

## How Do I Love Trees? Let Me Count The Ways ... by The Gratefulness Team

Some of you may have noticed (or are regularly visiting) our Practice Space where we offer a Daily Question to enhance grateful awareness. Each day we are moved and uplifted by the responses that appear. The reflections are joyful, poignant, subtle, poetic, loving, generous, sophisticated, playful, deep and, of course, infused with gratitude.

We delight in these reflections and wanted to share more widely. And so, in recognition of the vital role trees play in all of our lives (every day is a perfect day to celebrate a tree!), the following is a selection of responses to one of our Daily Questions:

How do I love trees? Let me count the ways...

“(Trees) are, have always been, members of my family. I live surrounded by the wonderful forests in the mountains of the Sierra Sur in Mexico. When a child turns one year old here there is always a big party ... My present to these little ones is a tree of their own...their best friend tree. Usually an oak, once an avocado, the tree comes live in a pot ready to plant—near but not too close to their house. It is accompanied by a letter that their parents will read to them when they are old enough...introducing them to their special friend where they may take refuge and delight throughout their entire life. I was given such a tree when I was little. I ran to my tree when I was upset or had a special secret to tell. I dreamed big dreams under my tree. I last checked my tree 10 years ago when I moved to Mexico. At that time it still stood in the backyard of a Minnesota house...my friend for life. We are both over 70 now. My tree’s greatest gifts to me have been the understanding of patience and acceptance and unconditional love.” ~ Amor Fati

“Trees are beautiful: pines, palms, and deciduous (with or without leaves). When deciduous trees have lost their leaves, they form exquisite and intricate drawings against the sky. In a recent ice storm the trees of our entire town were adorned with sparkling diamonds, making me the richest person in the world. They give us oxygen, shade, fertilizer, wind protection, and habitat for wildlife.” ~ Joan

“I love trees with all the fibers of my being, with the roots of my heart, with the leaves that spring out of my body to meet the light and warm presence of love, with the thick bark of me feeling the atmosphere and translating minerals into a song of praise and wonder, with the sap that flows through my veins carrying sweetness throughout my body, with the holdingness that welcomes birds and squirrels and anyone seeking shelter or home, with the limbs of me dancing to meet the sky in a delight of surrender, with the seasons of me meeting all the elements and using them as paint to splash across

mountains or the sky or frames to hold deep blue absence, with the forest of me gathered in monk-like meditation listening into the heartbeat and breath of silence, with the coniferous fur and needles of my being keeping a green light of hope glowing and a soft embrace dispelling cold winds, with the fruits and berries and nuts and acorns given freely to others, with the pollen searching the sky for communion and meeting in the alive air of Spring, with the songs of crickets and cicadas dousing the summer with rivers of swimming sound, with the creakings and the whoosh of me highlighting the depth of peace in our vast skies, with the giving of my body to soft earth as the food for further acts of love, with the ability to soak in and receive rain answering the cloud's surrendered falling with a rising up and rooting down toward the two loves of earth and sky, with the simple presence of being enough as I am and revealing the beauty of nowhere to go but here and now." ~ Ben

"I love the texture of trees, the expansive trunks of trees to the skinniest of trunks of trees, the shade they provide, the filter of the sky making shapes as the branches dance along in the sky while laying on the grass below, their smell after the rain, curiosity of tree rings and life of no longer living tree, how they bend, how they can differ so greatly in height, how they just seem to know things I know nothing about yet, how they feel to walk beside, between, among them, how they share a network of food deep below, how they provide environments for other organisms to grow, the homes/food/shelter they provide to wildlife, the kick ass forts I have made with their fallen branches, free heat while camping, holding up my hammock...friends who listen to my thoughts and help clear them out on a leisurely walk among them." ~ Manda

"Trees symbolize a "both-ness" that I adore. They are science and spirit. They are grounded and blow in the wind. The concept of "both-ness" is a core value that anchors me and brings me closest to the Divine. I used to think being a woman that expresses masculine in appearance was bad/unacceptable. Then I learned all things Divine are both masculine and feminine. I felt connected, in touch and relieved. I wasn't bad, I was both. Love for myself grew exponentially with this new perspective. Trees are one of the many Divine beings that remind me of this connection. I love trees!" ~ R. Pike

"Trees mediate between the air and the Earth, purifying the breath of life. They sing to the Earth as the air moves through. Trees are shade and shelter, beauty and benefit for all creatures." ~ Pat

"For me, the trees hold the souls of the Ancient Ones, the deep wisdom and life energy that support my very being in the world. My whole life, they have given me protection and sacred space just to be." ~ Pilgrim

"Silent. Still. Elegant. Wise beyond words. Unique and individual. Always truthful. Connected and social. Dignified and graceful. Living, breathing symbols of the tree of life."  
~ KC

“I love trees for they are the very essence of life.” ~ Gina

And we leave you with some additional tree wisdom...

Photo: Linda Hannum, A Network for Grateful Living

(If you'd like to send the image above as an eCard, simply click on the picture)