Some Notes on Contemplative Hiking

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Minimalism and voluntary simplicity. Take only what you need


No-trace camping. Pack-it-in, pack-it-out. Take only memories; leave only footprints. Leave each place better than you found it

Take your time. Travel at your own pace. Be present. Walk leisurely. Listen to your body. Enjoy the landscape

Practice trail etiquette. Yield the trail, especially when going downhill. Step aside and give way to people climbing up. In general stay on the trail (to decrease erosion), but rest on the side, ideally off the main trail

Formal meditation. Spend some time each day standing and sitting in silence

Mountain contemplation. Sit quietly in beautiful places, observing and listening

Movement awareness. Move with awareness and presence. Become rooted and sure-footed

Listen to birdsong and observe animals. Engage animals as teachers and develop a shared sense of animality. Trans-personal and trans-human relationality and care. Mutual nourishment and mutual flourishing

Contemplative reading. Take poetry, nature writing, spiritual classics, and other materials as trail companions and dialogue partners. Nourish spirit and develop insight

Reflection and journaling. Set aside some time for writing and reflecting on your experiences. Develop deeper discernment and insight about meaning and purpose. Affinities and aspiration

Trail names. Choose a name that expresses your values and interests, that provides a glimpse into your authentic commitments and character. It also might serve as an orientation point

Water. Drink fresh mountain stream and lake water. Stay hydrated and always carry enough water. Share water with those who need it

Wear good footwear. Make sure your shoes or boots are broken-in, supportive, and comfortable

Take care of your feet, in every sense