

Not so many generations ago, all our ancestors lived in smaller communities, clans or tribal villages. There it was understood that rites of passage at points of major life transition were essential not only for the individual but also for the health and renewal of the very fabric of life.

These small communities held powerful, poignant, ecstatic ceremonies to help assist those coming and going from their passage in the wilderness. They knew that to make a pilgrimage of this kind into the wild is to open oneself and one's life to radical transformation. It is a step of great courage and vulnerability that can be made more fully with a circle of caring, informed allies. It is in this tradition that we meet.

We meet on the land for community gatherings once per season, near the time of the equinox or solstice. And we hold Sendoff and Welcoming Home ceremonies for each Youth Quest. All are free and open to anyone who would like to participate.



"The greatest help, thrill, comfort and joy I found on this trip was the community that we all built together."

— Ariel W., 17,
Youth Quest 2001



Join us for a journey into one of California's stunningly beautiful wilderness areas. There nature's sweet blanket of silence will help you slow from the rush of modern life and rediscover your place amidst the earth's rhythms and cycles. Let a soaring hawk, the song of the wind or the vastness of the night sky guide you to the rejuvenation or self-discovery you need. As our ancestors from many cultures have done, you might come to mark a passage from one phase of life to another. Or, to seek healing and insight into particular issues, deepen your bond with nature, or simply to reconnect with what brings you joy and meaning. If you are hungry to understand yourself and your world more clearly, or seek help in navigating life's changes, this trip can be a powerful ally in your search.

"I can say in no uncertain terms that this experience has changed my life in profound and lasting ways."

— Jon L., 31, Community Planner

"I had a wonderful year of growth and change following my vision quest. Thank you again for your wise guidance."

— Ginny M., 55, Computer Scientist



We begin with a period of preparation done with the compassionate support of your guides and fellow seekers. Through storytelling, creative expression, council practice, and living simply on the earth, you'll rediscover your connection to what is important to you right now in your life. After this, each quester separates from the group to spend 3 days and nights living alone in the wilderness while the guides remain in a nearby basecamp. Most people choose to fast during this time. Upon your return from solo time, we reunite for a few days to help you harvest the lessons and gifts of your time alone and begin the task of integrating your new discoveries into your daily life.

Youth Quest

For youth ages 15–19, this quest travels high into the desert mountains east of the Sierras. It's a place where a vast silence, beauty and peacefulness abounds. If you are eager to build your self-confidence, to better understand yourself and your place in the world, or want to mark your passage out of childhood and into adulthood, this trip can help take you there. The Youth



Quest is for teens that want to mark the changes in their lives and are ready to step into their power and responsibility as young adults. Parents are encouraged to participate in pre- and post-trip activities to witness and support this rite of passage for their son or daughter.

The quest involves both alone and group time in the wilderness. It's a time for reflection, inward journeying and relating to nature. It is also a time when your innate creativity is likely to emerge and flourish. When you return to your family and community as a young adult, you may find that you are looking at yourself and the world in a new way.

"I discovered strength and stability. I learned to be honest with myself... I came to accept and understand the natural ups and downs we are all bound to experience."

— Jessica Y., 19



Day Quest

The DayQuest is the shortest form of our quest program, helping people turn to nature to seek insight, healing and renewal. Held in the beautiful wild lands in the SF Bay Area, a DayQuest is ideal for people unable to get away for a longer quest trip. And, our experience has shown us that going into nature in this ceremonial, sacred way for even just one day can be a life-changing journey. It's an opportunity to step out of your daily routine and into a world of peace, beauty and magic. The stones, a deer, or perhaps the gentle murmuring of a small stream will awaken you, guiding you back to yourself and to the wisdom you need in your life.

We offer two different kinds of DayQuests, focusing either on earth-based wisdom teachings or communing with nature through the expressive arts. We are also available to work with individuals and groups.

"Your work is profound!!! You helped me find my courage to be more fully in the world."

— Julie W., 38, Artist

"It was incredibly healing... More powerful than I could even convey...a very special place and moment in time for me."

— Claudia H., 34, Therapist



Couples Quest



Bring the joys and challenges of relationship to a sanctuary in the wilderness. Is your relationship at a point of transition: Getting ready to marry? To start a family? Considering separation or divorce? Or maybe you're longing to deepen your intimacy? Or needing to rebalance time spent together and time spent apart? The Couple's Quest is a fabulous opportunity to explore oneself in relationship and to deepen your capacity for intimacy.

"We gained so much insight into one another and respect for each other's needs for space and connection. Our dialogues have been much more honest since the quest."

