COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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Chapter Author: J. Miles
*Title of Book: Wilderness as a healing place
Book Author: K. Warren, M. Sakofs and J. Hunt
Number of Pages: 45-55
Publisher: Association of Experiential Education
Additional Information: Call number: 371.38/10 DE student
Requester Name: Nicholls, Valerie
Telephone: 03 62280601
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The article was originally published in the 1987 Journal of Environmental Education, 10(3), 4-10.

Nearly a century has passed since Muir wrote these words, and in that time many people have followed his advice. In fact, during the latter half of the twentieth century people have sought the wilderness so many people have followed his advice. But what during the latter half of the twentieth century people have sought the wilderness so many people have followed his advice. In fact, during the latter half of the twentieth century people have sought the wilderness so many people have followed his advice.

Go up and away for life be sweet (Tayor, 1994, p. 319)
be social to go to the snow-growers in winter to the snow-growers in summer anyway.

Go now and then for fresh life—it must of humanity must go through this town.

For John Muir, wilderness was a restorative place, a place in which

John Muir
Wilderness as Healing Place
"healing place" has truly been recognized on a scale beyond anything that Muir imagined.

**HOW DOES WILDERNESS CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTH?**

Wilderness experience, many claim, can allow us to build the structure of our being on a healthy foundation and also allow reconstruction and restoration of a cracked or crumbling foundation. Many programs today use wilderness for therapeutic goals of one sort or another. Undoubtedly, both the experiences planned and facilitated by the program leaders and the environment itself contribute to the healing effect of wilderness experience. We are concerned here with how the wilderness environment contributes to improvement of health.

First, we should define what we mean by healing in this context. It is a broad and value-laden concept. As Webster defines it, to heal is "to make sound or whole"; it is "to cause an undesirable condition to be overcome"; "to make a person spiritually whole"; or "to restore to original integrity." Healing involves an improvement of the condition of our mind/body. We need healing when we suffer pain and a reduction of our ability to live well. When we speak of healing here, we are not referring to its usual meaning as applied to our physical selves but to a process involving physical, emotional, and even spiritual dimension. Healing usually involves all of these dimensions simultaneously. The wilderness engages the whole person and thus may be an environment ideally suited to the holistic healing that John Muir experienced and advocated to his fellows.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF WILDERNESS**

There have been literary allusions to the restorative and therapeutic values of nature for centuries. This is valuable testimony, but is there any "hard" evidence that wild places contribute to healing? There is, it turns out, but not as much such evidence as we believers in the powers of wilderness experience would like. Two psychologists, Stephen Kaplan and Janet Frey Talbot, recently researched what we know about the psychological benefits of wilderness. Their review of the literature led to the less-than-startling conclusion that people find experiences in natural environments highly satisfying and that they highly value the benefits which they perceive themselves to derive from experiences there (Kaplan & Talbot, 1983, p. 166). The research literature trying to document the specifically therapeutic value of wilderness experience is generally flawed methodologically. It does indicate that programs like Outward Bound "can and do result in positive changes in the self-concepts, personalities, individual behaviors and social functioning of program participants" (Gibson, 1979, pp. 13, 2, 30).
domain and are often unable to deal with their environment effectively. People are bombarded with diverse information and driven to feel uncomfortable in the environment. The daily round of activity back home is often nothing but uncomfortable. People feel the need to control and understand the environment, and the actions taken to control the environment are often a reflection of the individual's need for a higher degree of control over the environment.

By refusing to acknowledge the illusion of control over the environment, people can relax and pay more attention to their surroundings and to their inner selves. The illusion of control is a way in which people can cope with their surroundings and to some extent in natural settings where they escape their inner selves. The illusion of control is impossible because it is both unnecessary and counterproductive. The illusion of control is a defense mechanism that people use to cope with the environment. The illusion of control is also a coping mechanism that people use to deal with the environment. The illusion of control is a way in which people can deal with the environment and to some extent in natural settings where they escape their inner selves.

