

Your Guide to Forest Bathing: Experience the Healing Power of Nature

M. Amos Clifford

Conari Press (Apr 22, 2018)

Softcover \$14.95 (192pp)

978-1-57324-738-2

Deeply encoded in the human psyche is the awareness that comfort, peace, and healing can be found in a forest. The Japanese have a term for this: *shinrin-yoku*, or “forest bathing.” They have long understood that being in a forest is to immerse oneself in grace and beauty and to feel the healing power that exists in the exhalations of the trees.

M. Amos Clifford is a forest guide, psychotherapist, restorative justice worker, and longtime Zen meditation practitioner. His book is a beautiful exploration of forest bathing, a source of information on the medical and scientific evidence of its benefits, and a guide to all that's needed for a fulfilling forest-bathing practice.

Evolutionary adaptation has not kept up with the rapid pace of change, leaving us vulnerable to stress, physical and mental illness, and fractured relationships with each other and with the natural world. Trees are slow, patient beings; keepers of history, they remind us of a slower, gentler way to live. “Forest bathing resets our nervous systems,” Clifford writes. “It does so quickly and effectively. It is as if we have come home.”

The benefits are reciprocal: we exhale the carbon dioxide that the trees breathe and in turn inhale their exhalations, shown by research to be a “rich mix of freshly minted oxygen and other aerosols that benefit our moods, our hearts, our mental capacities, our immune systems, and more.”

Estranged from the natural world, we've come to view trees as ornamental or as crops to be harvested for a price, but Clifford affirms that, deep in our DNA, we remember the power, beauty, and generosity of trees. “We deeply intuit that it is our birthright to recall their songs,” he writes.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May/June 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.