

# NATURE'S LIVING WISDOM

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YOUR PATHFINDER INTO THE FUTURE

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within the rhythms  
of nature, Kristina  
Dryza explores in  
this issue of the  
David Report.**



## Introduction

Seasonal, circadian, lunar and tidal patterns don't just form the background to our lives – they are our lives. We are comprised of rhythms and exist within the rhythms of nature. They are fundamental to our wellbeing. The quality of our personal experience when synced up with universal intelligence versus struggling and forcing through the powerlessness of the limited mind is like night and day. Patterns in nature emphasise the changing and the changeless cycles of life and it's these waves of energy we must align with if we are to evolve and thrive.

As a trend forecaster for 10+ years I've learnt that all most people consciously (and subconsciously) concern themselves with is the future and how it's going to impact them. It's why people devour any media that mentions future business predictions, peruse star signs and seek influential thought leaders as friends. We want to be at the forefront of life. We don't want to be left behind feeling trapped and insignificant.

I used to make strategic recommendations to my clients based on consumer trends, but as with most aspects of life today, the old way no longer works – innumerable commercial models are broken and unpredictability is the new normal. In the past, the majority of my clients wanted me to comprehend cycles of business and attitudinal change, but really the most important cycles and frequencies to perceive, understand and apply are nature's.

Rhythm and flow arise from alternation – ebb and flow, expansion and contraction, waxing and waning, building and dissolving – as one state transitions effortlessly to another. We're permanently in a climate of change, as life's not static, it's transitional. We're continually adjusting, fluctuating, tinkering and oscillating.

Though our frenetic, hurried pace of modern life isn't geared to respecting nature's living wisdom, that's no excuse to abdicate responsibility and not try. These patterns of energies present us with wisdom on how to be in the world and offer strategies to move forward with ease and grace.



## Nature as the changing and the changeless

Nature blooms, flourishes, withers, dies, re-blooms and we also go through these same processes. By reading patterns in nature – and in ourselves – we recognize the changing and the changeless. The subtle is often the colossal. We must learn to perceive those soft and understated distinctions like changes in the air, the amount of light in the sky, a person's facial reactions, messages our body gives us and our inner guidance. They all prophesy the future. When we partner with the faint and the hushed we're in accord with the wholeness of life. The gross and the obvious are a dictatorship that force us into a position of reaction, but in subtlety there is great power and choice. We mustn't mistake it as weak and insignificant.

Many types of patterns exist in nature: random, regular, alternating, flowing, progressive, and within them variation and contrast are crucial. We

monitor these patterns of energy because when we're aware of them, it's easier to sense the pulse of life, the heartbeat of creation.

Because all things in nature exist in their own strength, they bring an irreplaceable essence to the world. Each element is in harmony with the moment. Change does and doesn't happen overnight; some flowers bloom in the blink of an eye, while others unfurl at a more gradual pace. We can't hurry natural phenomena or outpace that which hasn't opened yet. Growth doesn't always happen at a rational speed. In our modern, fast-paced societies we have a false expectation that life should perennially be in bloom instead of existing in cycles of rising and setting. Look at a garden and appreciate it as an evolving structure. Notice how it lets itself be influenced. It doesn't contest the changes; the garden lets change guide and transform it.

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# The cycles of creation

Cycles contain growth spurts and stagnation, reminding us life is never static. Nature teaches us not to get too particularly attached to one phase, as another will soon appear. A cyclical view of life helps ground us, bringing much-needed perspective, yet it's a sense of eternal perception that marries us to the rhythm of all things. Until the end of time the world will operate in cycles: we're born, we die, it's summer then it's winter, life is never a straight line. When we perceive life cyclically it comforts us. If we think in a linear manner all we're confronted with are dead ends.



Creation is ordered by rhythms and cycles, and there is order to all creation. Withering is still an expression of creation. It's newness though that western society is preoccupied with: the latest fashion trends, the hottest technology gadget and this week's most recent fad. There is enormous validity in the old and the aged. In all processes – including dying expressions – there rests and breathes great beauty. We could argue that the blossom isn't truly resplendent as it hasn't lived yet, it hasn't begun to express its full magnificence out to the world, but both the blossoming, unrefined beauty of a teenager and an elderly lady's deeply wrinkled face teach us to appreciate each stage of the cycle.

There's nothing sadder than an older lady envying youth's fairness or the teenager sacrificing her innocence before her time. Cherry blossoms in full bloom are dazzling but they're equally stunning when they've blown off the trees and lay broken and trampled on the ground. The blossoms are in different stages of their beauty, of their growth and decline. Their essential gloriousness isn't altered whether they're being admired on branches or resting on the soil, crushed and ignored.