In the wilderness environment (p. 193), the wilderness experience is a second-best experience. People experience the wilderness environment by being present and-expecting it is also quite a way to add to the way one feels like being a part of the wilderness experience. People experience the wilderness environment by being present and-expecting it is also quite a way to add to the way one feels like being a part of the wilderness experience. People experience the wilderness environment by being present and-expecting it is also quite a way to add to the way one feels like being a part of the wilderness experience. People experience the wilderness environment by being present and-expecting it is also quite a way to add to the way one feels like being a part of the wilderness experience.
well as what they desire. They may experience frustration and tension and be entirely incapable of reflection on their situation.

Wilderness is very different. Kaplan and Talbot note:

In wilderness what is interesting to perceive tends to be what one needs to know in order to act. For many people the purposes one carries into the wilderness also fit closely with the demands that the wilderness makes: What one intends to do is also what one must do in order to survive. (p. 191)

All of this compatibility can be liberating. It can allow reflection that can lead to discovery of a different self, a self less conflicted, more integrated, and more desirable. It can lead to a new intensity of contact with nature. “They feel a sense of union with something that is lasting, that is of enormous importance, and that is larger than they are” (p. 195). Thus they tap a spiritual dimension of the human experience that generations of writers have extolled.

At the end of their decade-long research, Kaplan and Talbot had to admit that there was much to learn about the benefits of wilderness experience, but they believed they had documented and described a set of significant psychological benefits. They raised more questions than they answered, but their work should be encouraging to those who, on the basis of personal experience, literary testimony, and intuition, have been taking people into the wilderness to heal and to grow. Kaplan and Talbot conclude with the observation that “we had not expected the wilderness experience to be quite so powerful or pervasive in its impact. And we were impressed by the durability of that residue in the human makeup that still resonates so strongly to these remote, uncivilized places” (p. 201). Their work suggests that wilderness experience can contribute to the healing of people overburdened by demands of the home environment, that it calms them and improves their ability to cope with the stresses of their normal round of activity.

**Wilderness Enhances Self-Worth**

Some sociologists suggest other ways in which wilderness experience contributes to healing. They describe two conditions from which many people suffer: anomie and alienation. A person with anomie is faced with myriad possibilities in life; he/she is bombarded by stimuli and moves rapidly through a set of unrelated experiences in a condition of separation from other people. Richard Mitchell notes that such a person is “... unsupported by significant others, free to choose from meaningless alternatives, without direction or purpose, bound by no constraint, guided by no path, comforted by no faith” (1983, p. 178).

In such a condition, this person fears the outcomes of his/her actions and is plagued by an uncertainty that renders routine and normal tasks very difficult. Such a person may feel desperately in need of stability, security, and certainty.

Alienation, a condition of estranged and disaffected people, may become conscious because of existential threat. People may believe that effective action is no longer possible and that they are of no value.

We caution that the model described by Kaplan and Talbot is a circular one. It is not a linear model. Life is not a linear model. We do not believe that Kaplan and Talbot had the model in mind. Their work suggests that wilderness experience can contribute to a more meaningful life. It is not a self-reinforcing process. It is not self-capable, fit, and resourceful. People who have overcome their alienation may not completely overcome their difficulties, but they have given them to their personal perspective.

Competence and importance are possible only in non-wilderness experiences. The wilderness is not a place to live, but it is a place to live in. People who have had their experience of wilderness and are now living in places where they feel comfortable, resourceful, and important, are likely to have a more meaningful life.

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Central to the concept of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

**Flow refers to the state of consciousness which seems to appear unified**
matically. However, the moment to the next in which we are in control of
which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part. We experience it as a

It is the same in which we act upon action according to an inner logic.

How refers to the holistically sensing present when we act with total involvement.

Which is Chissembridge has decreed this "how." Centrally to the knowing property of mountain experience, there's "how." In which many such activities occur contributable to the knowing outcome as well.

We may say in his philosophy's notion the world's environment and existence has a physical sense of our "how." or freedom and self-awareness that discover these emotional thanks and gain new feelings.

In their mountainic experiences, they are involved. In the event that people to seek this

Which argue that certain activities provide ways for people to seek this

(1983, p. 180)

of difficulty. In sum, the complex individual's perception in measuring a complex structure's relationship and resourceful, fast application in measuring a complex structure's relationship and resourceful.

