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GARDENS**

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Mar 1-15 Permaculture Design Course

Apr 25-27 Deep Adaption Workshop
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May 14-20 Permaculture Gardener
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Photo: Adam Stevenson, RFS

by Aidan Ricketts

It has been palpably difficult to utter the words "Happy New Year" this time around. The sense of foreboding as the clock of linear time clicks from one decade to another is that we stand at the beginning of our own great reckoning.

Yes fires, the most intensely embodied sign that climate chaos is upon us, sooner and more catastrophic than we expected. The idea of inexorable sea level rise seems almost becalming compared to unprecedented firestorms driving mass extinction and escalating human loss.

Australia has always been a country of climate extremes, which only makes our foolish nonchalance about the established science of climate change all the more foolish. What did we think would happen in the land of drought and flooding rains if we ignored the warnings of 97% of the world's scientists that our climate was about to enter uncharted extremes?

The challenge facing Australia now far exceeds any prior threat. It makes the largely trumped-up 'war on terror' look like the political spin that it always was. Australia has had the luxury since World War Two at least, of conducting proxy wars in other people's countries (over fossil fuel) but never really having to face the ramifications of those violent conflicts on home soil. Now we are seeing the biggest civilian evacuations in our history, literally seeing communities driven into the sea, loss of life, loss of homes and whole villages and the loss of half a billion native animals and rising.

Australia's image internationally now is pretty much that of the hopeless drug addict (coal and mining addiction) spiralling into self-destruction. The country that is watching the reef die, thousands of homes destroyed and a continent-wide extinction event of mass proportions is the very same country that has recently re-elected a suicidally corrupt government of climate deniers, intent on doing the bidding of the desperate coal industry.

It would not be so sad if we had a credible federal opposition on the issue of climate change but we don't even have that. Albanese has spent more time in recent months spruiking the coal cause than offering effective opposition. If Labor can't believe in itself, how can it expect anyone else to believe in it?

While other developed countries in Europe and even Britain (despite its

recent crazy politics) have bi-partisan political acceptance of the need to respond to anthropogenic climate change, in Australia our bi-partisanship extends to little more than subservience to the power of the coal and mining sector.

It isn't easy being Green either, it means always having to say, "I told you so" and always getting the blame for what the bullies have caused. As the only party with a consistently strong position not just on climate change, but on actually phasing out coal mining, the Greens are the whipping post of the Murdoch empire, the government and the Labor party. Apparently without ever being in government, the Greens are to blame for the fires, and if you believe Labor revisionism, even responsible for Labor's decade of leadership instability and political failures on climate policy.

I suppose the only smoke-coloured lining in all of this is that maybe people in Australia are being painfully woken up to the reality of climate change, the painful rudderless of our two party system and the need to finally make comprehensive changes.

Time will tell if the Murdoch propaganda machine and the government's insistence on silencing all voices of dissent from protest through to fire chiefs, scientists and even business leaders will be able to withstand the scorching heat of the summer of climate reckoning. Hopefully, albeit painfully, we are experiencing a tipping point politically that can help us avoid an ever-worsening tipping point ecologically.

So what can we do locally and individually? Foremost we need to respond intelligently as a community. Elections are a long way away, and we already know our two party system is broken and beholden to the coal dollar. But there is much work to be done inside our communities to build the unity and resilience we need.

A first step is humility. Very few of us are experts on climate science, or on fire ecology. So let's be both humble and rational and listen and learn from those who actually do know. Enough of everybody having an 'opinion' on climate change, and an opinion on hazard reduction burning.

The scientists have made it abundantly clear that climate change is real and caused by humans and carbon based fuels, and the fire chiefs are also clear that climate change is why we are facing such an unprecedented scale of fires

and that hazard reduction burns are no magic bullet, and that the window for doing them has been reduced by the longer fire seasons. This is established knowledge.

In all of our social and social media interactions, we need to be humble ourselves and defer to established knowledge, and we also need to shut down the climate deniers, the conspiracy theorists, the Greenie blamers. There is no point in treating their opinions as valid, it is a mistake to even enter a conversation where you cast your opinion against theirs. It's about their ego not yours.

You don't have an opinion, only a respect for science, knowledge and expertise. The facts are not in dispute and anyone who tries is either a fool or a liar or a loony and needs to be dismissed as such as quickly as possible.

Climate denial is not a valid position any more than flat earth. Blaming greenies is not a valid position any more than blaming your neighbour's dog. While we are at it, let's stop petitioning the monarchy to sack the government. It's not going to happen, and it would be spookily undemocratic anyway.

Let's stop trying to find loopholes in the legal system or constitution that will make it disappear in a puff of logic because you are 'sovereign citizen' with no name, or any other nonsense. Let's stop subscribing to all manner of ridiculous fantasies to avoid the reality.

No matter what the crisis, there is only one piece of sage advice that can move us forward. "Accept things exactly as they are, and find a resourceful way forward."

Accepting things as they are includes accepting the science of climate change, accepting the increased threat we now live with, accepting that our two-party political system is corrupted by the coal and mining industry, accepting that it's a long way to the next election.

Being resourceful means adapting, building communities, joining the RFS if you can, supporting climate rallies and strikes, supporting extinction rebellion, supporting campaigns against the coal industry, and engaging in multiple regenerative projects as individuals and communities, whether they are about power generation, agriculture, low cost housing, community democracy and empowerment, or getting yourself and family out of debt before capitalism collapses. There's much work to be done on numerous fronts.

