

FIELD
EXERCISE
TWO

THE
SENSE
MEDITATION

THE LEOPARD

by Matt Wild

In Red Bank, New Jersey—January of 1993—I met a man who was to change my life forever. I had already heard a bit about him. Not much—just enough to know that he deserved respect. I had no idea at the time, but I soon discovered he was a man I had been looking for all of my 18 years of living.

I knew that he was a co-founder of Wilderness Awareness School. He was of British decent but was raised in Kenya, Africa, and was adopted by the Akamba people (a traditional tribe of Natives living in the old ways). They raised him and mentored him in the way they had been mentoring people for thousands of years. He was an unbelievably great tracker, naturalist, hunter, storyteller and mentor. He had moved to New Jersey many years earlier to follow his vision to share the wisdom he had learned. He was in his late 70's. He was kind and considerate and a wonderful role model. I knew Jon Young and many others respected him. I had heard of his many volumes of photo albums from Africa. I heard he liked his coffee very much. His name was Ingwe.

Jon and I were on our way to the Wilderness Awareness School office one day, and he mentioned we were stopping by Ingwe's so I could meet him. I assumed the three of us would chat for a couple of minutes and we'd be on our way. It was 8:10 in the morning. Jon pulled his van up to the curb, pointed at an apartment building and said, "That's it right there, apartment B. Knock first but then go right in. Make him some coffee as soon as you get in—he takes it with a little milk and one sugar. Don't make him mad, OK, Matt? Oh, and ahhh...tuck in your shirt before you go in, would ya? I'll be back to get you late this afternoon. What did you bring him for a gift?"

Needless to say, I was a little on the nervous side. I tucked my shirt in, knocked, went in and found my way up the stairs. Meeting his eyes was like looking into the eyes of a Leopard or Mountain Lion. He was wild. It was, literally, like looking into the eyes of a wild animal. They obviously saw much more than I could imagine. They were filled with wisdom, compassion, kindness and an acute awareness. I had never seen eyes like that. I was captivated and a touch frightened. "You're late" was apparently all he had to say for now.

(This exercise Taken from
Kamana Two, ©2001 Jon Young)

Fortunately, my shaky hands didn't spill his coffee as I brought it to him. He sipped it, smiled a big, wide grin and asked me where I was from. We spent the whole day together. I listened to his stories of the African wilderness, looked at his photo albums, met his wife and was honored to be adopted as his grandson. I still keep in touch with him regularly and stop by to visit him when I'm in New Jersey.

Ingwe is a wonderful grandfather, teacher, mentor, tracker, naturalist, photographer, hunter, storyteller...the list goes on and on. But there were two things I noticed most about him that day in January. The first was that when you're in a room with him, it really and truly feels like you are in the presence of a Leopard. Honestly. His eye contact is difficult to meet and you feel like at any moment, if he chose to, he could leap across the room, kill you, and be back in his chair before anyone knew what had happened. The second thing I noticed was that he has better senses than anyone I have ever met. He can see, hear and smell things that I can only dream of. His senses, like his presence, are those of a hunting cat.

When we had become close, I finally asked him one day, "Grandfather, how is it that you can always see, hear and smell things that nobody else can?" He told me the answer was very simple...practice. He told me to practice in a very specific way and gave me different exercises to work on. Those exercises are what make up Field Exercise Two. I've told you about Ingwe because I want you to know—really know—that you can continue to practice these for the rest of your life and they will take you beyond your wildest dreams of perception. Just in case you have any doubts, I have a story to share.

In the Spring of 1993, Wilderness Awareness School was running an expedition to The Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Jon Young, Ingwe and four or five instructors were going. None of us had ever been to that part of the park before. My job on the trip was going to be teaching the daily kid's programs and looking after Ingwe and our camp. I was also the designated "runner" in case of emergency. Needless to say, I studied the maps every day for about a month to make sure I could find all the water sources, lookout points, roads, ranger station, etc.

We drove down a few days before the students were to arrive so that we could get acquainted with the area and relax a bit. When we first arrived we all rushed to get out of the van. It had been a long, long ride. I opened the door for Ingwe. He got out, looked around for two or three seconds, took a deep breath in through his nose, pointed uphill and to the west and said, "Matt, why don't you go get Ingwe some water from that spring over



there.” He always refers to himself in the third person like that. Now, keep in mind I had been pouring over maps. I knew exactly where we were, and I knew that the closest running water was about a quarter of a mile south-east from where we were and that the closest spring was over two miles away and to the south. He pointed west, but I ignored the direction of his finger.

“Well Ingwe, I don’t have time to go all the way to the spring, but I’ll go,” I pointed southeast, “get you some water from the creek and have it purified in just a couple of minutes. Is that OK?”

