

FEEL GROUNDED

employee wellbeing

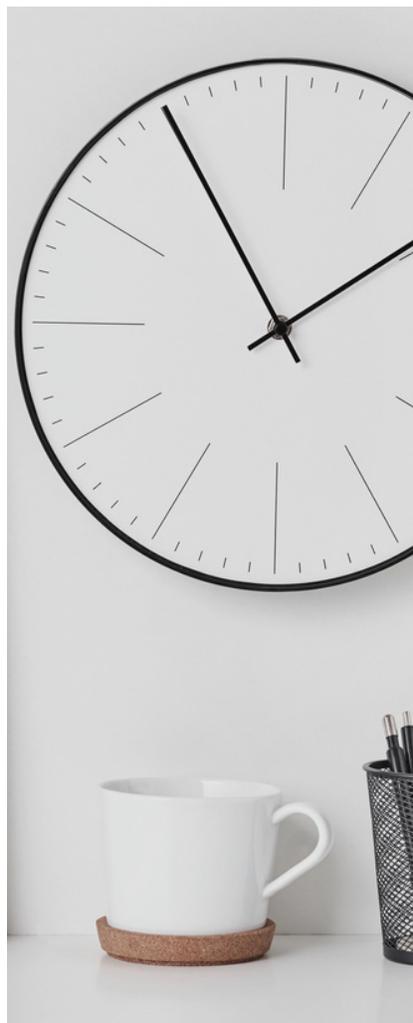
personal leadership
mindfulness in nature



2021

Grounded individuals. Resilient Teams.

During this time when many people are experiencing heightened anxiety, burn-out, and a sense of isolation, this is an opportunity to help them feel grounded again, find a sense of rhythm in their daily life and practice mindfulness in nature.



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Welcome.



For the last year, our lives have been disrupted at a global scale and pace that's never been experienced before. Looking at the mental health statistics, it's clear that the heavy toll from COVID-19 infections is weighted even further with a global mental health crisis.

When so much of what was once predictable in our lives is now unfamiliar or uncertain, our resilience can be compromised and even exhausted. It can be hard to feel grounded in daily life

Hello and welcome.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I'm grateful that you're curious about ways to support the wellbeing of the people in your organization or community. With some of the constraints we're all experiencing, this requires resourcefulness and creativity.

The eras of significant innovation have also been the eras of disruptive change. War, financial crises and pandemics have been the catalysts of social change and creative problem solving - adapting and creating to serve new needs in society. This pandemic has broken our old ways of seeing and doing things, inspired rapid innovation to fill the gaps - and **it has exhausted our problem solvers.**

This year, I'm in service to those exhausted and anxious problem solvers. The people who want to help their family, organization, community, customers or maybe even a stranger - but they need a moment to pause, catch their breath and set their direction. I offer that moment. Whether it's 90 minutes of mindfulness in nature, or a 3-month program to feel grounded again, they can slow down, breathe deeply and find their way.

If we're asking ourselves and others to lead through change and solve problems that matter, we need personal agency over our wellbeing, clear priorities, a strong internal compass and the capacity for empathy. I'm here to guide people on their journey to have this.

Warmly,

Valerie

INVESTING IN WELLBEING

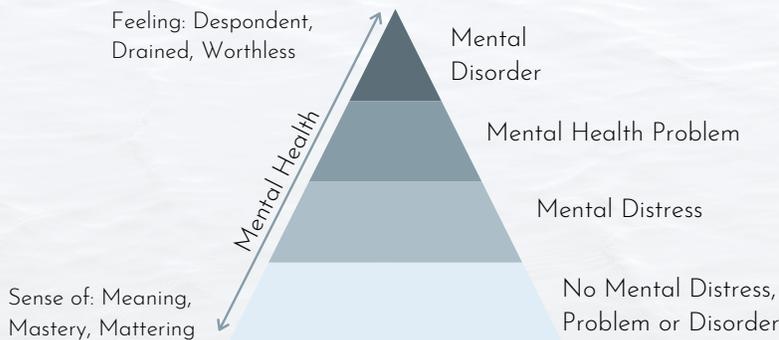
A BENEFIT TO PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

Pre-COVID-19, many organizations thought that employee wellbeing was important. Now it needs to be treated as a priority.

