

## 5 FORERUNNERS



"This may seem an alien concept on first blush, but for somebody who knows a place, who can sit in the desert, watch it and accept it for what it is, who does not need to experience it on a dirt bike, or for somebody who can go into an old-growth forest and sit under a five-hundred-year-old tree and try to pick up some wisdom from it, I don't think it is alien. We are place. We are connected to everything, and we are open to the world around us."

Dave Foreman, in Jensen, **Listening to the Land**

"One spiritual path contains all the others and conflicts with none. It is nature itself."

Eric Allan, **Wild Grace**

## **Strands**

### **Ned Kinloch:**

My original idea was so simple and personal, I can't say there was anything really philosophical about it. For some reason, on that morning, years ago, I got to thinking about all the different experiences I'd had in the mountains. I didn't get very far then, but I've thought more about it since then.

I've never tried to answer the question: Why climb mountains? I just don't know. There's the challenge of the unknown. It can be a test of strength in some ways. A test of skills. I'm not sure it's exactly a test of character. A lot of different people climb mountains. But you have to be determined. You have to persevere. As well as all the great times, there are hard times, too. That's all part of it. Anxiety, uncertainty . . . . And from time to time, fear. Changing weather, dicey moves . . . . stupid mistakes, poor decisions. And lots of luck. An awful lot of it.

Climbing, skiing, kayaking. In all of these activities, you're very focused. You're interacting intensely with the physical environment: rock and ice and snow. And fast-moving water. Mind and body totally involved. What you see, what you feel, what you sense. How strong you feel, or how tired you are. How confident, uncertain, anxious you might be. And after all that, you still don't want to stop. Somehow or other, you have to push the limits. And you end up with some crazy mix of exhilaration and terror you just don't get in ordinary life. It's part of fully enjoying life, being fully alive.

Lately, I've slowed down a bit. I've begun to explore a larger picture. I felt there was another dimension, something less intense perhaps, or intense in a different way. With a simple place to sit quietly without being disturbed for a while, I thought I might be able to get a different perspective on the mountain world, not just the challenges to a climber or skier. The way we feel just being in the mountains, or any other natural setting. The way we feel when we see a spectacular sunrise or sunset. When we watch an eagle, or a flock of shorebirds sweeping along a beach, or wild animals in their natural habitat. What does all that mean to us, as humans? Not a new question, I know, but that's where I started several years ago now, and it all tied in to other larger environmental issues I'd been thinking about.

Then the Samilkawen development issue came up. That got me thinking again, especially about National Parks and what they represent. How important they are, and how vital it is for us to protect them. And that gave the creation of the Sanctuary—which was Alicia's idea, the concept of sanctuary—it gave us a purpose we didn't have before. A symbolic protest, but also a new approach to experiencing Skyline Park and the natural environment.

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After that, Denise's gift of land for the MindBody Space opened up new possibilities for us to explore the mind-body issues we'd already discussed. But there was no great plan. Nobody laid out any guidelines or a path to follow. Ever since we spontaneously created the Sanctuary, and then the MindBody Space, we've had countless conversations and discussions about our experiences. Other people have added their thoughts and ideas. And we've been influenced by world events in the past couple of years. The sudden public awareness of global warming and the surge of popular interest in "going green"—after years of scientific and environmental warnings and calls for action. So our thinking has evolved quite a lot in the last couple of years.

Throughout the history of the Sanctuary there has been one continuous focus of interest: our relationship with the natural environment. The way I've thought about it has been influenced by a variety of environmentalists—writers, thinkers, activists, and some writers that are not usually regarded as environmentalists. Early ones like John Muir and Thoreau, Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson. The whole range of modern writers, from the Gaia theorists to David Suzuki and Al Gore. There are so many of them these days. I can't remember all the ones I've read

But the main influences have been the ones who've been out in the wild places, who spent time alone in the mountains, who have really captured the spirit of the wild, in the mountains or in the desert. I'm thinking of Edward Abbey and Gary Snyder, and before them, John Muir. Mountains and deserts. Sounds positively Biblical doesn't it? Though Ed Abbey's not exactly Biblical. Fierce, combative. Solitary. But full of life. The latest in a line of forerunners that started with people like Muir.