He looked at me for a little while in a way that always made me uneasy. He said, “What do you mean you don’t have time? Just run over there and fill this with that nice Smoky Mountain spring water.” He handed me his canteen.

It was an uncomfortable situation to be in, but *someone* had to tell him he was wrong. After all, who would go uphill to find water? “Ingwe,” I said, “there is no water over there. There’s a little creek just a quarter mile from here, but the closest spring is at least two mile....”

“There’s a spring right over there! I can hear it! I can smell it! Go and get Ingwe some water!” Oops. I seemed to have made him mad. Well, I had been around him long enough to know that I should just do what he says, and so I walked off headed west. My plan was simple...I was going to walk west until I was out of sight, circle around, go get water from the creek and bring it back for him. I got far enough away, turned south and walked about 10 feet before I stepped in mud.

“Mud,” I thought, “Hmm. That’s strange.” I followed it uphill a little bit, forgetting about my task for Ingwe, and discovered that it turned into a very small and slow-moving stream, only about three or four inches wide. Uphill another 15 feet, there it was—a beautiful mountain spring. “Oh my gosh!” I was so excited. “I found a spring!” After drinking a bunch, I started to cup my hands together to shout for the others and celebrate my discovery, but I noticed there was a canteen in my hand. “Wait a minute. How could he have known that?” I rushed to fill his canteen and ran all the way back.

“Ingwe! Ingwe! There really was a spring up there. How did you know that?” I was beside myself.

“Simple. Just like I said...I could hear it. I could smell it. And now, I will taste it. Thank you very much.”

“What do you mean you could hear it? I could hardly hear it when I was standing in it. You mean that you sensed it somehow, right? You don’t really mean you heard it with your ears.” I was yanking on my own ear lobes in disbelief as I ask him.



“No, I really heard it. Listen.” He put one finger to his mouth as if to say “Ssshhhh.”

“*What are you talking about Ingwe!*” I was getting annoyed.

He said, “I can hear it because I *really* know what it sounds like. Can’t you hear the sound of your own name from another room even if you didn’t hear the rest of the words? That’s because you truly know it. Go and sit by that spring and really listen to it...don’t just hear it. Pay attention to it, Matt. Get to know it and soon you, too, will be able to hear it from far away. But only when you really *know* what it sounds like.”

That’s a true story. I went back to that same place a couple of years ago. I stood in the same spot, listened as hard as I could, and I still couldn’t hear the darn thing. I found it again, though, and it’s got to be one of the sweetest tasting springs in the South. Maybe I’ll be able to hear it next time. Well, you’ve waited long enough. Here’s Field Exercise Two. Read it through once, and re-read it a couple of times in the next week or so. Have fun.

LOSE YOUR MIND AND COME TO YOUR SENSES

“I stopped thinking when I was 19 years old.”

Jon Young

Can you stop thinking anytime you want...just turn the “brain chatter” right off? Can you stop thinking so that your mind is completely clear of thought and your spirit is left to freely detect the life force? Can you stop thinking for as long as you want and keep your mind free for an indefinite time if you so choose? This exercise will teach you one simple way to do it.

When I say I stopped thinking when I was 19, that is not to say I haven’t had a single thought since. What I mean is that I stopped allowing thoughts to control me—I took control of them. I stopped letting the thinking mind distract me from sensory awareness. I can start or stop thinking whenever I want to and “thought-less-ness” is now my primary mode of existence. This is absolutely necessary for developing the awareness skills that are vital to a naturalist and a tracker, as well as for allowing the small voice of intuition to be heard. It so happens that the following exercises are perfect for practicing at your Secret Spot!

BIRD’S EYE VIEW OF FIELD EXERCISE TWO

First, you will read over the entire exercise and get a feeling for the vital importance of this next piece to add to your “naturalist’s tool kit.” Then you will find a quiet place to begin practicing



bringing your various senses to life. You will practice four animal forms, imitating an aspect of each animal, and adding that animal's dominant sense to the ones you have already gained.

Once you have this basic understanding of what is involved, you will practice this awareness routine at your Secret Spot. This is a valuable tool that will bring a new depth of meaning and understanding to the world around you, and one that you will find very useful in all areas of your life. Towards the end of the month, you will write a Reflection Paper on what this exercise has done for your experience of nature and the world around you.

Overview

1) Read through this entire Field Exercise to see how everything flows together, and to begin to understand why a state of heightened awareness can be so important to a true naturalist.

2) Do the "Awareness Appetizer," below, as you come to it. Then go back to the section titled "The Sense Meditation or Sensory Awareness Exercise." Read this section again, stopping to do each animal awareness form as it is described. Then put them all together, becoming an owl-deer-raccoon-dog person with all your senses fully engaged at the same time.

