

An Introduction to the MEDICINE WALK



WILDrites
Soulmaking in Nature

www.wildrites.uk

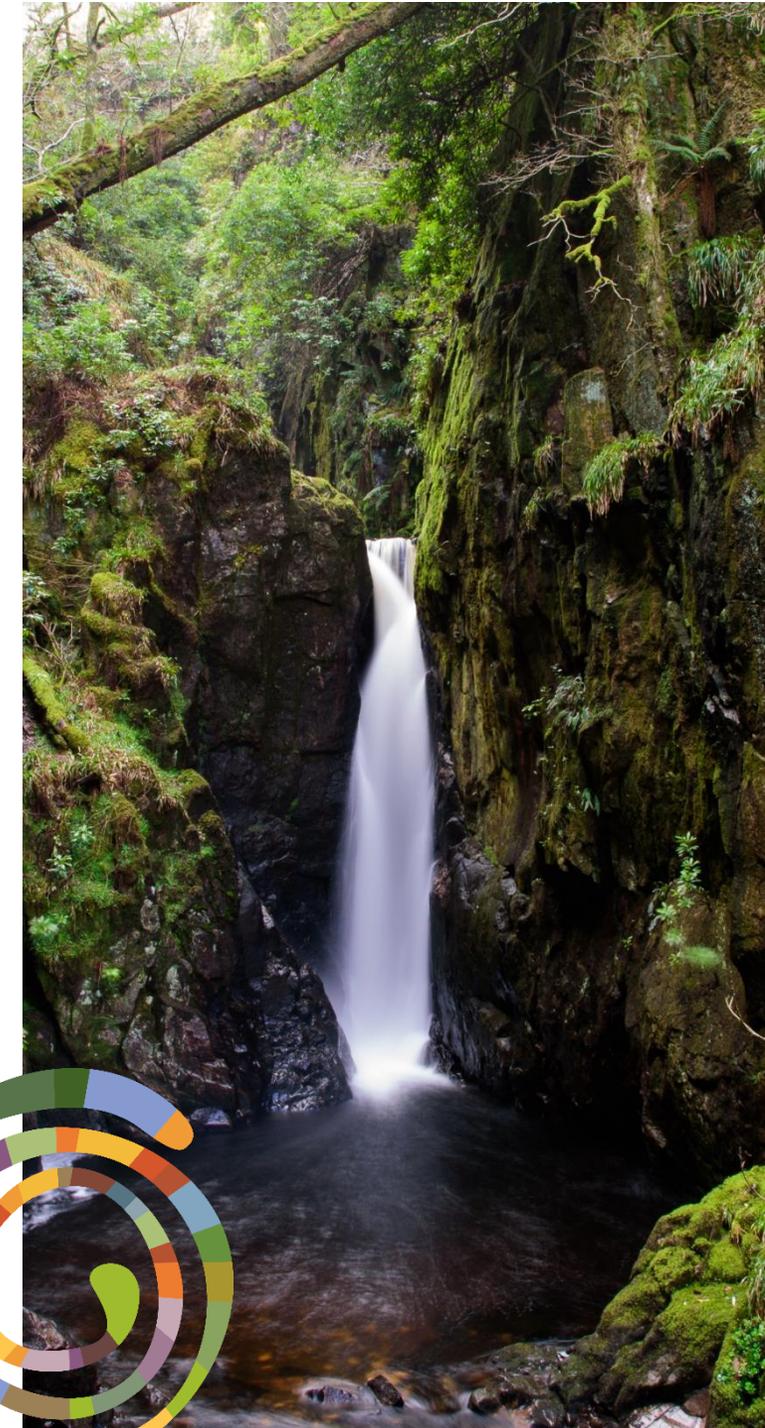
Wild Rites Introduces the Medicine Walk

First we need to consider that in this context the term 'Medicine' refers to both your True Self and to anything, anyone or any event that guides you towards greater realisation and expression of your True Self.

Medicine leads us towards Wholeness and living life aligned to our Truth. Sometimes it is bitter to taste; sometimes it is sweet. When we interact with the world and others in a way that is aligned to our deepest and highest truth, then we have shared and touched another with our Medicine.

