

“We are bleeding at the roots because we are cut off from the Earth and the sun and stars.”

-- D.H. Lawrence, author, essayist, poet, visionary 1885-1930

Do you ever wonder why we humans, who are part of Nature, engage in practices that deteriorate the natural environment? The question passes through my mind often, especially after a natural disaster strikes, such as Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. Only then, I wonder what is wrong with us that we do not recognize that we are the crux of the problem and the heart of the solution?

Dr. Michael Cohen, a recipient of the Distinguished World Citizen Award, eco-psychologist and environmental scientist, has dedicated his sixty-year career to researching and teaching Natural Attraction Ecology. Lauded as a maverick genius, he formulated a Web of Life Model that identifies exactly “what is wrong with us” and empowers us to correct it.

“Industrialized Society indoctrinates us from childhood into a nature-disconnected story that excessively exploits nature’s balanced essence, even as that energy dances in, through and around us,” he explains. “The root of the problem is that we deny we have been indoctrinated into this story; this keeps us tied to exploitative patterns of thought and behavior that perpetuate the industrial myth.”



WAKE UP ECO ZOMBIE

By Karen Rider

The result of living the Industrial Myth is obvious to many of us—but not enough of us: We are out of touch with our senses, with our inherent sensitivity to natural order of the web of life. It's not just the environment that is deteriorating; as a part of nature, our personal and social well-being degrades along with it. When human beings live nature-disconnected lifestyles, they impose limits on our reasoning and creative thinking. We become eco-zombies numb to the problems we are responsible for creating in the environment and the disorders of body, mind and soul.

Dr. Cohen spoke with Om Times about the powerful sensory and nature reconnecting processes that enables us to restore wellness to our nature-disconnected psyches. More than just rewriting the myth, his research and teaching Natural Attraction Ecology and the Natural Systems Thinking Process enables us to once again dance with nature for personal and global well-being.

Karen: Share with our readers how Webstring Natural Attraction works.

Dr. Cohen: The Webstring Natural Attraction Model recognizes people as being part of the web of life, no better or worse with respect to the planet as a totality. Each member of the web, whether amoeba or cloud or human, has its own identity, it's own contributions, and its own relationship to the whole.

The web of life is based on attraction between everything that's a part of it. For example, we've been in an attraction relationship with the sun for billions of years. That same attraction holds the nuclei of atoms together. On a smaller scale, for example, the human body's sensation for thirst is our natural attraction (NA) for water; water is the NA of hydrogen atoms to oxygen atoms. The web is a system, a dance that allows the whole to communicate with the parts through attraction and vice versa, in order to balance itself so everything remains in attraction.

The Webstring Model demonstrates that individuals, at any given moment, learn what they need to know when they make uncontaminated sensory attraction connections with authentic nature.

Karen: How so?

Dr. Cohen: Most folks know The Webstring Model works because they have experienced its effects. Right now, recall an experience you have had in nature, one you would be attracted to repeat again because of what value that experience brought into your life in that moment and the moments since. This is factual. This is personal empirical evidence. You can trust it because the experience registered, unadulterated, directly on your senses: the colors that surrounded you, the motions and sounds of nature, the aromas, textures or flavors that were part of the experience touched themselves in you.

Karen: I'm thinking of a backpacking trip to Grand Canyon. How do NA experiences heal the disconnect created by the Industrial Myth?

Dr. Cohen: The Myth is so ingrained in the personal and global psyche that we've become eco-zombies, unable to see what is right in front of our eyes and act to correct it: Separation from the web of life, the natural order, is at the root of disorder and dis-ease. Go

back in your memory to that NA experience. What do you recall of your trip?

Karen: Immense peace. Awesome appreciation for the beauty of the planet. I remember seeing so many stars in the night sky; it was as if God had sprinkled diamond dust on black velvet.

Dr. Cohen: In my years of field study and practical application of this model in education and psychology, people have reported the observations like yours. Their direct contact with the web of life helped them escape their “industrial story thinking.” They were able to feel and sense the true natural being they were born as. They become aware how their natural self has been hurtfully misguided by Industrial Society’s exploitation of nature within and around them.