Nature is constant reinvention. Whether it's presently born – or a step away from death – each element of the cycle contains expanding perfection. We fail to value the completeness of life when we focus only on one part, a solitary element of the whole. There is as much cheer in the first daffodils of spring as a rose in the frost clinging to its vanishing life. It's necessary for us to celebrate both the fading and that yet to flourish.

The rhythm of life comes from within and then enters into the constitution of all things. Universal rhythms aren't something to believe in with our mind, they're cycles to feel, embody and live. Grace though has more chance of touching our lives when we're allowing and not stage-managing exactly how moments should appear in our lives. Rhythms involve a series of steps – a progression of layers – that can't always be observed by the naked eye, meaning the nuances of their gradation can often only be appreciated in retrospect.

While there's a growing desire to escape the urban dehumanization of life – to seek freedom of space, pure wilderness and the sanctity of community – is fleeing for the hills the answer? Whatever issue we try escaping from must return as by definition we only momentarily left it, not solved it. A temporary escape does nothing about a permanent problem. The question rather to ask ourselves – and even more importantly to live and embody – is, 'Can we place our lives in the context of the wider cycles that govern the planet?'

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# Syncing up with a greater power source

One of the greatest pleasures in life is enjoying the transition from night to day and day to night. Unfortunately most adults miss the first change-over as they're asleep and for the second they're stuck in an office. Cues from outside rhythms influence our internal biorhythms and unfortunately for many adults, artificial lighting, long working hours and jet lag from international travel leads corporate life to dictate our circadian rhythm more than nature.

We're constantly fighting our natural human circadian rhythm, this roughly 24-hour cycle going on within our bodies (which plants and animals follow too). Nourishing this internal body clock is crucial for our wellbeing and many of us are currently not living the way nature intended, in sync with the rhythms of the rising and setting sun. Just as we sync our iPod with our iTunes account, it would benefit us to harmonize with the light-dark cycle, as it's the inherited blueprint our body's cells and organs follow. Aligning ourselves with the signals of nature expands our awareness and helps us release our worries, as when we dwell in the womb of nature the artificial falls by the wayside and a sense of serenity returns.

There's a natural period of alertness in the morning and a time of restlessness after sundown but many of us work on our laptop right until the very last second before sleep. Bringing ourselves into line with the light-dark cycle reminds us life is fleeting and to ground ourselves in the constancy and grandeur of the rising and setting sun, to find peace in its recurrence and flawlessness.

The sun never struggles to rise or set, it does so effortlessly and with great ease. It's a reminder for us to go about our day just as fluidly. These 24 hours will never come again, and the sun's exultant path across the sky is a reminder of each day's uniqueness. By not witnessing the sun's movements on a regular basis we miss the miracle of how each day comes to be and how quickly it vanishes like an apparition into the night sky. It – shamelessly – makes it easier for us to complain and trudge our way through the daylight hours. Acknowledging each day as it opens and closes reminds us to be thankful for all the vast, indescribable beauty that exists in between.

Each evening the stars take their rightful place in the sky to form a luminous blanket but a ceiling confines the conclusion of most of our nights. The stars remind us how beautiful and precious life is when we keep our focus elevated. Appreciating the grand cosmic scenery in the universe and our relationship to it requires discipline, perseverance and fluidly alternating between the territories of the magical and the ordinary.

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# Feeling nature by eating seasonally

When commemorating the changing seasons – the multi-colored dying leaves of fall tumbling to the ground, the blooming daffodils signaling the approaching possibilities of spring – we also celebrate the same processes within ourselves. It's not about merely noticing the seasons solely through our physical eyes, but sensing and feeling their emotional energies as they fleetingly make their way through us.

In our modern day need of instant gratification we demand strawberries even when they're not in season, no matter if they've been flown here from halfway around the world. We incorrectly assume everything should be accessible according to our own selfish whims and fancies, but when we live in parallel with nature's cycles we witness life's passing and intensely celebrate the brief, irreplaceable windows of time they present.

Knowing we can't have strawberries again until next season heightens our appreciation and reminds us to pay attention to their shape, smell, texture, taste and consistency. Their harvesting not being a daily occurrence means they're to be intensely savored when in bloom. Too many of life's treasures are lost as they're overly accessible and encourage us to take life for granted. We lose all sense of their preciousness.

Fruits and vegetables in season are at their peak and contain the greatest number of nutrients. It's also the time to eat food that speaks of where it comes from. The French call it *terroir*, how the geography and climate of a location influences certain foods and drinks, embedding them with special characteristics.