I've also been very interested in the practical aspects of living in harmony with the natural environment, in voluntary simplicity and living lightly on the earth. Schumacher and Stuart Brand and Dwayne Johnson. Bill McKibben, and Paul Hawken, too. And Amory Lovins. I'll probably remember more later. I shouldn't leave out people like Wendell Berry and Thomas Berry, either. More philosophical, perhaps, but still concerned with living with the natural world—and with other people.

What I got from those writers was an awareness of the richness of the natural world. I could see how their lives were enriched by that awareness. They describe ways of living that are grounded, or centred—in balance with the living world around them. So different from the unhappiness that seems to be everywhere these days. A total contrast with all the stuff—stress, anxiety, depression—you see in the lifestyle pages of newspapers and magazines. Promises of a new solution to all of those problems every few weeks. The latest fad, the latest fashions, the newest toys and gadgets. Everything based on endless, mindless consumption. I just don't get it.

So that's an environmental strand in my thinking. There's a spiritual aspect as well. It comes from my experiences in Japan. I've made two trips to Japan, and that's where I got interested in traditional architecture and gardens. In Zen Buddhism and Taoism, and I found a lot that I liked. Attitudes and outlook on life. Simplicity. Even austerity, I suppose. But at the same time, I found guidelines for living a moral, concerned, engaged life. I was never particularly

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religious at all, and I saw Zen and Taoism more as philosophies than religions. I guess I've been selective in what I've taken from them, especially as I've tried to relate them to a Western way of life, a Western culture that I'm part of. When I got back here, I started meditating, and as I said, I'm still a beginner. And when I met Reb, she taught me some chi gong exercises, and then we started on tai chi. Alicia and Tak are more familiar with the spiritual side of things, and they've taught me a lot, so I now have a wider spiritual context that I certainly didn't have before.

### **Alicia Tyndall:**

The old Buddhist and Taoist sages went to the mountains, to the wild places, for a very good reason, of course. To get far away from all the distractions of everyday life in the towns and villages. They did not meditate on nature specifically, but on all things. On everything and nothing. On the meaning of life. There is a reason for all those cartoons of people climbing up impossible mountains to ask a question of a sage, a guru, sitting in his cave in a loincloth. When you are alone, away from all the regular distractions, you see things differently. You can see things more clearly. And if you sit quietly, after a while all your senses seem sharper.

But in addition to the Eastern sages, we should not forget Western traditions of contemplation and meditation. The long traditions of the monasteries and silence that go back centuries, too. So many thinkers have explored the human relationship with Nature and the divine. Spinoza, Nietzsche and Kant, among others, and people like Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau, who recognized a sacred element in nature. Ned and Tak and I have discussed those traditions, but we have probably talked more about modern writers like DT Suzuki, and Gary Snyder, and Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama.

So we are starting from a rich heritage of thought and inspiration. Our concern for the natural environment and our spiritual curiosity have come together, first, in creating the Sanctuary, and now in considering how it might best be used. As Ned has said, we have no set path to follow, and no specific way of thinking. We are explorers.

## **Questions**

### **Ned Kinloch:**

I'm often asked why we need the Sanctuary. Why not sit anywhere? Well, one of the original functions of the Sanctuary was to provide a contrast with the Samilkawen development. It had symbolic significance being in the Park. But basically, my answer is "Go ahead and sit wherever you like. Sit anywhere and everywhere."

The key is finding a place where you can sit quietly, without people or noise right around you. That's not always easy. That's what I found when I started looking for a place for the first sitting bench. Unless you're going on a vision quest, or consciously going on a solitary journey into the mountains, or into the wild anywhere, you don't want to be a long way

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away. Very few people go into the mountains entirely on their own. In most cases, it's strenuously discouraged—for good reasons. If you are on your own, it's not a bad idea to stay fairly close to established trails and places where there'll be other people around.