Getting the subjective, measurable, convergent measures from a person's image, that back;

Meaningfully, and importantly, these convergent measures assess bounded and apply them

Which tells people are needed to seek comprehension, a sense of personal worth.

Which tells people are needed to seek comprehension, a sense of personal worth. (A sense of bounded, and in existence there is too little involvement.) In a social sense, notes are

They need to reduce the vulnerability of struggle when too much is present. We are not only aware of other's abilities and appreciation need to reduce their effect. What is important is that people subtracted and appreciation need to reduce their effect. Otherwise, they become depressed, withdrawn, and uninvolved. The alienated person comes to

The effect of this condition on someone is to feel powerless and indifferent.

(1983, p. 179)

in a given situation regarding of their own resources. They are flexible, when they know what they will do on total resources, and fantastically are skilled. Where they know what they will do.

In the event that people are involved, they may become selective. Their sense of social, emotional and spatial resources are involved. They are involved, and they become selective. Their sense of social, emotional and spatial resources.

One problem is how the composite factors on the base level of the social order in

Philosophical Foundations
actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future. (p. 58)

This sounds remarkably similar to the “fascination” that Kaplan and Talbot earlier described, a condition in which attention flows effortlessly to whatever is being done. Mitchell, though, argues that it is the act of climbing that creates the flow experience, while Kaplan and Talbot suggest that the environment is the principle factor. The latter investigators did not study the action of mountaineering, and Mitchell studiously avoids discussion of environment as a contributing factor in flow. The question of the relative importance of action and environment in helping with problems such as anomie and alienation remains an open one.

**WILDERNESS AND THE ABILITY TO LEARN**

Many programs that use wilderness as a healing place seem to assume that the environment contributes to achievement of their goals and that certain activities do so better than others. Outward Bound schools usually use both the opportunity for flow that activities in the wilderness provide and the fascination effect of the wilderness environment. The combination of these factors may partly explain the power of the Outward Bound process.

This process is being used in many places to help young people who are in trouble, particularly delinquents. These are people who are usually unwilling to take responsibility for themselves and others; they resent the situations in which they find themselves and the necessity to work. They are often limited learners, unable or unwilling to collect new knowledge and apply it to their lives. Many lack confidence in themselves and resist the idea that anyone can be of help to them (Golins, 1978, p. 26). In acting out their resentment and frustration with their lot in life, these adolescents often find themselves in trouble with the law and in the court system. As part of their therapy, an increasing number of them are being provided an opportunity to participate in a wilderness-based adventure education program.

Golins has reviewed how such programs “. . . impel a delinquent to rearrange his destructive ways” (1978, p. 27). He notes how the outdoor environment contributes to this process through its “evocative” quality. The outdoors in general and the wilderness in particular are unfamiliar and captivating for most delinquent youths. It engages the participants’ senses and increases receptivity to stimuli in their environment. Their chances for success seem to be increased because of their experiences. This may be because the needs and purposes of the moment (to be warm, to stay dry, to curtail hunger) are compatible with the demands of the environment, as Kaplan and Talbot observed. A person usually resistant to learning is made less so when the learning is necessary to solve basic problems of comfort and even survival.
In general, Colins thinks that such experiences help young people to learn to think.

From all of this, the woman may generalize about problem-solving cooperation.

The environment may be natural, but the demand for action is familiar. Those who design the curricula of wilderness-based educational programs are very cautious to present the opportunity for success. Lastly, the learner is presented with a professional, more difficult sense of challenge and cooperation. Hence, the demand for action is familiar. Those are similar to the environment in which the outdoors is used as a tool in the outdoor classroom.
conceptually and thereby deal more effectively with situations that have previously baffled and frustrated them.

