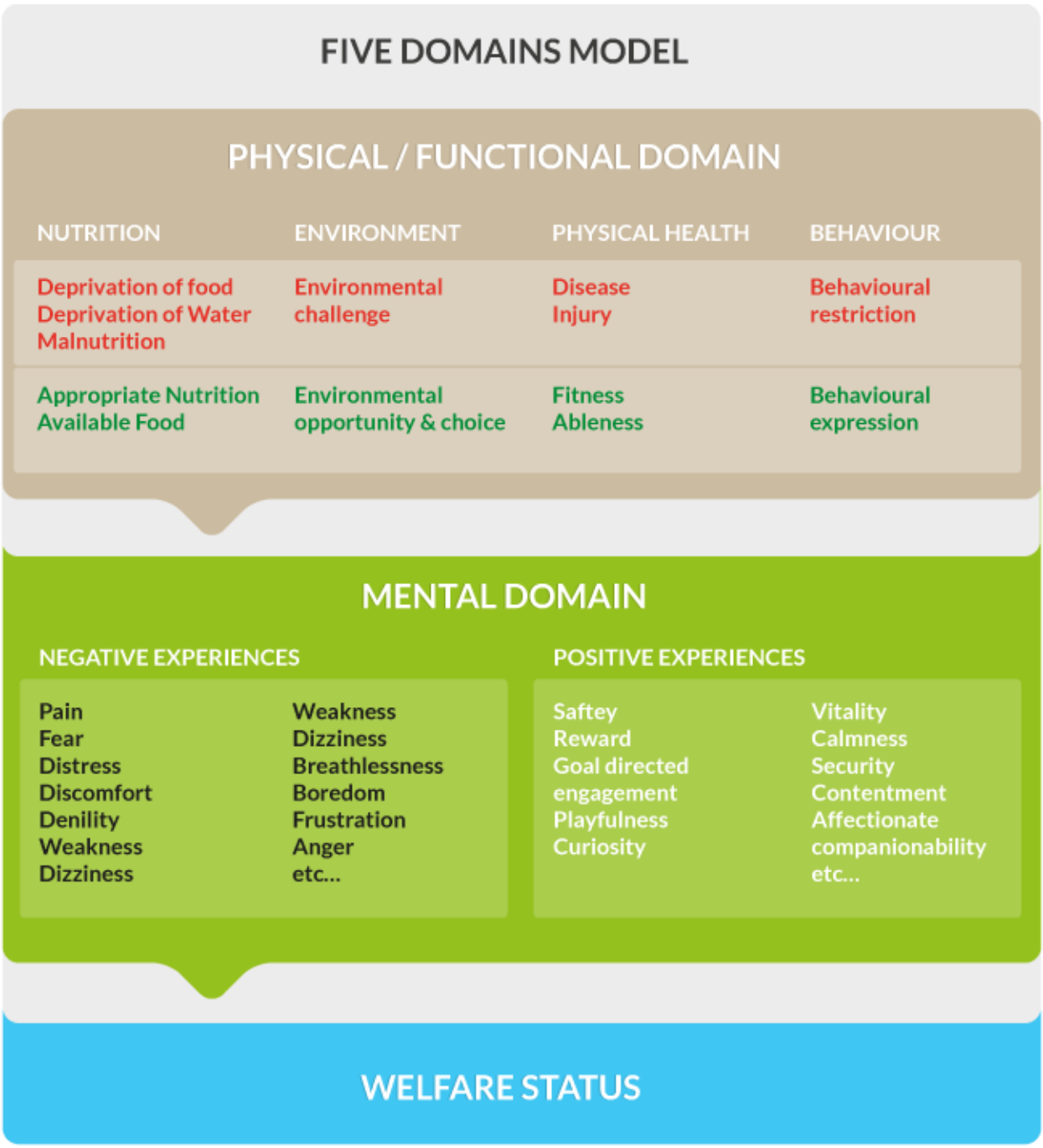
HONESTY
authenticity
integrity
presence

PLAY
joy
humor

PEACE
beauty
communion
ease
equality
harmony
inspiration
order

AUTONOMY
choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

MEANING
awareness
celebration of life
challenge
clarity
competence
consciousness
contribution
creativity
discovery
efficacy
effectiveness
growth
hope
learning
mourning
participation
purpose
self-expression
stimulation
to matter
understanding


FIVE DOMAINS MODEL
PHYSICAL / FUNCTIONAL DOMAIN
NUTRITION
ENVIRONMENT
PHYSICAL HEALTH
BEHAVIOUR
Deprivation of food
Deprivation of Water
Malnutrition
Environmental challenge
Disease
Injury
Behavioural restriction
Appropriate Nutrition
Available Food
Environmental opportunity & choice
Fitness
Ableness
Behavioural expression
MENTAL DOMAIN
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES
Pain
Fear
Distress
Discomfort
Denility
Weakness
Dizziness
Weakness
Dizziness
Breathlessness
Boredom
Frustration
Anger
etc...
POSITIVE EXPERIENCES
Saftey
Reward
Goal directed engagement
Playfulness
Curiosity
Vitality
Calmness
Security
Contentment
Affectionate companionability
etc...
WELFARE STATUS

Suggested Further Work/Actions

1. Read all the excerpts in the background readings and then write your own reflection of what good, beneficial, or prosocial behavior means to you from a multispecies perspective. Share your reflection, and this issue of Nurture Nature Community Connections with others.