A Distressed Workforce

The uncertainty and stress created by the pandemic, combined with increased isolation due to extensive remote working, have put pressure on the wellbeing of employees.

According to a Q1 2021 study by Morneau Shepell, Canada's working population is currently as distressed as the most distressed 1% of working Canadians prior to 2020.



While it's encouraging to see significant investment in mental health options in the workplace and recognising when people are 'suffering', wellbeing efforts should be focused on *prevention rather than treatment*. It needs to be about more than an EAP number to call or vacation time to take *when a person has surpassed their capacity and can no longer cope*. Organizations need to provide tools and resources that encourage and enable employees to proactively manage their *wellbeing, before it becomes a mental health problem.

- Almost **40%** of Canadians are concerned about a co-worker's mental health.
- **44%** of respondents believe that if they told an employer about having a mental health issue, their career would suffer
- **50%** of managers felt speaking up would hurt their career, while **39%** of non-managers shared this concern (*not being responsible for a team*)

(Morneau Shepell, Mental Health Index, 2021)

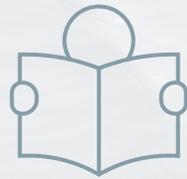
The World Economic Forum conducted a global study about people's experience as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **56%** had increased anxiety about job security
- **55%** had increased stress due to changes in work routines
- **50%** were having difficulty in work-life balance
- **49%** were feeling isolated while working from home
- **46%** had reduced productivity
- **45%** felt stressed due to family pressures



*Mental health wellbeing interventions yield the most significant ROI, yielding up to a 60x ROI

(Cigna International Study, 2020)



"There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing" - NY Times, 2021

Distress vs. Wellbeing

Feelings of wellbeing are fundamental to the overall health of individuals, enabling them to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what they want out of life. It's essential to resilience and the ability to adapt to change. It's also essential to critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and productivity. Feelings of distress are attributed to a person feeling that they're unable to cope or adapt to changes in their daily life. It's helpful to *notice these signs of distress and wellbeing*:



DISTRESS

Physical, social, cognitive, or psychological pain or suffering that may cause a person to feel sad, afraid, depressed, anxious, or lonely. People in distress may also feel that they are not able to manage, cope or adapt to changes caused by normal life activities.



WELLBEING



A person feels satisfied with their life, and believes that it's worthwhile. They have positive day-to-day emotional experiences, with their physical and emotional needs met by fulfilling personal relationships. Generally, they feel in control of their daily-life and are able to function effectively.

bored, uninterested, lack of desire or perceived progress in self-improvement	PERSONALGROWTH	sense of personal growth, progress towards potential, increasing self-awareness, learning new skills
question their purpose, see no higher meaning of self - other than fulfilment of tasks	SENSE OF PURPOSE	their life has meaning, strive to make a positive difference, feeling connected to ideas and social movements larger than themselves
chronic health issues, poor eating, sleeping or exercise patterns, dissatisfied with physical functioning	HEALTH	no chronic health problems, consistently positive eating, sleeping and exercise patterns, satisfied with physical functioning
struggling to achieve desired result and confused, disappointed or anxious about opportunities to advance	PERFORMANCE AS A CONTRIBUTOR	pleased with results achieving, enjoy what they are doing and confident with progress & advancement
self-critical, lacking personal identity, wish to change themselves	SELF-ACCEPTANCE	self-esteem, accept strengths and weaknesses, growth mindset
dependent, concerned about other's opinions, always seeking guidance, pressure to conform & please others	SENSE OF AUTONOMY IN LIFE	independent, self-reliant, doesn't need validation
feels unappreciated, disconnected, hostile, misunderstood, rejected, unloved, distant	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS	feels connected, respected and loved, able to share, experience intimacy and feels secure
hard to identify & connect to own emotions, concerned about emotions, generally more negative than positive emotions	EMOTIONAL HEALTH	experiencing variety of emotions, comfortable with feelings, generally feeling more positive than negative emotions
feels powerless, unable to adjust or adapt, stressed, overwhelmed	SENSE OF CONTROL & MASTERY	resources & abilities to cope and adapt, can manage stress
regrets, unfulfilled, alienated, dissatisfied	OVERALL SATISFACTION IN LIFE	at peace with past, content, fulfilled