The basic idea of the Sanctuary is to have a safe, comfortable place you can get to without too much trouble. A place you can return to at different times of the year. A place designated for silent sitting. When people go there, and see other people, on the trail or on the platform, they feel they're part of a community. Individually, they may have different reasons to go there, but having gone there, they'll share a common experience, and from our experience, many of them will feel comfortable there, and be happy to be part of a community.

There's another aspect of the Sanctuary that is equally important. It provides a focus for reflection on the value of the natural environment. It makes a small claim on the land, a visible expression of connection to a particular area, to a type of landscape, to a natural region even. It's not an economic or legal claim. It's a symbolic claim. A sign that a place is important to humans as well as the plants and creatures that live there or pass through it.

That's what makes our concept of sanctuary different from other places to sit. If you want to meditate, you can do it anywhere. In the city, in the suburbs, in any space where you can spread a mat and a cushion. Zen monks meditate in bare rooms facing a blank wall. You can do the same in your own home if you like.

But our concept is closer to the special areas that many retreat centres have for meditation and contemplation. It may be in a meadow, or a grove of trees, or in a garden area away from the main buildings. The connection is the same—to the natural environment. In a way, we're trying to move into the public domain. A place for people to go for a few hours, for a day of meditation and yoga and outdoor recreation, without any specific religious or philosophical framework. A place where we can all reflect on our humanity and the wonders of life all around us.

As it happens, I think National Parks—spectacular places like Lake Louise or Lake O'Hara in the Rockies, the rim of the Grand Canyon, in the valley below the Tetons—they'd be great places for sitting platforms or sanctuaries. Places for visitors to sit quietly, enjoy the view, relax, but in total silence. Not chatting or snacking. Just sitting. For most people it would be a new experience, and I think it could be a good one. For them, and for the Park.

### **Alicia Tyndall:**

When we go to the Sanctuary, to a natural place away from the town and the city, we give ourselves time to find ourselves. It takes time to get out of the routines of life. It takes time to settle down. It is not always easy. So many distractions. So many things to do. Our lives are so busy. You need time. And you need stillness and silence. Then you can begin to understand your real self. You find yourself in your body—perhaps restless and uneasy at first. You find yourself in your mind.

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The process begins when you walk to the Sanctuary. Everyday life drops away. Your mind opens to your movement, your breathing, to all your senses. When you arrive at the Sanctuary, you find a peaceful place to rest your body and your soul. Stillness and silence are vital, as many people from ancient mystics to recent writers like Eckhart Tolle have recognized.

You may focus on your own situation, your concerns or problems, on your inner self. But strictly speaking, you can do that anywhere. The most important aspect of the concept of the Sanctuary is that it helps you to see yourself as part of the natural world. Through stillness and silence, it is possible to absorb some of the energy, the life force of nature from the plants and creatures around the Sanctuary. I think that is more important than simply finding “one’s true self” alone. It is useful to know who you really are. Thousands of therapists and self-help books are available for consultation and counselling. Most religions exhort you to lose yourself in a vast “oneness.” That may be the world or the universe, but most often it’s the oneness of a particular god or divine person.

The key to the Sanctuary is not simply meditation and contemplation. It is meditation and contemplation in a natural setting. There you can “find” yourself, and ultimately, you can “lose” yourself. To become one with the world.

The process is the same in the MindBody Space. With focussed, mindful physical movement, you become aware of a different type of energy. And when you go beyond the Sanctuary with that energy, to the mountains, you feel fully alive. An easy walk or a strenuous hike? It does not matter! Run or climb or ski. It is a glorious feeling! A wholeness of mind, body, and spirit in the natural world. It is good for us as individuals and good for the world.

That is why the Sanctuary is important. Is it a special place? Yes and no.

For some of us, yes. It has special meaning for us who know Skyline Park. The mountains and rivers, the alpine meadows, the icefields and glaciers, the lakes and rivers. All that they represent in adventures, accomplishments, and happy memories.

