



I sit before flowers hoping they will train me
in the art of opening up.
-Shane Koyczan

LI Forest Walks

Spring Edition 2018

SPRING FORTH -AWAKENING & NEW GROWTH – WHAT'S POSSIBLE AFTER A LONG WINTER?

WHERE ARE WE WALKING?

A Walk for All Seasons

Imagine that your relationship with each season is informed by the forest's relationship with each passing season. What's possible for you there?

Spring signals an awakening and new growth. The increase in sunlight increases bird song so the forests and preserves are alive with sound. The increase in sunlight activates us, too. We are still connected to the sun as a symbol of strength, warmth and regeneration. A Spring Forest Walk includes invitations that create rebirth as an exploration of what's possible after a long, cold winter in our lives. Spring can also evoke a sense of grief and loss. Spring creates opportunity to let go of things we've been holding onto or be mindful about how we hold onto them. Spring walks take place in April and May.

Summer is all about longer days, warmer temperatures and full blooms. A Summer Forest Walk includes invitations that create a full expression of what it means to live life fully engaged and expressed; how we bloom when we create optimal conditions in our own lives. Water invitations make a Summer Forest Walk a very special experience. A Summer Forest Walk takes place in July and August.

Autumn is always about Fall colors and leaves. We notice days getting shorter; what have we realized over the summer and what is still ours to create? Invitations include the pushing off of leaves (because leaves don't really fall; they are pushed off by the tree), and how leaves inform our own actions. Autumn walks take place October and November.

Winter inspires people in different ways. For some, it's a love of the cold and glistening, newly-fallen snow. For others, it's a time to hibernate and rest; to reconsider and reinvent. It's a quiet time in a preserve or forest, and yet, a time when every sound can be heard. Winter can also evoke a sense of grief and loss, which is a natural part of life. A Winter Forest Walk includes invitations that speak to what's personal for each person on the walk with time to explore how Winter informs their actions. Winter walks take place in January and February.

Follow a Walk for All Season:
<http://www.liforestwalks.com/events>

NEW! Art of Nature Forest Walk

Inspired by Healing Forest, our Art of Nature walk is designed to create and appreciate the beauty of the forest. We'll only use what's fallen and let everything return to nature when we're done, taking only photos, not things.

MARCH

Wednesday, March 14, 7-8:30PM
Informational Talk at REI in Carle Place, NY

Wednesday, March 21, 2-4:30 PM Art of Nature Forest Walk at Gardiner County Park, Bay Shore, NY

APRIL

Wednesday, April 18 10 AM – 1 PM A Walk for All Seasons/SPRING at Bailey Arboretum

Saturday, April 21, A Walk for All Seasons/SPRING at Trustom Wildlife Refuge, South Kingstown, RI



LI FOREST WALKS WELCOMES NEW RELATIONSHIPS

LI Forest Walks is always inviting new relationships with:

- Universities
- County Government
- Corporate Organizations
- Arboretums
- Wildlife Preserves & Refuges
- Retreat Centers
- Other coaches & facilitators of workshops and retreats

THE VALUE OF A 'SIT SPOT'

Building a relationship with nature is something you can do every day. Finding a sit spot, a place where you can sit and silently observe the natural world around you is one of the first steps anyone can take. No effort, no skill, no cost.

My first experience with a sit spot was in my own backyard. It was easy, accessible. No driving required. The first time I did this, my first thought after getting settled: BORING. Why was I sitting in my backyard when colleagues of mine were perched near mountain streams or in deep, wild woods; eagles flying overhead, deer peering at them from behind trees.

In my backyard, there are birds and squirrels. The birds are quite comfortable with me since I feed them. Some don't even leave the peach tree as I refill the feeder. The squirrel who sees this as a free meal, peers at me from atop the fence, watching and waiting, not even moving when I get closer. Cheeky dude, that one.

My sit spot was a failure, or so I thought.

Encouraged by a mentor, I was asked to really get to know my backyard. No, *really get to know it*.

So, what did I notice? I noticed that the blackberry bushes completely wiped out the red raspberries, which were my favorite berries. Now, my neighbor complains that they are growing up under his hot tub. The thorns are very sharp and no glove seems to be impenetrable. Days and days of nursing a thorn in my finger until it finally works its way out. My relationship with these blackberry vines is reaching the point that I want to remove them. What I've learned is how tenacious they are; people suggest burning them in the fire pit; drying

them out on a driveway and running over them with a car. Seriously? I wonder why they needed to become so tenacious. What's in their story that made them such survivors?

More noticing: there is a possum in my backyard. I see its tracks in the wet earth. What do I know about possums? I know they eat ticks among many other things and are immune to Lyme disease and have a high tolerance to Rabies because of their low body temperature. What a resilient marsupial!

It makes me wonder what else walks through my backyard when I'm sleeping or busy doing something else. Who else has been here while I've slept? How busy IS my backyard??

A note to self to sit spot late at night and see if I can spot it as that possum walks the tightrope that is my fence, under the grape vines and through the butterfly bush on its nightly rounds.

I notice the spider that's taken up residence on the back of my garden gate; I videotaped him with thoughts of adding the soundtrack, "Me and My Shadow" as two spiders seem to dance in synchronicity in the morning sun. He is allowed to remain on the garden gate until he gets so big, I feel a bit intimidated approaching him. I move him gently with a long, long stick to a place in the garden where I feel more comfortable.

I soon realized that my backyard was thriving with activity, and eventually, I did get my wish of seeing something wild. I learned that there is a red-tailed hawk in my neighborhood. I learned that because it likes to dive-bomb my bird feeder; sometimes, it even has 'lunch' on my roof. Be careful what you wish for.

I learned that there is nothing boring about my backyard, once I sat silently and observed what was in motion when it wasn't me in motion. Try it. Let me know what's in motion in your back yard.

WHAT TYPE OF WALKS CAN I LOOK FORWARD TO?

Public Walks: Public walks are scheduled monthly. Check the events calendar at LI Forest Walks for more information or join our Meet Up group at <https://www.meetup.com/Shinrin-yoku-Into-the-Woods-for-your-Health-and-Wellbeing/>

Private, Coaching Walks: A private forest walk is for the coaching client who wants the deeper experience of the forest's wisdom. The 90-minute walk is tailored to the client's agenda and needs and is best incorporated with regular monthly coaching calls. This experience is for local Long Island coaching clients only.

Family Walks: Take the entire family on a forest walk! Up to 12 family members on their own forest walk with specific intentions just for you!

Corporate Walks: Your employees will thank you for this corporate event that combines a forest walk with team building, systems thinking and individual accountability for your organization's bigger picture and bottom line. It's a great stress reducer, too! Corporate walks are typically 2.5 hours in length and may be customized for added impact and value.

NOT NEAR LONG ISLAND, NY?

Well, Linda loves to travel. Just ask.

There is also a comprehensive guide map at <http://www.natureandforesttherapy.org/find-a-guide.html>

Until next time, I hope you'll head out and take a walk in the forest, talk to a tree, notice what's in the silence. The forest has your back.

Contact Linda at linda@lifestrwalks.com or 516-238-0059.