

## Allowing nature to come to us

### Imagine the following scenario:

It is a fine sunny day. Large white cumulus clouds drift lazily across the sparkling, blue sky. You are strolling through the countryside, admiring the horizons that unfold around you. You pass meadows, woodland, streams, an occasional lake. At various times the landscape gently undulates, flattens out, rises sharply or dips dramatically. Every now and then you pass through a village or find yourself wistfully admiring an isolated cottage, with its thatched roof and bright blooms. As you walk through this ever changing landscape your mind absorbs a myriad of impressions; some of which you are conscious, such as the gnarled beauty of an ancient oak tree or the glistening clarity of a meandering stream, and others that do not specifically attract your attention, but make up the kaleidoscope of colours, forms, sounds and smells that inform your experience. In your pocket you have a map, which you refer to occasionally, to make sure that you know where you are.

### Compare this with another possibility:

It is the same day, the same stretch of countryside. But instead of taking a walk, you leave your map folded up in your pocket and wander into a field, where you simply sit and observe. At first you scan the landscape with no particular focus. The field slopes away from you down to the edge of a wood, where the sunlight blurs into shadow. The grass is sprinkled with buttercups and daisies. An unruly hedgerow, with occasional outbursts of rose-hip and hawthorn, runs along the field to your right, whilst to your left a low lying limestone wall, with an iron gate in it, marks the boundary of the field. You notice these things without particularly noticing that you notice them. Gradually, as your awareness deepens, the field starts to come alive around you. You become aware of the buzzing of bees as they zip from flower to flower and the brightness of butterflies, lifting into the air and settling again, as if in a perfectly choreographed dance. The stiller your mind becomes, as the distractions of your everyday concerns begin to fade, the more you become aware of the call and answer of birdsong, the chirrup of a grasshopper, quite close to you, another further away, then suddenly they seem to be all around you. How could you have not noticed this before?

Without expectation you sit, allowing nature to come to you. Something moves at the periphery of your vision. It's a rabbit, a hundred yards or so down the field. There are a couple of them, silently nibbling and sniffing the air. Then a larger movement draws your attention. A deer has emerged from the wood. It grazes close to the edge of the wood, ready to blend back into the shadows again, at the slightest hint of danger. It is aware of you. Every now and then it stops grazing and stares right at you. You feel a sense of wonder as its dark, soulful eyes meet yours and you silently thank it for allowing you into its world, knowing that if you had sought it out you would never have found it. It had to come to you. You had to merge into its world, imposing nothing of your own, for it to reveal itself to you.

### Consider a further possibility:

As therapists we can approach the landscapes of the human body-mind in many ways. Each therapy has its own particular map, with which to orient itself. Each therapy has its own assortment of techniques as reference points to draw on, and each therapist has their own intuitive understanding which breathes life into these techniques. Like the walker in the first scenario we can take a tour of the body-mind allowing its colours, forms, sounds and smells to inform our experience. This can be very rewarding and of great therapeutic value. Such an approach should not be knocked. The only inherent flaw in this approach is that the map may become confused with the landscape and techniques imposed upon the body-mind, rather than being used to facilitate its capacity for health.

As Craniosacral Therapists we may apply certain techniques, with excellent results. But, perhaps more than any other therapy, we have the possibility to merge into the landscape of the body-mind, and, as in the second scenario above, allow nature to come to us. When we become still, imposing nothing of ourselves, just being there, more subtle rhythms and deeper qualities of vibrancy and aliveness may begin to emerge, which, had we gone looking for them, we would never have found.

*Matthew Appleton.*