But it is not a centre of earth energies, a vortex location, or anything like that. It has no special, undiscovered power. As far as we know, it has no special meaning for the First Nations people who roamed the foothills in the past or live in the region today. It is not different from anywhere else along the treeline. The same rocks, the same trees and plants. We have not found anything unique about the ridge, except now, the presence of the Sanctuary itself.

Like Ned, I have always been interested in sacred places, and what they meant to early cultures. I have walked among standing stones and stone circles in Britain and France. Callanish, Stenness, Carnac. They are special places. I like to think that ancient peoples did make contact with the spirit of the natural world then. Of course, without all the mechanical conveniences of the modern world, they were very much in contact with the natural world all the time. Darkness, light, weather, food, shelter—these were all natural then. And there

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are the spectacular natural places that Ned and I thought of when we first talked about a place to sit in the mountains. Yosemite. Lake O'Hara. Places like that.

But the Sanctuary is special to us because it is the place of morning sunrise. The gateway to the mountains. To the wild. To the wind and the weather. To the natural world we depend on for air, water, and food. We hope many people feel it is special, too.

### **Rebecca Watson:**

Some people have described the Sanctuary as a diversion from real environmental action, but it's not that at all! Obviously, protecting the natural environment is a long, hard struggle. It takes hours and hours of work, and weeks and months of commitment. Alicia and Roger can tell you about long, hard environmental campaigns. And all of us were involved in the Samilkawen campaign.

The Sanctuary was part of that campaign. A small part of it, but I think it was more important than we thought. It made a difference. It didn't replace the protests and meetings. It wasn't meant to. It showed there was another way to think about the Skyline Park and about the natural environment.

Now, it's not just for climbers and skiers and adventure recreation people. It's for all the people who don't do those things, the ones who might like to spend a bit more time in the Park, who'd like a place to enjoy the Park and the mountains without having to walk a long way, without carrying a pack and camping gear, but might want to get away from the RV and the TV and other noisy distractions. There are lots of people who enjoy the outdoors, who could be open to a quieter, simpler connection with the natural world. Of course, I don't expect them all to rush off to the Sanctuary. The main users are almost all people already active in environmental groups or causes, or are already exploring their own spirituality through yoga or tai chi, or through Zen and other philosophies.

Roger had a good description of the Sanctuary. He said it was a support facility for the environmental movement. It's a place to go to when you're exhausted. When you're burnt out. It's a place to rest your soul. Some people take a break by doing a climb or a river trip or a ski trip into the back country. That's what he likes to do. But he comes to the Sanctuary too. It's another way of relating to the outdoors and the wild places that we still have.

When the weather's fine, the sun's shining, there's a breeze on the ridge, it's so peaceful and relaxing. And as you look around, at the mountains and the sky, you understand why you're fighting to protect the natural environment. It makes it all worthwhile. The way Roger described it, he said "I take a deep breath and it's like high-octane gas for the soul. Your batteries are recharged, and you come away feeling inspired and refreshed."

And even when the weather's bad, really wild and stormy, then you feel invigorated. Energized. I know that's what I feel, and we feel that way about the MindBody Space, when we combine yoga or chi gong with meditation on the ridge.

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That's what's so great about the Sanctuary. It's no big thing, but it's something positive and hopeful. It's easy to get really burnt out when you're dealing with all the problems, everything that's wrong with the world, and all the bad things that are happening. We need something positive for a change.

### **Connections**

#### **Ned Kinloch:**

What we get from our time at the Sanctuary—a sense of self as part of the natural world, and a sense of the natural environment we live in—are so obvious they're easily taken for granted. And forgotten. They're not part of our lives except in the most trivial ways. We've become separated from the natural world by the science and technology that have made life easier and better in purely material terms. That's not too surprising. But that science and technology have also caused havoc with the natural environment. The world is richer by all monetary or material standards, and those seem to be the only ones that matter these days.

