

# The Nature Effect

*Personal, professional & community development  
connecting people to their earth*



## Professional Development

*Action Learning,  
Peer Group Enquiry  
and Mentoring*

*Our other pamphlets include:*  
Overview 2011-13  
Personal Development  
Community Development  
Schools Projects  
Early Years Projects



[www.TheNatureEffect.co.uk](http://www.TheNatureEffect.co.uk)

# Professional Development

## Action Learning, Peer Group Enquiry & Mentoring

Between 2011 and 2013 we initiated:

- Action Learning for Social Change
- Action Learning for Education Managers
- Team development and in service days
- Organisational Constellations workshop
- Coaching and mentoring for groups and individuals
- A new network of our Associates with regular gatherings

The Nature Effect supports people to be powerful voices for the environment and social change, and to do the work they love to do. There is often little capacity for those working on the frontline to step back, reflect and resource themselves.



Development day for the "Wild Tots" project at Play Torbay

*"Instructions for living a life: Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it."*  
Mary Oliver

Many people working in social change find themselves swamped by fundraising, budget cuts, inspection targets, staff shortages, the needs of the people they serve, interpersonal issues, monitoring, evaluation requirements and so on. By reconnecting with the rhythms, freedom, logic and intelligence of the natural world, activists and professionals can resource themselves and reflect deeply on how they can be most effective.

One of the professional development tools The Nature Effect has used this year is **Action Learning**. This is an affordable way for people in the cash-strapped social action field to share their knowledge and test out new ways of thinking. The recent **Action Learning for Social Change** group included people working in overseas development, climate change, community participation and outdoor education.



We explain our work in these pamphlets:

### Overview

Introducing The Nature Effect

### Personal development

Wellbeing, Creativity and Transformation

### Community Development

Creativity, Collaboration and Connection

### Professional Development

Action Learning, Peer Group Enquiry and Mentoring

- You are here

### Early Years Projects

Playing with the Elements

### Schools Projects

Bread, Butter & Soup

All downloadable from [TheNatureEffect.org.uk](http://TheNatureEffect.org.uk)



In service training for teachers

Alongside classic Action Learning processes, facilitators Annie Davy and Polly McAfee brought in clay modelling, sensory walks in the garden, collecting natural objects to represent issues, and quiet time around a bonfire. These and the nature metaphors in the brainstorming and mapping exercises – for example exploring what might need to be nurtured, pruned, weeded or planted to help someone’s ‘garden’ grow most bountiful – provided an ecological frame.

TNE also programmes workshops by Associates and others on cutting edge approaches such as **Ecological Constellations** (Jenny McKewn, May 2013) and Wild Mindfulness (Ally Stott, April 2013).

Finally, TNE wishes to support those working in the nature-connection field to **‘walk their talk’**.

To this effect it organises regular Associates’ Gatherings where peers can meet in a natural environment and share home-cooked food, inspiration and reflective processes.

*“This process has empowered me to lead more confidently and to trust my own thinking.”*

Participant from  
Early Years Action  
Learning Set

**For work in schools and early years settings see our Projects pamphlets:**

**Bread, Butter & Soup** (Schools)

**Playing with the Elements** (early years)

From the beginning **The Nature Effect** has seen itself as being essentially a group of collaborators.

### **Associate Phil Prichard explains how he became involved in The Nature Effect:**

*“The octagonal log cabin was buzzing with excitement like a queen bumblebee recently emerged from hibernation, foraging for pollen and nectar for her daughters. I was sitting in the Barracks Lane Community Garden anticipating the launch of a new Community Interest Company, The Nature Effect.*

*I didn’t really know what it was, what it wanted to do or what involvement I might have but I knew some of the founders and that they were probably up to something special. Since then I have worked with The Nature Effect in lots of ways. I deepened my understanding of Ecoliteracy on an Action Learning programme with early years professionals.*

*We explored how to develop our own understanding of the cycles of life and nature. I discovered the joy of silent ‘sit spots’ - mini solo nature retreats designed to slow us down to observe the present moment and watch the marvel of life all around us. Together we teased out the key concepts that need to be explained and demonstrated by educators to promote the succession of new generations of ecoliterate children.*



