

"Kids and Rewilding" - A conversation with Dan De Lion, ReturntoNature.us and Willi Paul, Planetshifter.com (edited from the archive)

Prelude

Rewilding is considered a holistic approach to living, as opposed to skills, practices or a specific set of knowledge.

Rewilding means to return to a more wild or natural state; it is the process of un-doing domestication. The term emerged from the green anarchism and anarcho-primitivism political theories, in which humans are believed to be "civilized" or "domesticated" by industrial and agricultural progress. Supporters of rewilding argue that through the process of domestication, human wildness has been altered by force.



Willi - Is Rewilding about survivalism?

Dan - I find that it may be today, because we are very disconnected from traditional living skills. So, as all of the popular TV shows show that you can "survive" for a weekend, and get back to a modern living civilization to get the calories needed to restore yourself from the ordeal which you would have died from. But this is only due to a lack of traditional skill set that would have been second nature by the age of 3 in traditional and indigenous culture.

In my practice and life path to thrive is the goal, and perhaps this is what indigenous people were naturally born into. A child was born into a surplus of food that their ancestors worked for to provide them the caloric necessity needed to grow their bodies and train to provide for their own, and for others.

Nowadays we are often taught that "survival skills" are to get us back to civilization. Yet, as we in the rewilding community are birthed-out of the "solo survival in the forest" mentality and into "tribe" mentality we will naturally develop a deeper sense of community. Within my practice, the goal in nature is to thrive, not to run back to the city. To find that we are home in the forest, not that we are in a temporary battle with nature to return back to some other place.

Willi - What are the values of Rewilding? Are they different for children vs. adults?

Dan - I find that the most valuable aspect of rewilding, for both children and adults, is an innate sense of curiosity that continues to push the boundaries of our own personal awareness and attention. The open way of wandering, when applied to practice, enables the universe to lead us through means that are not rational and go beyond everyday rational comprehension. This is something that children innately have, when they declare that a specific tree or rock has a name,

or they become friends with energies of the earth, which requires preserving the capacity as they grow, not telling them it's all unreal as we do in our rationalist culture. As if our modern culture really has a stronghold on reality =) For adults, the access of this waking dream, imaginative and agenda-less state is more of a challenge, where they need to practice returning to that, and getting their control issues out of the way. Then mysteries unfold daily.

Willi - What are some key symbols of Rewilding?

Dan - Shelters, Neanderthal, Otzi, a Paleolithic diet.

Willi - What are common rituals of Rewilding?

Dan - Within the rituals of rewilding encompass everything from learning where our food comes from, to thanksgiving rituals, to celebrating the solstice and equinox, to sweat lodges, and magic, alchemy, medicine making, and even the ritual of reclaiming our money out of large-scale capitalist models into local community, trade, and barter – redirecting energy in its many forms toward a less captive mentality.

Willi - The Boy Scouts have been working in and valuing Nature since they began. Your thoughts?

Dan - In a way, the boy scouts organizations were an attempt to preserve Native American practices, perhaps even unconsciously. And yet, the problem with these and other organizations seems to have arisen after the "leave no trace" philosophy was adopted in the 70s. In the attempt at "conservation" we adapted a very "hands-off" approach to nature where the only way to interact with it was to "save it" and that touching it automatically means damaging something; and with it the concept of caretaker was lost. Of course, we don't need to save the earth, we need to save ourselves to be able to reside on the earth, which is allowing us to stay, for the time being.

Through these leave no trace teachings, suddenly it became about staying on a trail, and not touching any plants which automatically concludes harming; and the parks systems reinforce this with stringent rules about removing vegetation. As a result of this mentality, great dualities have arisen and become strengthened; people go in nature to go somewhere or to get a certain amount of mileage/exercise, and then go to the grocery store, instead of hunt/gather and understand the balance needed within an ecosystem to thrive and survive.

The concept of wasting would never exist under such real-life experience. This disconnect has led to a wall up when most people never go to the wild places; there becomes no translating medium. The interaction is like a mime with a glass wall up. This is why I teach through Return to Nature, for me it is a missing piece of "nature translation" in a way, seeing the patterns and helping others unfold them.

That said, it is very important that these organizations keep engaging children in the options to play in the mud, drink wild water, eat plants, and understand deeply that "packaged meats" come from actual animals.

Willi - Are you using music to teach rewilding? What are the main themes?

Dan - I do write music and love to improvise song and music circles within my community. I write and sing of the mysticism of nature, the medicinal aspects of plants, as well as the passion and magic of the realizations that come along with self-discovery within nature. It seems crucially important to gather friends together and make musical prayers and intentions in the form of improvisation to the sacred lands and spirits that were once revered and worked with by indigenous people all across the globe. In reclaiming the ability to raise our voices together, to bring forth meaning, to explore intimate connection, and to break through all of the fears and limits that tell us we cannot sing, or our voice is not worthy, we do find a tremendous alchemy, the alchemy of transmutating the throat chakra into a power center- and indeed, the voice of Gaia is within that space.

Complete Interview:

Original (Complete) Interview in Archive:

<https://www.planetshifter.com/myth/2295/kids-rewilding-and-the-new-mythology>