At Wild Rites, **wild** refer to your untamed, un-caged and un-adapted True Self; the innate you that is always seeking greater expression in the world; a human being's true Wildness. Your individual Self is interconnected with all other selves, as we move closer to spirit they become one and as we move into matter Self differentiates. Therefore, to live a life aligned to your true Self is the greatest gift and medicine you can share with the world. Be truly Self-ish!

To make a medicine walk is to **spend time focusing on your soul life and can greatly benefit yourself, loved ones and community.**



The Psychology of the Medicine Walk

The medicine walk we are introducing is a dawn till dusk solo walk in Nature whilst fasting from, human company, your usual identifications and attachments and food (if safe for you to do so).

This walk is distinctly different from going for a hike, it is about creating both outer and inner space to be with Nature in an I-Thou relationship. I-thou is a term conceived by Martin Buber (1970) to describe the way we experience the holistic existence of all beings. I-thou refers to an attitude in relationship where the “other” is seen and treated not as an object (an it) but as a non-separate relational being (a Thou). Buber suggests all relationships have the potential to bring us into relationship with Spirit/ Self/ God/ Goddess which he calls the Eternal Thou.

“All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware” Buber

Unfortunately, many folk in the modern world perceive themselves to be separate from Nature. An I-Thou relationship with Nature is often denied or neglected and many slip into an I-It relationship with Nature where the person is the subject in relation to Nature as an object, this often manifests in some form of unsustainable utilisation or attempt at control. Examples of this could be the Amazon deforestation, Dakota pipeline, nuclear weapons.

cont'd ...



Civilisations that recognise Self in Nature and our interdependence used to spend contemplative time in Nature furthering their self-realisation in forms such as the medicine walk , vision quest, meditation or the aboriginal walk-about. These practices to commune with your true Self and Nature are both universal and timeless... Buddha fasted underneath the Bodhi tree, Jesus went to the desert, Moses climbed Mount Sinai and Mohammad fasted in a cave. In myths of the British Isles, we have Merlin and Taliesin who experienced deep transformation, profound realisation and a sense of purpose through the fasting in nature.

To go on a medicine walk is to create space to be with Nature, inner and outer; to walk the land with intuition as your guide. What differentiates this walk is your intent. This walk helps provide a response to the life questions such as What must I leave behind? Where am I going? What do I need to learn now? What will I have to offer during the next phase of my life?

The Medicine Walk is more a time for being than doing, a time to contemplate rather than achieve. The Medicine walk is more an inner journey than an outer, physical journey. This is not a time to strike off for the mountain peak or to practice your rock-climbing skills!

As an individual self we are constantly projecting our inner world onto other people and our environment – what is happening outside of us, in all our human drama, is a mirror of what is happening inside of us either consciously or unconsciously. When we enter a medicine walk we are asking Nature to be our mirror and Nature can be the clearest and purest of mirrors to our own Soul. When we look into the mirror of Nature, with eyes willing to see, it is our Self that is mirrored back to us, for ultimately, we are Nature. The medicine walk is an invitation to explore your relationship with Self and Nature.