Welcome to the new normal, it will never be the same.

Gardening: a re-think and a re-plant

by Karen Welsh and Leon Kindemann

Time for a positive change in 2020.
A time to re-think our garden strategies, a time to plant, plant and then plant some more.
Plan more wisely for the future, to reduce our fire hazards and improve food for both human and wildlife alike.

Time to turn the tables on the record drought and raging bushfires that have decimated habitat for all our homes – human and our native bird, animal and plant life.
Where to start? If your current garden is suffering (or worse still, burnt out) use this time to nourish the earth and await the rains and begin your plotting and planning.
Consider replacing traditional garden plants and find a local native alternative that will thrive on less water and maintenance and will also feed



the wildlife. Plant for a variety across all plant types, nature doesn't do well in monocultures, diversity is a key criterion.
Consider visiting a local nursery every month of 2020! This will enable you to see new plants that are in flower and fruiting. The result? Year-round pleasure and produce for you and the wildlife.
Whether your 'gardening' is to provide

food and shelter for the native critters, creating a food forest, restoring native forests and waterways or planting sustainable timber for future generations, there is a local nursery that can tend to your planting needs. Their experience and local knowledge is highly regarded and valued by many gardeners.
As a community, we have amazing opportunities in our local nurseries. Of note are: the

Whalebone Nursery in Nimbin, Firewheel Nursery in Corndale, Daley's Fruit Nursery in Kyogle, Echidna Nursery (servicing local markets) and Gondwana Nursery in Barkersvale.
They all make a positive change to the world that we all want to see. Each has its own specific focus and plant lists, so why not incorporate all of them into your 2020 garden plan?



Radio fundraising courses

Three short (one-day) courses are on offer for members of Nim-FM. They are being conducted in association with the Community Media Training Organisation, and are free.

- ♦ **Grant Writing 8th February, 10am – 4pm**
This session covers how to prepare a funding application, key things to include and common errors. We'll drill down into grant guidelines, how to prepare budgets and brainstorm ideas for attention-grabbing projects.
- ♦ **Sponsorship and Fundraising 22nd February, 10am – 4pm**
Although sponsorship has traditionally served as the preferred method for raising revenue, there are a range of alternative streams available for radio stations to utilise. This session looks at sponsorship and fundraising options.
- ♦ **Copywriting for Sponsorship 7th March, 10am – 4pm**
Have you been wondering how to create the perfect pitch to attain sponsorships for your program? Learn it during this session! Course Presenter: Kitty van Vuuren
Morning and afternoon tea will be provided at all courses.
Please email: nimbinradiomedia@gmail.com to reserve a place, or come into the station and sign up.
New members are always welcome to join Nim-FM 102.3 Community Radio: \$22pa unwaged, \$33 waged, \$11 under-18.

Plant of the month



Ribbonwood
Euroschinus falcata

Selected and photographed by Richard Burer, Bush Regenerator

Anyone would think at first glance I'd be celebrating the new year with that dominant old thing Privet, but no, this friendly favourite is *Euroschinus falcata*, more commonly known as Chinaman's Cedar or even more commonly known locally as Ribbonwood.
Currently covered in black drupes, these scented obliquely egg-shaped fruits are providing some serious sustenance for our wildlife in this challenging time.
Rose-crowned fruit dove, topknot pigeon and green catbird are just a few that relish this summer's fruit in this hot dry summer.

It's common, with medium size trees and regenerating individuals throughout the landscape, but big old trees (45m) are hard to find.
On the farm, conservation sites and in the garden, this tree is hardy, fairly fast growing and rewarding.
If you go looking for this one, a quick squeeze of the leaves will infuse you with a mango scent, and interestingly this tree is in the same genera as mango, *Mangifera indica*.
Common at your local rainforest nursery, and when planted it suits dry rainforest and edges of subtropical rainforest.
Full sun is OK, and it's common in the valleys of Nimbin.

Every weed is different

Weed Words
by Triny Roe B.Ag.Sc

Every weed is different, and can behave in a novel fashion in another situation.
A weed in one instance, perhaps, is not considered so in another. The red cedar in the rose bed is not welcome there. Luckily, it is easily dug up and moved somewhere appropriate.
The mulberry tree on the creek bank is also out of place if bush regeneration and restoration of the riparian zone is your goal. It is only one of many species of cultivated fruit trees that has gone wild and established itself in the bush. Brazilian cherry, curry leaf tree, ice-cream bean and others have all earned reputations as environmental weeds.
Management options will vary from species to species. Some weeds are easily handled. Small herbaceous flowering species for example crofton weed, *Ageratina adenophora*, or ragweed, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* can be simply hand-weeded, and dense populations significantly reduced. Two seasons of consistent strategic hand weeding can remove a solid creek-bank infestation of crofton weed to be replaced by an endemic riparian species, *Polilla crispata*. Larger woody weeds are more difficult to deal with manually due to their size and gnarly root systems.
In an ideal world, it would be great to be completely chemical free. The advantages are numerous. No toxins will be introduced to the environment, no opportunity for off-target contamination or for the development of resistance. Massive use of glyphosate in agriculture has led to 42 species of weeds across the planet developing resistance to the popular herbicide. Ragweed is one of these.

