

EnviroMeditation™

Returning to Relationship
with the Living World



Welcome

Be invited.

Be welcome.

Be safe.

Welcome to EnviroMeditation™.

This book is an invitation to pause and attend to your relationship with the living world.

Our health and wellbeing—physical, emotional, spiritual and social—are inseparable from the living world that sustains us. Caring for ourselves, one another and the Earth is interconnected work. A sustainable planet requires a sustainable self.

Begin wherever you are, with whatever attention and energy you have available today. You can read, listen, pause or set these pages aside. Let your own comfort and circumstances guide the pace.

EnviroMeditation™ grew during a period of my life at McCarrs Creek, on Pittwater in Sydney, Australia. Living there gave me time to listen and notice, and to reflect on the relationship between humanity and the living world. Threads from my work in community cultural development, my relationships with people and places, and my training in mindfulness meditation began to come together.

The photographs throughout this book come from that time. They hold something of a place that held me. Including them here is a way of honouring McCarrs Creek and acknowledging its presence in the making of this work.

You will bring your own places to these pages. Some may be places you know intimately. Others may live in memory, or be places you are only beginning to encounter. Your relationship with the living world has its own history.

Through five practices—Pause, Breathe, Notice, Feel and Remember Belonging—EnviroMeditation™ invites us to explore that relationship through experience.

Alongside the writing and photographs, you will find invitations to listen to recorded meditations. You can move between reading and listening, spend time with an image, or return to a passage another day. There is room to find your own way through this book.

My hope is that these pages offer room to deepen your relationship with the living world, and to recognise how that relationship might find expression in everyday life.

We invite you to join us in this practice, bringing your own experiences, questions and places into a shared exploration of our relationship with the living world.

Welcome home to our little blue green dot Earth.



EnviroMeditation™



EnviroMeditation™

EnviroMeditation™ is a contemplative practice for re-membering our relationship with the living world.

It begins with a simple understanding: we are part of the Earth. Our bodies, our breath and our everyday lives participate in the systems that sustain life. The air we breathe, the water we drink and the food that nourishes us bring that relationship into every day.

Through EnviroMeditation™, we give this relationship our attention. We make room to experience it through our senses, our feelings and our awareness of the places we inhabit.