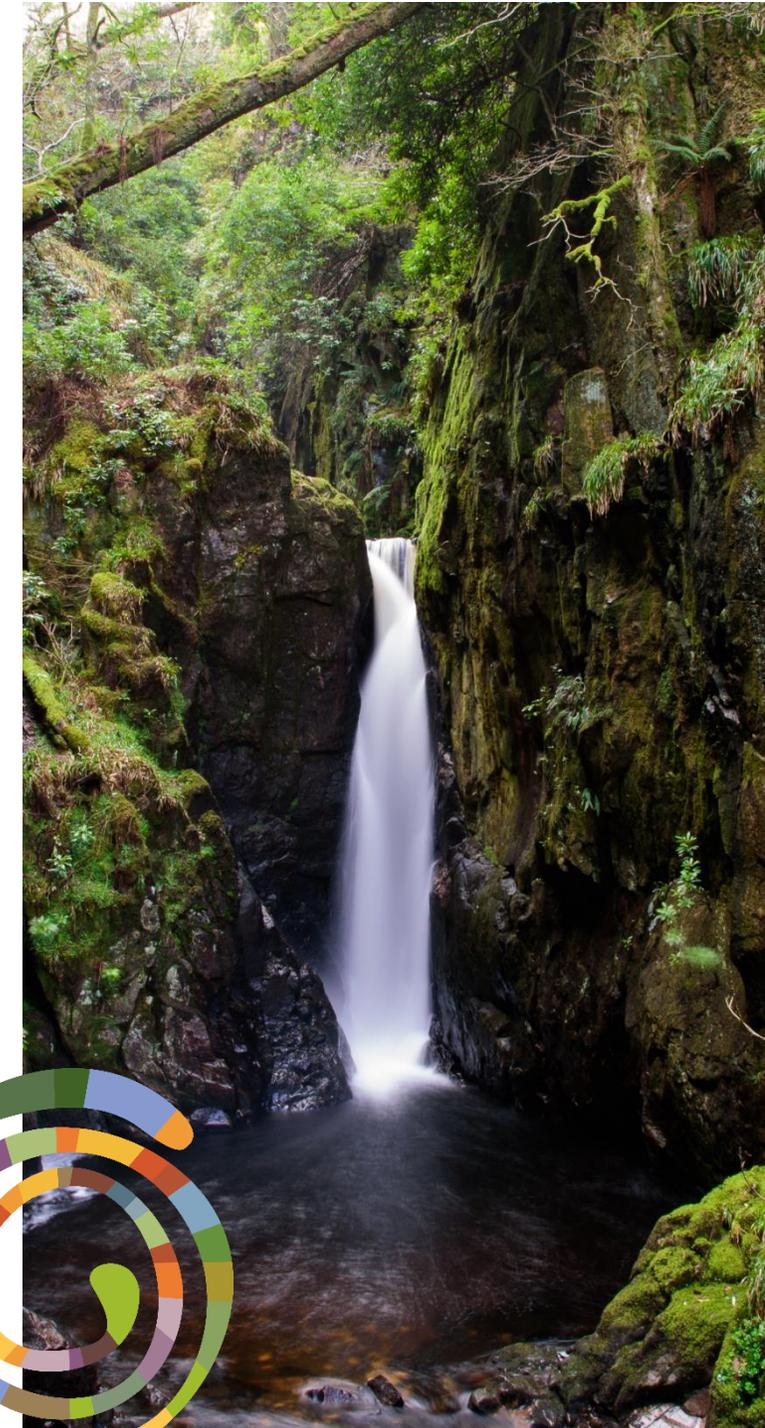


Why Fast?

It is traditional to fast from food after your evening meal the night before your walk until your return just after sunset on the day of the walk (approximately 24 hours.) Please only do this if it is safe for you to do so, if in any doubt please check with your doctor.

Fasting will help you to focus differently on the world around you and your inner process. Fasting can clear your mind and open your body, deepening your experience of Nature.

You are called to fast in other ways too; from talking, from working, from being in outer relationship with other people, from following habitual patterns like checking your phone. The act of fasting from food then becomes a physiological and metaphorical event.



How to go about your Medicine Walk

Firstly, be clear about your intention for the walk. Spend time prior to your walk really clarifying your intent. A meaningful walk is often determined by the clarity and simplicity of intent.

By simplicity we mean the simplest statement or question that can hold the energy of your intent, this often starts with complexity, because it is the simplicity on the other side of complexity that you seek. Some people find it helpful to journal prior to the walk to discover their intent and refine it for their walk.

Some intents that we have heard when facilitating this process include: “What do I need to see about my life now?” “What parts of my inner self do I need to reclaim?” “What will help me move toward greater wholeness?” “What can I offer to my people?” “Where is my place?” “What do I need now in my journey toward greater wholeness, health, and meaning?” “Who am I most essentially?”.

Choose the day that you will enact the Medicine Walk Ceremony in advance. Define a rough area where your walk will take place and inform someone you trust where you will be going and what time you will be back. Give them clear instructions of what to do if you do not return by the agreed time.



Begin your walk at sunrise. Clearly mark the beginning and ending by creating a threshold to cross, this may have a physical representation such a gate, stile, or stepping over a branch. When you cross the threshold the intent is to enter sacred space, a space where you acknowledge everything that happens has meaning. State your personal intent or question aloud as you cross the threshold.

