



# *Lessons* from the *Storm*

Cooperating with the  
Healing Power of Nature


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*When we are open and aligned to Nature, everyday miracles can occur. A Wind Walk® slows you down, heightens your awareness and soothes your body, mind and heart.*

Renee Baribeau

2020 left us with a record-breaking number of hurricanes.<sup>1</sup> These extreme weather patterns produced 30 named storms, plus 12 landfall storms on the Atlantic Seaboard. Events both in the United States and abroad mimicked these landmark storms. Along with the hurricane season, the US faced a global health crisis, a continental divide over politics, devastating fires, and destructive waves that came crashing down upon our economic landscape. Intense weather patterns will continue to harass our very senses. Our best outcome is to be a cooperating element of change.

I had just moved to the Pacific Northwest and was busy getting settled in while attending to several of my work projects. One such project was the intention to write an article, (which was long overdue). Despite my commitment to write, that green, college ruled notebook sat empty. As is my usual habit while sipping coffee, I scrolled through my emails, checked my FB - and neglected to write my story. It was obvious I

was not aligned, or cooperating with nature. The clarity for this article came after a major wind-storm upended a tree in front of my new home. However, even with grand inspiration, the page still sat blank. Then, one day, a request was made through my website for a soul card reading. My initial response was, "I cannot schedule that for at least a month because I've lost four days due to the storm." This is exactly how I framed my sense of overwhelm: my productivity was swept away with the storm drains.

*I was fooling myself by believing that I was in charge of my inspiration, and my value was measured on an achievement clock.*

The idea that I lost four days revealed my first lesson. I was fooling myself by believing that I was in charge





of my inspiration, and my value was measured on an achievement clock. This led to looking for Lessons from the Storm.

## 1. Nature Always Rules

"It's not nice to fool Mother Nature," was the infamous line that made Chiffon Margarine popular in the 70's. While the brand never gained a strong foothold in the market and eventually withered like autumn leaves, the message remains true today: Nature Rules.

It is predicted that intense weather patterns will continue in the years ahead. While planetary warming and cooling are constant variables throughout time, technology has brought us closer to the brink of extinction.

Think of Enlil, a primary Mesopotamian God who tired of human greed, fighting, and noise. One day, with a strong gust of wind, Enlil swept away all humans from our planet. (You can read more about these patterns in my book, *Winds of Spirit*, published by Hay House).

This was a clear reminder that my busy calendar could easily be upended, like my 60-foot cedar that fell face down onto the road. Unfortunately, my schedule was wound tight like the coils of a mechanical watch and did not have breathing room for change. Does yours? Many of us find ourselves in this predicament.

As we proceed forward during the epoch of Anthropocene, we will have to adjust our pace and become less of a planetary nuisance. It's not nice to fool Mother Nature; she is not concerned with my jam-packed schedule. The wind will blow whenever, and wherever it wants. I realized that I hadn't lost 4 days; Nature had merely provided me with an opportunity to reset. It was up to me to allow wider spaces in my schedule

for extreme nature events.

## 2. Wind Walks are Essential for Good Health

Walking offers an easy path to balance your mind, emotions, body and spirit.

A relentless 50 mile an hour wind left Whidbey Island in darkness for several days during January. In my neighborhood, there was a large pine sprawled across the road, resting on the downed powerline. With no power in sight, people were out walking, enjoying the sunny afterglow. For some who heat with electricity, walking served as a practical tactic to keep warm. Aside from warmth during a power outage, walking provides other health benefits.

*Not all yogis sit cross-legged, waiting for the muse; some take a daily walk.*

Wind Walk® is a term I coined to describe an active type of mindfulness. Not all yogis sit cross-legged, waiting for the muse; some take a daily walk. To benefit the most from your Wind Walk, here are the steps I recommend:

**Take your phone with you.** While it is great to leave your phone at home, I take mine to take photos of the beautiful sunsets or chat with friends along the way. However, I keep my phone off until I reach my destination—which is measured by my peaceful mind and sense of being connected to nature. I find this feeling happens with a steady gait and breathing in the windscape.

**Ask a thoughtful question** before embarking on your walk. Once you feel the wind's kiss, start walking. As you walk, inhale the wind while observing the



natural world around you. Look and listen for clues and signs.