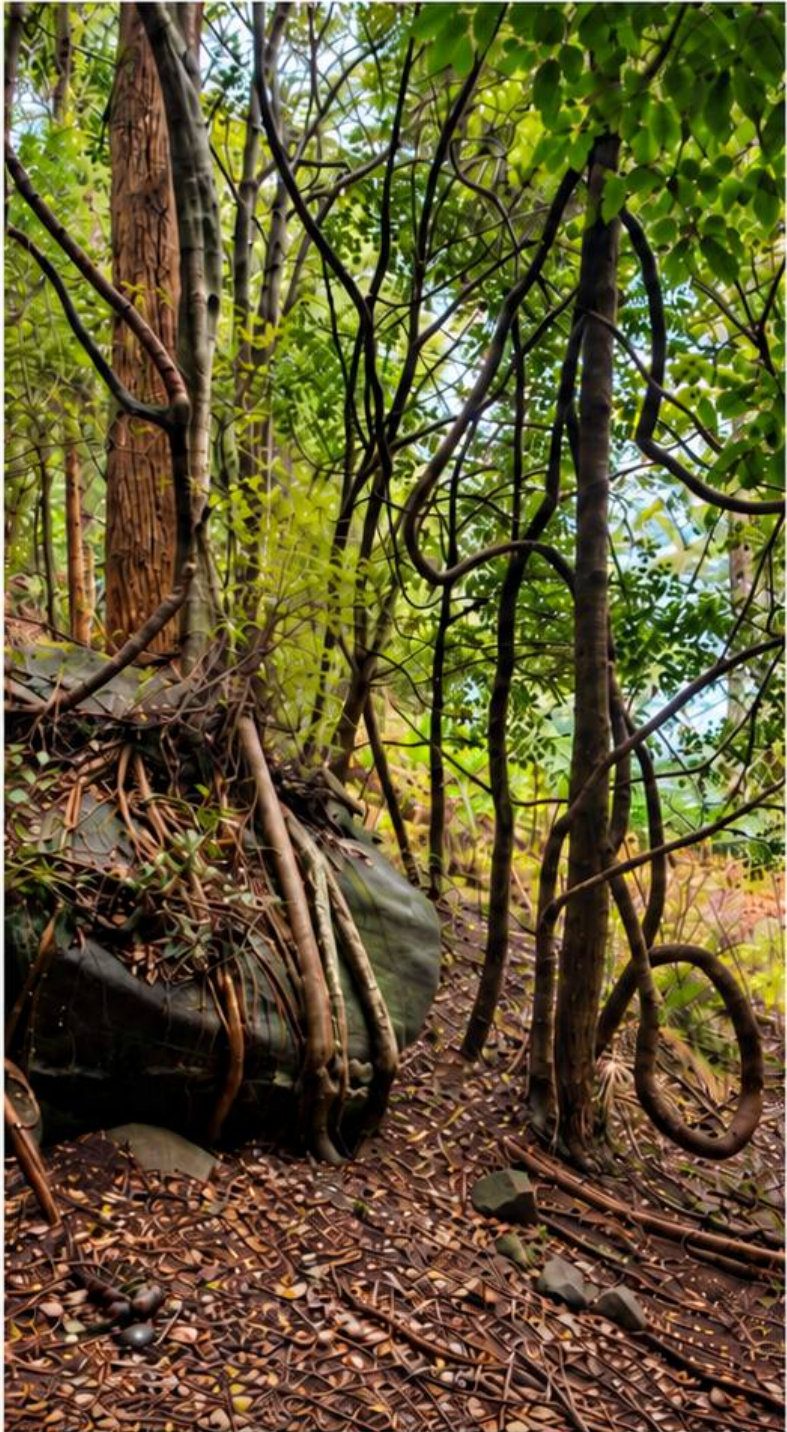
Re-membering brings our participation into felt awareness. We remember the relationships that sustain us and experience ourselves as members of the living world. Belonging becomes something we feel through our bodies, our senses and our encounters with the places we inhabit.

A breath can become a point of contact with the atmosphere. The feeling of air against our skin can bring us into awareness of our surroundings. Listening can open our attention to life nearby. These ordinary experiences offer ways to recognise our participation within the living world.

The practice is grounded in five values: Presence, Gratitude, Compassion, Interconnection and Responsibility.

Presence invites us to attend to what is here. Gratitude opens our awareness to the life that sustains us. Compassion makes room for our own experience and the experiences of others. Interconnection directs our attention to the relationships through which life continues. Responsibility invites us to consider how we live within those relationships.

We explore these values through five practices: Pause, Breathe, Notice, Feel and Remember Belonging.



To pause is to create room for attention.

To breathe is to attend to an exchange already taking place between our bodies and the world.

To notice is to open our senses to what is present.

To feel is to make room for an emotional relationship with what we encounter.

To remember belonging is to recognise ourselves as participants within the living world.

Grounded in five values and explored through five practices, EnviroMeditation™ invites us to deepen our felt relationship with the living world.

The EnviroMeditation pathway begins upstream with experience and returns to behaviour, exploring how experience shapes perception, how perception informs relationship, and how relationship influences what we value and how we live.



Each practice offers an entry point. You might begin by listening to the sounds around you, feeling the support beneath your body, or noticing the movement of your breath. Over time, these practices can become familiar ways of attending to daily life.

EnviroMeditation™ can be experienced in many settings: beside water, among trees, in a garden, on a balcony, or within a room. Wherever we practise, our bodies remain in relationship with air, water, light, land and other living beings.

Through guided recordings and photographs, we can also encounter EnviroMeditation™ digitally, allowing sound, imagery and memory to draw our attention towards the living world. These experiences can prepare us for time outdoors, bring a meaningful place back into awareness, and invite us to attend more closely to the life around us wherever we are.

Amid the demands and rhythms of modern life, the practice invites us to attend to these relationships: the air moving through our bodies, the water we depend upon, the places we inhabit and the lives unfolding around us.

