

## Day 9

# *Listening to Nature*

Nature speaks, that's for sure. It is just a matter of whether we busy human beings have time to listen or not.

In 2001, my wife, my sons, and I had the rare opportunity to go on a holiday to the West Coast of North America. Lake Tahoe was so set apart and magnificent. I never realized there was such a place like this in the planet. Imagine five hundred square kilometers of cold and pristine water contained in a basin that lay way above sea level. Looking down at Emerald Bay that told of a mysterious story carried me into another world. It was though the pirates and their ship were alive. It was a nerve-rending feeling like an episode of adventure flashed in front of me. I snapped out of it only after the receding tide of hallucination slowly parked its waters back to shore.

Until this time, the memory of this overwhelming panorama—a seclusion from the rest of the world, from the noise of my daily grind—is still quite vivid in my mind.

I could still remember the brilliant sparkles of the stones in Yosemite. I was flabbergasted by the distinct variations in the colors and make of the hills and mountains above my head. Each one featured a different description of splendor. It was like they represented assorted types of architecture like the edifices in the city showing off their affluence by the way they looked. The only thing was that these hills were attached to each other, like bulky men in a huddle avoiding any lapse between them. And they flowed like one whole mountain range. Yosemite shouted at me its arrogance and beauty.

The white sands of Boracay in Central Philippines are matchless. I've been to the beaches of Phuket, Bali, Waikiki, and Sydney, but I haven't yet seen anything comparable to those of Boracay until now.

And today, enjoying the ordinary garden landscaping in front of me, I hear the chirping of the birds, the bustling of the wind, and the murmuring of the trees, I see the red, tangerine, and purple flowers amidst the green and brown textures of the plants they draw their lives from. Blades of the weeds, both short and long extend to the sky in proud majesty only to gracefully bend at the tip as though they have to face the sun and capture all of its life-giving radiance.

I hear the rumbling transfer of water from a higher ground to the lower in the surrounding *Koi* fountain. And in each basin swim stout river fishes, *Koi* fish, gold fish, scramble for bread crumbs afloat. They sway slowly from one compartment to the other with their fat bodies creating little ripples that only disturb the still water. These movements blend with the stillness of the surroundings that encourages restful indolence and sweet surrender.

Birds fly in jest as they chase each other from tree to tree, ground to sky, sky to pond. They make sounds that are

harmonious to the rumbling water and flapping leaves of the trees.

There is not much to explain about what we could sense around us. There is beauty and peace everywhere, even in the noisiest moments. There is light even in the darkest shadows of the deepest night. We are not alone even in the lonely deserts of solitude. Nature speaks aloud. Take time to stop and listen.

## **STUDY GUIDE**

### Listening to Nature

1. Have you experienced sensing that nature speaks to you? Share your experiences on this.
2. Which of the places you went to before you remember you were just amazed about nature's beauty and majesty?
3. Ordinary places like a simple garden could be seen as a wonderful place as well. Do you agree? When does this happen?
4. What lessons can one learn from nature?
5. Explain: There is beauty and peace everywhere, even in the noisiest moments.

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*Essays & Stories for Meditation*

By Utanes

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6. When is there light even in the darkest night? What does this really mean?
7. Stopping and listening—these are the key be able to learn from nature. Do you agree? Explain.