**WILDERNESS AS A METAPHOR FOR LIFE**

Bacon, like Golins, has analyzed the Outward Bound process and how it works, and his thinking reveals yet another way in which wilderness contributes to healing in people who go there. Bacon’s theory is that the Outward Bound experience can serve as a metaphor for the life of the participant, as a set of experiences that can clarify real-life situations and thereby help the learner contend with them. Most of the metaphorical power of the Outward Bound process, Bacon argues, comes from the conscious programming of the leader, but he also contends that an archetypal quality of the wilderness environment contributes to this power. He takes the foundation of his idea from the psychiatrist Carl Jung who suggested that there are some ways of organizing and understanding the works that are passed down in cultures and individuals from early human experience and that transcend culture to the point of being universal. Jung argued that these original patterns are produced in all of us and are a factor in how we perceive the world.

One such pattern of archetype is Sacred Space. This is a place pervaded by a sense of power, mystery, and awesomeness. Such places are not suitable for living, lacking the resources for day-to-day comfort and survival, and the seeker cannot stay there anyway for he/she has important work to do in the everyday world. If the seeker comes to the Sacred Space with full respect and a clean spirit, he/she may be empowered in a positive way. Bacon argues that wilderness is Sacred Space. Anyone who has spent much time in the wilderness can easily recognize the parallels between it and the archetype of Sacred Space. Wilderness is difficult to get to and difficult to travel through. One passes a series of tests in order to exist within it. It is unlike the normal world in hundreds of ways. Above all, it pervades one with a kind of religiosity or mysticism—one of the most compelling things about nature is that it seems to implicitly suggest the existence of order and meaning. (1983, p. 53)

In Bacon’s view, wilderness as Sacred Space is useful to Outward Bound because implicit in this archetype is the concept of transformation and change. If Jung is correct and there is an archetype of Sacred Space within us, then when we go to such a place, especially in the context of programs like Outward Bound or Vision Quest, we accept the possibility that some kind of transformation may occur. This acceptance may not be conscious, but it is there and it makes change, growth, or healing possible.

A central principle of many psychotherapists is that a person does not change unless he/she wishes to change. Despite themselves, people cling to their problematical behaviors. Only when they become willing to change does healing become possible. It is similar to the person who actually steps off the beaten path with the leader or a physical challenge that presents itself, they accept the outcome.

There is a learning process that may or may not lead to transformation. If it is awareness that is the outcome, then the human spirit can be truly nourished.

Kaplansky sees wilderness as a metaphor of the experience described above:

The wilderness experience is, in some way, a turning point in everyday life. It marks a time in which something new, really a new way of being, really a new perspective, really a new approach, really a new way of looking at a situation, really a new way of relating to others, really a new way of relating to one’s self, is brought to the forefront.

In a manner of speaking, it is the act or returning to one’s origins. The wilderness experience of the personal transformation is that the person returns to the wholeness of who he is, and if part of that whole is good, it is not only fulfilled but moved on from the personal to the interpersonal, from the finite to the infinite, from the possible to the actual, from the impossible to the possible, from the concrete to the existential.

A final word: The wilderness demands that we hold ourselves in place with ourselves. People are actors in a rough theatrical. The purpose of life must be to meet these demands of basic need, growth, and possibility.
WILDERNESS AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

close with the world, it is a part of health. When this happens helps a person to understand and
possibilities of change to come. When this happens helps a person to understand and
with the accepted premise of sacred space. It is a change and holds on the
the wilderness experience of the "other world,"
it part of the following: to the therapeutic experience of the "other world." This makes sense to the
experience. There is of course, no assurance that the possibility will be achieved.
The wilderness traveler recognizes that daily the new or the change is gradual. In a
The wilderness traveler recognizes that daily the new or the change is gradual. In a
In a metaphorical way the wilderness experience supports the possibility of

Before: wilderness is suggested of a larger framework of what possibilities are considered
Kaplan and Talbot (without reference to June's adventure) argue that

To speak for themselves: (byron, 1989, p. 93)

The human being is involved. It is in this sense that we can argue that wilderness
is some sort of context that occurs when someone is moved beyond the capacities of
is our sense that the awareness of the context of the encounter moves beyond the capacities of
the wilderness context portrays the awareness of the context of the encounter moves beyond the capacities of
The question that certain course experience do involve the presence of one
The question that certain course experience do involve the presence of one

The outcome is certainly not a simple one. This is the potential for something new
they accept, perhaps begrudgingly or even unconsciously, the possibility of change.
if physical fitness is something new, to go into the wilderness is the opportunity for a judge

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they accept, perhaps begrudgingly or even unconsciously, the possibility of change.
if physical fitness is something new, to go into the wilderness is the opportunity for a judge

Philosophical Foundations
or snow. The ultimate wilderness adventure, like climbing a mountain or rafting a wild and rough river, can demand considerable physical stamina and skill.