Source: : Dr. Gregg Henriques, "A Quick Self Assessment of Wellbeing"



Wellbeing at a Human Level

We're seeing a transformation in how we look at wellbeing, recognising that for our efforts to make a difference at an individual and human level, we need to effectively support the *mental, emotional and social* needs of people in the organization.

This transition requires leaders to become more aware and conscious of people's *fundamental human needs*. This creates adaptive, welcoming environments in which people feel respected, included, valued and able to bring the whole of themselves to work.

Effective Leaders are creating environments where people can proactively ask for what they need to be *successful and emotionally healthy*, achieving a sense of balance in their lives.

Self-Managed Wellbeing

For many, the boundaries between home and work life have essentially disappeared. A culture of wellbeing needs to accommodate life outside of the office, because for many, the office is now in people's homes. Social norms, the work environment, values and priorities might need to consider family members, roommates - and even pets!

More than ever, equipping and educating a workforce with the *tools, knowledge and freedom to manage their personal circumstances* helps to build resilience and minimises the risk of illness and absenteeism by reducing the stress of daily life.

Wellbeing by Example

It's important for managers to trust that members of their team know their wellbeing needs better than anyone. Leadership is demonstrated by *empowering employees* with diverse options to choose from, trusting that they'll choose what is *best-suited to their specific needs*. To help inspire a culture of trust, *leaders need to take personal accountability for their own wellbeing*. Managing their own wellbeing as a priority gives employees a sense of permission and inspiration to do so as well.

When everyone in the organisation becomes more aware of themselves and each other, when they can demonstrate compassion and empathy, and when they feel that they have 'personal agency' to take action as a consequence, it leads to an environment that feels more 'well'.

A healthy and resilient organization is a consequence of healthy and resilient employees.

A CULTURE OF WELLBEING FOSTERS:

- resilience during change and ambiguity
- consistent delivery of results
- innovation
- productivity
- creativity
- collaboration
- employee and customer retention
- critical thinking
- healthy families & communities

Helping People Feel Grounded

The COVID-19 pandemic *dramatically impacted what was once ordinary and predictable in our lives*. Suddenly, everything that was familiar at work and home was disrupted:

- The familiarity of our office was replaced with the chaos of working from home: Distracting people and sounds, impromptu home office space, no commute time to think, epic video-conferencing. For others, heightened safety protocols added complexity and uncertainty...
- Basic errands became complicated: Curb-side pick-up, mandatory masks, directions in aisles, hand sanitiser before and after...
- Routines and rituals went away: Kids going to school, team sports, work-outs at the gym, holiday celebrations with family, a movie with friends, attending funerals of loved ones...

With so much "newness" to pay attention to, our senses have been tuned-into almost everything - our capacity to think, learn and problem-solve has been maxed-out.

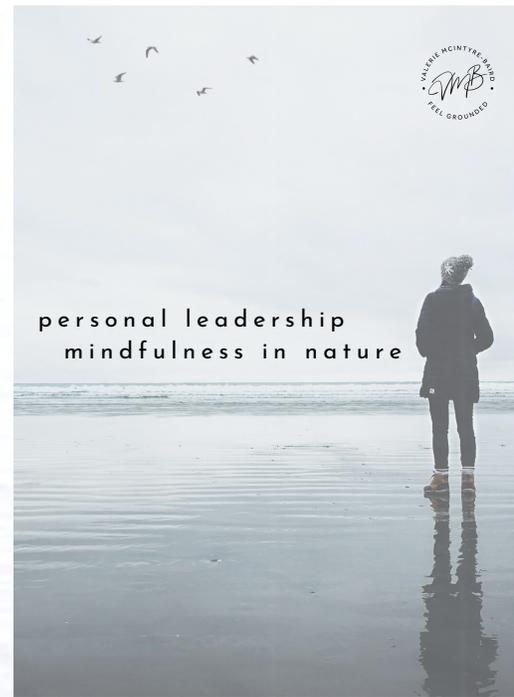
Over the last year, people have come to me because they're feeling adrift or burnt-out. What they used to do to restore a sense of balance isn't working for them and they don't know why or what to do. At first, many express feeling lost and unfulfilled. When we dig deeper, they express feeling anxious and overwhelmed - *they're distressed*. It hadn't occurred to them that **some of their most basic human needs feel at risk these days** - foundational things like financial stability, health and human connection.