We've got bigger cars and planes, and we're running out of oil. We produce mountains of everything, and we've got polluted skies and lakes and rivers. We have fast food and obesity. We've got lifesaving drugs and drug dependency. Amazing medical equipment and soaring health care costs. Massive fishboats and empty oceans. The list could go on and on. We talk about the threat of global warming and climate change, but we can't seem to do much about increasing inequality in the world; about obscene wealth and abject poverty. About food and water shortages. And seemingly endless conflicts.

And nearly all of these issues are related to the natural environment. To the way we exploit and control and waste natural resources. To the way we race to make sure we get the cheapest, the most, the biggest of everything. With no regard—in all our monetary measuring systems—to the cost to the natural environment. That's why we have to change the way we do things today.

I'd been thinking about earlier connections with the natural world, going back to the earliest humans. Not in terms of specific dates and eras, but in very general terms, and I came up with three very broad stages of human interaction with the natural environment. I characterized them as acceptance, manipulation, and domination.

The earliest connection was a matter of taking whatever the natural environment offered. It was a matter of survival. From day to day and year to year. People lived close to nature. In caves, close to water and food. They probably had pretty good local knowledge of where best to hunt and fish and find plants to eat—roots and berries, that sort of thing. They wouldn't know much about the weather, and couldn't do much about droughts or floods, or storms and earthquakes. The global population was small and out of the inevitable ignorance and superstition, I guess the first gods were “discovered,” or created. They were the shakers and movers, the rulers of the natural world.

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In the second type of interaction, humans manipulated nature in different ways. Making simple tools out of stones and copper and iron. Making other things out of silver and gold. They grew plants and domesticated wild animals. They built houses and cities and irrigation systems. Over the centuries, over the millennia, humans gradually shaped their surroundings and had more and more control over their own lives.

The third type of interaction developed as our knowledge of the natural world expanded. With science and technology, we began to think we could dominate nature. We can dam rivers, grow better crops with artificial fertilizers and pesticides. We can live in air-conditioned comfort anywhere in the world. We can get food from any part of the world. We can predict the weather and the path of hurricanes, and to some extent at least, we can take action to reduce the impact of droughts and floods. We can fly anywhere in the world, and into space.

Obviously, those are gross generalizations, and they don't apply everywhere or all the time. But I think they serve as useful categories for thinking about the future. The big question is: What is the next type of interaction going to be? Destruction of the natural environment, and ultimately, the destruction of humanity? Or integration? That is, a mutually beneficial process of humans utilizing natural resources in a less wasteful way, and at the same time, protecting biodiversity and allowing natural ecosystems to flourish.

If we keep going the way we're going now, destruction seems more likely than integration. And it's hard to tell how much time we've got, you know, with global warming and climate change. But we're optimists, and that's why we're thinking about new ways to connect with nature. That's another part of what the Sanctuary's about.

### **Alicia Tyndall:**

I believe a sense of place is something we have lost in recent years. In our ordinary life, we are separated from nature. We have gained many benefits in material comfort, but the cost has been great. They have taken us away from something very deep in our human nature. Oh, we travel all over the world. We see the sights. And wherever we go, we can travel in comfort. In big cars. In planes—not so comfortable perhaps! But fast. We wake up in another country. We have guidebooks. We see the sights. We have adventures. But wherever we go, certainly as Westerners from rich countries, our own culture is nearly always accessible. Not always of course, but in most cities of the world now, you will find Western-style accommodation and restaurants—McDonald's or other familiar names. Most of the time, you can speak English and never need to learn more than a few words of the local language. We travel with cellphones and Blackberries. Or we go to Internet cafes. We are never more than seconds away from our friends and families back home. We visit seven different countries, but only spend a few days in each one. And then a big plane whisks us back to our homes.

The world is smaller now, and while each country is distinct, and every city is different, there is also more of the same. A marvellous restaurant meal in Paris? Oui! But really, not quite as

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good as the dinner we had at Le Poulet in New York last year. River rafting on an adventure tour to Chile? Exciting, si! We were so lucky to have the same guides that took us down the Salmon River in Idaho two summers ago.