Karen: What does Earth have to teach us about the wellness of personal and global balance?

Dr. Cohen: Perhaps the greatest discovery nature has to offer is the opportunity for each of us to find answers to questions such as

“Who am I?” “What is going on?” “What is my purpose?” “How can I heal?” Such discovery lies in trusting our natural feelings and sensations, recognizing they are legitimate facts about how nature works in and around us.



Natural Attraction moments empower us to become conscious, to wake-up to the Industrial Myth. THEY help us recognize that you, me, others are not in conscious thought or sensory awareness when we live out our “indoor stories” and lives. Ironically, people reading this are probably indoors, with electronic lighting and reading devices.

Then you have people, as I have observed, who go out to the trails and waste their moments talking about the features of their SUV, mortgage payments and lousy bosses. Their consciousness did not register the whole of nature in the moment. Yet, that is what needs to happen. We have to encourage nature to register in our consciousness, become a part of it, as nature is a part of us.

Karen: You’re saying we fail to “see or feel” the world as we have RESHAPED it and the effect we have upon it. People don’t allow nature into their lives; they stay blind to the myth. What did you think of the film, Avatar? It seemed to illustrate the perpetuation of the Industrial Myth, which humans tried to impose upon the Na’vi.

Dr. Cohen: At the same time it demonstrated what is hidden in our lives, James Cameron’s Avatar also perpetuated the Industrial Myth. It portrayed the restorative connections between the Na’vi and nature as occurring on another planet, Pandora. The film created an il-

lusion that made folks think their true relationship with nature was an unobtainable fantasy rather than a reality. It further disconnected viewers from nature and made them more dependent on a film crutch, rather than helping them learn how to enjoy first hand contact with authentic nature's benefits and support. In reality, what happened to the Na'vi is happening on our planet Earth. Our 're-connect with nature'antidote also exists here, now.

Natural Attraction Ecology and Project NatureConnect offer ways to help us genuinely connect our psyche with the grace of nature's self-correcting and restorative powers. Our loss of these powers due to the nature-separated way we learn to think and feel causes us to create our most challenging problems, mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually and environmentally.

Karen: What can we do about it?

Dr. Cohen: We can let nature help us stop denying the Industrial Myth we learned during childhood. Engage in thought and feeling relationships, backyard or backcountry that contrib-

ute to the sensible joy of nature and natural attraction ecology. The curriculum in Educating, Counseling and Healing with Nature (ECHN) adds activities to any way of teaching, living and working. It is an effective step in the right direction.

When we integrate the sensory science of Natural Attraction Ecology into medical, educational or developmental disciplines and practices, we are able to consciously interlace thoughts, feelings and relationships with the restorative and self-correcting powers of nature. Through this purifying connection, we reap the benefits of reversing our disorders and increasing well-being personally and globally.

Fast Fact File:

For sixty years, Michael J. Cohen's tireless efforts as a naturalist, environmental educator, counselor and eco-psychologist have made him an environmental hero. In 1965, Dr. Cohen discovered that Planet Earth acted like a living organism. He founded sensory, Gaia based, degree-granting Environmental and Expedition Education outdoor programs independently and for the National Audubon

Society and American universities.

- Dr. Cohen has lived almost continuously in natural areas and to this day sleeps outdoors daily. He has lived among the Amish, indigenous people, outdoorsmen and ecologists.

- Director of the Institute of Global Education, Integrated Ecology Department and Project NatureConnect

- Faculty, Portland State University; Akamai University

- Author of 50 publications, including the books: Reconnecting with Nature, Einstein's World, Web of Life Imperative

- Hobbies: Writing, folk music, contra dance and traditional music performer

Free Course in Natural Attraction Ecology <http://www.ecopsych.com/eco800bb.html>

Project Nature Connect <http://www.ecopsych.com/overview.html>

Regarding Avatar: <http://www.ecopsych.com/avatar.html>

Discover your natural attraction powers <http://www.ecopsych.com/giftearthday1.html>

Online Natural Attraction Trail at <http://www.ecopsych.com/avata-path.html>.

YouTube: What is special about Natural Attraction Ecology? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddRigePS2MY>