When we explore what matters most to them right now, an immense sense of relief embraces them. By *giving themselves permission to prioritize their needs*, they put time and energy towards keeping those things in balance - and the foundation of their wellbeing is strengthened. What had felt like chaos to survive through each day becomes predictable and manageable.

As a Certified Executive Coach and Forest Therapy Guide, I help my clients:

- Explore and choose what matters most to them
- Proactively plan how to restore or maintain balance in these key areas of their life
- Define, design and apply themselves to a goal, based on their needs and priorities
- Design and experiment with routines that are a natural fit for them, creating a sense of predictability, flow and rhythm in their life
- Spend guided time in nature to calm their nervous system, connect to their intuition, improve their critical thinking and boost their immune system

The tools I provide and outcomes that they design can be shared with their families, friends and colleagues. With this, a **culture of empathy and wellbeing** is nurtured. They're able to ask for support and explain what they need - and have **a daily life of integrity with themselves**.



EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

personal leadership
mindfulness in nature



BEING GROUNDED

Being grounded means being present in your daily life and feeling **at ease with yourself**. While things change around you, you are guided by a **clear internal compass** - confident in how you make decisions and set priorities. You experience the world through your senses in the **present moment** - rather than living in your head, steeped in memories, regrets and worries. The decisions you make in your daily life are driven by your **integrity** - to yourself.

As a person who is grounded, your **deep roots** can weather most storms.



THE RHYTHM OF YOUR LIFE

The rhythm of your life is the strong, regular beat of a few core things that you anchor your life around. It's the core principles that inspire your habits and schedule.

Your rhythm shapes the many moments in your day into recognizable patterns, creating emotional meaning and order out of what might feel like chaos. Despite disruption, change and conflict, your life can still feel familiar and predictable.

Noticing the rhythm that feels natural for you and designing your life around it is part of feeling grounded. Your schedule can come out of your rhythm, but your rhythm cannot come out of your schedule.



MINDFULNESS IN NATURE

Staying connected to the natural world is essential to our wellbeing and resiliency. Being outdoors, breathing fresh air, feeling the breeze against our skin, sensing the sunlight on our face, listening to birdsong and noticing beauty in landscapes simply makes us feel good.

There is science-based evidence that nature can support our immune systems, de-stress and improve our mental health.

Forest Therapy is a mindfulness practice inspired by the practice of Shinrin-yoku, also known as Forest Bathing. As your Guide, I'll invite you to tune into your senses, slow down, breathe deeply and to give your attention to the natural world around you.



WHY BEING GROUNDED MATTERS TO ME

by Valerie McIntyre-Baird

Years ago, when I left the corporate world after 25+ years, I took a cue from nature. Two months into a 6-month sabbatical, I felt the most lost I've ever felt in my life. Without a role, a team, a schedule, a structure - I was untethered. My nervous system had never recovered from decades of stress. On a guided forest therapy walk in the Rocky Mountains, I found my way in the remnants of a forest fire. Here, I saw that the comfort I'd once felt in my 'old life' was actually an overgrown forest, so choked with busyness that it was dying. It took a 'forest fire' in my life (disruptive change) to make room for renewal and growth.

