

# Reconnecting with Earth

A SEVEN-SESSION DISCUSSION CIRCLE FOR THE HOME, FAITH CENTER OR WORKPLACE

## Purpose

∞ To clarify earth-related values through discussions about deep ecology and related topics.

∞ To discover how personal values affect the way we view and treat the earth.

∞ To explore what it means to take personal responsibility for the earth.

*“I really enjoyed the discussion style of the course. It was wonderful to hear everyone’s different viewpoints and opinions...The diversity caused me to think a great deal about my own ideas and beliefs and in many cases was inspiring.”*

- circle participant



## Session Descriptions

**1. Wild Nature:** An experience of awe and wonder in nature can lead to a deeper sense of connection to the Earth. How do these experiences shape our relationship to the Earth?

**2. Shifting Paradigms:** Human beings are one of many species, everything is interconnected, and sustainability should replace economic growth as our long-term goal. How do these underlying assumptions differ from current assumptions of our society?

**3. Nature and Spirit:** Religion and spirituality can play a significant role in shaping ecological values and ethics. What insight and inspiration for taking responsibility for Earth do they offer?

**4. The Universe Story:** Scientific discoveries in physics, biology and cosmology are challenging our assumptions about how the world works. How might these insights change our relationship to the Earth?

**5. Ecopsychology:** Modern life tends to cut us off from our bond to the natural world. Could restoration of that bond help to heal both individuals and the planet?

**6. Bringing it Down to Earth:** Modern, postindustrial society reflects an outdated worldview. How can we build a society that reflects a new understanding of our place on Earth? How can we as individuals, live a more Earth-centered lifestyle?

**7. Call to Action—Wrap-Up**

For information on how to join or start a Reconnecting with Earth discussion circle in MD or DC, please visit [www.simplicity-matters.org/info](http://www.simplicity-matters.org/info)



## Simplicity Matters Earth Institute

Simple living for a sustainable future

[www.simplicity-matters.org](http://www.simplicity-matters.org) | [contact@simplicity-matters.org](mailto:contact@simplicity-matters.org) | 301-432-8721

# Reconnecting with Earth

## Readings and Excerpts

**1. Wild Nature.** “The Real World Around Us” by Rachel Carson ♦ “The Tuolumne Camp” by John Muir ♦ “The Judgement of the Birds” by Loren Eiseley ♦ “Seeing” by Annie Dillard ♦ “The Phosphorescent Soul” by Terry Tempest Williams ♦ “The Moral Equivalent of Wildness” by Kathleen Dean Moore.

**2. Shifting Paradigms.** “Thinking Like a Mountain” by Aldo Leopold ♦ From *The Web of Life* by Fritjof Capra ♦ “The Eight Principles of Deep Ecology” by Naess and Sessions ♦ “Deep Ecology and Lifestyle” by Arne Naess ♦ “The Gaia Hypothesis” by *Mother Earth* editors ♦ From *Seeing the Whole at the Center* by F. Marina Schaufler

**3. Nature and Spirit.** “The Greening of the World’s Religions” by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim ♦ “The Gospel of J. Matthew” by David Roberts ♦ “First Do No Harm” by Stephanie Kaza ♦ “Sharing One Skin” by Jeanette Armstrong

**4. The Universe Story.** “Cosmology: The Largest Context” by Michael Dowd ♦ “Comprehensive Compassion: An Interview with Brian Swimme” by Susan Bridle ♦ “The Universe Is Our University” by Thomas Berry ♦ “Living the New Story: An Interview with Sister Miriam MacGillis” by Alan AtKisson

**5. Ecopsychology.** “Ecopsychology” by John Seed ♦ “When the Earth Hurts, Who Responds?” by Sarah A. Conn ♦ “Restoring Nature, Restoring Yourself” by Francesca Lyman ♦ “Interview with Bill Plotkin” (unknown) ♦ “Imagination: Creating a New Reality” by Laura Sewall

**6. Bringing it Down To Earth.** “The Learning Curve” by David Orr ♦ “The Genius of Nature” by Jeanine Benyus ♦ “Developing Bonds to Place” by Starhawk ♦ “The Pleasures of Eating” by Wendell Berry ♦ “The Night of the Razor-Clam Tide” by Kathleen Dean Moore

**7. Wrap-Up.** Evaluation and Next Steps

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