Through our bodies, senses and feelings, we bring this belonging into felt awareness, allowing it to deepen and become part of how we live.



01

VALUES

Our foundations

We are grounded in our values. They remind us of what matters and help us orient our attention, intentions and actions in everyday life.



Presence



Gratitude



Compassion



Interconnection



Responsibility

02

PRACTICES

How we engage

Our practices are accessible ways to bring our values into daily life. They help us pause, attune to the living world, and cultivate a deeper sense of connection and belonging.



Pause



Breathe



Notice



Feel

Remember
Belonging

03

PATHWAY

Our theory of change

Through regular practice, our experience can shift how we perceive the world, deepen our relationship with the living world, shape the values we live by, and lead to more caring and sustainable behaviour.

Experience →

Perception →

Relationship →

Value →

Behaviour



Relationship

Why relationship matters

Our wellbeing belongs within the living world. The water we drink, the food that nourishes us and the air moving through our bodies bring that relationship into every day.

EnviroMeditation™ invites us to give this relationship our attention, allowing what we understand to become something we also experience and feel.

A sustainable planet requires a sustainable self.

This guiding proposition invites us to consider how caring for ourselves, one another and the Earth can develop together. Rest, gratitude and compassion can help sustain our capacity to participate and care.

Thich Nhat Hanh's teaching of interbeing offers a beautiful point of entry. Looking at a sheet of paper, he recognises the cloud, the rain and the tree within it. An ordinary object reveals the relationships that make its existence possible.

We might bring that same attention to a meal, a glass of water or a breath. What has made this possible? What lives and places sustain us?

Experience and perception

A familiar place can come into view differently when we pause. We notice a sound we usually pass by, the movement of leaves, or a change in the light. Giving something our attention creates room to encounter it more fully.

Feelings are part of that encounter. We may experience pleasure, curiosity, gratitude or concern. A place we love may also hold grief. These responses can help us recognise what matters to us.

Joanna Macy's Work That Reconnects makes room for gratitude and our feelings for the world, bringing them into an exploration of connection and shared action.

Within EnviroMeditation™, we explore how experience may shape perception, deepen relationship, influence what we value and find expression in behaviour. We begin with an encounter and remain curious about how it becomes part of our lives.



Place and belonging

Some places become part of the way we know ourselves. We carry them through memory, familiarity and the experiences we have shared there.

McCarrs Creek holds that significance for me. Living there gave me time to listen, notice and reflect. The photographs in this book honour its presence in the making of EnviroMeditation™.

You will bring your own places to these pages. A garden, a neighbourhood street, a creek or a view from a window may offer a point of connection. Some places hold comfort; others carry more complicated feelings. Our circumstances also shape where we can go and what we can encounter.

We begin with what is available to us.

Through familiarity, we begin to notice seasonal change and the other lives with which we share a place. As our attention deepens, so too can our care for its wellbeing.

To remember belonging is to recognise that, wherever we are, we are already part of the living world.



What the research tells us

A substantial body of research demonstrates the importance of our relationship with the living world. Our experiences of nature are associated with physical and emotional wellbeing, our sense of connection and belonging, and how we care for the environment.

Nature, health and wellbeing

Research involving nearly 20,000 people in England found that spending at least two hours a week in natural environments was associated with better reported health and wellbeing. The pattern was also observed among older adults and people living with long-term health conditions.⁰¹

Research on organised nature-based activities has reported improvements in mental wellbeing and some measures of physical health. Forest bathing, known in Japan as shinrin-yoku, offers one example: spending unhurried time among trees and engaging with the forest through our senses.^{02, 03}

Experience, perception and connection

Spending time outdoors is important. Research also shows that how we engage with nature matters. A study involving almost 5,000 people found that regular visits to nature were associated with better general health, while feeling connected to nature was associated with greater psychological wellbeing and environmentally responsible behaviour.⁰⁴

Researchers have also examined ordinary moments of attention. In a study involving 500 people, short activities encouraging participants to notice and appreciate nature increased their happiness, satisfaction with life and sense of connection with the natural world. Nature-noticing activities also encouraged conservation behaviour.⁰⁵

These findings give everyday experiences their proper significance. A familiar tree, a local creek or the life encountered on a walk can become part of the relationships we develop with the world around us.