3) Practice the Sensory Awareness Exercise every time you think of it, and whenever you go to your Secret Spot. Remember to write notes for your Naturalist Field Inventory. You may find that some of your brightest images come during your Sense Meditation, when your spirit is left free to detect the life forces that surround everything. Also, start reading *Ingwe* or listening to *Spirit of the Leopard*.

4) After at least 30 days, write your Field Exercise Two Reflection on the pages at the end of this section. Write specifically about your experience with this exercise. Tying in Ingwe's stories might be a fun thing to do. This can be a page or more to tell us how this exercise worked for you. Just lay it out in a very straightforward manner and have fun reflecting on the different things that come up for you.

5) At the end of the month, gather together your four weeks of Field Inventories, etc., and this "Reflection Paper," make copies, and send the copies all to us. If you have questions you'd like a quick reply to, give us a call.



SOME THOUGHTS ON SENSE MEDITATION

by Jon Young

“Sensory Awareness Exercise,” and “Sense Meditation”—you’ll see us use these terms interchangeably. They both mean the same thing: a set of exercises that will help you to develop your awareness of the world around you to peak efficiency.

Thinking the Fox Afraid

Back sometime in my late teens, I was walking down one of the many sand roads in the Pine Barrens late one night. I was strolling along, enjoying the feel of the breeze ruffling my hair, the gentle shift of the sand under my feet and the strong scent of pine. I wasn’t thinking; in fact, I hadn’t had a thought in my head for several hours. I was simply that old sponge, absorbing all the wonderful sights, scents, sounds and sensations around me.

Out of the distance, I noticed a fox trotting down the road toward me. He appeared totally unconcerned as he cut a chalk-line straight track in the sand. As he came closer, it was obvious that the two of us were going to meet right there in the middle of the road.

When the fox was nearly beside me, an uninvited thought burst into my head, “Boy, I can’t wait to tell somebody about this!”

The thought rattled around in the stillness of my mind like a metal garbage can banging down an empty street in the wind. The fox startled at that exact instant. He froze in place, half cowering, and looked up at me with the most incredibly surprised, unbelieving expression, as if to say, “Where in the heck did you come from?” I honestly believe that up until that moment, he had not perceived me as a human being.

I was completely ashamed of myself. Here I had the opportunity for this wonderful experience with a fox, and I had blown it by wanting to brag to somebody about what I’d done. I breathed a slow steady breath, exhaling all the tension and feelings that came with the thought. With that breath, my mind returned to its former state of calm awareness, and the intruding thought vanished like a shadow in the night.

The fox recovered from his half-crouch, his stance relaxed, and his eyes lost their look of alarm. He gave a slight shake, more like a shudder, as if ridding himself of the unpleasant experience, and resumed his happy trot down the road.



The Right Tool For the Right Job

This experience, and several others like it, have firmly convinced me that thoughts carry real, tangible power. In the natural world, it is important to be able to take the “thought tool” out of our “naturalists’ tool kit” and put it to good use—when the situation calls for it. My friend Greg, who sides houses for a living, will tell you that he would be lost without his special tools. At the same time, he doesn’t use his siding tools to repair his truck. There are times on the road to native natural awareness where thinking is definitely called for. And there are times when it is best left in the tool box. Our challenge, as naturalists, is to perfect our use of our “awareness tool” to the point where it becomes second nature. Awareness is one of those tools that should never be put away. Toned down, sometimes, but never completely turned off. The rational thought process is best left for those times that call for critical analysis.

Don’t Despair

If you have tried, or done, meditation, and if it was difficult to get into or remain in that state of un-thinking, don’t despair. Meditation is already a useful tool for some people, but for others, the task of completely turning off the thinking mind, as taught by many meditation instructors, is just too difficult. Classical meditation practices and this Sensory Awareness Exercise are as different as night and day *in approach*. So please approach this exercise with an open mind and let go of any preconceptions about meditation of another sort. If you practice this exercise regularly, *the way it is given here*, you can’t help but succeed.

Before Reading On, How About a “Sense Meditation Appetizer?”

It’s very simple: just relax, find a focal point out in front of you somewhere, expand to your peripheral vision, listen to the sounds all around you, sense the feelings your body is picking up, and notice the smells and tastes you are sensing. Maintain your peripheral vision at the same time you become aware of the other sounds and sensations around you. This means that your eyes aren’t really focused on any point or object, you just have “blurry vision” of everything. This is the state you naturally drift into when you are having a vivid daydream experience, except that during daydreaming your attention is focused on an imagined happening. Here, your attention is focused on the very real sensations your body is receiving from all around you. Really pour yourself into it, one sense at a time. You are a hypersensitive antenna of awareness, the proverbial sensory sponge in an ocean of stimuli.