With the fire out, deep roots and seeds lay waiting in the rich soil. Like this forest, I didn't rush. Instead, I decided to grow my life on purpose, based on my basic needs and current priorities. Applying all I knew from my personal leadership approach, being an Executive Coach and a Certified Forest Therapy Guide, I created a simple method to become and stay grounded. As an adult with ADHD, this method has been especially important to my wellbeing. As a mother of a son with ADHD, this is my gift to him.

When the pandemic started, my husband and I applied my Life on Purpose method to ourselves.

For the first 6 months, I decided that the 3 things that were most important to me (my Touch-Stones) were: Simplicity, Financial Stability and Making a Difference. All of my priorities were guided by these 3 words. Decision making was easy, even in complicated and difficult situations. I proactively planned how to restore and maintain balance for my 3 'Touch-stones' while in a calm state-of-mind, allowing me to notice and respond with clarity during moments of stress and disruption. My refined morning and evening routines ensured I had some predictability in my daily life - and that I took care of myself. I intentionally designed the means to live with integrity - to myself.

Today, I help people live each day as a person who is grounded. They access nature to calm their nervous system and connect to their senses. Their increased capacity for creativity and critical thinking helps them solve problems that matter. They have clear priorities and a strong internal compass. They have a rhythm that keeps them moving forward in a way that feels predictable, regardless of disruption and uncertainty. They make choices and set priorities with confidence.

As my clients find themselves feeling grounded, hopefully they can help others in their own way too.



Valerie spent over 25 years leading technology teams to reach their potential in the energy, utility, banking and technology industries. Over the last 6 years, Valerie has developed a private practice as a trusted Executive Coach (ICF), Mentor and Certified Forest Therapy Guide (ANFT) for clients around the world. Her unique approach incorporates guided time in nature in support of mental health and overall wellbeing.



JOIN ME FROM ANYWHERE

ALL PROGRAMS AND EXPERIENCES ARE OFFERED
GLOBALLY, ONLINE & OUTDOORS

Whether participating as an individual or as a team, participants are encouraged to go outside, breathe fresh air, connect to their senses and move their bodies as much as they like during all programs and experiences.

The beauty of using video and audio calls is that everyone can participate, no matter where they are in the world. That said, I'm happy to keep screen-time to a minimum if you prefer!

Maybe we'll have your coaching call while we're "walking & talking" outside or each sitting in our gardens - starting with a 10-minute guided "mindful moment" to calm your head.

Perhaps we gather your team together for a remotely-guided forest therapy walk - each person participating from their patio, back-yard,, local park, forest or beach via an audio call.

No matter where you are, you'll be invited to tune into your senses, slow down, breathe deeply and give your attention to the natural world around you. We may be far apart, but I'll still be with you to listen and guide you.



PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

a 3-month program for
individuals & teams

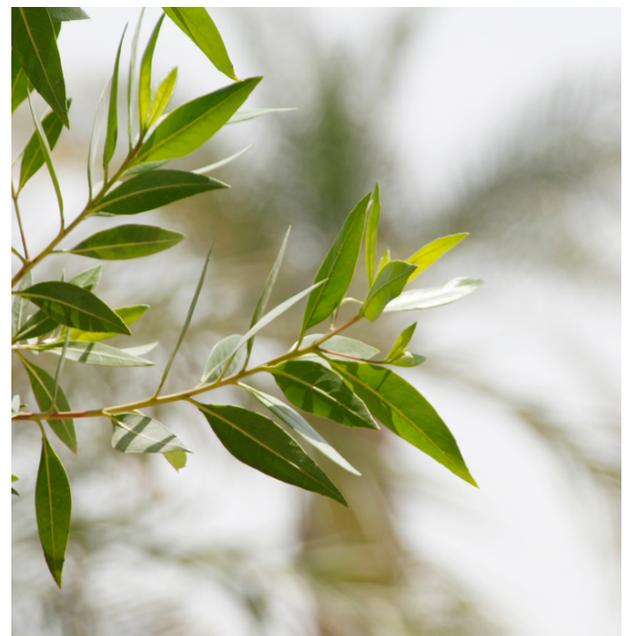
FEEL GROUNDED

My Feel Grounded Program is an engaging and structured process with professional coaching, guided mindful time in nature and a workbook to guide individuals over 3-months.

