

POINT REYES TRACKING SCHOOL

How To Use Your Tracking Club

Some points to consider when you go out with your tracking group, regarding how to get the most out of each experience.

1. As you head out, open your senses.

Take a while, as you walk, to go through the whole sensory shift, wide-angle global senses alternating with focused attention and back. Take some time with this, until it takes hold, then let it run unconsciously. Let yourself feel the sun and the wind, the tides, the growth cycles, birthing and hatching cycles

2. As you move out, slow down.

Consciously slow yourself, even exaggerating it for a while if necessary to get yourself to shift out of daily haste. Take your time, stroll, stop frequently, walk more quietly.

3. Begin to notice all the signs of life around you.

Everything—bird calls, feeding sign, scats, digs, trails, tracks, sightings. Begin relating what you notice to the current location and weather conditions. Think of the local species lists and possibilities

4. Notice how the signs of life are changing.

As you move through the landscape, how they are rooted in your precise location

5. Notice how the day is changing.

In real time—and how that feels as you move from one micro-niche to another

6. Recognize your tribe.

Open to them, honor and respect each of them for the qualities they hold and the value they bring. Share your wealth of awareness and aliveness.

7. Notice how your awareness of where you are is changing.

How the changing contexts allows you to anticipate and observe the smallest animal signs you might find and how to interpret it in terms of the inter-relationships of the varieties of life in that location

8. Notice the current seasonal shift.

How is it affecting the plant and animal communities—What plants are being eaten, what insects are out, what birds and mammals are active and what are they doing?

9. Step back occasionally.

See how the whole picture you are becoming aware of is playing out

10. Share with your tracking mates.

Include internal feelings and mystical senses. Learn to trust and rely on one another. Be willing to share your darkness and help each other work through it.

11. Pay attention to your knowledge gaps.

Take note and work on them.

12. Consider your wounded thinking patterns.

Use the purity of nature, of wildness, as a projection screen to help reveal your wounded thinking patterns--watch how they show up as noise and chaos against nature's impassive soul. Use this to discover your blind spots, your projections, your internal gossip and negative self-views, your fears, your automatic defenses. Just take note when nature gives you an assist with ever-ongoing healing processes. Let nature show you what to hold on to and what to let go of.