The ability of plants to develop resistance is behind the evolution of GMO crops such as Monsanto's RoundUp Ready Soybeans. Recently a barnyard grass in the Ord River was discovered as being able to metabolise glyphosate. Scientists pinpointed the gene responsible and advised farmers to reduce the number of times they sprayed.
The benefits of using chemicals in bush regen include quick results, less labour required and no soil disturbance. Entrenched infestations of giant devil fig may respond well to drill and inject as their robust root systems are not easily physically removed.
Chemical free is a gentler approach that has many benefits to the environment often allowing a gradual transition. While we are busy killing weeds and transforming ecosystems, we are also sometimes removing food and homes for birds and four legged critters. Native wildlife have learned to adapt to a new diet as their traditional food sources were



Ring-barked camphor laurels

displaced by large scale clearing by humans and then replaced by the vigorous vegetable invaders.
The downside of chemical-free is that it is labour intensive and longer term. Follow-up will be required, though follow-up is still necessary even with chemical control as new seeds will sprout later. Weed management is rarely a one-off activity. New incursions can and will occur, and will need to be dealt with. Landscapes and ecosystems are never static. They constantly change and evolve.
Camphor laurel is common in the Northern Rivers and still a threat to biodiversity. It can be effectively managed by ringbarking. One simple technique involves hammering a wide ring of the outer bark off leaving the cambium intact. The cambium will dry out and no longer function.
Use the blunt end of a hatchet and start whacking, hard. Around waist high is a comfortable and effective working height. The chips will fly, so make sure you use your PPE including eye protection, gloves, long sleeves and trousers. Return every three to six months and remove suckers. The tree will slowly succumb eventuating in death in around five years as native species regenerate underneath.
Happy weeding.

Saving Australia

(A song to the tune of Waltzing Matilda)

by Simon Thomas

Once a jolly prime minister
showed up at a press
conference
With a stupid baseball cap
sitting on his head
Reporters asked him questions
and he answered full of
confidence
Raising both his thumbs up to
them, this is what he said:
Now is not the time that we
should talk of climate change
Not while the bushfires are
raging all around
You can talk about the cricket,
but the climate you can stick
it
And leave it buried deep inside
a coal mine in the ground
Now's not the time, everything
is fine
Close your eyes and crack a
beer and toe the party line
Now is not the time to get
emissions into line
Now is not, now is not, now is
not the time
Now is not the time to think of
billabongs and rivers
And the water they deliver to
the people and the land
We can make a bigger splash if
we sell the water off for cash
That's the logic Barnaby and
Angus understand

Now's not the time, everything
is fine
Close your eyes and crack a
beer and toe the party line
Now is not the time to show
Murdoch we have a spine
Now is not, now is not, now is
not the time
Now is not the time to get all
sentimental
For things environmental like
the birdies and the bees
If you want to see 'em, you can
go to the museum
And there won't be any
bushfires once we've cut down
all the trees
Now's not the time, everything
is fine
Close your eyes and crack a
beer and toe the party line
Now is not the time to stop a
great big coal mine
Now is not, now is not, now is
not the time
Now is not the time worry all
the voters
Who are driving in their
motors to and from their
place of work
You don't want them thinking
that all things are interlinking
And that how we live could
'cause the world to go berserk.
Now's not the time, everything
is fine
Close your eyes and crack a

beer and toe the party line
Now is not the time to talk
about the climate crime
Now is not, now is not, now is
not the time
The prime minster jumped
up and he sprang into a
corporate jet
"You'll never catch me in
Hawaii," said he.
And his voice may be heard as
you pass by mining companies
Who'll come a climate denying
with me?
Climate denying, Australia is
frying
Koalas are dying, we're burning
all the trees
Wake up Australia to our
climate failure
Who'll come a-saving Australia
with me?

Saving Australia, saving
Australia
Who'll come a-saving Australia
with me?
Now is the time to bring our
action into line
Who'll come a-saving Australia
with me?

Watch the video
#savingaustralia onYouTube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w5SylVZ7Y&t=8s&ab_channel=simonthomas

Bleak future for koalas

by Ros Irwin, FOK president

Like all wildlife organisations, we are devastated by the loss of many millions of wildlife across Australia, and hearing and seeing the graphic images of so many dead animals is incredibly painful. Whilst our immediate focus is koalas, we all care about wildlife generally and the loss has been almost incalculable and very sad. The estimates are that we've lost about 2000 koalas to fires in our Region – and of course many more other species – but we think that many more may well have been killed.

So far we have rescued 20 koalas from the fires from Drake through to the Bungawalbin National Park, but unfortunately most couldn't be rehabilitated as their organs had started to fail. One koala we thought had a good chance of survival, as his fur was singed but he had no burns.

However, when the vets examined him through an ultrasound, unfortunately some internal organs were baked, which meant he couldn't survive. So if the koalas weren't killed in the fires, the radiant heat was enough to inflict fatal injuries.

We have released four of the koalas including a mum and her joey, that we released at the Mt. Neville Nature Reserve out beyond Rappville, and still have one – Ember – at Currumbin. Ember was rescued after a harrowing drive one evening with huge trees across the road and having to go bush to get around them. We keep our fingers crossed for her survival, but it will be uncertain for some time.

We know the odd surviving koalas will be coming out of the fire grounds for some time yet – one was rescued yesterday from Ewingar – but they're unlikely to survive given any injuries but also having had nothing to eat and drink, so their condition is very wasted.

