

MANIFESTO FOR ACTIVE RECONNECTION:
A FOUNDATION FOR LIVING WITHIN THE APOCALYPSE

While living in New York City, I began to notice moss growing in the cracks of the sidewalk. Grasses popped up amidst the concrete. Then, pigeons started to spend time on my windowsill. Urban environments are teeming with life, if we slow down enough to notice.

When I stop to observe the small ways that Nature manifests, wherever I am, I reflect on what I want from my own humanity. I find clarity when I slow down; it makes me feel less scattered, more whole. By being present in this Natural world, I augment my humanity rather than dimming it.

The digital age, largely considered the height of technocratic problem solving, is currently at odds with our humanity. It has brought a simultaneous deluge and rejection of emotion. Both states of emotion lead to dissociation from ourselves, the communities we live in, and the environment. This numbing of emotion threatens our ability to tackle the most pressing issues facing society. To regain our footing on more stable ground, it is necessary to develop an emotional foundation to heal our environment, political systems, and financial vulnerabilities.

To begin this process, we must actively engage with and create for emotions surrounding Self, Community, and Nature. By consistently recentering ourselves around meditations for Self, Community, and Nature, we galvanize our lives, our practice, and our relationships towards a mindful life, a mindful experience of humanity.

01. RECONNECTION WITH THE SELF

Understanding and cultivating the Self is the first step towards reconnection. There are several principles contributing to the growth of the Self. These elements relate to perception, representation, and honesty.

1. Self limits anxiety towards the external gaze. The Self must be secure in order to fully benefit from and embody feedback.
2. Self seeks out feedback from diverse perspectives. Collaborators are essential to the growth of Self.
3. Self must be conscious, honest, and explicit about positionality and performativity. They are aware of the biases and privileges that surround the embodiment of Self.
4. Self is affected by and contributes to culture. Investigate the cultural practices surrounding both Self and others, and continue to ask questions. Why is the Self situated where they are?
5. Self provides care and love to their chosen community. This care can be shown in the donation of time, knowledge, skillset, or capital.
6. Self prioritizes the distillation of questions (in concept, form, fabrication, etc.) that are personally exciting and relevant. When work is enjoyable, and when the Self is passionate, they create more impactful work.
7. Self actively searches for knowledge of every sort, in any form. This means that everything can be interesting.

8. Self allows space to feel emotion, then processes that emotion through the act of making.
9. Self chases honest awe and exultation at all costs. Time on earth is limited.
02. RECONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY.

Once the Self has been reconnected with, it is possible to contribute to Community. This, of course, benefits the Self as well. Community principles are connected by respect, communication, and understanding.

1. Community is a locus of love.
2. Community deserves honest, open, and consistent communication. This mode of communication represents mutual respect.
3. Community, like Nature, is teeming with life. Slow down and listen to what it is telling you; this will provide inspiration and moments of breakthrough.
4. Community is an entity that should be considered when making major decisions for Self. Do not begin by bringing your own agenda.
5. Community is something the Self chooses to be a part of. This is, and should be, an active, interdependent relationship, not a passive one.
6. Community creates a sense of social wholeness when indulged. Do not detract from this - lean into it.
7. Community is a collection of diverse perspectives and morphologies. The more that you recognize differences and represent them with justice, the more universalized your work will become.

03. RECONNECTION WITH NATURE

Nature is our physical world. This encompasses plants, animals, geological phenomena, and other features and products of the earth. Reconnect with Nature in order to learn more about Self, as well as expand your impact in Community. Meditations on Nature center on knowledge seeking, connection, and reciprocation.

1. Nature is something to be revered, but it is not invincible. Natural phenomena can be disrupted by a lack of care.
2. Nature can be approached as an extension of Self, just as Self is an extension of Nature. Recognize that you are a part of Nature, and that this relationship will always be reciprocal.
3. Nature is joy, it is pain, and it is grief. It is laughter. When Nature is painful, ask why. What is your responsibility in this? If Nature failed you, seemingly inexplicably, look to find root causes. There might be other agents involved.
4. Nature’s joys are meant to be available to all. Use whatever resources, leverage, and power you have to make this so.
5. Nature has a history. Know the past stewards of the land you are on, understand their history - within this history, there is important information that has been dismissed or erased. Community ties that have been violently severed.
6. Nature has an endless supply of questions waiting to be answered. Slow down, ask nicely,

and listen intently. With your persistence, Nature will show answers (even if they are not the answers you expect).

7. Nature reminds us that childlike curiosity is possible. Through Nature, channel growth and discovery.

8. Nature is mutualistic. Seek out mutualisms, and ask why they occur. Are there any potential mutualisms to create or augment within your body of work?
9. Nature abounds everywhere, even in the most urban cities. It is a well of visual, symbolic, and emotional information. Take time to notice where the moss grows.

This doctrine provides a foundation for reconnection. Growth does not stop here; in fact, if we stop here, we will stay put. Meditation takes discipline, and it takes consistency.

We move together, like trees in a forest. By returning to the principles of Self, Community, and Nature, we can establish a foundation, feel the ground beneath our feet, and we will be able to keep our eyes open. We will articulate our humanity, recognize where we must ask more for it - where we must confront our digital world in defiance - and actively chase after collective growth.

I am alive. I am more alive the more I notice.

“A tree is not a forest... It is at the mercy of wind and weather. But together, many trees create an ecosystem.”

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES BY PETER WOHLLEBEN