During your walk you can alternate between walking and resting as you choose. Let yourself wander. Pay attention to "calls" you may get: a particular tree or rock that captures your attention, a stream that interests you, a bird or animal that asks you to follow for a while; always wondering and listening to what is being said, paying attention to your emotions as they arise, the sensations you have in your body and the thoughts and images that come. Be aware of the people and life events that come into your awareness and wonder about their significance. Your task is to pay absolute attention to your inner nature and Nature all around you. Be curious!

At some point during your walk you will find an object that represents important insights or teachings from your walk. Bring this object or a clear memory of it home with you as a concrete reminder and anchor. Its meaning may not be immediately apparent, nevertheless you will know when you meet the object of your walk.

When sunset comes, return home, crossing your threshold at last light. You may be feeling tender and fragile, be gentle with yourself and choose the kind of environment you would like to come back to. You may wish to continue your learning by writing in your journal. Whatever you do, stay close to yourself, your feelings and experiences. Remember to break fast and let your safety person know you have returned. Be cautious about driving and definitely have some food prior to driving as you will likely be in a far more altered state than you realise.



After your Medicine Walk

We recommend not speaking about your walk with another for at least 24 hours. Let the experience steep in your body, heart and mind so it goes in deep.

You may wish to journal your experience. Be sure to treat inner and outer experiences with equal care. How you experienced a sign or symbol is as important as what you experienced. Examine your medicine walk as an expression of your relationship to nature: both outer nature, the physical world and your inner nature, the world of your psyche.

Try to identify the underlying themes of your medicine walk and to integrate the various images, thoughts, feelings, plants, animals, weather, people and physical features that came to you. There is no need to jump to explanations of your experiences, rather, take the time to come back to your experience again and again, understanding it in deeper ways.

Contemplate your experience as you would a dream. If it was a dream you would consider each element to be a part of you and to have some deeper meaning and value to you. So it is with your walk. Begin the process of interpreting and making the walk yours. Recognise each element as representing an aspect of your psyche, an aspect of yourself which may be more or less conscious.

For example, say an unusual tree catches your attention, see that tree as a dream image, as a part of your inner life speaking to you through nature. What part of you is the tree representing? What is the tree saying to YOU?



Safety During your Walk

Remember to let a trusted friend or relative know the area/direction you are going and when to expect your return. For example. *“Parking at Stickle Barn and walking towards Little Langdale via Blea Tarn. Expect to be back home no later than 8pm if I’ve not called you by 10pm come and look for me.”* Make sure you contact them when you do return! Hypothermia can be a risk any time of year, and it is potentially life-threatening- especially when fasting. Even if the weather looks fine, take warm clothing with you.

Take plenty of water with you on your medicine walk. Have water stashed to drink after your walk and if you are driving a little food (e.g in your car).

- We recommend you take at least the following items:
 - Water (recommended 2 litres minimum)
- Fully waterproof jacket and trousers (such as Gore-Tex) and good fully waterproof walking boots/shoes.
- Warm jackets (such as down) or fleeces.
- Journal (optional, for recording insights, thoughts, feelings, events and daydreams).
- Personal first aid kit.
- Survival sack and sufficient warm clothing in case you get stuck out overnight.
- Head torch (maybe two) and whistle (to signal for help).
- If sunny: Sun hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen, shorts and t-shirt (plus warm/waterproof clothes in case the weather turns)
- If cool include fleece/ wool hat and gloves



Finally, may you find joy in moving on our wonderful earth in this way and may you receive all that you need from this ancient practice.

At Wild Rites, we have gone through years of extensive training to learn how to “see” and be with the emerging Self, to help others recognise their unique innate potential. If you would like support clarifying your intent or recognising the medicine in your walk, please email jon@wildrites.uk to arrange a Skype or in person session.

If you enjoyed this and want more we offer long weekends teaching ancient yet timeless ways to look into the mirror of Nature, which include medicine walks. If you would like to learn more about our work, wild rites and soulmaking in nature visit us at www.wildrites.uk or contact jon@wildrites.uk



WILDRITES
Soulmaking in Nature