*I’m passionate about reskilling our society in the dwindling skills of home food production and cooking real food from raw ingredients*

*This was my key learning: that we need to actively share the concepts and enable the habits which will ensure future generations can live harmoniously with the natural world and that this needs to be in the mainstream. I’m passionate about reskilling our society in the dwindling skills of home food production and cooking real food from raw ingredients, so I was delighted to be asked to help with The Nature Effect’s pilot programme “Bread, Butter and Soup”. We work with classes of school children rotating between three food-related activities. The children hear stories and experience the magic of making their own butter from cream and bread from grain. They cook soup on an open fire from vegetables that they have washed and chopped themselves. Real grassroots empowerment and a realignment with the forces of nature! I think that’s what The Nature Effect is.”*

Over the last four years, **The Nature Effect founder Annie Davy** has developed her own brand of personal, professional and community development-based collaborative learning with a range of associates, wise tutors and clients.

She says: *"Whether we are working with individuals or groups of professionals or communities, there are **three golden 'keys' to our work** that seem to help make visible that which was not, and to unravel things that were tangled. They are:*

- *mapping and being in service to the 'field'*
- *asking the right questions*
- *using Nature as a teacher*

*Being in service to the 'field' means looking wider than the individual client. Asking the right questions will shed light on the previously unknown or the unconscious so that new ways of thinking and acting on new knowledge can emerge. We are Nature and Nature is us - therefore it must always be the first and best teacher. It contains its own solutions. Our language is rich in Nature metaphor and I often find people 'come alive' when they see things in pictures based on the wider ecological world.*

*I have been lucky enough to work in the field of human development for many years - as a teacher, development worker, inspector and senior manager.*

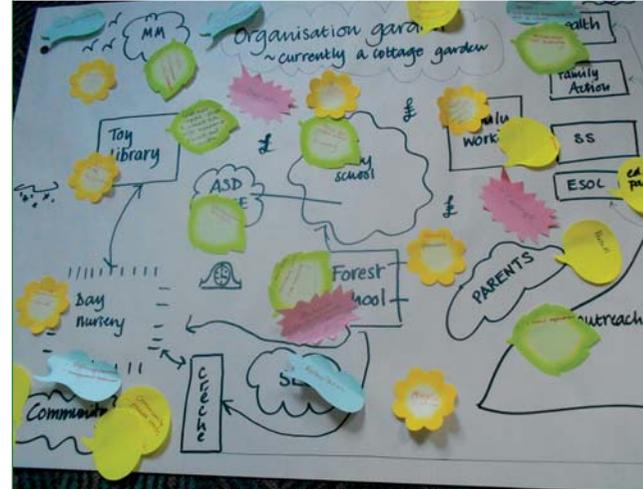
*"What shape waits in the seed of you to grow and spread it's branches against a future sky"*

David Whyte

*My more recent work as coach and enabler of peer groups, action learning and community engagement has felt like coming home. I see in the feedback that this way of working is truly enabling, powerful and potentially transformational.*

*I look forward to doing more of it with more Associates and clients!*

*I am deeply appreciative of the organisations and people I have learned from in the last two years, including all at Schumacher College (especially Richard Louv, Jenny Mckewn, Stephan Harding and Satish Kumar), Ruth Cooke of Action Learning Associates and Chris Luttichau of Northern Drum."*



*Our workshops use a wide range of tools, including poetry, role-play and walks in nature as well as good old post-it notes on flip-charts*

Annie has written about community development in *'What is the place? Story of a Garden'* a chapter in *Stories of the Great Turning* (Vala Books 2013) and about action learning and ecological literacy in *Montessori International Magazine* Autumn 2013.



*For further info on our work please visit our website: [www.TheNatureEffect.co.uk](http://www.TheNatureEffect.co.uk) or email: [TheNatureEffect@gmail.com](mailto:TheNatureEffect@gmail.com)*