Nevertheless, compared to what has happened in other places, we remain hopeful that koalas in the region, and particularly in the Ballina, Byron, Kyogle and Lismore local government areas will not be extinct. However, unless the State Government immediately prevents the further removal of their habitat it will be that much more difficult to prevent extinction.

The past six months have been extremely busy for us. Long before the bushfires started in the region in September, the drought had already taken its toll and the situation for koalas was fairly dire as many of the koalas



Koala Kolumn

we rescued were dehydrated and malnourished due to the condition of the trees.

It was dispiriting for our volunteers, as many of those rescued were taken to the vet, assessed as unable to be rehabilitated and euthanased. However, nothing compared to the situation once the fires started in the Richmond Valley Local Government Area in September and have continued around the country ever since.

We have had as many as 45 koalas in care, the most we have ever experienced, and whilst some are at Currumbin and the Australian Wildlife Hospitals, we have had 31 at the Care Centre, which meant we had to construct some temporary runs to accommodate them.

We were simply unprepared for the demands on wildlife volunteer organisations that the bushfires presented. Although some of us had been through RFS Bushfire Awareness training several years ago, which is the first requirement for volunteers

wanting to get into the fire grounds to look for wildlife, our approvals had expired.

Needless to say, we have taken steps to ensure we won't be caught unprepared again. We now have nearly 20 volunteers who've undertaken the training, and we've established closer links with the NPWS, RFS and Forestry people, and are acquiring an emergency trailer from funds provided by the NPWS Foundation which will be fitted out with everything we need to deal with an emergency.

The support we've received from the community locally, but also from around Australia and the rest of the world has been humbling. As I write, we have received about \$400,000 in donations, some big, some small, some from businesses and some from young children donating money instead of receiving Christmas presents, but all given from a love for our precious wildlife, and we are so grateful as there will be much to do to ensure their recovery over the coming years.

Planetary archetypes

by Christobelle

As we enter this area of understanding, it is crucial to consider how radically different is our current worldview to that of the Ancients, whose cultural foundations we have inherited; but that we tend to dismiss their interpretations from our narrowness as primitive and ill-informed.

We think we are so superior and clever now – yea, and how's that working out for us now? Fundamentally, we must consider that consciousness is not static, but the human psyche and capacities have been evolving over many millennia. Also, our understanding of the cause and purpose and structure of the universe has radically flipped, from the numinous spiritual viewpoint of the Cosmic Mind being the precursor to matter – that energy is primary, and the physical creation a secondary outcome of this.

And that they saw all natural forces as having a personified spirit with whom man could interact and appeal to; and live in harmony with – and have qualities in common with – 'as above, so below.'

The worldview that is currently held by a majority at this time, at least in the so-called developed, so-called civilised world of which we are a part – is a reductionist, so-called scientific, so-called rational one which has reduced the natural world to an empty, mechanistic, soulless resource.

Apparently, with our brilliant, unbalanced minds; we no longer need to be one with Creation. More will be said in these arenas – the history of consciousness and our mythologies – in the coming months.

Last month, the idea of the four formative pillars of the cosmos being the four fixed star signs of Leo – Fire; Taurus – Earth; Scorpio – Water; Aquarius – Air was introduced, as these four essential elements that are the building blocks of Creation are represented by them. Three of them are symbolised by animals, and the fourth by man.

The cherubim of biblical fame are the overseers of these four energies, as



described by Ezekiel in a vision he had of them pulling God's chariot – four living creatures with four faces and four wings: "And as for the likeness of their faces: there was the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side of all the four; and the face of an ox on the left side of all the four; and the face of an eagle over all the four." – Ezekiel 1:10.

"I saw in my vision by night, and behold the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts, different one from another, came up out of the sea." – Daniel 7:2-3.

Winds: North – Fire; South – Earth; East – Air; West – Water.

Daniel asked a spirit present in the vision for an explanation concerning all these things, and was told: "These four great beasts are four kingdoms that shall arise out of the earth." – Daniel 7:17.

So here, ever so briefly are these same archetypes expanded to show examples of how these energies have manifested historically as empires on earth. Think of their animal symbols – some have morphed, eg lion to dragon; bull to bear.

Eagle – Assyrian, Roman, British and colonies, American, French, Spanish.

Man – Atlantean, Mayan, Inca, Tibetan, Egyptian, Greek.

Bull – Medea-Persian, Russian, Slavic, Ottoman, Germanic, Viking.

Lion – Babylonian, Indian, Mongol, Chinese, Japanese.

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Personality plus

by Les Rees
Equine naturopath
and sports therapy

Looking back to the animals that have been part of our family over the years, I can recall the one thing they all had in common, they each had huge personalities that were unique to them.

A client was asking me what it was that made them so special and I can honestly say it was because they had the freedom to express themselves. They were treated as valued members of our family, given plenty of love and had their needs catered for in much the same way as we looked after ourselves. In other words, we respected them and gave them the opportunities to enjoy life with us.

I have been accused of spoiling them but generally by those who lack compassion and empathy, those who think that animals can be there when they want them to be but expect them to distance themselves when they are not wanted. I can always tell if an animal is not respected and it eats away at the very essence of my being.