Participants can sign-up as individuals or a team can participate together as a private group.

Team participation can ensure everyone has a consistent and confidential way to intentionally focus on their wellbeing, decide on their priorities, ask for what they need, find resources to support them -and do this together to remain connected and supportive of each other.

By incorporating regular Remotely-Guided Forest Therapy sessions in this program, remote teams step outside to collectively calm their minds, reduce anxiety, improve critical and creative thinking and stay connected with each other.



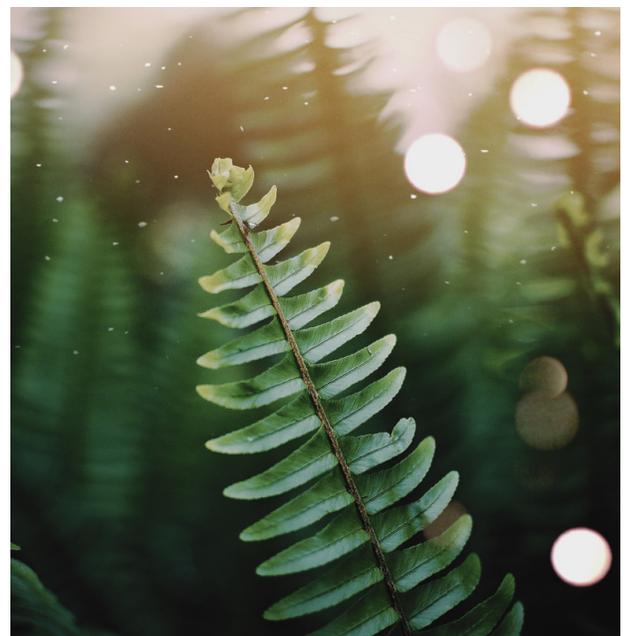
FEEL GROUNDED PROGRAM BENEFITS



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- Define, design and apply themselves to a goal, based on their needs and priorities
- Design and experiment with routines that are a natural fit for them, creating a sense of predictability, flow and rhythm in their life
- Spend guided time in nature to calm their nervous system, connect to their intuition, improve their critical thinking and boost their immune system

[LEARN MORE](#)



FEEL GROUNDED PROGRAM SCHEDULE

month one



One 60-minute Getting-Started Session to design our three months together & how to honour yourself upon completion



A Personal Assessment to discover your needs & what matters most for you right now (Touch-Stones)



Receive your Life on Purpose guide and journal



Receive your West Coast Comforts gift from my home to yours



Two Professional Coaching Sessions (60-minutes)



One remotely-guided Forest Therapy walk

month two



Two Professional Coaching Sessions (60-minutes)



One remotely-guided Forest Therapy walk

month three



Two Professional Coaching Sessions (60-minutes)



One remotely-guided Forest Therapy walk

NOTE: Team bookings are discounted for 5 or more people. These group bookings can also include a private online space to share insights and progress with each other, as well as bi-weekly prompts to guide group-check-in calls.



