



## Simply put, nature nurtures

By Lee Ann Szelog

**N**ature's peace calms chaos, comforting the mind, soothing the soul, and bolstering the body. Thirty years ago, I would have dismissed such thoughts as I raced through each day, striving to get ahead. Reflecting, I ask myself, "get ahead of what?"

Fortunately I met a man, Tom, my husband of 30 years, and a professional nature and wildlife photographer, who opened my eyes to the natural beauty of our world; Mother Nature opened my heart, which was a motivating force for me to change my thoughts and my life.

The experiences nature has provided me has resulted in my belief that regardless of where your stress comes from, nature can be a constant supply of comfort, inspiration and motivation. Nature has propelled my productivity, success, capacity, and contentment, personally and professionally, over the past 30 years.

Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally, but studies indicate it also contributes to your physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones. Even if the chaos of my life only affords me a few moments with nature's solace each day, these are moments I savor to provide sustenance to embrace and persevere challenges.

Society provides an extraordinary amount of competition, which drives us beyond our boundaries, contributing to stress, anxiety, and fatigue to name a few. Once we enter the race to get ahead and are swept into the electronic world that consumes our every thought and drives us to habitually survive each day on auto-pilot, our perspective of what is most important and the power to think for ourselves is lost. The ability to escape the madness sometimes becomes impossible.

I so firmly believe in nature's calming power that it has become important for me to share its benefits with others through nature retreats I offer. The retreats will help you find comfort and inspiration in life's most ordinary, yet grand pleasures, nature and wildlife, and will help you connect with nature, even if you prefer not to venture too far into the woods, fields, streams, ponds and rivers. You will experience the life-altering solitude of nature, and the freedom and opportunity to experience life from a different perspective.

Nature surrounds us, even in our metropolitan areas. I encourage you to take a few minutes every day to disconnect by connecting with nature. Contemplate nature's power to stimulate your brain in a gentle manner to place our petty human fallibilities into perspective. Escape the pandemonium in order to thrive rather than survive, enjoying today while you have today to enjoy.

Simply put, nature nurtures. Residing in, and/or visiting Maine, we are fortunate to have an abundance of nature from which to help us reduce stress, increase energy and productivity and calm the chaos. I wish you the hope that comes with every sunrise, the peace that comes with sunset, and the joy of every day in between.

*As President of Simply Put, LLC, Lee Ann Szelog conducts presentations to help people change, grow and prosper. She also works with her husband, Tom. As passionate advocates for wildlife conservation, Tom and Lee are dedicated to sharing their words and photographs to educate and inspire people about the vital role the natural world plays in our lives. One of their current endeavors is a feature length film, presently in post-production, that will allow audiences to experience nature's peace of forest. They are also the authors and photographers of the multi-award winning book, *Our Point of View-Fourteen Years at a Maine Lighthouse*, featuring Marshall Point Lighthouse in Port Clyde, and *By a Maine River - A Year of Looking Closely*, which explores the natural beauty found in their own backyard. [simplyputllc.com](http://simplyputllc.com)*

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