So how might the physical demands of wilderness travel contribute to healing? First, and most obviously, the demands of wilderness activity, if faced over a considerable period of time (like the 3 weeks of the standard Outward Bound course), lead to physical conditioning and stamina. A fit body can do much to enhance self-image, and a positive self-image is a boost in confidence. An increase in confidence opens new possibilities of learning and growth.

Thomas Stich (1983) notes other ways that physical activity can be helpful in dealing with psychological difficulties. When a person gains control over his/her body, as must be done in wilderness travel, there may be corresponding gain in control in other areas. Perhaps there is also a metaphorical dimension. Traveling to a wilderness objective requires taking one step at a time, putting one foot in front of the other, pacing oneself. So it may be in daily life in a wide range of tasks. The way to the objective is not impatient rushing but steady effort. Alan Drenson has noted this quality of the physical act of wilderness walking. He calls the process "mindful walking" and points out that while one must be attentive to the physical act of walking, one can still look at the larger view and even achieve a meditative state. Meditation is an advanced state of psychological awareness and control, and wilderness walking certainly does not lead everyone automatically to that state. Some measure of the condition is often achieved, though, with beneficial effects.

Stich notes that physical exercise can cause self-expression and be an outlet for aggression and anxiety. All physical exercise provides these opportunities, including that involved in wilderness travel. Self-expression may come in many forms, as in the style in which one climbs a rock or the route one picks on a ski tour. Attacking the difficult pitch on a climb or the physically demanding long, heavy haul can be an outlet for aggression. Struggling with anxiety about bears or exposure or avalanches, pushing down the anxious upwelling while coping with the problem, then screaming with delight when the climb is done or the tricky avalanche slope passed—all provide an outlet for anxiety. The coping with anxiety is in part physical, moving beyond the threat to a position of safety. This is a concrete experience, one that cannot be denied. Back home a success (or failure) might be measured on some abstract scale, by someone sitting in judgment. The physical acting on a problem in the wilderness is real and undeniable. For a person who has often failed in society and thinks there can be no alternative, the physical, concrete experience of achievement in a wild place can be uplifting and restorative.

We can argue with confidence that wilderness has great potential to contribute to improvements in physical well-being. It cannot, of course, "cure" illness, but by its nature it can place demands on us that force us to call upon physical and emotional potential often unrealized. It can allow us to release pent-up energy and to feel our bodies, reminding ourselves that we have physical powers we may lose if we never use them. In short, the physical demands of wilderness places can...
The construct of wellness is complex and multifaceted, encompassing physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Wellness is a state of optimal health and well-being, achieved through the integration of multiple aspects of one's life. It involves not only the absence of disease but also the presence of positive attributes such as vitality, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

Conclusion

We have seen that wellness encompasses a wide range of factors that contribute to overall health and well-being. The pursuit of wellness is not merely a matter of individual choice but is also influenced by a variety of external factors, such as the environment, social support, and personal beliefs. By understanding the complexities of wellness, we can develop strategies to promote and maintain optimal health in our lives.
8. The physical challenges of wilderness travel can enhance physical fitness and can also allow expression of frustration and anxiety, thereby reducing stress.

John Muir knew that his wilderness days restored his body, mind, and soul. He did not know how this restoration occurred, but the effect of his wilderness travels upon him was so great that he prescribed the experience to anyone with the means to go there. Today we still do not know exactly how and why nature has curative and restorative effects upon us, but as our modern lifestyle and development remove us farther from the natural world, we are consciously seeking the succor of wild places and researching the possibility that we need contact with nature to be fully functioning humans.