

One little 'story' of my connection with nature

I remember childhood expeditions with my cousins to a local trout stream, across the *commons*, in the village where I lived (Chorleywood in Hertfordshire, England). This, along with other special places, served so many functions. It was where I learned about nature; it was a place to go to dream and sort out what I felt and thought and believed; and it was a sanctuary I could retreat to when things threatened to disconnect me from myself and others.

My two-year study of a bat-inhabited cave in Trinidad taught me so much more about how nature works and set me on a journey to better understand the amazing world of the soil, and also of insects and their relatives. In my extensive food garden (and later on during a project to help the community of a small island in the Seychelles become self-sufficient in food and energy) I was able to apply all of this understanding in ways that were life-affirming and deeply meaningful. In all of these experiences there was, and still is, a powerful awareness of the absolute amazingness of it all, and an acknowledgment of how limited my understanding is. I have an enormous reverence for, and sense of wonder about, the infinite 'rest' that continues to do its thing without my knowledge of it. I think that it is this awareness that helps me to be less controlling than I might be without having had these experiences of nature and place.

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