

00:11

Picture one of your favorite spots in nature, a place you love. Maybe you're heading for this spot after a stressful day at work, maybe you're worrying about your economy, maybe you had an argument or fight with your friend or worse -- you lost somebody you loved. You are heading to this specific space, maybe close to home, to find some comfort. Whatever and wherever it is, most of us tend to search nature to play or to get some relief, purpose and perspective. These spaces for potential peace are now proving to be more important than ever during the pandemic.

00:52

Often we are surprised by some kind of natural phenomenon and magic when we're in nature. Maybe an eagle suddenly flies over your head, a fish nips at your toes, or a sparrow approaches your bench with a tilted head and a look that says, "Please share some of your bread with us."

01:12

This is me, my dad and grandmother, Signe. And this is where I come from, the west coast of Norway. Most of the time in my childhood, I spent in this yellow boat, with my dad. He was a wildling in many ways, my dad, and he gave me the possibility to learn from nature and connect with it, especially the ocean and the seabirds. So when I'm close to these elements, I really feel like home-home; I feel connected.

01:43

Now, picture that the place you love, that sacred place where you can feel more at ease and sometimes maybe find peace is in some way broken or even worse -- gone. What if this place -- for example, your favorite bay to swim in -- which has always been there for you now is polluted, full of oil, dead birds everywhere. Or the steady mountain, now hijacked by big machines and greedy industry. Well, it is not about imagination anymore. The destruction of nature and wildlife is real. It's been real for a good while. And our homes that we share with other life forms are getting destroyed in the name of progress.

02:31

A couple of years ago, I met a Norwegian philosopher, Arne Johan Vetlesen, after reading one of his books, called "The Denial of Nature." We quickly found that we share this common love and fascination for nature, a love that we can call "ecological love." We talked about our connection to our homes and the love for our surrounding environments: for him, the forests in the southeastern parts of Norway, with the beautiful and mysterious owls; and for me, the bird island and mountain Runde on the west coast of Norway. I said to him that in some strange way, I

sometimes feel like and identify with the puffin bird, maybe because I kind of always have been dreaming about having the ability to fly. So it must be love, most likely not mutual.

03:23

In the forest close to Arne Johan's house, the owls are now gone because of deforestation. The bird island that I love, the island of Runde, now has bird nests full of plastic, and climate change is confusing the wildlife. This has a devastating impact on the nearly 500,000 bird inhabitants -- 500,000. Their numbers are now decreasing. Most of the birds there are listed as endangered. So we explored our own sorrow and pain, Arne Johan and me, and discovered that many people in various cultural contexts and in different ways feel a complicated form of loss and mourning, ecological sorrow, love sorrow. We mourn and suffer with nature.

04:19

Life forms that we in many ways have taken for granted and, as we know, exploited, are now facing extinction at a rate that is insane. Since the early 1970s until today, 2020, the world's wildlife has been reduced by 68 percent. And the latest UN nature panel report warns that we human beings are continuing to kill all nonhuman living beings systematically. We really need to start listening to what nature is trying to tell us and what we are doing to ourselves as well. We need to make a shift from natural-born killers to natural-born lovers, and we need to critically challenge what future Green Deals should consist of.

05:10

Because unfortunately, some of the prospective solutions to the climate crisis also can destroy nature. Protecting and respecting nature is one of the most radical and important climate actions we do. Most of us have felt that love is both amazing and sometimes a bit complicated. We also know that sorrow is deeply connected to our ability to love and to care for other beings. So I argue, alongside others, that we should feel more actively in our relationship with other life forms. When nature is being destroyed -- the steady mountain, your favorite swimming spot, the forest and all its inhabitants -- it seems quite natural that we feel emotional pain. Doesn't it? How does the destruction affect our mental health?

06:13

Ecological sorrow is indeed a complicated form of mourning. Maybe it gets more complicated because we need to acknowledge that we, as we live today, are the problem -- human beings, our constant craving for more, stimulated by a political system that does not act to protect our fundamental home, a system that disconnects us from nature, the soil, the forest, the ocean, the air. We fail to protect all other forms of wildlife that we share this magnificent and sometimes

awful planet with. So our lack of respect for the other-than-human is also a lack of respect for humankind.

07:03

Look at this. It's just ... heartbreaking. It really breaks my heart that we cannot stop our destruction.

07:20

So what's the point, talking about this? Why should we try even harder to explore and understand this complicated love story and relationship with nature? Why is this at least equally important as big tech solutions? Well, it does not help anybody to get stuck in the sorrow and sadness. But I believe we need to make room for this sorrow, this pain to make room for our vulnerability to make room for all the complicated feelings related to the ongoing nature and climate crisis, because this room potentially also creates an opportunity to act. Because we can't ignore it. We need to talk about it and share our stories.

08:13

Accepting and understanding my feelings helps me to overcome some of the pain and to not get stuck in depression. And it helps me to connect with others that feel sad and angry because what they love is being destroyed.

08:30

Understanding our emotional and physical reactions better can create the opportunity to reclaim the fact that we are a part of nature, not apart from nature, to quote the famous Sir David Attenborough. And just look at what Greta Thunberg is doing. She took her sorrow and depression and transformed it to powerful action, actions that engage and resonate in people in an exceptional way.

09:03

However, it is likely that we will experience more loss. I sometimes get this question: What can we do with our ecological love and sorrow? And why should we do anything? Why should we care to continue at all if our land is lost and gone? This is a hard reality. Some people commit suicide because of climate change and destruction of their homes. Some get killed protecting their home and forests. Once again, the most vulnerable are being affected the most, for example, First Nation people and climate refugees.

09:48

I believe there is still some hope that we can come together, that we preserve nature so that future generations can coexist with and enjoy what this planet has to offer. We can use our feelings towards the natural world in a more constructive way, alongside the knowledge and technology that helps us rewild nature. We can have a positive function in the ecosystem.

10:18

I can only speak for myself, even though I know I share this perspective and these feelings with many. But the deepest meaning for me in this weird life is to feel connected with all human and nonhuman life and to try to be supportive on behalf of life. Although it's difficult to see and feel any hope, I believe that it will be in our actions that we will find hope and meaning. We have possibilities to plant seeds and start a garden to create a small impact where we are in our local communities; possibilities to reclaim the soil that our bodies someday, like it or not, are heading for; possibilities to protest; possibilities to take our love, rage and sorrow on behalf of our homes and the planet to local. And although we feel the sadness and the sorrow in our bones, we should remember that this feeling is in many ways collective, that this sorrow takes deep roots in our collective unconscious.

11:28

To prevent a public health disaster, a continuing wave of collective loss and sorrow, we need to acknowledge our feelings to understand where they come from and start protecting our ecological home. I argue that it's OK to be sad, angry, depressed. Believe me, you're not alone. Ecological love, sorrow and rage can work as resistance. Our stories can work as resistance. And together, we can transform our love and sorrow to powerful actions in the name of protecting nature and each other, in the name of changing a destructive system.

12:17

My fellow political animals: engage and organize and plant those seeds. I mean, it's amazing to follow the will of life. So let's go out there and try to create communities of hope despite all odds, like tender dandelions breaking through asphalt. Let's be vulnerable and strong and rebel for life. That's all I have.