If you had even one second where you did not have a WORD pronouncing itself in your head, you succeeded for that brief moment in not thinking. If you can do it for a second, you can do it for two seconds. If you can do it for two seconds, you can do it for five, or for five minutes, or for five hours. All it takes is practice, and the will to master this tool.

This was just a taste of the real thing. Read on for the main course and dessert!

Thinking vs. Sensing

Be careful about the definition of what thinking is. Maybe you believe you are thinking when you are in fact adjusting your awareness to detect what your five senses are telling you. Thinking amounts to things like: "Gee, I have to go meet my friend at 5 o'clock," and "Oh, I'd better get my homework done," and "I wonder how much my gas bill is this month." *Any unnecessary things that are constantly intruding into your mind which don't have anything to do with your awareness of your surroundings are thoughts.* These thoughts must not be allowed to distract the intent of your will. The thinking mind is stuck in your head, whereas the sensing mind reaches into your surroundings. Your intent is to be fully aware with all of your senses fully engaged at all times.

Use your mind, don't let your mind use you.

–Joseph Campbell

Stress in our lives is caused by how we think about stimuli and not how the stimuli really are. We choose to become upset, we *chooseto* be angry, we *chooseto* become emotional about things. It is not a function of the stress itself; it is really a function of how we perceive it and what we *think* about it.

For a really interesting study in this whole process, look into the Joseph Campbell video series known as *The Power of Myth* where he discusses how the thinking mind can diminish the quality of life. He talks about how we should learn to live from our spirit and from our hearts and not from our thinking minds.

***The thinking mind is an excellent servant,
but a terrible master .***

–Unknown



Ultimately, when you reach the level of awareness that *native* people possess when they live close to the land, you don't think at all, except when you choose to. The Sense Meditation is a direct route to this awareness, with easily reproducible results even for beginners.

You can use your thinking mind just the way my friend Greg uses his special hammer. When you are finished using the thinking part of your mind, just put it away in its tool box and return to your senses. Sensory awareness becomes your normal state of existence, and thinking becomes something you use to problem-solve, not something that rules your life. As Kahlil Gibran said: "It is slavery to live in the mind, unless it has become part of the body." Think about that for awhile! (Just kidding...)

USING THE SENSORY AWARENESS EXERCISE IN YOUR SECRET SPOT

When you are on the way to your Secret Spot, the first thing you should do is go into your Sense Meditation. Remember the house cat we introduced to you earlier? When the cat stepped out of the house and into the night, it stopped a moment on the porch to allow its eyes to adjust to the different light level, it checked the air for scents, and the breeze for sounds. Become that cat each time you leave your house. Immediately upon stepping out the door, stand still for a moment and tune in to your five senses. Start by taking a deep breath, hold it for a second or two, then exhale and relax. Look through your owl eyes, listen with your deer ears, feel the world around you with raccoon body, and smell and taste the air like the dog: use all of your senses fully—only then begin your walk.

Notice that if you are moving when doing this meditation, your focal point will constantly be changing. Try using a point above the horizon or just forget about having a central focal point and expand your visual awareness to the perimeter of your visual screen. Practice the Sense Meditation when you are walking to your Secret Spot, stopping occasionally to enhance it.

Once you've arrived at your Secret Spot, use it there as well. You'll tend to drift out of awareness, so the last thing you should do before you leave your Secret Spot is your Sense Meditation. When you return home, the last thing you should do before you step into your house is your Sense Meditation.

Make sure you use your Sense Meditation whenever you go to your Secret Spot but don't limit it to only that time. Use this tool in as many places as possible and as often as possible. *Whenever you think of it, do it.*



Even when you are in the house, let the subtle sounds outside catch your ear and your awareness. If it is a bird you have never heard before, step outside and look for it. If it is those crows again, then go see what they are doing; maybe it is just their typical mysterious crow mischief. But then, maybe this time they are calling about a red-tailed hawk soaring overhead! Pay attention. That is what this course is about!

Take a Moment to Prepare for The Sensory Awareness Exercise

Before beginning the Sensory Awareness Exercise, find a pleasant location and a comfortable position; then relax. In the beginning, you should start off in a sitting position, but this particular exercise can be done while lying down, sitting, walking, running, driving, or just about anytime. Your goal is to develop the ability to enter this clear awareness at any time by *focusing your will* on this intent.

I am going to guide you through a Sense Meditation in this written assignment. However, you will become familiar with it and easily remember it on your own. It is as simple as learning to tune in your five senses, one at a time.

THE “SENSE MEDITATION” OR “SENSORY AWARENESS EXERCISE ”

Sense of Sight

We will work through our senses in the order of their dominance. For most people, sight is their strongest sense. We use our eyes all the time, so let's begin with sight.

