

We The People
Program 50
Naturally Less Stress



Each generation brings with it new technology and a new regime of leisure, hobbies and distractions. The pace of life seems to increase relentlessly and previous generations often perceive that something is lost along the way. As a kid I would play with my mates and build cubby houses and clay dams in earth gutters from mud and imagination took us to places which I now realise ignited creative thought while the dirt and worms built a strong immune system. The emphases was not on toys or purpose built creations rather on our ability to use everyday items to create all kinds of fun. An old bed sheet and tomatoes stakes became a raft with a sail while a piece of pipe became a cannon and a towel was a cape you could fly with. I guess there was the equivalent for girls but I didn't notice as I wasn't interested in them at age 9. By the time I did take notice I was a little older and the rest is history.

Today we are quickly becoming an indoor species as most people live in cities and urban areas. A recent U.S. study indicates children between the ages of 8 and 18 spend more than 4 hours a day interacting with technology and as result there is no longer time for the outdoors and imagination stagnates. Current research shows that untamed places and the bush have a restorative effect, calming our frazzled nerves and relieving a tired cortex. Even after a brief encounter with nature people are far more creative, happier and better able to focus and cope. If there were a pill that delivered the same result we would be taking it.

It appears that about three days in nature is the optimum time to gain the most benefit and start noticing the soft environment where everything has purpose and lives in harmony. We pick that vibration up rapidly and the positive effects are immediate. No cell phone, no texting and with no technological distractions gives us time to think and see the wonderful world we live in. A reverence descends and we find a new place for ourselves and more reason to celebrate each day. Even a few hours will do the trick too.

Our current generation seem to be missing out on all this and imagination is almost extinct as technology rules our lives. Even when looking at a field of grass scientists measure an improvement in children's ability to focus and be calm while afflictions like ADD reduce in severity if the surroundings are softer and more natural. We are not designed to live in a concrete jungle and our youth pay the biggest price with more and more cognitive drawbacks and less ability to appreciate the natural world. In older people regular exposure to nature improves short term memory and general outlook.

We are truly blessed on the Gold Coast to have so much in the way of bush and natural places at our back door. Regardless of age we can all participate and enjoy nature. How long has it been since you went to Springbrook or Natural Arch. To Mount Warning or Lamington National Park and Purlingbrook Falls. Think green and travel to Binna Burra and hear the Paradise Rifle bird or explore the Scenic Rim area. Closer in take a walk through the Burleigh Headland National Park or hike through North Stradbroke Island or explore the Numinbar Valley. Beside all this there are a myriad of hiking and walking tracks again for all ages and families.

We were built for nature and that's why being immersed in it has such a wonderful positive effect on us. Make sure your children and grand children experience the sheer calming beauty of our forests, rivers and the magnificent animals and bird life we have here and the effect on the young will be instant. In fact a hike of just a few hours is the perfect way to calm and focus a teenager before a big exam. Gentleman here's one for you because a walk in the bush increases levels of Oxytocin in women and that's a big bonus for the heart.

It's when we are lost in the wild that the mind is finally at home and nature touches our soul.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley