

GETTING STARTED...BEGIN WITH CURIOSITY

“The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.”—Dorothy Parker

CONNECT

One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself,

*"What if I had never seen this before?
What if I knew I would never see it again?"*
—Rachel Carson, *A Sense of Wonder*

The *Wheels of Time and Place* are a powerful tool for connecting us with our inborn sense of wonder. Do you remember how you experienced nature as a child? With all of your senses engaged and your attention focused on this place and moment in time, you might feel that sense of wonder again...and foster that connection to the natural world in your children or students. What a gift to give yourself or share with one another...the gift of time and attention!

The foundation practice is a simple one. We begin by sitting in a place long enough to begin to experience it deeply. This silence and stillness may be difficult at first...and even youngsters can develop the habit of tuning into their surroundings for a few moments; long enough to begin to notice sounds, sights, and smells they might have missed before. Even the most ordinary place can become magical with this type of vision!

Try connecting to your place by sitting on the ground, feeling the Earth beneath you, closing your eyes and simply breathing in and out. Now you're ready to begin the next step...

CREATE

Opening all your senses, what do you notice about your place?

What is unique about it?

What is beautiful to you?

What shapes, colors, textures, or sounds grab your attention?

What words come to your mind?



As you see, hear, and feel, identify the words, poems, pictures, or gestures that you wish to use to describe your place and your experience in it. Remember, this is YOUR unique vision, and no one else's. There is no right or wrong. Tap into your relaxed, creative mind and let the words and images come to you in whatever form they appear. You might want to use a separate notebook and “brainstorm” to catch your flow of ideas. Nature will guide you...if you pay attention.

When you have an idea of what you want to create, you can use pencils, pens, markers, paint, photos, writing or any “tool” to create your unique work of art. If you feel daunted by drawing, use photos, trace, do rubbings of leaves or objects, or make a print using natural objects or stamps.

COMMUNICATE

When you discover something new about a place, see interesting things happening in it, or discover something new about yourself...you will want to tell someone about it! After all, the purpose of art and writing is to communicate with others. From the time of the earliest cave paintings; humans have used art to express their ideas and experiences in the world. You also might simply want to record your own memories and thoughts about a certain place and time to remember them in the future.

Think about what you might “say” about your experience that would make someone else feel like they were there with you. Choose words or images that describe exactly what it feels like to you. Expand your vocabulary; try to use different descriptive words and metaphors. Capture images through drawing or photos that “speak” to you and describe your place and time in it. This could be a whole landscape, or a series of small observations of life around you, such as a single plant or leaf.