Owl-Eyes Form: Owls have developed eyes so big and so powerful that they have actually outgrown their eye sockets and are “frozen” in place. They have incredible eyesight, and are able to locate prey even on the darkest of nights.

Imagine that you are an owl. Look straight ahead and imagine that your eyeballs are so large that they are stuck in your eye sockets and cannot move. To look at, or focus your eyes on something, you have to move your entire head.

Now look straight ahead toward wherever your body is facing. Pick a spot directly across from you that you can train your eyes on without moving. Hold that spot in the center of your vision as your focal point. If your eyes wander off, bring them back to your focal point again. Always return to that one spot.

While staring at that spot and without moving your eyeballs,



notice that you can also see part of the ground or floor between you and that spot. And without moving your eyeballs you can see part of the sky or ceiling between you and that spot. You can see the ground, the sky, and that spot all at the same time using your peripheral vision.

Build on this peripheral vision now by adding to your awareness the farthest thing you can see to the left and the farthest thing you can see to the right, all without moving your eyeballs. You can see these five things at once: your focal point, the ground, the sky, the extreme left, and the extreme right.

Sense of Hearing

Now, while maintaining your focal point and expanded vision, notice the sounds around you.

Deer-Listening Form: Imagine that you are a deer, with a set of incredible auditory receptors that swivel and turn to catch the slightest sound. Pay attention to how your ears feel. Twitch them, or “prick up your ears,” and pretend that you are a deer, able to hear the subtlest of noises for a great distance, warned long before any possible danger approaches you.

Listen to the sounds all around you. Perhaps you can hear the wind as it moves through the branches of a tree. If you are indoors, maybe you can hear the humming of the refrigerator, or the hum of an electric light. Notice that even where there is no sound, you can still hear the sound of silence. Sometimes you can hear a low-pitched vibration as background noise. There is sound coming from 360 degrees around you at all times. In your mind, sweep the area all around you, using your ears like radar. Tune in to the sounds in all four directions as well as those coming from above and below you.

With Owl Eyes and Deer Ears: Now, once again, return your awareness to your vision. See that spot? Make sure your whole peripheral vision is turned on. At the same time, listen to the sounds all around you. Now your eyes and your ears are fully engaged.

Sense of Touch

While you are aware of the ground, the sky, the spot in front of you, the birds singing overhead, and the sound of the wind in the trees, you are at the same time sitting on the ground, or in a chair and your hands may be resting on your knees.

Raccoon-Touch Form: Raccoons earn their livings by their sense of touch. Have you ever watched a raccoon as it investigates



the rocks at the edge of a pond? Its little hands touch and turn, check and reach under and around each rock, hoping for a tasty morsel. All the while, raccoons seem to be staring off into space, not really looking at what their hands are doing. Raccoons see with their hands; they are the masters of touch.

Become the raccoon's hands, and feel the sensations around you with your whole body. How does it feel where you are sitting? Is the ground cold, or is there a rock poking you in the back? Is there any place in your body that is crying for attention? What does it feel like inside your shoes or on the ground beneath your feet? Can you feel moisture? Is the sun shining on your face? Can you feel its heat? Is the wind blowing your hair? Tune in to these things.

The largest organ of the human body is the skin. Skin is also the primary receptor for the sense of touch. Notice all of the sensations you are receiving from your sense of touch—from gravity to sunlight.

Owl Eyes, Deer Ears and Raccoon Hands: Now, go back to your focal point and peripheral vision. Return your awareness to the sounds all around you, and remain aware of the feelings that your body is picking up from the environment.

Senses of Smell and Taste

You will now add another level of awareness, the sense of smell.

Dog-Nose Form: Sniff the air the way a dog does—short inhalations to see if you can pick up an intriguing scent, a hint of dinner. The dog's nose is particularly sensitive, perfect for sniffing out the fresh track of another dog, a cat, a squirrel...or your steak dinner! Become the dog and sniff the air, flaring your nostrils to detect subtle smells.

Can you smell anything? Your nose has been picking up messages the whole time you've been sitting there. Now tune in to what it is telling you. If you are sitting under an evergreen, can you smell the fragrance of the needles or the pitch on the bark? Is that a hint of smoke? Can you smell the car that just drove by? Can you smell the fragrance of the rich moist earth, or the wonderful dryness of the sandy desert?

Smell and taste are closely related. As you use your nose and your sense of smell, notice also the tastes you can sense in your mouth and on your tongue. Is that a hint of your morning coffee there behind your molars? Can you taste the pine tree off to your right?



