



Tips to keep you airborne!



Take a walk on the wild side
January 2023

Back in the 80's, as a young, naive twenty-something year old, I headed off with a 1-year, 5-stop, round-the-world ticket in my pocket, in search of adventure and self-discovery. I had a plan.

First stop was Tokyo, a buzzing, booming oh-so-cool metropolis, which scattered my plans, as I got drawn into her trance and was held captive for 2 years.

But little did I know at that time that tech-boom burnout was endemic and that a powerful antidote to combat that very exhaustion had just been born.

Too busy was I being swept up in the rich, dazzling culture, not to mention the mind-boggling myriad of tech stores lining every other city street from which I purchased my very first Sony Walkman. My tech fire had just been lit but quite clearly, I was a laggard.

The antidote to this 80's tech-burnout, to which I was totally unaware, was none other than a method to inspire the Japanese people to reconnect with, and at the same time to protect, their native forests.

'Sounds interesting, says you. 'Tell me more.'

Well, Shinrin-yoku had arrived.



Caroline Crosbie
CONSULTING
Tapping into Personal and Professional Wellness

Caroline Crosbie Consulting
www.carolinecrosbie.com.au
info@carolinecrosbie.com.au
0416 154 259

Also known as forest bathing, this therapeutic technique, which has since gained major traction internationally, had taken root.

'Forest bathing?', I hear you say, perhaps a tad puzzled.

There's no doubt that at first glance, to me, it conjured up images of floating languorously in calm, green lakes in forest settings...with perhaps real ducks in tow.

That being said, let me reassure you that it ain't necessarily so.

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In short, all that's required for this rejuvenating practice is to mindfully immerse yourself in a forest environment and to consciously activate all of your senses, connect with what's around, engage deeply with an encounter with sounds, smells, sunlight on surfaces, a tree, a leaf, a beetle or a bee and so forth and soak up the experience.

Put simply, it's about nurturing an intense preoccupation with the present and developing a fascination for what is, which as you are probably aware, is not always an easy thing to achieve, given the pace of our living and our high levels of distractibility. Forest bathing speaks to our natural affiliation and capacity to connect with our natural world. Called biophilia, it's something we innately know.



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What's more, it exposes us to phytonocides, wonderful aromatic, antibacterial and antifungal compounds, which when inhaled, have been proven to increase killer T cells in the body to fight infection and support the immune system...a big plus for me.

Heck, scientific research shows that a good dose of forest bathing will not only boost your immune system, but it will also increase heart rate variability, reduce stress, improve vitality and energy, allowing for clearer thinking and greater creativity, to name a few... not to mention upping your stakes in the happiness department.

It's got everything to recommend it.

How do I know?

Well, I dipped my toes in a forest bath the other week and came away revitalized.

You don't have to be a wilderness lover to give it a go. Any natural environment with conscious connection will do the trick.

However, I wanted more structure and instruction to set me up for success, and so joined a 2-hr ecotherapy excursion with Shades of Nature.

And the proof?

Holding a leg stretch pose at a coffee stomping ground after a run, my gaze was drawn to a weed, growing in a bitumen crack, that I'd seen many times previously, given its location next to the wall that I regularly stretch against.

But this time...for the first time...I 'saw' the weed...in all its glory, as the filigree hairlike structures in its stem 'waved their arms about' in the brilliant sunshine.

I was fascinated enough to squat down and get up close and personal with this attention seeking plant. It was a cool moment.



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I then smiled when the realization of why I'd probably done this dawned on me. Yes, you guessed...my forest bathing experience.

So, till next month, do yourself a favour and take a leaf out of Lou Reed's book by taking a walk on the wild side. It'll do you the power of good.

Caroline

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PPS - If you're ready, work with me directly to see how you can benefit from some stress less coaching. Hit the reply button to this email with "yes, more information please".



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