

One in Nature, One with Nature, All with Nature

(Original)

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I am **one in** Nature. I am **one with** Nature. I am **All with** Nature.

Somehow when it comes to our relation with Nature, all of the statements make full sense and complement one another. We are one in Nature because we are just a small fraction of its complexity. We are one with Nature because we are intrinsically connected to it and are subject to its twists and turns, to its connecting webs, to its cycles and changes. We are all with Nature because regardless of how small a piece we are our actions can have an enormous impact, for good or bad, for our communities, our neighbors, and even those who are the furthest away from us.

In the rush of our days we tend to forget this connection and, from being one in, one with and all with, we construct the idea of being one by ourselves, separate from Nature and able to use it without restrictions.

Last year, as I made an effort to know my country more in depth, I was both astonished and humbled by the beauty and magnificence of nature, its indivisible relation with the lives of communities, and its fragility and vulnerability to change. It was July and as I was travelling through the Tambopata Rainforest I was able to experience –briefly, and in a limited way- a stronger connection to nature than I had ever before. My friend and I were guided by Chiki, a volunteer park warden who lived in a community near the reserve and, as he told us, had spent months in a row exploring the jungle by feet. He was acquainted with every sound and smell and could tell us with his eyes closed what kind of animal was near to us. He also knew by heart every twist and turn of the Tambopata River and was able to guide his *peque peque* (a canoe with a small motor, that was our main way of transportation during the days we spent in the forest) safely even when the sun was setting.

During the days we spent in the forest we learnt a lot from our conversations with Chiki. All he needed and all he wanted was around him, in Nature, and for that same reason he was aware of his responsibility to preserve it. He spoke of animals and plants with light in

his eyes and a smile on his face, the same way in which we usually speak of a dear friend.

Why did his happiness astonish me so much? Possibly because of the sharp contrast between his life and what we picture as a successful life. He did not own a car or a big house; he did not have a high-paying job, fashionable clothes or the latest cellphone. Most importantly, he did not want them or need them. I cannot help but wonder then: if we spent more time closer to nature, if we learnt to appreciate its beauty and complexity and our role in its systems and cycles, if we allowed ourselves to explore and discover; Would we care more? Would we invest our time to protect it? Would we be more aware of how powerful our impact can be and how vulnerable nature is? Would that help us take better decisions?

I think it would. Although the days I spent with Chiki were few, the learnings were many. I believe he helped me become more humble, conscious and responsible. And I believe that Nature can teach us to be more respectful and unselfish and to show solidarity and support to those around us. Knowledge of Nature can also help us find the answers to our day to day problems, because it is full of complex systems that work in harmony as pieces of a perfect design. It can also teach us about the ephemeral quality of our lives and the overarching existence and continuity of Nature, motivating us to live sustainably for the generations to come.

All of this moves me to encourage you to explore and appreciate. To learn and to be **one in, one with and all with Nature.**