When we eat in season it brings a reassuring rhythm to our lives as well as being the optimum time to eat produce for maximum dietary benefit as when we're eating foods at their peak, it motivates us to also reach our zenith and fully express ourselves. Eating seasonally we also notice everything else special about that time of year, which insects are buzzing about, what flowers are blooming, the changes in the air. We feel it as a particular point in time on the calendar that can't be frozen; it must pass.



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## The ephemeral beauty of temporariness

We must train ourselves to view the ordinary with fresh eyes; otherwise we'll forever be chasing extraordinary future moments, which take us out of the now. Bear witness to the rare in the every day, not only on holidays and special occasions.

Moments are fleeting so other moments can enter into our lives. These points of time are transitory – that's how nature is; it lives, it dies, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth continues. Though at times it's invisible to our eyes, nature is continuously in a state of growth or decay and shapeshifting like a wave that forms, breaks and disappears back into itself. Moments can't be relived, they're one-offs. Relinquishing the need to hold on doesn't mean we don't enjoy all of life's experiences, rather we submit ourselves to the impermanence of all things. We don't try to

capture what's ephemeral as then we'll only diminish its beauty and imprison its legacy.

The sun always falls across offices, gardens and coffee shops in abundantly scenic ways at various points of time during the day, but maybe we've never noticed or been interested in the subtleties of light before, or the canvas of a building doesn't seem to adequately highlight the changing shadow patterns. When we witness the variations nature brings to spaces we can be with the wonder of the light never falling this way again to cast these particular silhouettes or that the winter sun won't ever shine through the poplar trees, forming outlines that dazzle like luminous fireflies in this exact same way again. And that metaphorically we have the opportunity to turn the lead of shadows into the gold of illumination.

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# Simplicity rules



Many people still falsely believe complexity is the height of sophistication. They don't realize that multiplicity weakens the spirit and that there's a vast difference between simplicity and simple.

Think back to the meals you ate as children. You felt doted upon even though the meals were (I'm guessing) uncomplicated and basic in their structure. Today though we're seeking cleverness and intricacy from celebrity chefs that will never feed our true hunger. We don't know how to simply nourish ourselves in a never-satiated world of desires and obligations.

Spring cleaning is part of our lexicon but so few of us ever literally do it. A good clean out is exactly what nature does – it gets rid of the excess, so the necessary may shine. Nature only uses what's necessary; the unnecessary is forsaken as a drain on resources. Not everything is important. Prune away the dead parts of your life to create space for a new flower to be born.

We've lost perspective of what's really a priority and how to distinguish between the indispensable and what's surplus to requirement. When a

ship is sinking a lifejacket is essential – everything else is superfluous – but many of us want to take our multiple suitcases of junk and odds and ends with us!

All the excess, ignored and unwanted items in our life decrease our space, both physically and mentally. Holding onto the unnecessary means we have no faith that the future will provide for us as there's no space for anything new to come in, but I don't just mean new stuff. I'm talking about new attitudes and ways of being, which come when we recognize how our internal fragments of energy affect our external reality.

This means regular maintenance – of ourselves, the homes we live in, our social circle of friends and acquaintances and especially our attitudes. Daily maintenance prevents massive overhauls and creates optimal physical and mental health. We make minor alterations as needed rather than delaying them until a catastrophe demands massive changes from us. When we're responding creatively to what's happening around us (instead of impulsively reacting) we transform for the better.

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## Balance as a dynamic state

We have a deluded idea of balance in modern life. We believe it's static, and this perception causes us tremendous agony as nothing in life stands still; absolutely nothing stays the same and planning otherwise is futile. Life shouldn't be a constant, uphill struggle but that's what we turn it into when we refuse to harmonize with the unfolding laws of nature.

Nature, like balance, is dynamic. We shapeshift to the rhythm of the moment as it moves with and through us but modern society these days demands uniformity and consistency. Franchised coffee anyone?

The balance most people chase is an illusion. They forget balance is ever-elusive due to its constantly changing form. The version of balance women's magazines sell implies a fixed, one-off ending but in reality we bring balance to our internal mind as a frequently repeating process. Rebalancing is a moment-to-moment activity as we adapt ourselves to what the current situation requires from us. Consider balance as balance with the now – not maintaining equilibrium as a permanent state – but constantly orientating ourselves to each new moment. Trying to force a constant state of balance will derail us each and every single time.

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# Silence as a path to creativity

A frequency to often tune into is silence. Not analytical or reflective quiet but pure stillness. We don't routinely practice silence, as it doesn't yet mean more to us than all the other things in our day. When we experience this stillness – and trust the peace it brings – only then will we commit to regular repetition and not treat it as an expendable resource.