MINDFULNESS IN NATURE

remotely-guided walks
for individuals & teams

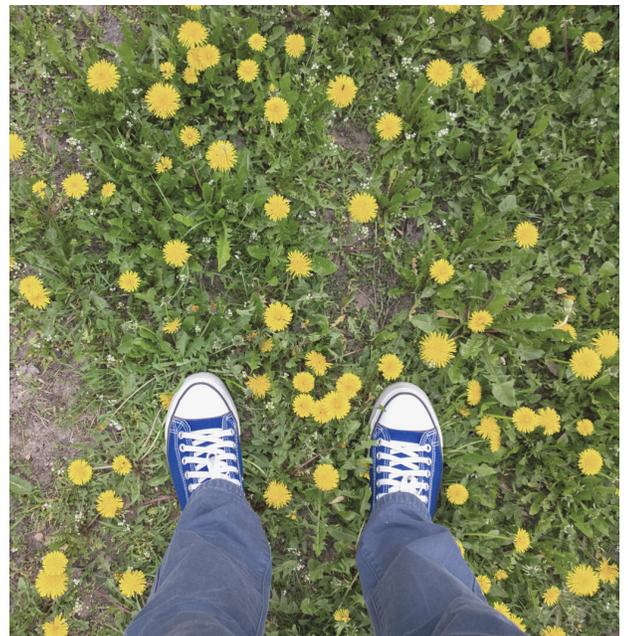
FOREST THERAPY WALKS

Forest Therapy is a practice inspired by the Japanese practice of “Shinrin-Yoku” which translates into “forest bathing.” Because it's a gentle way of being in nature, everyone can participate in and benefit from this practice.

This is a simple way to give the gift of time in nature to your employees, encouraging the many physical and mental health benefits

I lead these remotely-guided sessions with people around the world via an audio call. Anyone can participate, regardless of age, ability or access to the outdoors.

Whether organising a group walk for team-building, an activity for an online conference event, regular sessions for team connection & wellbeing, or a gift certificate for a walk as a thank-you - remotely-guided time in nature is a creative, engaging and mindful option to support wellbeing.



FOREST THERAPY WALK BENEFITS

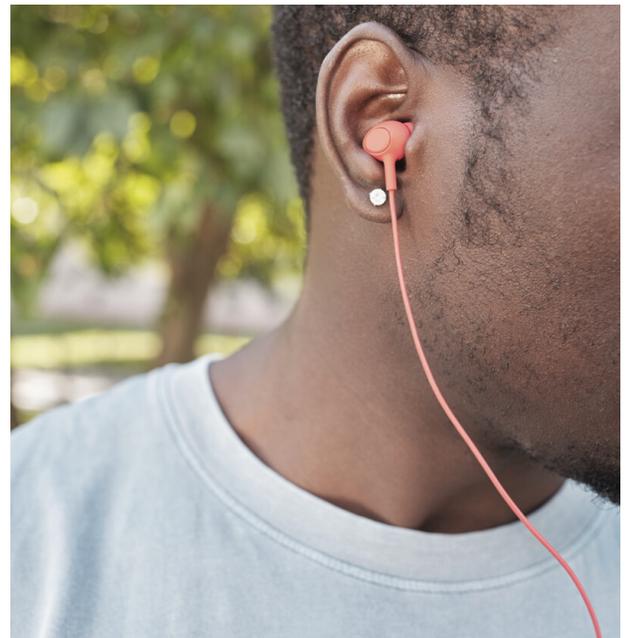
In the last year, I've remotely-guided over 500 people, including Canadian medical professionals who are now prescribing time in nature as part of their treatment options.

Over 40 years of global research has proven significant health benefits such as:

- greater clarity of thought, creativity and critical thinking
- a strengthened immune system
- reduced blood pressure
- a reduction in stress and cortisol levels
- improved mood
- increased empathy
- increased ability to focus
- better sleep

Participants are welcome to join from wherever they are. These online gatherings invite everyone to participate from a safe and familiar outdoor space near them, such as their garden, a local park or a nearby greenspace.

[LEARN MORE](#)



FROM MY HOME TO YOURS



All Feel Grounded Program registrations include a hand-picked “West Coast Comforts” gift box which contains a selection of local, handmade items from the West Coast of Canada - meant to share a little bit of my home with you.

These oils are one of my favourite items to include. Their scent takes you to the forests and ocean, creating a sense of calm.

Photo: Great Bear Rainforest® Essential Oils and West Coast hand-made cedar Touch-Stones®

Great Bear Rainforest® Essential Oils are carefully steam-distilled from fresh, sustainable harvested conifer needles gathered in the Great Bear Rainforest region. These organic, wild-crafted, steam distilled oils are manufactured locally by the Metlakatla and Nuxalk First Nations of the Great Bear Rainforest.

The Great Bear Rainforest encompasses the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii regions of British Columbia. This area is the unceded Traditional Territory of these First Nations and represents a quarter of the world’s surviving coastal temperate rainforest.