Our horses generally get along because each one plays a unique role in the herd dynamics. Their individual

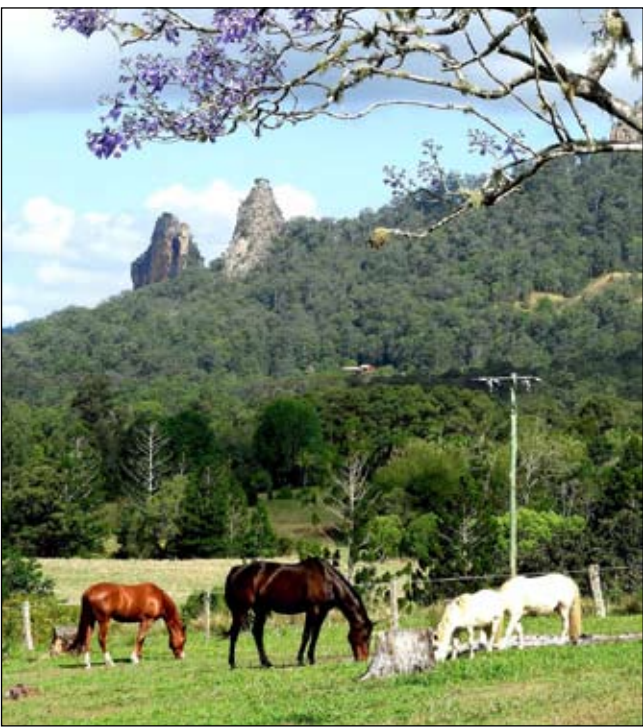
strengths serve to keep balance and maintain its integrity.

Gypsy seems to be the matriarch who quietly maintains order and has opinions on everything. She likes to supervise at meal times when I am making up the feeds. She watches me closely, doing a time and motion study, occasionally nudging the wheelbarrow to let me know that she is counting the time it takes for the food to arrive. She has even worked out how to open the roller door. If I'm not quick enough to stop her, she slides her neck under it and pushes it up so that she can have a better view. This is her 'self-appointed' job!

After the horses have finished their food, Red takes over to ensure that all bowls are cleaned and that he gets to drink the water used to do the job. He then follows me around until I've finished tidying up.

The interesting thing is that each allows the others time to be with me without argument. The rest quietly wander into their stables and wait their turn. I've never consciously taught them to do this, it is all their own invention. All I did was to allow them the freedom to express their personalities.

The importance of calm



energy around animals is the key to maintaining balance within the herd. Calm energy resonates outwards, influencing emotions and enriching shared positive experiences that encourage relaxation.

A lot of people have a problem with this because they are aware that horses are much bigger and faster than themselves but if you think that way, the horses will pick up on the fear and associated defence mechanisms that accompany this kind of energy.

Horses are masters at reading energy and can spot it from a fair distance away. Given that they are

flight animals, this is not surprising. I believe that the secret is never to allow myself to get cross. I simply just take a deep breath, increase my energy level and look directly at them. This seems to have the desired effect.

Having animals in your life can be very demanding and also restrict you from other activities especially if you have no one else to help look after them, but for me it is worth every second to receive their unconditional love, it enriches my life and keeps me happy.

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Chatting with horses

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

Recently I found myself saying to a student, "It's a conversation, not a command."

This one phrase is probably the most important thing I can teach. When the human is commanding the horse to obey and do something, there will always be the master/slave relationship.

I was raised to do this with horses, and people who didn't have instant obedience from their horses were considered beginners or ineffective. I bought into this headspace for many years. I believed that the horse MUST do as the human says.

The relationship that is created by thinking this way is very different to the relationship I have with horses now. Now, if I 'ask' a horse to something and they say no, my next question is why? Because over the years I have found that horses always say yes unless there's a problem.

So, it's my job to ask them what the problem is, listen to the answer, then see if the horse and I can find a solution to the problem together. Sometimes there's a no because the horse is in pain, has an injury, is frightened, tired, confused, frustrated or hungry. Horses feel all the same things we do, it's our job to read the horse and find out what's happening for them.

And sometimes they know better. I recall a time when I wanted my horse to go through a boggy area and he said no, which I listened to, then later found that someone else had forced their horse to go in there and

got seriously and dangerously stuck! Sometimes a horse will say no because they don't know how to do it. The it's not my job to force then to do it, but to teach them how to do it.

I will tell instead of asking if there's a serious safety issue, such as biting or kicking, when I say very clearly "No." Then I immediately ask why. Why did the horse feel they needed to defend themselves with aggressive behaviour? Is it because they felt threatened? Is it because they were threatened? Is it because of some danger that happened in the past? Is it a habit from the past? Does the horse have pain? Is there something in the environment that causes that behaviour? Is there something else I'm not thinking of?

As soon as you start looking at it this way, you're separating the behaviour from the horse. Instead of "It's a bad horse," it becomes "This horse has a problem, I wonder what it is?" This headspace changes everything. Your problem-solving mind clicks in, instead of the dominating, forceful mind.

The energy that comes with this is completely different, relaxing both of you. Then you can start trying different things and seeing the horse's reaction, each time modifying what you do in response to the horse's response.

Then you're having a conversation. It goes backward and forward between you and the horse, sometimes at incredible speed. In this way you develop a deep relationship between the person and the horse, a place of understanding.

No human is perfect, and no horse is perfect, we all have our things, our little challenges in life. By seeing your



horse as a sentient being and treating them with respect the same as you would any other being, opens the door to true understanding of the nature of equids.