On day two of the storm, I met a neighbor working with the fallen tree. By this time the tree had been cut into several 3-foot disks, each one weighing in excess of 100 pounds (my estimate). My neighbor's ability to single handedly roll these cumbersome logs up the ramp into the back of her pickup, piqued my curiosity. She explained that she kept her midlife body fit and strong by lifting weights and walking. Then she provided me with a tip on how to experience better results during a Wind Walk.®

**Get off the pavement.** Take a stroll off the beaten path. When you walk up a trail, or even on the shoulder of a familiar road, you circumvent rocks and navigate the dips. Changing your route requires the use of your left and right brain faculties. Physically, it requires additional muscle power. Over all, you get a richer, more meaningful experience, as you focus your attention on the act of walking. Stop, and breathe in the Wind.

Walking is free, requires no gym membership, and leaves you open to the everchanging awe-inspiring kaleidoscope of nature.

## 3. Find Common Ground around the Darkness

Nature restores community.

With everyone walking about, the fallen tree became a community landmark for 2 days. The tree served as a focal point where new neighbors could greet and meet.

People swapped stories, took photos, and connected. There wasn't a single mention of politics or COVID. People were aligned to the current issue affairs and the nature at hand. Much of the conversation was

about the weather and it's ensuing results. People wondered how long they would be without power, and discussed alternative ways to move about the island. There was a strong sense of community and a connection with the Wind.

People shared stories, freezer space, and untethered time. The silence at nightfall was palatable and welcome.

## 4. Preparation

Are you prepared for the Storm? Living five miles from the closest grocery store causes one to plan ahead and organize. Fortunately for me, when I arrived at the island, a friend was there to welcome me. She prepared dinner for us daily, and after she left, my stomach felt abandoned.

After a typical ten hour day at the computer, it was cold, dark, and I was hungry. I scavenged for leftovers from the bare refrigerator. The next day, I overstocked with frozen entrees to ensure I would get through those late working nights. I was ready.

When the power went out the following week, and the freezer began to thaw, I realized my feeding plan had a flaw. Luckily I remembered the unpacked generator still sitting in my garage. My host provided me with a Coleman camp stove, which gave me the ability to brew my morning coffee, and warm up the thawing pad thai. My home also has a propane fireplace to keep me and my cat warm.

When the sun rose over the frosted grass, I spent the morning setting up the generator. Then, I was able to preserve my food, and my neighbor's food as well for 3 days until the power was restored.

Lesson learned; do not put all your food into the freezer. It is best to have non-perishable items such as dry supplies, canned goods, and potable water.



Planning and preparation are essential if you want to survive comfortably.

### 5. Repurpose

While I was pleased that two stumps were donated as seats for my new firepit, the neighbors labored to gather the 4,500 pounds of firewood needed to heat their homes. Others gathered the branches to shred for mulch. The tree sacrificed its life so we could be warm and learn about the cycles of nature.

*Ask yourself, "What am I repurposing from the storms in my life? Are the lessons and debris the fuel that stoke my fire?"*

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### 6. Miracles

The tree fell, and left a gaping hole five feet from my property line.

The following week, a county worker came to conduct a septic inspection on the neighboring property. As timing would have it, the 2 foot deep ditch was already wide open. The inspector said I would be wise to expand my septic system in the future.

Another perk of the fallen tree was the opening in the front of my property to allow for more sun to shine through. Sunlight is a welcome addition during winter in the Pacific Northwest.

The collision between humans and our natural surroundings is not new, nor is climate warming or

cooling. What makes this moment a News worthy milestone in history is that we have the wisdom of the ages coupled with technology to make different choices. It seems we are experiencing an evolutionary concussion and have forgotten to apply the lessons learned from previous storms.

As the storm rolled out to sea the following week, I was granted one more miracle.

One afternoon, I put a turkey in the oven and decided to head out for my daily Wind Walk.® Somedays I unknowingly put my questions into a form of a request. As I left the door, I remembered that I had forgotten to purchase cranberry relish for dinner, but a walk was more important than an eleven-minute drive to the store.

One of the neighbors I had met during the wind storm was at the beach while I was out for my walk. Somehow the conversation came around to cranberry relish. On the way back to my house, I stopped by her place to pick up a jar of cranberry relish she had prepared from a nearby cranberry bog.

The final lesson arrives: when we are open and aligned to Nature, everyday miracles can occur. A Wind Walk® slows you down, heightens your awareness and soothes your body, mind and heart. €



Learn more about author Renee Baribeau at [ThePracticalShaman.com](https://ThePracticalShaman.com)

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