The ecosystem is the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world. It is home to grizzly bears, black bears, cougars, wolves, and the rare white-furred kermode, or Spirit Bear, as well as centuries-old western red cedars and a complex, bio-diverse ecosystem dependent on the recurrent upriver migration of salmon.

Since 2000, Coastal First Nations have been working together to create a model that supports local communities while ensuring the long-term future of the Great Bear Rainforest and its surrounding waters.

Beyond being an important, healing aromatherapy product, Great Bear Rainforest® Essential Oils are a powerful labour of love, conservation, care and community, and the benefit of your purchase has a significant ripple effect.

These products can also be [purchased on my website](#).

[watch video](#) 

WORKING WITH ME



There are six ways that we can work together to proactively support the wellbeing of your employees:

1 WELLNESS BENEFIT SPEND

Encourage employees to be proactive about their wellbeing. One way to do this is to allow them to apply their company Wellness Benefits to register online for the Feel Grounded Program and/or Forest Therapy walks.

2 TEAM WORKSHOPS

The Feel Grounded Program can be delivered as a workshop for leadership and delivery teams. By participating together over 3 months, a culture of empathy emerges and a shared language allows for supportive conversations amongst team members. Wellbeing becomes a shared priority.

3 GIFT CERTIFICATES

Demonstrate that wellbeing is a priority in your organization by giving gift certificates for my Forest Therapy walks:

- Perhaps welcome new employees by including a certificate in their onboarding package.
- Give a gift certificate to celebrate a milestone, as a thank you or to offer kindness during a difficult time.

WORKING WITH ME

There are six ways that we can work together to proactively support the wellbeing of your employees:



4

COMPANY WELLBEING PROGRAM

The Feel Grounded Program can be delivered as a proactive wellbeing initiative for the entire organization. We can customize the experience in accordance with any branding requirements or key messages. The impact of this Program can extend beyond employees, positively influencing the wellbeing of their families and community when they share the tools and practices.

5

MEETING & CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

"Virtual" town-hall meetings and conferences can struggle to find engaging ways to bring people together while contributing to their wellbeing. Remotely-guided Forest Therapy walks can accommodate large audiences from around the world. Participants step away from their screens for 20 - 90 minutes, enjoying mindful time in nature together and sharing what they're noticing.

6

KEYNOTE TALKS

A keynote talk on any of the following topics related to wellbeing can be offered - and key messages for your organization can be incorporated:

- The Benefits of Mindful Time in Nature
- Having Integrity With Yourself
- When You're Seeking Balance, Start With the Big Stones First



I'd love to support
the wellbeing of you
and your teams.

Please contact me if you'd like to
register or learn more.

If you're looking for additional
information, pricing & resources,
please visit my website:



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DO YOUR EMPLOYEES
NEED TO STEP AWAY
FROM THEIR SCREENS?



A Fresh Approach to
Employee Wellbeing

How do you offer wellbeing programs when teams are remote and screen fatigue can be an obstacle to available options? With many wellbeing programs being offered online, a screen-free option in nature is welcome by many.

[READ MORE](#)

DO YOU HAVE
PERMISSION?



Permission to Use Your Senses

Doctors, teachers, artists, entrepreneurs, journalists, parents - on my remotely-guided walks, they all realized they had stopped paying attention to their senses because they didn't think they were allowed to. In a world of masks, hand sanitizers and an airborne virus, touching and smelling became seemingly dangerous. For many, this has been an emotional realization - and a cathartic experience.

[READ MORE](#)

PLANNING MY
SCREEN-TIME
SABBATICAL



My Screen-time Sabbatical

Each week, I'll be sharing my plan, my progress and any insights I gather along the way. My goal is to reduce my screen-time by at least 75%, translating to 6 hours less a day. "Success" isn't about reducing my screen-time. "Success" is consciously choosing how I connect, create and contribute with the time I get back.

[READ MORE](#)



"I went for a walk in the woods and
came out taller than the trees."

Henry David Thoreau

