

Recovering Our Sacred Nature

For centuries, Americans have benefited from our willingness to harm other cultures, other life, and the Earth. We stole the land from Indigenous Peoples, kidnapped and enslaved Africans, and liquidated the majesty and beauty of the Earth, practices that we globalized and continue to practice. We rationalized our crimes through the stories we spun about our exceptionalism, which we codified through a hierarchy of inequality, privileges, and laws. These lies have sunk so deeply into our view of life that Western culture has only one value: the price point. We believe that self-interest and competition define human nature.

The sacred path of furthering life on Earth begins with overcoming our self-centeredness and willingness to harm others and the Earth for self-benefit, a way that opens to our living harmoniously with other sacred beings and equitably sharing the Earth. We bring to the sacred path our awareness of the sacred.

The first lessons on the path teach us to unseat our self-centeredness and overcome our willingness to harm others for self-benefit. Learning these lessons gives us the opportunity to begin giving back for what we have taken. Giving up the ways we harm the Earth Interbeing serves as a way for us to repay a generational moral debt from which we have benefitted.

Life has the sacred nature to further life on Earth. Life naturally wants harmonious interactions with other beings and equitable sharing of the Earth so that all life can survive. We have the nature to have a joyful awareness of our sacredness, to humbly follow sacred guidance of what to do, to express our gratitude for our life on Earth, and to patiently bear the burdens of life. We have the nature to preserve life on Earth by maintaining a balance in how we live with each other and how we give back for what we have taken from the Earth Interbeing. All these sacred ways further the survival of all life on Earth.

Self-centeredness and a willingness to harm others have buried our sacred nature under a thick layer of harmful ways and wrong views. As we remove these layers, we begin to experience our sacred nature. When we stop using others as objects to serve us, we naturally begin to interact with them as beloveds. When we stop buying stuff compulsively, we come to appreciate what we have. Our dissatisfaction with arising experience transforms into gratitude. We don't have to learn gratitude, loving-kindness, cooperation, or any of the other aspects of our sacred nature. We only need to remove our harmful ways and wrong views that prevent our sacred nature from shining forth.

As we begin to stop harming the Earth Interbeing, we dimly experience our sacred nature. This gives us the encouragement to remove another layer of harm to experience more of our sacred nature, which encourages us to take off another layer of harm. Our path becomes a virtuous spiral that opens us to our sacred nature and to knowing what we as a sacred being can do to help the Earth Interbeing to recover from Western capitalist culture.

Our household serves as the natural space for us to recover our sacred nature. We define household to mean the people and other beings we interact with daily. Within this small laboratory of the heart, we have immediate feedback on how we interact from our household members. We discover that the more we reduce our harms and strengthen our sacred nature, our household life becomes more harmonious.

The others in the household do not have to share our path or even know about it. At this level of practice, a solitary path takes us far in restoring the brilliance of our sacred nature. The solitary path offers the path of least resistance to change. When interacting with others not on the path, we do not harbor feelings of spiritual superiority nor try to convert them. Instead, we humbly proceed on our solitary path to remove what harms and increase our capacities to harmoniously interact.

As we experience how the path works for us, we want to share what we have learned with others. However, those who still actively seek wealth and power will have no interest in a path that seeks to overcome what they value. No benefit comes from convincing others of the errors of their ways. Such efforts only entangle us in the harmful realm of proving right and wrong.

It takes humbleness to admit we do not know how to further life on Earth as our harmful ways separate us from the sacred knowing of what to do. When we see the harmful ways within the world, the path asks us to see these faults as our own faults that we have projected onto the world. Those who give up their deluded arrogance of knowing what to do and humbly seek a sacred path to further life on Earth receive the support and guidance of the sacred.

Self-discipline means disciplining the self, as in self-centeredness. We apply restrictions upon ourselves to not impulsively react harmfully to external events, to limit our consumption, to not try changing others, and to not view ourselves superior to other beings.

It takes hard work and a years to free us from the ways we harm others, the Earth, and ourselves. We slog through our great reluctance to change by making an enduring and persistent effort. Even then, we remain on guard for any resprouting of our harmful ways. Yet as we uncover our sacred nature, we gain the knowing of how to live as an Earth interbeing.

We have what we need to further life on Earth within us. We have within our sacred natures the means to do it. We sacrifice our self-centeredness and willingness to harm to obtain something of far greater value: the furthering of life on Earth.

January 13, 2025 (Rev. 2/20/26)