Owl Eyes, Deer Ears, Raccoon Hands and Dog Nose: Again, return to your focal point and peripheral vision. Be aware of the sounds all around you and the feelings that your body is picking up from the environment. Notice the smells and tastes that you are sensing.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

by Matt Wild

Practice focusing your awareness through each sense, slowly adding on until you are practicing all five senses at the same time. Return to this Sense Meditation description frequently to make sure that you are not leaving anything out.

So there you have Field Exercise Two. What I'd like to do now is introduce what we call Field Inventories. They're easy things to do and will serve as a major part of your studies. From here on out, you'll be asked to fill out one Field Inventory every week for the duration of your time as an Independent Studies student. Field Inventories are a series of questions that will help you make clear observations of your Secret Spot and emotions and give you the time necessary to reflect on what you're doing and how you're progressing. They're a lot of fun.

I'll tell you a story about Jon Young. One day he and I were sitting in the Pine Barrens that you have all heard so much about. It was just after sunrise sometime in early May. Tree branches were heavy with buds, leaves and bird excitement. Bird song literally filled the air space and in every single moment there were at least two or three bird songs to be heard—sometimes there were as many as half a dozen singing at once. It was absolutely beautiful. I started asking Jon what some of them were. After a short time he closed his eyes and was naming *every single* bird as it sang and point to the direction of its song. Amazing! I took that as a challenge and decided to one-up him.

"Oh yeah," I smirked, "Where's the moon right now?"

He pointed directly at it without opening his eyes. I'd have to push a little harder. "Which way is the wind coming from?" He pointed directly upwind before I was even done with my question and said softly, "About half a knot, but it just switched recently. It was out of the east until just a couple of minutes ago." I continued to throw question after question at him until I could think of no more. I asked things pertaining to all of his senses. He got every one right and never hesitated to answer quickly.

Needless to say, I was awestruck. With no other questions left to ask him, I said, "Please teach me how to do that." This is what



he explained: It's simply a matter of practice. Start by picking a couple of senses to focus on for now. "It's real easy," he said, "you just have to take it one step at a time." He told me to spend the next two weeks focusing on my sense of hearing. He told me to just keep pushing that sense. "It's like a muscle in your arm or leg. The more you work it, the stronger it gets."

For the next two weeks, when I would come back from my Secret Spot he would ask me all sorts of questions about what I had heard. How far away was it? Which direction did it come from? How many total sounds did you hear? How many could you identify? One day I came back and he said, "What did it smell like at your Secret Spot today?"

"I don't know, Jon, you told me to focus on hearing." He laughed, but when he asked the same question the next day you can bet that I knew. Slowly and patiently, he would introduce a new sense when he was satisfied with my accomplishments, always stressing not to ignore the others I had been practicing. He told me to use Owl Eyes and Deer Ears as a root, or foundation to build from. "Never get so distracted with practicing another sense that you forget about Owl Eyes and Deer Ears."

Within a couple of months he was asking me about wind direction, humidity levels, bird activity, tracks, the scent of the plants, coming weather, etc. Then he'd always say suddenly, "Close your eyes!" and ask me something about the room I was in. He continued to build on it, over and over again. Believe it or not, I never really felt like I was learning what I had asked him to teach me. One night inside a house in West Virginia, many people were gathered talking over the radio. I noticed Jon's body language change a bit—something I had learned to look for. He was still listening to the person who was talking to him, but I could tell he had heard something outside. Nobody else noticed. I sent my hearing out the partially opened window and heard what had gotten his attention. Coyotes, a pretty big pack, howling and yipping from across the valley and up on the other hill.

In my excitement I asked everybody to listen, "Shhh...can you hear that? Coyotes." Jon smiled. Everyone else crowded by the windows and opened them up all the way. We all heard that beautiful sound of coyotes gathering in the night. It sounded like they were singing and dancing. Someone whispered, "Where are they? I've never heard coyotes here before?" I jumped in, proud and eager to show off, "They're about half way up that hill over there."

When they had stopped howling and conversation resumed someone came up to me and asked how the heck did I ever hear that? Could I teach them to use their ears that way? It was the first time I realized what Jon was teaching me. Jon, hearing my con-



versation with this young man from across the room, smiled knowingly. On his way out the door he whispered, “You missed them the first two times. There was another pack down river. They were calling back and forth for 15 minutes before you noticed. But good job...good job.”

So that’s the way it works. Just like all of these skills, it’s something no one will ever master, but it sure is fun to practice. The Field Inventories have been written by Jon to get you thinking about pushing these senses and making good observations. The first four—one month’s worth—will be simple. Please fill them out every week. You don’t have to write much, just keep thinking about it. Slowly, as the program goes on, we’ll build upon them and begin asking more and more questions.