Relationship, values and behaviour

Across many studies, people who feel more connected to nature also tend to report stronger environmentally responsible behaviour. These behaviours include everyday choices as well as wider participation in environmental protection.⁰⁶

An English population study found that visits to natural environments and appreciation of nature were associated with environmentally responsible behaviour, giving another perspective on how experience and relationship relate to action.⁰⁷

Health and attentive time in nature

Forest bathing research has found improvements in emotional wellbeing, including reductions in anxiety and depressive symptoms. Research on nature-based activities has also identified benefits for some measures of physical health. Together, these findings demonstrate that contact with living environments can matter for both body and mind.^{03, 02}

Our wellbeing and the wellbeing of nature

The evidence describes connected relationships: nature experiences are associated with health and wellbeing; attention and appreciation can deepen our sense of connection; and people who feel more connected to nature often report a greater willingness to care for it.

Our opportunities to encounter nature differ, and no one experience is universal. Nevertheless, the research gives us compelling reasons to consider our own wellbeing alongside that of the places and other lives with which we share the Earth.

*“Human and nature’s well-being
is interdependent.”*

Pocock and colleagues, 2023⁰⁵

Sound, imagery and direct experience

A recording, photograph or remembered place can offer another way into this relationship. Listening to water indoors or spending time with an image may bring a place into awareness.

Research into natural sounds and digital nature experiences suggests these encounters can support mood and aspects of wellbeing. They also offer ways to recall a place and renew attention to our surroundings.

Within EnviroMeditation™, sound and imagery offer invitations to prepare attention, recall a meaningful place and become curious about our present surroundings.

A photograph of McCarrs Creek might bring water you have known to mind. When a recording ends, you might continue listening to the sounds around you. You may carry that attention outdoors, towards the sky beyond a window, or into awareness of your body and breath.

The place you are in now offers its own encounter.

We begin to practise with the relationship already present, and room to attend.

Practice

EnviroMeditation™ brings together five practices: Pause, Breathe, Notice, Feel and Remember Belonging. Together, they describe a process of giving attention to our relationship with the living world and allowing that relationship to become more present in our lives.

Pausing creates space for attention. Breathing brings us into awareness of an exchange already taking place. Noticing opens our senses to our surroundings. Feeling allows our emotional response to become part of the encounter. Remembering belonging draws these experiences together, helping us recognise ourselves as part of the living world.

Each practice supports the others. We may begin with a pause, or find that a sound, a feeling or a familiar place draws us into the process.

Pause

Pause creates the space in which the other practices can develop.

In daily life, attention often moves quickly between tasks and demands. Pausing interrupts that momentum and gives us time to register our experience: our body, our surroundings and what is happening within and around us.

