

# Vision Fast in Nature 2020

7<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> August,

Mid Wales, UK

With Fern Smith and Philip Ralph, Artists & Wilderness Guides



*Are you facing a turning point in your life? Looking for a ritual to mark a beginning, ending or transition from one life-stage to another? Are you wanting to undergo a rite of passage in nature?*

**2020 Vision Fast in Nature is a powerful nature-based ceremony designed to support us to become the person we were born to be.** It is an opportunity to listen to the still small voice deep inside, calling us into our next state of becoming. This voice challenges and encourages us to become whole and to dedicate ourselves to becoming truly human before we die. The 2020 Vision Fast in Nature provides a holding structure enabling us to enter sacred time and let go of all that is not necessary, all that is superfluous in manifesting our future selves. We undertake this challenge both for ourselves and on behalf of the community of all beings in this time of disruption and transition. The process is guided by **Fern Smith and Phil Ralph**, who have both already undergone a number of Fasts and have now been called to guide.

**Vision Fast in Nature is a time of being alone, opening ourselves to the potency of the living world, communing with the elements of earth, air, fire, water and spirit.** It is a time of emptying and surrendering to unknowing, whilst simultaneously opening up to the future realms of potential and possibility. This is a powerful initiatory ceremony which can be undertaken for any reason and at any time of life. It is deeply grounded in nature and in the body.

**Integral to the process, are the ancient and modern teachings of the four directions, the four elements and the four seasons.** The experience of the Vision Fast can be divided into three distinct phases – Separation (or Severance), Threshold and Incorporation. We begin our time in community, each sharing and speaking to what has called us here.

**Each participant or initiate is supported to craft their own unique, powerful intention statement - the motivation behind their call to consciously enter into ceremonial time.** After this initial phase of preparation, each initiate goes alone into the natural world to find their unique place on the land which will support them in their fast. There, they will spend four days and nights alone with minimal shelter, no food, technology or distractions. Each enters the threshold of their own formlessness, and opens to the teaching and healing of the land. **Each initiate undergoes a 'threshing,' where what is no longer relevant or necessary is acknowledged, thanked and let go.**



**Each of the four days involves connecting to an element and a passage of life – childhood, adolescence, adulthood and eldership/birth.** Each phase is consciously marked. The initiate is given various practices to enact whilst on the land and is encouraged to find their own ways of generating self-directed, personal ceremonies.

The culmination of the four days and nights involves an invitation to stay awake for the entirety of the last night looking into the darkness, making vigil whilst waiting for the first rays of morning. **During this time, the initiate asks for a vision,** for guidance, speaking prayers, revisiting the biography and patterns of their life lived to date. The rising of the sun on this final morning marks a new phase in the initiate's life – the beginning of future potential and possibility.

**Each initiate returns to the group after their solo time, is welcomed, given food and celebrated in a ritual manner.** The time that follows is one of community and sharing stories. Each initiate speaks of their solo time, is witnessed by all and their story is mirrored back to them by the guides. This marks the beginning of the incorporation phase which continues for days, weeks and months after.

**2020 Vision Fast in Nature takes place in the beautiful landscape of mid Wales.** It is led by Wilderness Guides Fern Smith and Philip Ralph, trained with the School of Lost Borders, David Wendl-Berry of Earth Encounters and Pip Bondy of Ancient Healing Ways.

This beautiful and powerful ceremony is based on and inspired by the 'Four Shields' as taught by Steven Foster and Meredith Little and developed as a pan-cultural ceremony by the [School of Lost Borders in California](#).

## Emergence 2020 Vision Fast Guides



### Fern Smith

Fern is an artist and wilderness guide, trained at the School of Lost Borders in California. She first Quested with David Wendl Berry in 2011. Since then she has been bringing earth based practices and the Four Shields consciously into her work. Her background is as a theatre practitioner and co-founder of [Volcano Theatre](#). She developed [Emergence](#) in 2010, creating spaces for transformation, nature connection and dialogue. She is an associate of the Annwn Foundation, craniosacral therapist, celebrant and coach. [www.fernsmith.uk](http://www.fernsmith.uk)



### Philip Ralph

Phil is co-director of Emergence and, for the past five years, has been training alongside Margaret Wheatley on her Warriors for the Human Spirit programme. He has studied Way of Council, undertaken Vision Quest and also assisted Pippa Bondy of Ancient Healing Ways. Phil is also an award-winning writer and performer.

[www.philipralph.com](http://www.philipralph.com)

### Practicalities

The first part of the process will be in and around Nant y Gwenill, an 18<sup>th</sup> century welsh cottage in the hills outside Machynlleth. Accommodation will be mainly camping in the grounds and surrounding fields. We will use the house as a place to cook, eat and hold our circles. As we move towards the threshold time and the heart of the Vision Fast, we will leave for basecamp and the surrounding hills of the Cambrian Mountains. We return to Nant y Gwenill towards the end of our time together to share stories and formally complete the process.



### Food

We will provide simple vegetarian meals included in the fee. There will of course be 4 days and nights of fasting where no food will be eaten. Initiates are taken out for breakfast in Machynlleth to mark the start of incorporation. You will need to bring money to buy this.

### Preparation

As part of an initial contemplation phase we suggest that we have an initial conversation on the phone/in person with you to ensure that this Vision Fast is appropriate for you. We might suggest a different ceremony - perhaps Space for Change - if we feel this might be more suitable.

After this conversation, we invite you to write your letter of intention which should be no less than 1 page and not more than 5 pages of A4. As part of this you will speak about where you have arrived at in your life and how you see the Vision Fast fitting in. We ask you to give an outline of your intention which you will carry forward into the process. You will also need to include information on your biography and any emotional, mental or physical challenges you are living with.

We will send then you a handbook which gives more information about the ceremony you are about to undertake. One month prior to the quest, we ask you to complete a dawn to dusk 'Mirror Walk in Nature'. We will send you more information about this in due course.

### Payment

We ask for £700 from each initiate. A £200 non-returnable deposit secures your place. Payment includes our teaching fee as guides, land charges for solo time, and for food. Payment can be made in instalments. 2020 Vision Fast in Nature is limited to a small group of 6 - 8 initiates. If this fee is prohibitive, we invite you to speak to us and we can discuss a mutually workable arrangement.

### Fasting & Medical Issues

If medical issues preclude you from fasting (seek advice from your doctor), this is not an obstacle to participation.

For more information and/or a conversation, contact Fern Smith & Philip Ralph on:

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Phil 07791 975820, or [philipralph@gmail.com](mailto:philipralph@gmail.com)

*2020 Vision Fast is an Emergence initiative. Emergence supports transformational spaces for dialogue and inner, outer and nature connection. [www.emergence-uk.org](http://www.emergence-uk.org)*