2. Invite others to attend the next Nurture Nature Community gathering

3. Write up a plan for your own Nurture Nature Practice that includes growing your multispecies intelligence. What do you need to do? You might consider reading resources on animal behavior and thinking (cognitive ethology) or going outside and imaging you are another species.

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Nurture Nature Community

The Premise and the Promise of a Nurturing and Naturing Community

We are connected to all of life, interwoven with the many in our biotic communities, and in that web of beauty and belonging we are nurtured so that we may nurture all of nature. Embracing and embraced by reality, we practice nurturing and naturing to build resilience to save ourselves and save our world. We can do this with intention, knowing that humans can change.

- Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner

An Invitation to a Nurture Nature Community

We are the beauty we behold around us. Nourished and sustained by strands of interconnecting beauty that weave the interdependent web of life, we can in turn offer ourselves fully to life, and to the task of nurturing others. We need each other so that we can go into each day fully living, nourished no matter what, nourishing no matter what. Please join me so that we may save ourselves, so that together we may save the world.

- Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner

What is a Nurture Nature Community?

1. A group of people inspired by One Earth's Vision
2. So inspired, this group commits to grow their capacity in the five intelligences through learning, practice, and experience.
3. The community stays connected to One Earth and other One Earth Communities by engaging in similar and simultaneous learning, practices, and experiences
4. This community is strong co-creative. What is it that is yours and ours to do?

Next Steps

1. Sign up for One Earth's newsletter with weekly Nurture Nature tips and news about upcoming events and our conservation efforts in Latin America. Go to our website and receive a free Nurture Nature Guide: http://www.oneearthconservation.org.

2. Sign up for future webinars and other Nurture Nature Events: http://www.oneearthconservation.org

3. Take courses thorough our online Nurture Nature Academy http://www.nurture-nature.thinkific.com/

4. Attend a monthly Nurture Nature Community gathering through Meetup: https://www.meetup.com/pro/nurturenature/

5. Start a Nurture Nature Community in your area by contacting us at info@oneearthconservation.org

6. Participate, offering your gifts and resources

One Earth Conservation's Nurture Nature Program

One Earth Conservation's Nurture Nature Program aims to inspire, motivate, educate, and support people to take care of themselves, their organizations, other individuals of all species, and the biotic community as a whole by developing their awareness and understanding of nature, especially human nature as it relates to all of nature. Participants will then be able to leverage this awareness and understanding to nurture themselves and others, leading to the growth of more efficient and resilient nurturers and naturers for the benefit of all life.

There is no final arriving, for nurturing and naturing exists along a continuum. No matter where you are or under which circumstances you were born or developed, you can move along the continuum, ever growing your capacity and resilience to be nourished, and to nurture nature. Nurturing Nature is a lifetime practice ever refining and more greatly embodying the understanding that all beings are interconnected to each other in beauty, worth, and well-being.

One Earth's Vision of Interbeing

1. All individuals of all species have inherent worth and dignity (all bodies are beautiful, have worth, and matter).

2. All individuals of all species are connected to each other in worth and beauty.

3. We are also connected in harm, benefit, health, well-being, and existence. Without tragedy, there is no beauty. What is done to another, is done to all of us.

4. Embracing this reality, humans grow in belonging to this wondrous planet and the life upon it, and so embraced and nurtured, can nurture in return.

5. This reality of *interbeing* makes us both powerful and vulnerable, therefore, we need each other to grow and to heal as much as possible.

6. Humans are a plastic species, and can change, both individually and as families, organizations, communities, and societies. We can become more effective and joyful nurturers and naturers. This is hard, deep, intentional, and a lifetime's work.[1]

Our Five Natures with Intention and Intelligence

There are multitudinous facets to human nature, many of which can be intentionally nurtured so as to make individuals and groups greater nurturers and naturers. The NNP emphasizes the following five natural intelligences of human nature:

Our Natural Intelligence	*Using Our Natural Intelligence to...*
Emotional Intelligence	Be in Beauty
Social Intelligence	Be with the Other in Beauty
Multispecies Intelligence	Be the Other
Ecological Intelligence	Be the Relationships
Spiritual Intelligence	Be All

Each of these intelligences interconnect through a primary understanding of how individuals from unicellular to complex social vertebrates respond to stimuli in their environment by "moving away" from harm or discomfort and "moving towards" benefit and satisfaction. Each individual has a subjective experience and makes decisions on what to do so as to meet their needs. For some species, we can easily term these subjective experiences as emotions. These emotions are the motivators for response to the environment (behavior). We can therefore come to greater understanding and acceptance of the inherent worth and dignity of all beings by seeking to know their subjective experience and how it relates to behavior to meet needs. In other words, what is another feeling and needing? By answering this we can move to ourselves having greater choice on how to have deeper connections with nature - ours, others, and the earth's. With this deeper connection, we foster a greater sense of belonging, and in that welcoming embrace of life, we welcome others into the family of life through compassionate and empowered action.

We can maximally grow these intelligences embedded in a multispecies community, and hence, we intentionally gather in Nurture Nature Communities.

[1] *Nurturer* - One who nurtures any aspect of the biotic community, nurturing oneself as one's neighbors

Naturer - One who cherishes nature and seeks opportunities to understand, experience, and be nourished by nature