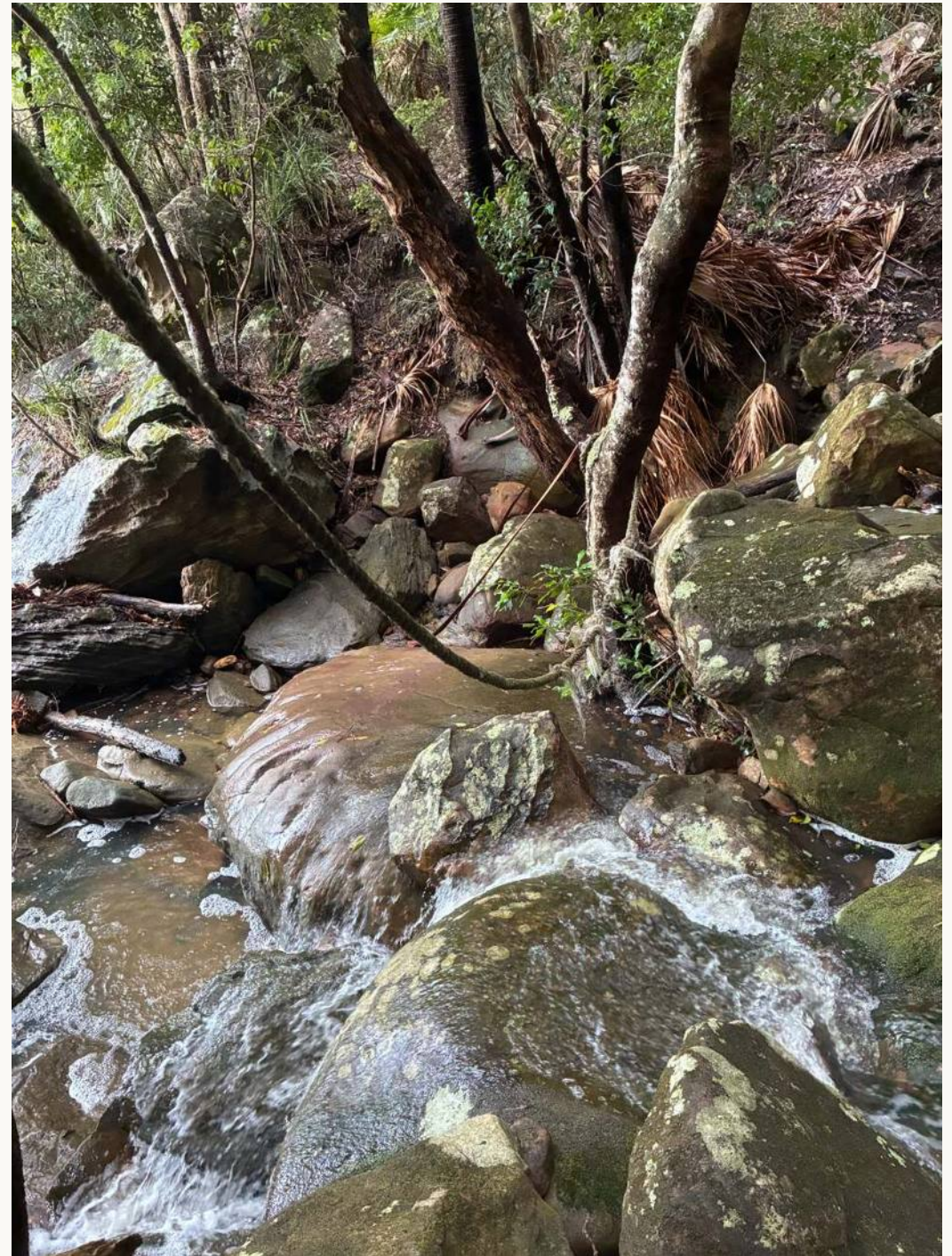
This space can change how we meet a moment. Before replying to a message, beginning another task or moving through a place, a pause allows attention to catch up. We may become more aware of what we are bringing into the encounter and find room to choose our response.

Breathe

Breathe brings attention to the relationship between our bodies and the atmosphere.

Breathing is continuous, usually happening with little conscious attention. Within EnviroMeditation™, attending to its natural rhythm offers a way to recognise that our lives are sustained through exchange with the world around us.

Breath also gives attention something familiar to return to. From the space created by a pause, we become aware of our bodies breathing within a particular place. This can make our participation in the living world immediate and personal.





Notice

Notice extends attention through the senses.

We become aware of sound, light, temperature, texture and movement, according to what we can encounter. Our surroundings come into greater detail. A place we regularly pass through may become somewhere we begin to know.

Noticing supports relationship through familiarity. We recognise changes, become aware of other lives and spend time with what draws our attention. These encounters give us something to reflect on, respond to and come to care about.

Feel

Feel brings our emotional response into the process.

What we encounter may stir gratitude, affection, curiosity, concern or grief. These responses can help us recognise the significance a place or another life holds for us.

EnviroMeditation™ makes room for that response with compassion. We allow time to recognise how an encounter touches us and what it brings into awareness. Feeling gives relationship a personal dimension: we begin to understand what we care about through our experience of caring.

Remember Belonging

Remember Belonging brings the practices together, helping us recognise our place within the living world.