The next pages of this book are four blank Field Inventory sheets for you to complete. There’s also a little surprise in there for you, but *do not* skip to it. It’s there for a reason. Read it only when you get to it. Please do one Inventory a week. For this first month, they are all the same. Next month, we’ll add some more. The questions on these Inventories are just guidelines. Go ahead and write from your heart, but also stay on task. Fill out the Inventories when it’s time, but don’t go past the last one. What follows is Field Exercise Three, after you send in Field Pack 2.2. *Remember* not to send the originals and to write your name, student number and the date on the top of every page you send in.



FIELD INVENTORY

Please write your observations on the following subjects

Owl Eyes. What are you noticing? How does it feel?

Deer Ears. What do you think? Can you hear things further away than you thought?

Can you combine Owl Eyes and Deer Ears?

How about Raccoon-Touch form?

How is Dog-Nose going for you?

Can you put them all together?



Date:

Time:

Name:

Student #:

FIELD INVENTORY

Please write your observations on the following subjects

Owl Eyes. What are you noticing? How does it feel?

Deer Ears. What do you think? Can you hear things further away than you thought?

Can you combine Owl Eyes and Deer Ears?

How about Raccoon-Touch form?

How is Dog-Nose going for you?

Can you put them all together?



Date:

Time:

Name:

Student #:

So, you're two weeks into this. How's it going? I know that sometimes it can be a bit of a challenge to be pushing yourself so hard. With that in mind, I thought you'd like to hear a story from our friend Dan Gardoqui.

THE POWER OF THE BUFFALO: INSPIRATION AND STRENGTH FROM WITHIN

by Dan Gardoqui

Surrender. You may have heard Tom Brown use the term to indicate the conscious decision to let go...to give in to one's spirit. Without surrendering, we let others live our lives. We surrender to their expectations, their desires for us. Unless we can take the time to stop, tune in, and surrender to our very soul, we cannot know who we truly are.

Maybe you've heard these phrases before: "I'm too tired to get up with the sun today and go to my secret spot. I'll do it this weekend," "I can't do thirty more strokes on this bow drill, my arms are like jelly," or "Heck, I already know ten trees near my house, it's alright if I don't figure out that row of strange trees with the fan-shaped leaves over by the firehouse." Sound familiar? I want to make you aware of the fact that in choosing to forego your naturalist training path, you are choosing another path. Most likely, it is the path of comfort, the path of ease and self-satisfaction. Tom Brown would say that we are "Surrendering to the false gods of the flesh." We all do it. I'd know. So, you ask "What does it take to push us out of that comfort zone (a.k.a. the daily grind) and to give us our second wind in our quest as human beings striving to reconnect with our blueprint?" Good question. Let me share with you a story....

Have you ever had your eyes swollen shut from mosquito bites? If so, there's a chance you can imagine what the West Branch of the Penobscot River was like as we put in our canoes on an early August evening some years back. Our wilderness canoeing expedition was off to a psychologically challenging start. It was my, and many others, first time in a genuine North Woods mosquito storm. Needless to say, we were pleasantly surprised by a light rain that sent the skeeters packing as we set up camp. Unfortunately, the rain continued for two days straight. Amidst the ever-present moisture, we were able to cheer ourselves up a few times; there was the canoeing cornmeal mush fight, the cow moose who I could have touched with my paddle, up to her chest in sphagnum and murky water, and a couple of small, but exciting, sets of rapids. Nonetheless, the rain continued.



I was squatted in the bow of our craft, with Jon at the stern and Tater, our trusty Lab, midship. It was the third evening of the voyage, we were forced to make a tactical decision: Do we attempt to cross Lake Chesuncook with the current winds and rain before sundown or do we make camp on the riverbanks and try to make up the time later? We chose to go for it. At first, the east wind was steady, but bearable, as we tracked northeast across the lake. Chesuncook is approximately a mile and a half wide where the West Branch dumps in. The wind shifted to northeast and increased in velocity. We were side by side with Dr. Dave and Fish paddling to our left. The wind grew fierce. Whitecaps began finding their way over my bow. I got on my knees and dug in to each swell. Fish, the bowman to my left, gave me a look that I knew meant trouble. The race was on.

Fish was a much larger, more muscular specimen than either Jon or myself, and Dr. Dave, albeit a few decades older than I, had a reputation such that seeing him stroking blindly while screaming into the headwind was extremely intimidating. Tater pushed aside gear and nestled into a tarp. Fish and Dave had pulled ahead. Jon yelled to me over the howling gale, "You gonna let those old men beat us?" "Hell no!" I replied, and began paddling with ferocity. We were gaining on them. Neck-and-neck we tracked across the turbulent lake for about ten minutes, switching sides every thirty strokes or so. We were halfway across the lake and could almost make out the point we were shooting for. Looking back, we could see only faint blurs that somewhat resembled canoeists. We were hauling ass! Just as I was about to call it a draw, the point became visible, only a half mile away. Fish and Dave spotted it before us and were going for broke. We followed their lead. I was exhausted.

