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Project Green:



Intention: For today, our intention will be to simply be present in nature. To do this we will take a four-hour-long silent hike. This will allow us to truly be one with nature and to be alone with our thoughts while enjoying nature and each other's company.

How will we get there: The mountain is 1 km away from our houses so we'll go walking. This will make the hike 11km long instead of 10.

Can our snacks be organic: As the hike is only four hours long we won't need much more than a snack and a bottle of water. We decided to take one apple per person for the snack. This means that we will be creating no waste as the core of the apples is biodegradable. The water will be taken in our water bottles instead of using single-use plastic water bottles.

How will you lessen waste? In order to lessen waste, we will only take reusable water bottles from our own

homes. The snacks will be completely biodegradable and the backpack we will use to transport our snacks and drinks will be a recycled Jansport backpack. The backpack was made out of recycled polyester and nylon.

What are my attire and gear made of? The shirt I am using was the shirt my dad used in a marathon he ran in 2014 and my shoes were made by Adidas from recycled plastic bottles. The backpack, as stated previously, is also recycled as it is made from recycled polyester and nylon.

Destination: The destination is only open to people who have passed. However, my dad has a pass that gives him the ability to invite four additional guests to the hike. It is safe to go to and requires no extra precautions.

What am I seeing: I saw a lot of moss, trees, and flowers. We also saw a waterfall. Most of all, our silent time really allowed me to be in synchrony with the environment I was in. I think to humans in the 21st

century it has become nearly secondhand nature to talk. When someone asks us a question, we don't think we simply answer. This hike allowed me to see the importance of both nature and silence. It also redefined my definition of silence. Whenever I thought of peace and quiet I would always think of the woods or a lonely place in the middle of nature. However, the truth is that nature is extremely loud. The sound of the wind against the leaves, the chirping of the birds, the incessant buzzing of the bugs. The only place that is truly quiet is civilization when everyone is asleep. I saw both the world and myself with more clarity than I had in a while. It was a truly enriching experience.

What animals am I seeing: I saw some birds however they flew by really quickly and I wasn't able to take a picture of them. The cows on the other hand were easy to photograph. I also remember very vividly seeing an eagle soaring through the sky. We had just gotten to the highest point of the hike and I saw one of my friends staring at the sky. I thought he was simply looking at the sky until he started pointing with his hand toward the sky. I immediately looked up and saw an eagle soaring in the sky. I also saw multiple different types of flowers and trees. Among the most amazing was a tree I later on learned was 200+ years old. It is truly humbling to see a tree that has been there for ten times as long as you have and will most likely continue to be there once you are not.

How could I describe the environment: I would describe it as natural. Although there are trails on the hike, it is not very popular. There are trails but it is not a very popular hike. We didn't run into any other hikers which honestly made the hike so much better. It was just us and nature. We could hear the birds and the cows, but we couldn't hear any cars or motorcycles. It was all very natural, a place untouched by humanity's corrosive touch.

How did it inform your journey(intention): Our intention set the tone for the whole hike. Most of the time I go on hikes I am simply doing exercise, and I am not trying to be present in nature. This also has to do with the fact that I speak a lot which keeps me from being in the moment. Speaking gives me the ability to live in the future and the past, but hardly ever in the present. Having the silent hike really made me conscious about where I was and who I was with. As we couldn't speak, we had to be very aware of each other. Did my friend need water? Were we turning right or left? Our intention was the very basis of our journey, without it, it would not have been so special.

Were you able to stick to the plan: We were able to stick to the plan. We applied five out of the seven principles in order to have a safe and productive hike that did not harm our environment. We planned ahead by estimating the time the hike would take and the snacks we could take that would not harm the environment. We also ensured we traveled only on the designated trails in order to reduce our impact on the vegetation as well as reduce our chances of getting lost. In order to dispose of waste properly, we brought a shovel in our recycled backpack in case one of us had to poop during the hike. We also brought a plastic bag where we put any trash we found along the trail as we brought nothing that could create waste. Even more, we ensured to leave everything as we found it. Before we started the hike I spoke with my friend about the importance of leaving everything we found exactly as we found it. We focused on taking pictures of the things we wanted to remember just as they were instead of moving or manipulating them. In order to respect wildlife, we remained silent during the whole hike. After all, we were guests in their homes, and it was our turn to be quiet. We also kept our distance from the animals we saw to make

sure we didn't make them feel unsafe. Lastly, we focused on being considerate to others by being silent during the hike and protecting the trails so that other people could do the hike in the future.

How did the experience make you feel? Has it strengthened your relationship to the Earth and our individual and collective responsibility towards the environment? The hike made me feel renewed. I was able to have a clear mind and truly be in the moment, which was not something I had felt since summer. I think it didn't necessarily strengthen my relationship with nature, but it restarted it. I consider myself to be someone who is very connected with nature. However, this year I lost my connection to it. I had been overwhelmed by my schoolwork and wasn't connected to myself or nature. This silent hike allowed me to rediscover my love for nature and realize how happy being in nature makes me.