



# Nature and the Human Soul: Cultivating Wholeness and Community in a Fragmented World

By Bill Plotkin

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Addressing the pervasive longing for meaning and fulfillment in this time of crisis, *Nature and the Human Soul* introduces a visionary ecopsychology of human development that reveals how fully and creatively we can mature when soul and wild nature guide us. Depth psychologist and wilderness guide Bill Plotkin presents a model for a human life span rooted in the cycles and qualities of the natural world, a blueprint for individual development that ultimately yields a strategy for cultural transformation.

With evocative language and personal stories, including those of elders Thomas Berry and Joanna Macy, this book defines eight stages of human life - Innocent, Explorer, Thespian, Wanderer, Soul Apprentice, Artisan, Master, and Sage - and describes the challenges and benefits of each. Plotkin offers a way of progressing from our current *egocentric*, aggressively competitive, consumer society to an *ecocentric*, soul-based one that is sustainable, cooperative, and compassionate. At once a primer on human development and a manifesto for change, *Nature and the Human Soul* fashions a template for a more mature, fulfilling, and purposeful life - and a better world.

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**Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #60754 in Books
- Brand: Brand: New World Library
- Published on: 2007-12-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 6.00" w x 1.25" l, 1.54 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 528 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In his magnum opus more than 25 years in the making, psychologist, eco-therapist, and wilderness guide Plotkin (*Soulcraft*) brings forth a new model for the whole of human life and spirituality in our world in dire ecological need, spoiled by patho-adolescent society. Beginning fittingly with elder eco-sage Thomas Berry, Plotkin calls us to a fresh circular conception of individual and collective evolutionary life genuinely reconnected to the wild of nature. Using the indigenous template of the four compass directions, his eight stages on the wheel of spiritual development are the Innocent, Explorer, Thespian, Wanderer, Soul Apprentice, Artisan, Master and Sage. The Wheel is a deep-structure portrait of nature-and-soul-oriented cultures, a portrait that encompasses child-raising practices, core values, stages of growth, rites of passage, community organization, and relationship to the greater Earth community, he writes. Leaning heavily on psychology, Plotkin also draws upon a heavenly host of the rich sources that inform a lifetime including poetry, global cultures and much more. Graceful prose is counterbalanced with diagrams and clear chapter structure. Plotkin offers an essential, weighty book for our perilous times. (*Jan.*)

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From the Inside Flap

"With *Nature and the Human Soul*, Bill Plotkin once again works miracles. This vital book provides a road map to help us remember how to be human - which means how to be a human being in relationship to the natural world, to our home. We owe Bill Plotkin a deep debt of gratitude for this important work."

— **Derrick Jensen**, author of *A Language Older Than Words* and coauthor of *As the World Burns*

"*Nature and the Human Soul* offers a consolidated and invaluable template for internal and external development - not only personally, but collectively as well. Bill Plotkin defines the eight stages of human life and describes the cultural and individual tasks for each stage in brilliant, insightful, and masterful ways."

— **Angeles Arrien, PhD**, cultural anthropologist and author of *The Four-Fold Way* and *The Second Half of Life*

"Bill Plotkin enhances our grasp of the stages of life we are born to pass through by weaving into them themes of meaning, soul, and spirituality. This is a rich offering not only to the field of psychology but to a world torn from its roots."

— **Chellis Glendinning, PhD**, author of *My Name Is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*

"Brilliant, accessible, respectful, and compassionate, *Nature and the Human Soul* weaves a practical path for anyone from any culture to become whole, leading a soul-centered life that will benefit themselves and everyone and everything around them. Science, as currently practiced, can only tell us what is. *Nature and the Human Soul* shows what could (and should) be. There is an old adage that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. The publication of *Nature and the Human Soul* may well signal that humanity is ready to learn a better way. It should be read by everyone, particularly those who choose to be parents, educate our children, guide our cultures and communities, and envision a better world."

— **Dan Popov, PhD**, cofounder of the Virtues Project and coauthor of *The Family Virtues Guide*

"C.G. Jung, Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, Father Thomas Berry, Julia Butterfly Hill, Joanna Macy. These are but a few of the bright visionaries who have helped us to understand the territory of the human psyche in

its relation to the realm of myth, the profundity of cosmology, and the ancient human love affair with the natural world. In *Nature and the Human Soul*, Bill Plotkin joins their ranks by masterfully weaving luminous streams of insight and guidance, offering us new tools and maps. These potent maps not only hold the promise of personal transformation, but they may very well be a path toward our survival as a species."

— **Frank MacEowen**, author of *The Celtic Way of Seeing*

From the Back Cover

"Plotkin brings forth a new model for the whole of human life and spirituality in our world in dire ecological need, spoiled by 'patho-adolescent society.' . . . Graceful prose is counterbalanced with diagrams and clear chapter structure. Plotkin offers an essential, weighty book for our perilous times."

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