Jon sensed my pain, fatigue, and weariness. Switching sides didn't give us the boost it previously did. Jon cried out from the stern, "Think of the buffalo, plowing through chest-high snowdrifts, charging into the blizzard." The apparition of a white buffalo on the plains in a heinous snowstorm came into my mind's eye. I pushed myself harder. "The Buffalo!" I shouted out. Fish and Dave shot a quick, puzzled look at us, then returned to their labored strokes. We were pulling ahead. I closed my eyes, ignored the blisters on my knees, the tearing pain in my back and the spray of the whitecaps that stung my face like tiny bits of gravel and sand.

I reached further inside, losing my consciousness of the physical self and could see myself fiercely drawing on the crests of waves, soaked to the core. Before I knew it, we were fifty yards from shore. I heard Jon's high-pitched laugh and heard him holler



“Look at them! They’re barely visible!” It was true. Somehow, in that last 800 yards, we absolutely wasted them. Forget the other five canoes. They were nowhere to be seen. The inspiration of the strong buffalo, charging, teeth to the wind, on the frigid plains, triggered a response deep within ourselves. We were the buffalo. Fish and Dave arrived as we were toweling off from a celebratory swim. They were both dejected and amazed. Fish whined to us from his bow, “How the hell did you guys do that?”

Ingwe, Wilderness Awareness School’s grandfather, has said that “The greatest thing on earth is to believe. Things happen beyond us. We must believe in the spirit.” I started this story talking about surrendering and the inability to motivate oneself. There are many reasons in many different situations for why we get bogged down in “the lazies.” However, one consistent theme that Ingwe has noticed when mentoring students through Wilderness Awareness School is that those students who are not challenged in the wilderness, who are not given rites of passage, are not able to go the last lap. To be a warrior for this earth, your family, and yourself, “It takes tears and it takes courage” Ingwe says. We must never get too comfortable with our modern lives such that we lose awareness or that we stop learning. Ingwe is fond of an analogy about antelope and leopards: “Once an antelope no longer learns, then it takes things for granted. And when it no longer learns, then it is dead, boy.” To keep ourselves and our students alive we must learn to both surrender to our spirit and to accept the challenge of getting out of our daily ruts and habits.



FIELD INVENTORY

Please write your observations on the following subjects

Owl Eyes. What are you noticing? How does it feel?

Deer Ears. What do you think? Can you hear things further away than you thought?

Can you combine Owl Eyes and Deer Ears?

How about Raccoon-Touch form?

How is Dog-Nose going for you?

Can you put them all together?



Date:

Time:

Name:

Student #:

FIELD INVENTORY

Please write your observations on the following subjects

Owl Eyes. What are you noticing? How does it feel?

Deer Ears. What do you think? Can you hear things further away than you thought?

Can you combine Owl Eyes and Deer Ears?

How about Raccoon-Touch form?

How is Dog-Nose going for you?

Can you put them all together?



Date:

Time:

Name:

Student #:

FIELD EXERCISE TWO REFLECTION

(Please respond to the Field Exercise, not the entire Field Pack)



Name: _____ Student #: _____

Date: _____

FIELD EXERCISE TWO REFLECTION



Name: _____ Student #: _____

Date: _____

FIELD EXERCISE TWO REFLECTION



Name: _____ Student #: _____

Date: _____

FIELD EXERCISE TWO REFLECTION



Name: _____ Student #: _____

Date: _____



This form is for students registered with Kamana Services

Certification Option students use this form to organize your work as well.

Field Pack 2.2

1. Nature Awareness Trail:

- Field Exercise Two Reflection
- 4 Field Inventories

2. Resource Trail:

- 2 journal entries for each chapter (Chapters 2-7)

I am on time with this assignment (see Registration Form).

I have exceeded the amount of time Student Services is available to me and have included \$25 for review of my work for this Field Pack.

Method of payment: Check M.O. Visa Mastercard Amex

Name as it appears on the card: _____

Account number: _____

Expiration date: _____ Today's date: _____

Signature _____

SAMPLE

Please send COPIES, not originals...



Name: _____
Student Number: K _____
Date: _____

Field Pack 2.2

1. Did you include:

Copies (**not originals**) of:

- your Resource Trail work
- your Nature Awareness Trail work (include all pages)

2. Tear off this sheet, fold in half, and insert your work in an envelope.

3. Mail to Kamana Student Services. **Please write your Student Number and "Field Pack 2.2" on the envelope.**

Office use

Instructor: _____

Arrived: _____

Reviewed: _____

Returned with response: _____

