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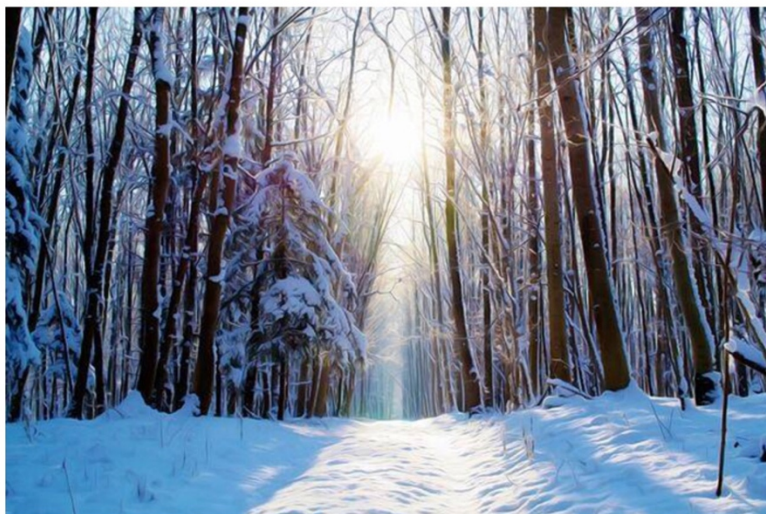
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## Communicating and Communing with Nature

DECEMBER 7, 2017 BY [CARL GREER](#) — [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

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Recognize that simply being in or near nature can bring you information about your health and be "medicine" for you in ways you might not expect—as my client, Brendan came to see when he stood quietly and made a connection with a tree while waiting to receive health test results. As you observe a snowfall through the window of a quiet room, you might feel moved to dialogue with the experience and let it inform you about your health. You may get a message about purity, innocence, freshness, or a new beginning. You might realize you need to slow down and be less distracted. Even if you only intended to sit for a while and observe the snow falling, you might begin to realize you and your health are part of a larger whole of nature and that remembering this truth will help you experience greater wellness.

One winter evening, I took a walk and was looking at a waxing moon, which was about half full. It would appear and disappear in the sky, as the clouds passed in front of it. I paused to interact and dialogue with it to discover what it could teach me about my health story. I was reminded of how some things can be present but not visible—things that contribute to poor health and to good health. I understood that if I intend to see them, and I remain vigilant, I can catch glimpses of the invisible world and the wisdom it holds for me. Soon after this, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, which was present but not visible, just like the moon behind the cloud.

Taking advantage of opportunities to reconnect with nature and its elements can give you insights and energies for healing. Even if you may have seen many snowfalls or thunderstorms in your life, you might want to pause the next time you experience one. Open yourself to what it might bring you—messages, a renewed feeling of gratitude, or something else. I also suggest that when you use expanded-awareness practices in nature, you consider beginning by opening sacred space, cleansing your energy field, and doing mindful breathing, and then closing sacred space afterward. Should you receive any messages from the snow, rain, sky, clouds, or ground, consider thanking them, as this shows respect for the wisdom of nature.

If it has been a while since you have spent time in nature, connecting to its healing powers, you might want to do the following simple expanded-awareness practice, which can help you connect with the energy of the sun. Do you long to feel its rays upon your skin? In writing about an indigenous African ritual for greeting the sunrise, Carl Jung said, "The longing for light is the longing for consciousness."<sup>11</sup>

When was the last time you made a point of watching a sunrise? What are you missing by taking for granted that since the sun will rise again tomorrow, you can always catch a sunrise some other day?

The following simple expanded-awareness practice requires no preparation other than planning to find a place to greet the sun as it rises.



### ***Expanded-awareness practice: Sun Greeting***

*Plan to awaken before dawn to watch the sunrise in a natural area where you can fully appreciate the experience with an unobstructed view. As soon as you can upon arising, go outside to greet the sun as it begins to spread light upward from the horizon, filling the sky.*

*Be fully present as you soak in its light and warmth. Imagine it is observing and greeting you, just as you are observing and greeting it.*

*Become mindful of your breathing. Then, as you face the east, salute the sun, adopting whatever posture feels right to you.*

*You might want to do a yoga pose such as the sun salutation, or you can simply extend your arms out to your side, with your palms up, and thrust your chest forward.*

*Open yourself up to the sun's energy. Look out at the horizon or sky and then close your eyes so you can turn your face fully toward the sun. Notice the sensation of your breathing and the sensation of the sun as it strikes your skin and its light penetrates your eyelids.*

*Try not to consciously create thoughts about what is happening; simply be present to the experience, and continue to focus on your breath.*

*You might open your eyes and watch the changing colors of the sky, but do not directly gaze at the sun, as this can damage your eyes.*

*Ask the sun, "What message do you have for me about my health?"*

*Wait for the answer. Be open to the form of the answer. It may simply be an inner knowing, or it may be a word or an image that comes to you.*

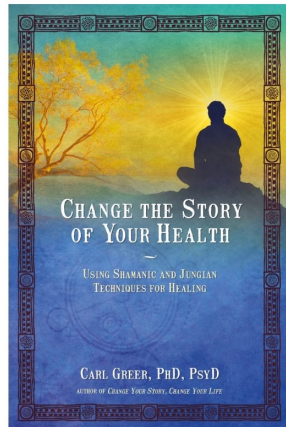
*Ask the sun, "What do I need to release to help me live according to a better health story?" Ask it, too, what you need to bring in for that purpose. You might also ask, "What in me needs to be nourished so that it may grow?"*

*Each time, wait for an answer before posing the next question. When you sense it is the right time to end your ritual of interaction with the energy of the sun, open your eyes. Thank the sun for its messages and energy.*

After you have used this practice, journal about it. Did you receive any insights that you found helpful? What was it like for you to have this experience?

Expanded-awareness practices such as this one can be used to work co-creatively with the energies in nature, accessing their healing properties. If you do not get a clear, direct answer to your inquiries about your health when you are in nature and trying to communicate with it, remain present to the experience and simply observe what you are feeling and sensing. Later, you can choose to do a dialogue and learn more.

The following expanded-awareness practice, to be done out in nature, is a technique for tapping into the wisdom of the unconscious mind. It is similar to the Jungian sand tray technique and Native American sand paintings created for healing purposes by people of the Navajo, Zuni, Hopi, and Plains tribes, but here I am calling it a "nature painting" because it might not involve sand as one of its elements.



## Carl Greer



Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD, is a practicing clinical psychologist, Jungian analyst and shamanic practitioner. He teaches at the C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago, is on staff at the Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being, and is involved in various charities. For more, visit [CarlGreer.com](http://CarlGreer.com)