



Ten Ways to Deepen Your Connection with Trees

- 1 Notice.** Start noticing how trees and their gifts are part of your daily life, and take a few moments to appreciate them when you can. A little awareness can go a long way.
- 2 Just be.** Find a tree you feel drawn to and simply enjoy being with it. Try sitting and leaning back into the tree, standing with the front of your body and palms resting on the trunk, or whatever helps you feel more present. (It's a good practice to ask permission before and give thanks after you connect.) When your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the tree, your breath, or physical sensations.
- 3 Get acquainted.** Walk around a tree, looking high and low, getting to know it from different vantage points, maybe even climbing it. Use all your senses—touch is especially powerful for bringing you into the moment and a more intimate connection. Let your intuition and curiosity guide you, and see how much you can learn through direct experience.
- 4 Branch out.** Explore different ways of relating to trees. Follow your instincts and move like a curious animal. Climb up into a tree and find a perch where you can sit or lounge for a while. Dance or move creatively with a tree partner, or sing, write, or make art with a tree.
- 5 Rest.** Lie down under a tree, ideally in a peaceful, beautiful place where you feel safe. Gently take in the sights and sounds with a soft focus, or allow your eyes to close. Notice that there is nothing you have to do. See how fully you can relax and release into the support of the earth.
- 6 Hug.** Hugging is a natural way to express affection and a delicious way to connect with a tree. Long, lingering hugs are especially nourishing and bonding. Let's embrace tree hugging as the simple, honorable practice that it is!
- 7 Make friends.** Find a friendly-looking tree that you feel an affinity for and can visit regularly. Get to know it, using your intuition and some of these practices. Open your heart and mind to the tree, and see where that leads you.
- 8 Listen deeply.** While connecting with a tree, cultivate a quiet and receptive state. Tune into the tree, listen deeply, and see what comes. Or guide the communication by holding an intention, asking a question, or speaking directly to the tree. (Although we've been taught to forget this, it's natural and healthy for us to experience deep connection and communication with trees and other living beings.)
- 9 Bless.** Honor a tree with a song, poem, prayer, or symbolic offering. You may want to create a simple ceremony of blessing or thanks-giving, or practice the Celtic tradition of tura, a walking prayer around a tree or sacred place. Find ways to bring trees into your spiritual practice (if you have one) or bring your practice to the trees.
- 10 Give thanks, give back.** Offer thanks to trees as you walk by or receive gifts from them. Support our tree friends by planting and tending them, reducing wood and paper use, choosing recycled or greener options, scaling back consumption and energy use, and donating to groups that protect our precious planet. Linking small, personal actions with love for trees or broader values makes them more meaningful and rewarding.

 By Kai Siedenburg. Originally published as part of an article in *Common Ground*, April 2015.

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