Through pause, breath, sensory attention and feeling, we become more aware of the relationships in which our lives unfold. Air, water, food and place are part of our daily experience. The living world sustains us, and our ways of living participate in it.

This is re-mem-bering: remembering those relationships and recognising ourselves as members of the living world. Belonging becomes something we can experience through our bodies, our encounters and the places we come to know.



The five practices can develop through listening to a guided recording and through returning to them in everyday life. With repetition, they can become familiar ways of attending, helping us carry awareness beyond a meditation into our relationships and choices.

This is the movement towards action: exploring how the relationship we recognise and feel can find expression in the way we live.

Action

EnviroMeditation™ invites us to deepen our relationship with the living world and explore how that relationship finds expression in the way we live.

Action brings attention and care into our choices. It may begin with something close: how we respond to another person, use what we have, or care for a place we know. It can also develop through participation with others, contributing to changes that reach beyond our individual lives.

Returning to behaviour

The EnviroMeditation theory of change is:

Experience → Perception → Relationship → Value → Behaviour

What we experience may influence what we perceive. Our perceptions can shape our relationships, which in turn can influence what we value and how we behave.

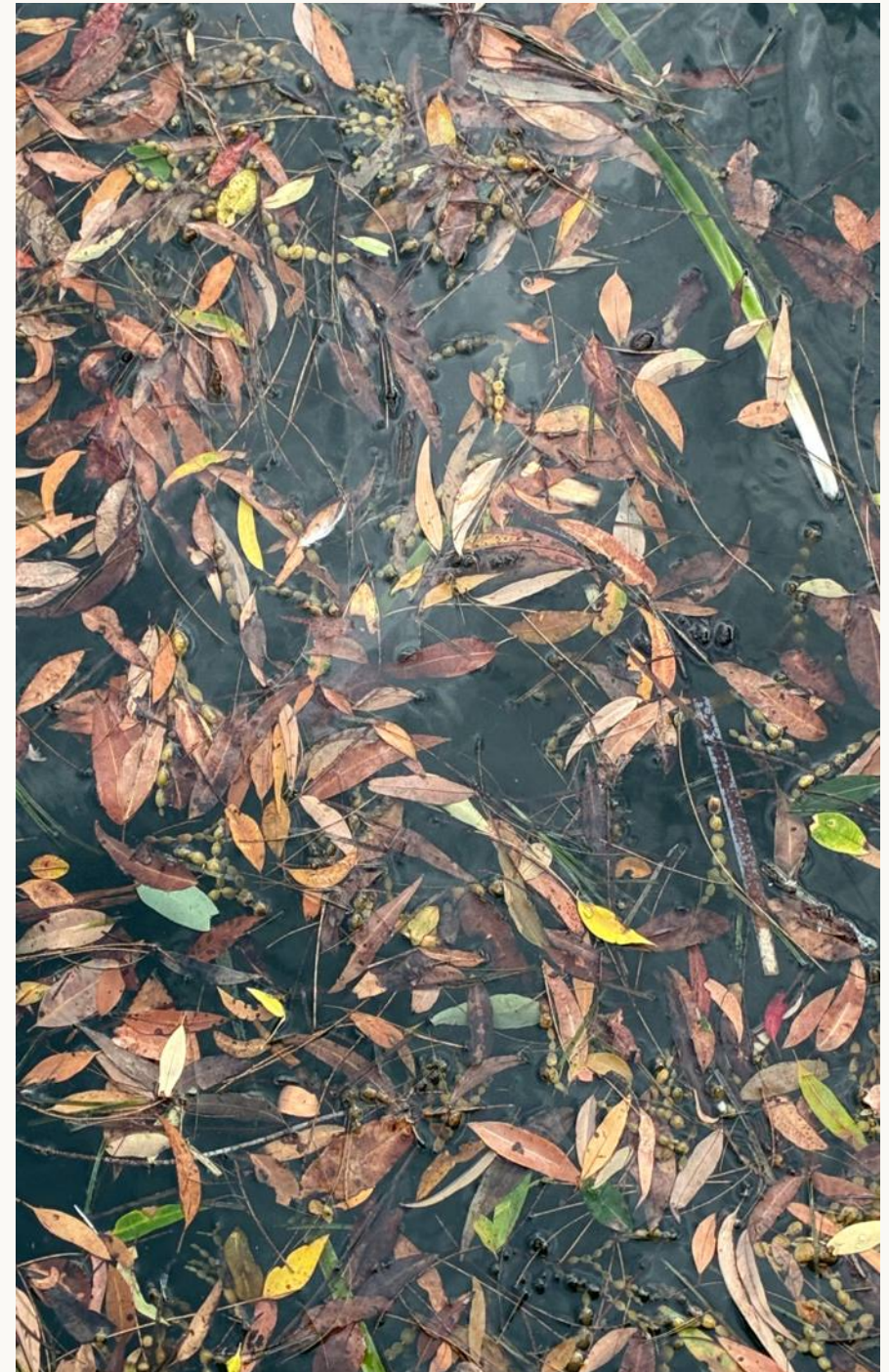
EnviroMeditation™ explores how attending to relationship may help care find expression in daily life.