I am beginning to sound like Ned, now. Ned, the happy curmudgeon.

No, it is not something we want to change, the size of the world. The problem for me is that so much tourism and travel seems to be very superficial. What I would like to see is a better understanding of our essential connections to the natural environment.

### **Roger Maltenby:**

A few recent trends are promising. In the last few decades, a huge number of people have been able to travel all over the world in ways that they never did before. When the highway system in the U.S. was finished in the 1950s, people started driving all over the country, and the great National Parks were a huge attraction. With jets and cheaper airfares, people started flying everywhere. Fuel costs and airline bankruptcies might change all that soon, and I have to admit, most tourism is very superficial. Beaches and bars and shopping. But people have seen other places and experienced other cultures, and that's crucial for the future.

Another encouraging sign is the growth of eco-tourism. Almost anywhere in the world now, you can find eco-tourism. Birds, wildlife, sharks, whales—every kind of wildlife. You name it. Somewhere, you can go on a tour to see spectacular natural places and events. People are travelling to learn about the natural environment. They see unique features of a particular place, and they also see how those places are linked to other parts of the world by migration routes. I'm thinking of whales and turtles, the seasonal movement of wildlife across parts of Africa, and birds that travel thousands of miles from one hemisphere to the other. Although it's impossible to measure how much people learn and remember, I think they become more aware of the natural environment wherever they live.

Another positive aspect of eco-tourism is the growing awareness of the impact of travel and the trend to "going green." I don't know how much that's affecting air travel. That's an individual decision about how much to do and how to mitigate the impact with some form of carbon credits and offsets. But on the ground, eco-tourism tends to be greener and less damaging than regular forms of tourism. Adventure travel is also growing, and it's generally green, too. Perhaps not everywhere, but in many cases. It also introduces people, especially young people, to spectacular places. Some of the most amazing features of the natural environment you'll ever find.

I think, between eco-tourism, adventure travel and general tourism, people are more aware of the global natural environment, and to some extent, the natural environment where they live. I think we have to expand that awareness to the connections between every natural region of the world. And ultimately, to the very practical links between our lives and the natural environment everywhere.

**Alicia Tyndall:**

Clearly, there are many ways to make a new connection to the natural world, and many ways to strengthen traditional connections. There are still many people who find it in the old ways—hunting and gathering, farming and fishing, making use of natural resources. Others make a connection in modern ways of recreation and adventure.

For many people, the connection is made every time they go into mountains, or into wild places. Some feel the connection as a challenge. To conquer a mountain. To ski a mountain that has never been skied before. To run a river for the first time. I know one can feel like a conqueror after a hard climb. But you do not beat the mountain. You beat your fears or your weaknesses or your doubts and uncertainties. You prove something to yourself. But the mountain is always there. Next time, the conditions could be different. The rock is wet or icy; the snow unstable, the weather bad. Your fingers and your feet are freezing. You are not as strong as before. The mountain is still there. It is not beaten, and it has not beaten you. It is simply what it is, where it is.

Sitting quietly in a pleasant spot in the mountains, by a lake or river, or beside the ocean—that is very different. Yes, there are benches and seats at every scenic viewpoint, but you will not find stillness and silence there very often. It is only a matter of time before the next tour bus and its load of sightseers comes along to take photos of each other with the view in the background. Then they move on to the next piece of scenery.

At the simplest level, we all love the natural world. Despite all the marvels of science and technology, we love green parks and gardens. We love sunshine, flowers, lakes and rivers. We want natural light and fresh air. We feel good when we are surrounded by nature, and we feel better when we see nature in our cities. But we rarely take time to acknowledge it.

Time and stillness and silence are important for a deeper type of connection: the feeling that we are a part of nature, not separate from it. Then we can truly feel awe and wonder at the abundance, the beauty, and the complexity of nature. That is the beginning of a direct awareness of what we depend on for life itself: clean air, clean water, and fertile land. To make the connection, you need peace and quiet and stillness. Around you, and in yourself.