Horses are the most willing and honest creatures imaginable. When you drop all the baggage and just have an honest open conversation with them, they will do nearly anything we ask. When you ask a question, listen to the answer, and change your behaviour in response, the horses just talk more and more, they have a lot to say. I'm not talking animal communication or horse whispering (although there may be some of that present), just good old-fashioned observation.

If you really allow yourself to be completely in the present moment with a horse and observe and feel everything they do, you will be overloaded with messages. Horses are talking all the time, in their own language. If we allow ourselves to be open to listening then, they will open and listen to us.

Then it's a conversation, not a command.

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The Welcome to Nimbin Kit is a project of the Nimbin Advisory Group (NAG). It was auspiced by Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC), in partnership with the Nimbin Community Centre and the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce. Funded by the partners and Lismore City Council, with contributions from Nimbin Hills Real Estate and Lifestyle Real Estate.

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When the child ego state speaks

What's worse than someone who argues with you all the time?

To my mind it is someone who refuses to say what they want but tries to get you to do what they want anyway. This is manipulation, plain and simple – but it isn't so much dishonest, as unaware behaviour. Such a person can seem to be reasonable, fair and equitable, on the surface, but they are incredibly controlling just the same.

Though not a game, Eric Berne wrote about in his famous book *Games People Play*, *The Psychology of Human Relationships* (1964), this is up there among the most notable. In a minute, I'll explain why.

Berne posited that we all possess three ego states when we engage in transactions with others: the parent, the adult, and the child. These represent an individual's internalised model of parents, adults, and children. The child ego state is directly linked to the emotional life of the child during their first five years of life.

If the person responds in most human interaction from that early emotional place, then the child ego state



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

is their most dominant. If they operate from a punitive position, you must do such and such (eg, always chew with your mouth closed), then the parent ego state is dominant.

The third ego state, the Adult, is one where a person exercises autonomy and responds not out of emotional reactivity (as for the child) nor in order to control the other person (as for the parent), but with a capacity to utilise whatever it takes to share equitably and rationally.

When two people operating from the adult ego state converse, each listens to what the other has to say and chooses what to respond to. There is a maturity in the transaction. When one person is responding from the position of the emotional child state, it is quite hard to

steer the conversation from the child-parent position as it is this dynamic that is the most familiar. It's hard for the other person to avoid taking the parent ego state position when the other's child ego state is saying, "Poor me, help me, I don't know this" that reaches out for a parent to make all things better, and yet this is what we all need to strive for.

In the child ego state there is magical thinking going on. What the person is feeling about themselves is confused with they imagine the other person is feeling. So, for instance, they'll insist that because they feel sad, the other person is also feeling sad, or what they want is essentially what the other person wants. They'll even say so. Essentially, it's "I want..." therefore you want it and when you say you want it, I know because it's what I want, and I know these things.

I know such a person as I've described above, and being with her is incredibly hard work. There is a disconnect in all conversations. Her child ego state just never seems to grow up, stuck in a mind-state that doesn't allow for fundamental change, nor it seems, any capacity

for realising that what isn't already known can be learned.

The child just wants what she wants now and wants the other person to accommodate her, without discovering ways to fill out the areas she has no knowledge of.

Transactional analysis, as developed by Berne, is a post-psychoanalytic theory and method of therapy where social transactions are analysed to determine the ego state of the client (whether parent-like, childlike, or adult-like) as a basis for understanding behaviour. This 'why is it so' gives us a way to reframe our presentation of self to how we interact with others.

To redirect the trajectory of the child ego state in one person with the partnered parent ego state in the other person to an equitable conversation between two adults requires concerted focus, effort, and awareness.

The familiar old way isn't particularly healthy as it inhibits growth and understanding.

We need to, I think, learn to redirect the dynamic of human transactions from reactivity to mutual sensitivity and responsibility toward self and others.

It's important to make an informed choice

Doula Wisdom

by Kirrah Stewart

Even though your mother or grandmother probably birthed in a hospital, did you know there are other options of where you can give birth?

Where you choose to give birth will have a big impact on your experience so it's important to make an informed choice. Labour is usually shorter and flows more smoothly when women feel safe and undisturbed.

The best environment for labour is private, warm, dark and quiet. Wherever you are, you need to feel safe in order to release the right hormones; oxytocin and endorphins.

Up until around the 1950's, giving birth at home was the most common choice. Today, the majority of people in developed countries birth in a hospital, however, there is a growing trend to choose other places like a birthing centre or even homebirth.

The rates of planned home birth range from 0.1% in Sweden to 20% in The Netherlands. (Source: *International Journal of Women's Health*)

Why birth at home or in a birth centre?

Birth your baby at home or in a birth centre can be a very empowering and satisfying experience. When supported by a midwife it is a very safe option for women having an uncomplicated pregnancy.

The main advantages of birthing at home or in a birth centre are: people tend to feel more comfortable; labour can progress unhindered; and there is less need for interventions.

By planning to birth at home or in a birthing centre, women with a low-risk pregnancy can significantly increase their chances of having a normal birth.

This consequently reduces their risk of interventions like induction, episiotomy, forceps delivery, vacuum delivery or cesarean. (Source: *BMJ*)

Why consider a midwife?

Many healthy women choose to have a midwife support them during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal time.

Midwives are specialists in natural birth. They understand what helps birth flow more easily and can also diagnose if something isn't progressing normally and can intervene or refer when needed.

There are options called 'case load' or 'continuity of care' where the woman can have the same midwife care for her through her pregnancy, birth and postpartum. There are options to hire an independent midwife that can care for you at home or



Mother and baby in birthing pool

hospital or birth centre.