A meta-analysis found that people who feel more connected to nature tend to report stronger environmentally responsible behaviour.⁰⁶

How that connection develops into behaviour depends on many influences, including our circumstances and opportunities to participate.

A place we regularly pass through, for example, may become more familiar as we give it attention. We notice its changing conditions and the lives it supports. As it becomes meaningful to us, we may take a greater interest in its care.

Returning to behaviour means considering how this relationship becomes part of daily life. Our intentions meet our habits, circumstances and opportunities. Practice offers a way to remain attentive as we make choices, try something different and learn from what follows.



Care in everyday life

Care can take practical forms. We might use food more thoughtfully, repair something we already own, or learn how to support local habitat. We might become more attentive to the needs of a neighbour or join others caring for a shared space.

These actions take their meaning from the relationships involved. Learning about a waterway can help us understand what affects its health. Listening to people who use a local park can reveal needs we had overlooked. Attention gives us a fuller basis for deciding how to respond.

Each of us begins within different circumstances. Time, health, money and access influence what is possible. We can choose actions that are meaningful and manageable, and allow our participation to develop as we learn.

Responsibility and participation

Belonging brings responsibility into view. We live within relationships that sustain us, and our choices have consequences for other people, other living beings and the places we share.

Responsibility asks us to consider those consequences and respond with care. It involves learning about a place, listening to those who know it, and recognising how our actions contribute to its wellbeing.

Participation gives us ways to act together. This may include a neighbourhood initiative, habitat restoration, advocacy, creative work or involvement in decisions about shared places. Different people bring different knowledge, skills and capacities.

Individual choices sit alongside collective decisions. The systems through which we obtain food, water, energy and housing shape how we live. Caring for the living world therefore includes how we participate in our communities, workplaces and public life.

Reflecting on consequences

An action begins with an intention. Its consequences become clearer through attention to what happens afterwards.

We may discover that something helped, that its effect was limited, or that it created an unexpected difficulty. Reflection allows us to adjust our approach, seek advice and respond to what we learn.

Impact is considered here through the consequences of behaviour. We look at what changed, who or what was affected, and whether the action contributed to the care we intended. Some effects are immediate; others take time to understand.

The five practices remain available within this process. We can pause before deciding, notice what is happening, recognise our feelings and remember the relationships involved.

Action then becomes part of an ongoing practice: participating, learning and allowing our understanding of the living world to inform how we live.



Next

Thank you for spending time with EnviroMeditation™.

This book offers a beginning. You can continue through the recordings, return to a passage or photograph, and explore how the five practices become part of your everyday life.

We welcome you to share in this work, bringing your own experiences and places into an ongoing exploration of our relationship with the living world.

We also invite you to share the EnviroMeditation™ story. Pass this book or the library link to someone who might enjoy it, or share something of your own experience. Your invitation can help others find their way into the practice.

Listen • Practise • Explore • Participate

Listen to a meditation that interests you. Spend time with it at a pace that suits you, and return whenever you wish.

Practise through ordinary encounters: a pause within the day, attention to breath, a familiar sound or time in a place that matters to you.

Explore what draws your attention and how your relationship with the living world develops.