— Amanda C., 30, Social Worker

Together with one or two other couples you will participate in the powerful ceremony of a wilderness quest. The trip includes all the components of a quest with the added opportunities afforded by sharing such a journey with your partner. The presence of other couples offers support and resources not found in other quest settings. Come to reconnect with your partner and with what is beautiful and alive in you and in your partnership. To register for the trip or get more information, call us at (415) 488-1917.

Listening from the Belly

Imagine yourself in a deep liquid world, afloat in stillness and exquisite silence. Any movement or sound that ripples across the surface of your body, awakens every cell in your being as you experience, locate, identify, and respond to whatever is moving through the environment. Whatever moves around us also moves through us. There is no separation. When residing on this earth fully in our senses, we can hear the electric conversation of ants as they devotedly build their underground temples. We catch the shadow of bobcat as she quietly slips into the forest at the edge of our vision. Through the soles of our feet we feel the sway of treetop branches in the breeze. What is the wisdom lying within a stone? The hidden language of a gurgling creek? If you really stopped and took it in, what would you learn from a giant sequoia, a being 1,500 years old? What would it be like to contact a soul of such unimaginable presence?

During this 5-day retreat we will use the metaphor of listening from deep within the belly of a whale to expand our awareness. We will court the wildness of the world's soul with a "language older than words." By listening to nature and one another's stories, our sensing, feeling selves will reawaken to the beauty surrounding us in each moment. Touched by the many wonders of the natural world, our bodies and imaginations will come alive. This residence of being is our native, innate state — one of joy, aliveness, sensitivity and interconnectedness.



Each year we co-create a wide variety of customized programs for groups and individuals. These range from corporate teambuilding and therapeutic trips for youth to private DayQuests and wilderness trips. For people who have already been on a quest and want to become guides themselves, we offer apprenticeships in wilderness quest guiding. Apprenticeship can be a profound path of self-development, learning and service every bit as powerful as going on a quest.

"Dave's vision quests are a unique mix of masterful consulting skills, appreciation of nature, knowledge of ancient traditions, and creative use of song, poetry and art. Dave asks the appropriate questions — often the tough questions — to help us open up to our deeper yearnings."

— Lynn R., 46, Consultant

We have an amazing staff! Diverse and talented, we love to craft programs to fit your needs and give you exactly what you want. Our private DayQuests and one-on-one ecotherapy programs have been exceptionally successful. Even just one day spent in nature in this way can be life changing and can help guide you on your life's path for many moons to come.

To explore the possibilities, contact us at (415) 488-1917 or via e-mail info@WildernessReflections.com.



Dave Talamo, MFT

Dave Talamo is founder of Wilderness Reflections. He has over 25 years of experience guiding wilderness trips and trained as a quest guide with Stephen Foster and Meredith Little. He works as a therapist with youth and adults, and is a certified Wilderness First Responder. Dave is committed to the expression of joy and authenticity through the body and to helping others experience their own embodied selves in an intimate, ecstatic relationship with Nature.

"I'd follow Dave down any river."

— Stephen Foster, Author, *Book of the Vision Quest*

Annie Bloom

Annie is a naturalist for humanity, seeking and tending that which is essentially wild and untamed in all of our hearts. A gifted wilderness guide, she has been taking people into places of extraordinary beauty for 12 years, opening them to the joy of living in soulful connection with Nature and as caretakers for Earth. At her home in Utah, she is a professional body worker and ceremonial facilitator.

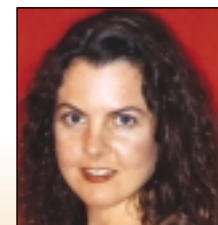


Shai Lavie, MFT

Shai works as a therapist with adults, adolescents and children. A brilliant and creative group leader, Shai also teaches meditation and runs leadership retreats for teens. Combining ancient and cutting edge wisdom on youth development, Shai trains other therapists and speaks to parents about teen issues. He has led youth quests for four years and is trained as a Wilderness First Responder.

Amy Biesemeyer, MFTI

Amy has a passion for nature and personal growth work. As a quest guide, she weaves together her love for song, ritual and creative expression. In her ten years of wilderness guiding, she has learned to gently and skillfully help people navigate the territory between comfort and challenge. Amy is a certified Wilderness First Responder and a therapist for children, teens and adults.



Alice Higham, LCSW

Alice has worked with young people, especially adolescents, for many years, as a therapist and rites of passage guide. She utilizes a variety of approaches in this work, including storytelling, crafts, song and silent reflection. She has led youth quests for three years and is known as a strong, caring and inspired innovator.