When women have continuity of care from a known midwife they are more likely to have a natural birth, more likely to successfully breastfeed and generally feel better about their birth and postpartum.

Is it safe to birth at home or in a birth centre?

According to an article in the *International Journal of Women's Health*, the majority of studies (across a variety of countries) have shown no increase in neonatal morbidity and mortality for planned home birth.

Maternal outcomes are consistently better for planned homebirth and overall satisfaction is high with fewer interventions and complications.

For women with uncomplicated pregnancies who are being cared for by a competent midwife at home, evidence suggests that birth

outcomes are as good as or better than outcomes for similar women in a hospital setting. (Source: *IJWH*)

What does homebirth cost?

If homebirth is available, costs vary depending where you live. Sometimes there are publicly funded programs, meaning that homebirth is free.

But usually women hire an independent midwife with costs ranging from \$3500-\$6000 with some rebates usually available.

It would be wonderful if more women knew about the options available to them when it comes to birthing. This is a day that you will remember for the rest of your life, so take the time to make a decision that feels right for you.

If you're planning a birth, make sure you have downloaded the free natural birth checklist at: www.doulawisdom.com

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Beyond the Rainbow

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Falling in love with nature and our Earth

When I was in primary school, we visited the Blue Mountains and its cliffs, deep valleys and rainforest made an indelible impression upon me. Maybe if more children connected to nature they wouldn't grow up to be adults who destroy it with impunity.

Years later we moved to the Adelaide Hills in SA where I'd spend my spare time running over hills, along bush tracks or navigating through forests. Nature seemed way more beautiful than people. It was inspiring, the air was fresher, the water was clearer, and in nature there were none of the bullshit patterns, violence, obligations, oppressions, and insanity that humans are known for. Instead there were animals, their instincts and their patterns of behaviour which are so varied as to be fascinating.

The school I attended was an agricultural school, and as part of our work experience program we visited an abattoir. Unfortunately, the venture backfired and the trauma and horror of the blood and guts slaughterhouse separated me from my unconscious traditional



by Cameron Storey

diet.

My parents increasingly found me to be hard work and sent me on an Outward Bound course which triggered new ways to travel across the land and ways to live in country: climbing and abseiling cliff faces, paddling in estuaries and oceans and spending nights watching meteorites enter the atmosphere, the travel paths of the stars and various visible planets including the phases of the lunar cycle.

The two years I spent studying Outdoor Education at Bendigo College saw me traversing National

Parks, paddling numerous rivers (flat and white-water) and skiing and living above the snow-line. Part of the course was learning ways to leave no trace, no rubbish and ways to survive and protect the environment.

When I moved back to Sydney my weekends weren't partying but white-water rafting and canyoning. A typical canyon involves a one-hour walk-in to the top of a creek line, several abseils, swimming flooded sections and walking over slippery rocks through a fairyland of old growth rainforest, and then a two-hour walk-out. While most canyons took a day, some were two days, and quite a few I did solo, hauling abseil ropes and extra equipment, not seeing anyone from start to finish.

When you are immersed in nature you can learn to read clouds to determine when it's going to rain, roughly how long the rain will last, and whether the temperature overnight will drop due to no cloud cover or be warmer due to cloud cover. Recent rain makes tracking animals easier in some terrain. You can learn to distinguish what type of animal you are tracking (person,

emu, lizard, kangaroo, wild pig, wild dog, etc), the direction of travel, and the heaviness of the animal by the depth of the print, and when you find scats, what the animal eats for food, as it may contain grass, fur, feathers or bones.

Indigenous cultures in Australia and around the world have knowledge of thousands of intricate details about this planet that supports us all and the wildlife we share it with. For the continuity of this knowledge, listening is paramount and has been an often missing element by colonising cultures world-wide. High time for this to change.

For each of us to breathe, we need plants and trees. Plants are also part of a system that brings nutrients and water from the soil and onto our plates. The elements of earth, water, fire, air within space maintain our body/mind vehicles. These are the essentials and comprise all phenomena. Human systems (conveyer-belt education, unethical business, fraudulent financial, and corrupt political systems) are often fragile, distracting, unnecessary, a source of stress, inequality, aging, sickness

and death.

When the unsustainable systems break, and they will break, even if it's your children who tear them down, we will fall back into, unless we are already there, our connection with nature, plants, trees, soil, animals and common human nature beyond race, advantage or possessions.

Every morning these days, I walk barefoot consciously connecting to mother earth, the source of nourishment of all sentient beings, breathing the fresh air of her forests (recently smoky), bathing and drinking clean water that falls from the sky and feeling the love from the sun on my skin. The time we spend in nature helps us relax, strips away the superficial, connects to the elements internally and externally, calms our mind, connects to country, connects to ancestors world-wide and leads us to love our small planet spinning in the middle of space.

Honestly, this planet will survive without us, but we can't survive on a toxic planet and we can't thrive until we all find sustainable ways to live, holding all beings as our family and our earth as out mother.

Parenting beyond breakup

Parents Beyond Breakup are collating and publishing the lived experience stories of separated dads and that of their immediate family members; grandmothers, sisters, daughters.

Separated dads are a high risk group for suicide. PBB have been working to keep dads alive and in their kids' lives for 20 years and giving dads a voice is an important part of their suicide prevention work.

