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## Hug a Tree: Reconnecting with the Earth

by Catriona MacGregor

Not only do plants support our physical well-being as conveyors of oxygen, plants can also support our energetic well-being.

Trees act as grounding rods in facilitating the movement of beneficial energy and life force from the sky, which is positively charged (yang), to the Earth, which is negatively charged (yin), and back. Within dynamic columns of light, trees maintain an area of vitalized, life-enhancing energy upon the surface of the Earth. When we sit or stand near trees, we come within range of their dynamic channel of energy. This is why so many people have mystical experiences under, in or near trees.

While trees and human beings may appear on the surface to be completely dissimilar, we share several important commonalities that make energetic and spiritual experiences possible between us. For example, human beings have hemoglobin, which moves oxygen through our bodies in the life-giving river of blood. Hemoglobin is stunningly similar to a tree's chlorophyll in structure and purpose.

Chlorophyll, an essential component of photosynthesis, helps plants obtain energy from sunlight via its molecules, which absorb light and transfer its energy. Both chlorophyll and hemoglobin bring life force energy into the living system.

The structures of hemoglobin and chlorophyll are astonishingly similar. The primary difference is that hemoglobin uses iron at the center of the porphyrin ring, while chlorophyll has magnesium at its center. The iron gives us red blood (once exposed to oxygen), and the magnesium gives plants green leaves.

Trees also possess a system that is similar to the human circulatory system. Trees drive sap through internal tubes in much the same way that blood courses through a human body.

Yet there are also dramatic differences between plants and us. For example, plants are able to create life force energy directly from light. Great yogis have also been able to receive their life force energy directly from the ether, as in the astounding case of Therese Neumann, who did not eat or drink for over a decade. This feat, well beyond most people's abilities, was but one of the "miracles" manifested by Neumann, a German Catholic mystic and stigmatic.

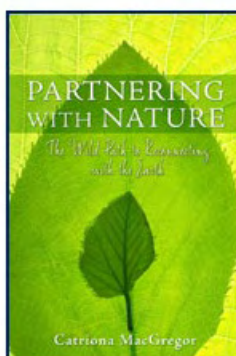
Trees also free up energy in the environment through the production of oxygen in the atmosphere, while humans use up nonrenewable energy and in turn create waste and polluting byproducts. Thus, in many ways, trees are more "advanced" than human beings. Of course, trees and all other living things on Earth lack the exquisite human nervous system, and energetic/spiritual structure of chakras. It is these systems that provide a way for spiritual enlightenment.

Since oxygen and energy are both important to our physical health and spiritual growth, trees are excellent partners in our quest for spiritual development. The Yakuts, Dolgans and Evenks of Russia, cultures that all practice shamanism, believe that trees are special on Earth because they are the one being that belongs to the three realms: below the Earth (roots), upon the Earth (trunk) and in the sky (branches). The physical reality of the tree reflects its capacity for binding these corresponding spiritual realms together.

Trees help to maintain the homeostasis of the Earth, a process further explained by a theory called "Gaia." Gaia, as defined by James Lovelock, the scientist who developed the hypothesis, is "a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans and soil — the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet."

Lovelock came to this conclusion after an extensive research project for NASA that was seeking life on Mars. He found that Earth has an optimum environment for life not found on any other planet we know about. Lovelock believes that Earth provides a beautifully balanced, homeostatic feedback system created and maintained by the living things that exist here. Of these living systems, plants are clearly one of the most important in maintaining the homeostasis of the Earth.

Catriona MacGregor, author of *Partnering with Nature: The Wild Path to Reconnecting with the Earth*, is the founder of *Awen Grove*, dedicated to bringing the wisdom and inspiration of nature into daily life. Visit [www.naturalpathfinder.com](http://www.naturalpathfinder.com). Excerpted with permission by Atria Books/Beyond Words at [www.beyondword.com](http://www.beyondword.com).



### Tree Affirmation: Nature Nourishes Me

Take your breathing practice deeper with the help of a tree, and use an affirmation to link the mind and emotions with the actions of your body. This practice is especially energizing when you first wake in the morning.

1. Go outside or stand by an open window and face a vibrant, healthy tree or plant that provides positive energy to you.
2. If you can, stand either near the tree's trunk or within the range of its canopy. Stand tall, with your spine straight, and do a few deep breaths to warm up. Then, on a deep breath inhalation, lift both arms up and over your head as high as you can. In this open position, inhale fully and affirm, either to yourself or out loud, "I am open to receiving all good." Hold.
3. Bring your arms down by your side slowly as you now exhale fully, and say or think, "I release all that does not fulfill (or serve) me." As you do this, imagine the breath releasing from the bottom of your feet into the ground.
4. Repeat this process at least seven times, but feel free to do it more if you so wish.
5. Finish by sending a blessing of good health and vitality to the tree.

Throughout the day, sitting with your back to a tree can help to ground you, and bring greater clarity and energy. Similarly, if you need energy to help you run or walk, you can reach out and hold a leaf of a tree or vibrant plant to receive a subtle energy boost. People sometimes do this subconsciously as they walk up hills on hiking paths.

— Catriona MacGregor

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