

Thoughts Along the Path . . .

Connecting through Nature

Nature: It's "out there" and maybe we stop to think about it and maybe we don't. Some of us walk, hike or picnic; some help with litter cleanup; some maintain a garden or grow veggies and herbs; and some photograph it. But what does the word really mean, what is nature, and how do we relate to it?

Ask someone how they connect to nature and their answer can range from "I spend as much time as possible outdoors" to "I love looking at it" to "That's where my food comes from" or even "I'm allergic." I guess there's really no end to how we connect. Steve Fleischauer, Landscape Architect and Director of the Diploma in Turfgrass Management at the University of Guelph, defines it this way: "Nature connectedness is the extent to which individuals include nature as part of their identity."

I asked Steve for his definition because he is the featured speaker at the next installment of the Unity Café series hosted by the Baha'is of North Dumfries. We offer these evenings as a way to meet neighbours and friends, to learn together, and to explore concepts such as "nature." Earlier in this series we learned about connecting through music; relaxation and meditation; storytelling; and fasting.

Steve tells me that in his talk he will consider both rural and urban components, which is important to people like us who live in small communities surrounded by open areas. He will also look at the impact of connectivity with nature for human health— physically, emotionally, and even spiritually.

Recognizing that our lives are becoming increasingly urban, he also has ideas about creating opportunities for connection with nature via design. The gardeners among us will take special note in this. And non-gardeners may apply these ideas in home decorating and other personal or professional interests.

Why am I telling you about all of this? Because you are invited to the North Dumfries Community Complex on Friday May 17 at 7pm (or even 6:45). After the program we will have refreshments with plenty of time to relax and enjoy social time.

For more information please see <http://northdumfries-bahais.org/> or email unitycafe.ayr@gmail.com .

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Submitted to Ayr News by Jaellayna Palmer, May 2019

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