



## Why it is so good to take people, especially children and youth, to nature!

According to a study in Germany, 80 % of all young people enjoy spending time in nature. The same study states:

- for 83 % of all of them it is relaxing to be in nature.
- 62 % think nature is the best place to be at, if you would like to relax.
- 42 % think nature is the best place to be at, if you would like to think about something important.

Probably in other European countries the results would be similar.

Psychiatrist and biologist Prof. Gebhardt from Hamburg presented on a seminar some years ago:

### Why being in nature is so good for us humans.

Prof. Gebhardt explained:

#### **We humans live in a constant dilemma.**

On the one hand:

We always want to experience something new.

We are looking for variety in life.

On the other hand:

We wish to have routine and consistency.



#### **That means, we do want two things at the same time, but they don't go together.**

But that's exactly what we can find in nature, Gebhardt explained. Imagine you have a favorite tree, not far from your home. Maybe like the one on the picture. Every now and then you sit down under this old tree. You may have done this already 30 years ago.

It is always the same tree. The tree has hardly changed during the last 30 years. But every time you sit under the same tree, you experience something different. Sometimes a bird sings sitting in the tree, sometimes insects buzz around you or leaves rustle in the wind. According to Prof. Gebhardt, this is the secret why we can relax so well in nature. **Our favorite tree combines both of our desires, variety and continuity.** As the study quoted above shows, even children know that spending time in nature is good for us.



The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche knew another reason why we do like to spend time in nature.

Ones he said: **“We like to be in nature so much - because nature does not have any opinion about us.”**

And it is true, if you take a walk through the forest, no tree will check how you are dressed and if you are in a good mood or not, behaving well. They just do not care and you can feel free and relax.

Some great thinker even where sure that spending time in nature makes better people out of us:

The philosopher **Emanuel Kant**, born 1724 for example wrote: *“By absorption into nature the development of the moral of human beings can be raised.”*

Because the beauty and the mystic of nature makes the ones who really pay attention to it more humble. And this humbleness makes people in general, Kant was sure, more sensitive, thankful and respectful.

The Dakota – Native American **Luther Standing Bear** (1868 – 1939) said: *“The old Dakota knew, that the heart of a person, who lost the connection to nature, will become harsh. They knew, that the missing respect for everything that is alive and everything that grows, will also lose respect to people. That why the influence of nature, who made young people tactful, is part of our education.”*

**Many good reasons why we should spend more time in nature and why we should take children and young people in nature.**

**That is where Nature Education comes in. The goal is to make people interested in nature, to connect them with nature and to show them the beauty of nature.**

The aim should not be to teach the people we take out into nature as much as possible. It's not about being able to name six tree species afterwards.

The aim should be that the participants of our activities afterwards

- find trees fascinating
- have learned something about the magnificent life of these giants

If they also know the name of a tree, that's good too, of course.

But studies have shown:

***It is not the knowledge about nature that makes us behave more environmentally friendly, it is the emotional connection that matters.***

***Creating this emotional connection to nature is the goal of nature education.***

We invite you to have a look at our educational material, that might help you to organize nice activities in nature. Or get in touch with us.

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