Scott is a dad in his 50's living in ACT. The following is a true story in Scott's own words. Identifying details have been altered/removed. "I met my wife in [removed]. It was young love and it was great. I had a high profile corporate, well-paid job at that time. She came from a very wealthy family.

I didn't think about it then, but she was certainly accustomed to a certain lifestyle. We moved in together, married and had two children, one daughter and one son. While we were holidaying there was a shuffle in management and, although initially promoted, I ultimately lost my job. I was reeling and really struggling at that time.

It was then that my wife alleged I'd mistreated our son. He was only a couple of years old. I adored him. I'd taken him to the park, when we got home there was a police car parked in our driveway. I immediately feared the worst and thought something had happened to my wife. I raced into the house. She was vacuuming. I said, "There are police here." "They're here to speak to you," she replied calmly.

The previous night when I was getting my son ready for bed, he'd kicked me while I was putting on his pyjamas. I tapped him and said, "Hey, don't do that to Daddy." She had visited the police station to allege I'd assaulted our child. I moved into the guestroom. The whole experience

was so incredibly hurtful. When she tried to talk to me, I said, "Don't talk to me, it's over".

The following day I started ringing around the very best family lawyers. When you ring a family law firm, they have to check there's no conflict of interest and they haven't dealt with your partner. She had already spoken to all of the top tier law firms. Not one, not two, but all of them. For the first time, I realised she'd been planning this for some time.

The following Friday, I was meant to pick up our children from day care. When I arrived, she had arrived earlier and taken the children. She abducted our children. I had a message from my child saying they were okay and where they were.

I was emotionally drained by the time I got home and climbed into bed around 6pm. Shortly afterwards the police turned up. They said an allegation of family violence had been made against me and I had to go to the police station. I said I'd need to get dressed. They followed. I was bundled into the back of a paddy wagon in front of all of my neighbours.

I'd gone from earning a big corporate salary to nothing overnight. That wasn't acceptable to her. Her allegations became increasingly ridiculous. She would say I'd been stalking her when I was in a different state. I spent everything I had in courts trying to defend claim after claim. Hundreds of thousands of dollars, it's all gone.

Once I was gardening at my own home. The police arrived saying they'd had a report of trespassing. She made complaints that I'd been threatening after she'd heard the children speaking to me on the phone. It was crazy.

She started trying to backdate physical abuse, which had never happened. I was served with an

interim (DV intervention order) and, on legal advice, foolishly I accepted the terms on an 'without admissions' basis. The female judge made it clear she believed men were abusers and women were victims.

Of course, it was all part of her plan. Keeping these police matters rolling meant they had to be questioned in Family Court too, which was running concurrently.

I was alienated from my children. I've been told by legal professionals and retired senior politicians they've seen this happen to men before. They all know the system is broken. I had to pay for supervised visits with my own children. When I took them to the toilet, someone came with me.

The fear and mistrust towards me was being pushed onto my children. I lived in pain for years. She even said my daughter had shown "heightened sexualised behaviour", implying I'd sexually assaulted her.

Sexual crimes detectives arrived at her school to investigate. I was beside myself. I hit rock bottom. I tried to take my own life. It's still very raw, hard to talk about.

I should never have represented myself in legal matters and I shouldn't have accepted the terms. But when you're in it, you are mentally broken. I didn't have the experience or mental energy to fight. It was horrendous. My life was ruined. When I was living it, I was drowning.

This is why peer-support is so important. There are people out there who've been through it, they know what you're likely to face and they can help you through it."

Read more at: www.dadsalive.org

Are you a separated dad needing support? PBB understand and can help. Phone 1300-853-437. Email: helpline@parentsbeyondbreakup.com Find a local group at: www.dids.org.au

Natural Law



by Helene Collard

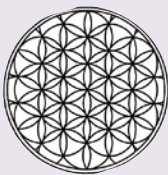
*We are all self-governing.
Let us call upon our ancestors and teachers – past and present,
to guide us in the way of the heart.
You are all my relations.
All is One.*

The universal cycle of karmic clearing continues to create a dichotomy of experience. In one hand, we hold hope, with new beginnings and the seeds of potential. In the other hand we experience the effects of ongoing struggle and uncertainty.

Watching and waiting can be painful at times, however, until a clear path emerges, watching and waiting is an ancient and powerful spiritual practice.

During this month of re-organisation, increase your self-care practices, and the time you spend in deep connection. Deep connection can be had with others in ceremony and sacred space.

In January, I encourage you to experience deep connection with nature. When you consciously remove yourself from distractions (people, technology, domestic and paid work) and sit quietly in nature, you activate a deep coding in your DNA, and access ancient wisdom that will guide you through these times.



Somewhere along all our ancestral lines, our people lived off the land, in harmony with all life, and they watched and waited for the right time, the right people, the right season...

Indeed, just as it is important to watch and wait – we must also know when to act. Acting with clarity, focus and purpose is critical.

Deep connection with nature, is the key to attuning oneself to the rhythm of life.

Daily Affirmation for January: Today I connect deeply with nature.

Enjoy these days my friends, and thank you for reading Natural Law.

Coming up at Yemaya Centre

- ♦ **iRest® Meditation, Somatic Experiencing and Trauma Sensitive Yoga Courses** Sam will be back on 30th January.
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*Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing (Law & Justice), is a Reiki Master and the founder of the Yemaya Centre:
www.yemayacentre.com.au or phone 0405-656-797.*