



Parent Self Care Tool: The Calming Effect of Nature

Work and school deadlines, traffic jams and cantankerous, hungry children...time to care for yourself as a parent? In dreams only!

But there is time, because just outside every door is *outside*.

The next time you "step out" of your car take ten seconds to "step out" of your situation.

- Just close your eyes and breath deep.
- Or instead of closing your eyes look up to the sky, at the architecture or find one tree to gaze at.

Each time you "step out" of a door at work or at home make a conscious effort to "step out" mentally and melt into nature. Ten seconds will not change freeway traffic. One sixth of a minute will not starve the children. It will not make or break an appointment. But taking ten seconds to enjoy nature may make or break you as a parent.

Nature has a natural calming effect. Along with the daily ten second breaks, schedule a non-negotiable time each week to take a 15-45 minute walk. As you walk be aware of the sights and sounds around you. Are there birds, trees, raindrops or gentle wind? Even metro strolls cannot conceal the beauty of the sky or the crisp air. Take time to breath deeply. Ponder what a huge wonderful world we live in. Think about the daily sunrise and sunset. The moon shines and stars abound nightly. Our consistent and constant friend always awaits us *outside* every door.

Taking great care of our children requires taking great care of ourselves. So stop for 10 small seconds several times a day to breath nature in or take a long stroll with her weekly. Let nature care for you, so you may care for your family in a fresh natural way.