

How to Walk on the Wild Side

Personal Perspective: A way to experience your life differently.

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"Wildness... sucks up the now, it blazes in your eyes, and it glories in everyone who willfully goes their own way" —Jay Griffiths

"In span and in size, our human lives unfold between the scale of leaves and the scale of stars, amid a miraculous world born by myriad chance events, any one of which, if ever so slightly different, could have occasioned a lifeless rocky world, or no world at all..." —Maria Popovo

We see the world based on how we learned to learn about life, and other environmental influences. It is a given that our world consists of many contradictions that don't always allow us to recognize our interdependency with each other and our environment.

We are part of nature, which has no opposites when humans do not interrupt it. It flows in a blend toward harmony. When we succumb to the power of opposites, we enter a world of



Wild Indian Dream

Source: Natasha Rabin (c) with permission

opposition or conflict. Not many people like conflict, but it is the forum for creativity; ask any artist. It also is the essence of comedy. Abbott and Costello could gather jovial baseball laughs, wondering, "Who is on first...What is on second..." and so on. Yet when these situations are unresolved beyond a joke, they create havoc. Whether disrespecting nature or our significant relationships, it ends up being like an escalating arms race or a bully's subjugation of another. It is, regardless, excruciating.

Poet Wendel Barry describes his coping skill when too much conflict produces his despair: "I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water."

In a similar manner, author Jay Griffiths states, "There are two sides: the agents of waste and the lovers of the wild. Either for life or against it. And each of us has to choose." Choosing to love the wild is a mindset that can address lack of hope and despair. To be "wild" is a profound way to create new perspectives beyond conflict. It offers a wider lens to soothe your awareness and contextualize things.

Practicing being wild is celebrating that life can say no at times, yet besides being messy, it is simultaneously beautiful. It allows each situation to be seen as preparing a readiness to interface with a larger, unifying world. Wildness can be described as a process that exemplifies how the whole of our existence is greater than the sum of its parts. Accepting the framework of the wild is entering that space between inductive and deductive thinking; it is beyond perpetuating opposites; it is an ecological process. Our lives can then go beyond fragmentation by respecting and sharing how we move through all the contexts that educate and affect us, such as the family, community, economy, environment, media, religion, politics, etc.

Being wild refutes irrational beliefs and allows for new random possibilities. It is wild to be full of inviting, weird, exciting, improvisational patterns that emerge before our eyes and can add to our evolving legacy. It is how discoveries occurred through intuitive thoughts that refute the belief that being familiar with the world is the only way to find happiness.

Our whole environment is more than the sum of all that exists. It offers the visionary power that William Blake felt is within us all, or the way Walt Whitman sang, "A leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars." This exemplifies what is not hidden but merely unseen, waiting to emerge in a manner that Levi-Strauss describes regarding the bricoleur (handyman) who starts from the beginning and in between, with an aesthetic resilience that enables simultaneously seeing the parts and whole picture.

Life can sometimes be painful, like a watch with a bent gear still working but telling the wrong time. However, understanding how to think out of the box and be wild in an ecological part-to-whole manner can produce less adversarial and more respectful outcomes. This will meet the needs of a healthier world. It frees us to evolve collaboratively.

Here are some prompts to help you become more "wild." Keep in mind what the rock group The Troggs sang or what Lou Reed suggested:

"Wild thing, you make my heart sing
You make everything groovy
Wild thing" —The Troggs

“Hey, babe, take a walk on the wild side, I said, Hey, honey, take a walk on the wild side” —Lou Reed

What does this quote by Maria Popova mean to you: “After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, love and so on- have found that none of these finally satisfy...what remains?”

Is it time to listen and care for each other through non-adversarial forums that go beyond imposed fragmentation?

What is the pattern that produces polarization and imposed opposites?

How can we share concerns and attempt to enlighten those who feel they have nothing to lose?

Is there an opportunity to listen and synchronize through the everyday emotional and physical survival needs?

In what ways can mutual learning enhance our relationships?

How can we avoid the injuries of environmental, cultural, and racial discord?

How can we strive to tend to and care for each other?

How could life better coalesce for you in vital ways?

How do you feel about familiarity being dangerous and producing a static life?

Would allowing for a life that encourages randomness and improvisation be acceptable to you?

How can you better resolve conflicts in your life?