When we listen to music it's the spaces in between that create what we hum along to. The spaces between sounds are as important as the musical notes themselves. The holes give Swiss cheese its taste and appeal, just as the 0 in the binary code system is what allows the 1 to function. Equally, it's the still gap between our thoughts where true originality, creativity and the very essence of life exists.

It's not about completely shutting off our thoughts, but rather letting the space shine through. The vibration of sound is everywhere – the heating system, radio, email notification beep – so learn to luxuriate in creative, silent pauses . . . lap them up and change what to value. Sound has driven our lives this last century and it's now time to give the same worth to silence as we do to noise.

Visualize connecting to the silence at the bottom of the ocean. Even though movements occur on the water's surface they don't disrupt the intrinsic stillness underneath. It's not enough just to think about peace and quiet though, but to live it. Find ways to reconnect with stillness at regular intervals throughout the day saluting the silence that lies beneath all that you do. Just as the trees momentarily gust in the wind, it's for us to be the enduring tranquillity that lies behind the temporary blowing of the leaves as we go about our day.



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# Pacing one's life to an inner rhythm

We infuse meaning into our actions by doing things at their proper pace. This leads innumerable to the pleasure and enjoyment of a situation. Observe how quickly many of us in our stress-filled, 24/7, 'always on' lives walk when we're not even in a hurry. Urgent becomes our default everyday speed as we let our surroundings and external influences pace us.

Struggling and resisting the rhythms of nature by not accepting the inherent perfection within the cycles leads to anxiousness and a great deal of inner and outer conflict. Living at a constant sprint is unsustainable. Rather than let the passage and pressures of time assault us it's far wiser to sense the various rates of knots in existence and be with the individual pace of a process. Many of us are great at being 'on' time, but don't know how to exist 'in' time i.e. in rhythm. We're so enslaved by time that we've lost

the art of being timeless and live our lives out on the periphery instead of at the centre.

We want to get everywhere fast: be an adult before we complete our teens, have success before we've been tested, demand a finished painting before we even draw the first line. It's not about anticipating the next part of the cycle but being one with the energetic experience of the phase we're in now. If we can't fully accept where we are now, we end up doing great damage to where we're meant to be.

The Italians have a musical notation not found in any other language – tempo giusto – which means 'the right tempo,' a steady, normal beat, between 66 and 76 on the metronome. As an objective measure tempo giusto is the average beat of the human heart; the subjective interpretation is the rightness of the tempo at a suitability garnered from the musician's intuition. The term is now a lifestyle movement advising the modern world to start living at a true tempo i.e. to live in accordance with both one's own inner rhythm and in congruence with seasonal, circadian, lunar and tidal rhythms.



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# Conclusion

Reason and logic rule in our world today. But we can't reason our way out of our problems; we need to feel our way through. The heart is considered unreliable; society has deemed it not fit to rule, regarding it a redundant, useless barometer. When we use our intuition to readjust our internal rhythm to join with the universe's cycles we begin to feel how things in their natural order play out – the Monarch butterfly migration for example – and begin living life through this reality.

To all creation there is a visible and invisible gestation period and when we're in reverence of the invisible there's no struggle, pain or discomfort in birthing our new ideas into being. The future unfolds in a state of flow, which involves perceiving ourselves as dynamic entities working with the rhythms of the natural world, not against them. While flow implies natural ease, it comes through mastering active and receptive methods, masculine and feminine principles, as



well as other polarities and universal paradoxes.

It's now time for us to stop valuing clock time over the natural movements of the sun and moon and connect to time through sensation... to lose the logic of the digital timepiece. Rather than a regimented corporate and consumerist life dictating our days let's instead allow the cycles and their idiosyncratic energies to guide us. Observe the Mongolian farmers and their nomadic lifestyles; they let the natural world

direct them and their animals, and it's this very fluidity and connection to the earth that's missing from our urban, technology-driven lives.

Find whatever ways possible to feel at one with the land and the energies of the cycles as only through first unifying with the rhythms of nature can we feel the wonder and majesty within the world and in ourselves. We cannot break the laws of nature, only ourselves against them.



# DAVID REPORT

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about:

## **This issue**

This issue of David Report is written by Kristina Dryza.

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David Report is an influential blog and online magazine that since 2006 explores the intersection of design, culture and business. Our readers share our interest and curiosity in everything from art, architecture, culture, design and fashion to food, innovation, music, sustainability and travel.

## **About Kristina Dryza**

Kristina Dryza is a trend forecaster and writer. Her passion is viewing and experiencing life through the lens of rhythm.

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