Nature Connectedness
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Our relationship with nature has failed...

...we are not a nation of nature lovers.
A growing disconnection from nature is evident in cultural products. 


What is Nature Connectedness?

• Different to contact and exposure to nature.
• An internationally recognised psychological construct.
• A person’s sense of their relationship with nature.
• Measurable & malleable
Why Nature Connectedness Matters

- Systematic review of 50 studies shows nature connection related to feeling good & functioning well.

Why Nature Connectedness Matters More

“strong & robust association between nature connection & PEB, as well as evidence that nature connection causes PEB”

Nature Connection Index Project

- Natural England Strategic Research Network project to measure NC at the population level to complement the data on contact.
- Existing measures not suited to a national survey with adults & children.
- NC Working Group tested and validated a new short, simple 6 item scale for use with adults and children - the ‘Nature Connection Index’ (NCI)
Measures - The Nature Connection Index

The NCI is measured on a 7-point scale ranging from completely agree to completely disagree and asks:

1. I always find beauty in nature
2. I always treat nature with respect
3. Being in nature makes me very happy
4. Spending time in nature is very important to me
5. I find being in nature really amazing
6. I feel part of nature

• The measure can be used with children and adults and generates a meaningful score from zero to 100.

The INS and other outcomes

Please circle the picture below which best describes your relationship with the natural environment. How interconnected are you with nature right now?

Other Outcomes
- Hedonic wellbeing – single item happiness.
- Eudemonic wellbeing – single item worthwhile life.
- Pro-Conservation Behaviours.
- Pro-Environmental Behaviours.
NC & Pro-nature behaviours: The Basics
Nature Connection Across the Lifespan

For a Sustainable Future?

Why the Adolescent Dip Matters

- A national analysis of 29,784 Canadian adolescents.
- Connection to nature ‘important’ - associated with a 25% reduction in high mental health symptoms
- Adolescent engagement with nature ‘protective for their psychological well-being’.
- Connection to nature drops 30% from age 9 to 15

Comparing Visits and Connection

• Theory and research has focused on time, type & frequency and largely overlooked the person specific factors in human-nature interactions.
• Survey of 4,960 adults in England. UK official statistics = representative sampling.
• Meaningful as greater in magnitude to benchmark socio-demographic factors.

Relative percentage difference in wellbeing and health as a function of nature contact, nature connectedness and socio-demographic comparators.
Key findings

- Nature connectedness important over and above nature contact for worthwhile life and pro-nature behaviours.

- Nature connectedness is a key target to foster a worthwhile and sustainable life – a ‘good life’.

- The 2019 IPBES report on the decline in wildlife stated that to save nature we need to re-evaluate what we mean by a "good life".

A New Relationship with Nature

• Nature connectedness is important in its own right for wellbeing and pro-nature behaviours.
• Meaningful as greater in magnitude to benchmark socio-demographic factors.
• A connected life is a worthwhile life,
  – a sustainable life,
  – a good life.

let nature be your story