Participate in ways that reflect your care, circumstances and interests. This might include sharing a recording, caring for a place or joining others in something meaningful to you.



Continue the journey

The free meditation library

The EnviroMeditation™ library offers free recordings to support your exploration, including fuller Enviro meditations and shorter Enviro micro meditations.

You are welcome to listen, return and share the library with others.



www.EnviroMeditation.Earth

Stay connected

We invite you to keep in touch as EnviroMeditation™ develops. Your experiences and reflections are welcome, and can help inform the work as it grows.

Visit the website for contact details and updates.



Meet your guide

Tony Duke is a story maker, community cultural development practitioner and certified mindfulness meditation teacher. His lived and professional experiences across five decades have brought him into relationship with people, communities and places in Australia and internationally.

His practice is framed in the strengths-based narrative of First Nations and Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. His work has enabled him to engage with, and at times lead, a diversity of organisational structures and cultural production processes for the creation of objects and artefacts, performance, text, celebration, ceremony and exchange.

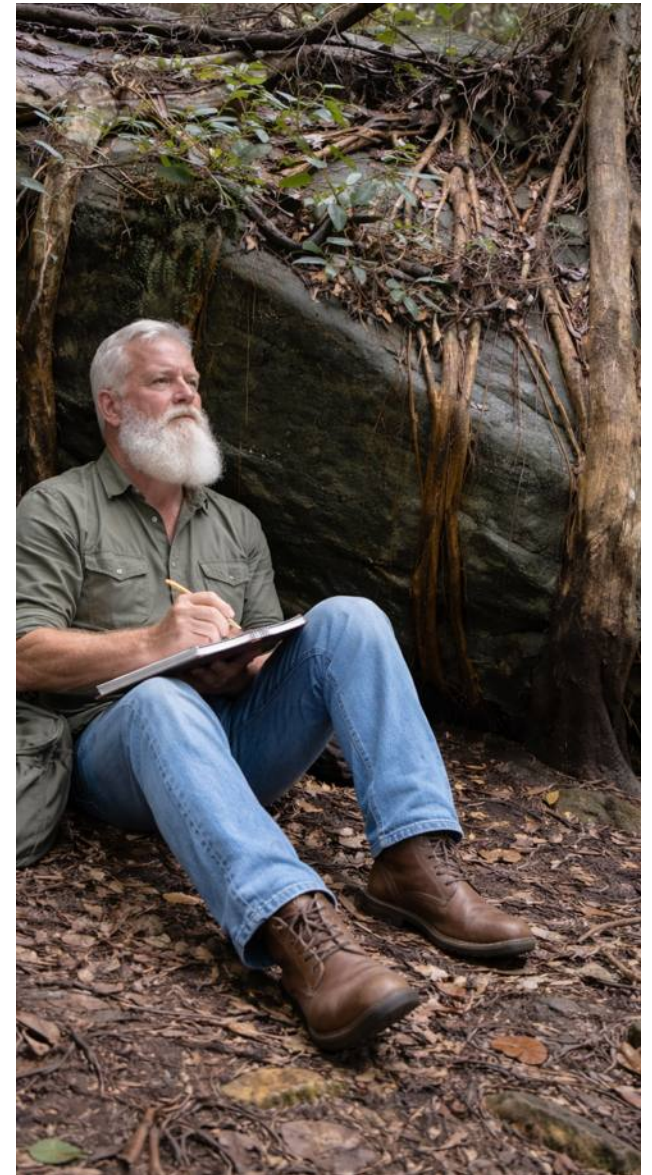
EnviroMeditation™ brings threads of that experience together through contemplative writing, sound, photography and an exploration of humanity's relationship with the living world.

Photographs and audio

All photographs were taken by Tony Duke at McCarrs Creek, on Pittwater in Sydney, Australia, during 2024–2026.

All meditations are written and voiced by Tony Duke and recorded at Echidna Audio in Sydney, Australia.

*Welcome home to our little
blue green dot Earth.*



References & resources

The following works are cited in, or have helped inform, this introductory booklet. They are offered as starting points for further exploration.

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Further influences

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