One part of that connection is having a true sense of place. Getting to know a place really well and understanding how it affects your life and how you affect it. Even in big cities, we cannot survive without the natural environment around us. Wild places are where you find clean air and water, and biological diversity. The oceans and rivers provide fish. Farmlands provide the food we eat. We all live in a location with a particular geography of mountains, valleys, plains, rivers, and lakes. A place with particular climate and weather. No city is totally artificial.

In the Sanctuary, we can re-connect with nature. Treat it with respect and restraint and empathy. We feel awe, and wonder. We feel exaltation. And gratitude—gratitude for the marvels of creation in all their forms. Gratitude for life itself.

### **Takao Matsushima:**

At the same time, it's important to understand what the Sanctuary isn't. It wasn't meant to be the complete answer to the National Park issues that arose at the time we built it. It began as a new and slightly different approach to a particular issue: the on-going struggle to preserve and protect a small part of the natural world against the forces of excessive growth and development. We didn't know how it would work when we started, but we all had an instinctive feeling that it was a step in the right direction. It represented conservation and spiritual values, simplicity and moderation. It's definitely not a solution to the huge array of environmental issues that demand action—prolonged, persistent, and concerted action by people and governments.

In a wider context, coming here for a few minutes or a few hours is not the same as undertaking a vision quest. It's not venturing deep into the wild. Meditating here won't automatically bring enlightenment.

Ironically perhaps, when we started, we weren't consciously taking on a vast moral obligation to bring about change in the relationship between humans and the planet. But in the last year, we've seen how it could represent a starting point for a tentative approach to that relationship. That's the exciting part now.

But let's not forget. All we've done is put one small idea into practice. It may have been a giant leap for our little group, but it was only a tiny step for humankind.

## **Exploration**

### **Ned Kinloch:**

In the Sanctuary, we're interested in the age-old tradition of contemplation and meditation as a gateway to new insights into the natural world and our place in it. With the MindBody Space, we're going back to other old traditions to explore other aspects of human potential. Not just intellectually, but physically as well. Not to be super-fit, or super-competitive, but to use *all* our faculties, all our capabilities as human beings. Capabilities that could help us find solutions, or productive approaches to a whole range of social and environmental issues that face us now and in the future. A pipe dream? I don't know. I think it's worth investigating.

In this area, as in everything we've done or are doing, there've been many other forerunners. George Leonard has been interested in the human potential I've just mentioned for a long time, and he has a great system for incorporating mind-body activities into everyday life, as a part of everyday life, not a short-term program to meet a specific goal. There's so much evidence showing that mind-body co-ordination contributes to health and fitness, and facilitates centering and balance. Scientists, at least Western ones, haven't been able to

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identify hidden or subtle energies that add to our strength, health, and well-being, but those energies are at the heart of yoga and chi gong and tai chi.

I think the combination of those activities, sitting in the Sanctuary, and familiar Western activities like walking and running and hiking, done in a natural setting, not only helps us become healthier and happier, it makes it possible for us to make an even deeper connection to the natural environment. We can take that feeling back to our homes and our workplaces. We can make our lives simpler—but fuller and richer in all the ways that really count.

We're not scholars or scientists. We're not lifelong meditators. We're dealing with small, easily felt, but not easily defined aspects of health and fitness and spiritual exhilaration. To explore human potential, not only in physical terms, but mentally and spiritually as well. To search for, and hopefully, tap into natural energies that might help us grow and develop in new ways, ways that will help us change and adapt to the world of the future. It's challenging and exciting!

### **Alicia Tyndall:**

We are building on connections we all know are there: awe, wonder, peace, and inspiration. Taking time for unfocused thinking—the space for insight to occur. Open to experience and insight wherever it comes from.

I like to think about the Sanctuary the same way I thought about the original platform: with a "beginner's mind." That is a Zen concept that encourages us to be open to new and different ideas. An experienced mind is quick to say "No. That will never work." A beginner doesn't know any better, so any new idea might be worth exploring. And you can often learn as much from trying and failing as you can from trying and succeeding. Our exploration is just beginning.

