

Suggestions for you the reader

Two styles of reading —

While reading a book that has both words and images, one engages in two different modes of “reading.” It is easy to read the words then glance fairly quickly through the images; it is also easy to absorb the images and just skim the text.

Do read the text, and also take some time with these images. Perhaps you might “read” the book two times—once with focus on the words and once on the images.

Wandering through the book —

While some sections of this book follow a linear narrative—there is a trail to follow—other parts can be viewed in no particular order, though while making the book I did have to choose a sequence. Please allow yourself to “go off trail” and delight in wandering through the book, perhaps opening the book “at random,” letting what is here resonate with you in the moment.

An open book —

This book does not want to sit closed on a book-shelf. With its lay-flat binding, please let the book rest open on your desk or table so it catches your eye at odd moments. The White Pines, the *koak* in the Western Abenaki, can thus continually “speak” to you in their own non-verbal language.

Return again and again to these pages to visit with your friends and relatives, the white pines and the people whose stories are here.

Yet words and images are limited —

Words and images are just that—words and images. They are not the true living experiences to which the words and images point.

Tao Te Ching, begins with a reminder of the limitation inherent in using words (and images).

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

—Chapter One, *Tao Te Ching*

Beyond the book —

I encourage you to set this book aside occasionally and go outside.

Find a white pine tree, or whatever tree is native to where you are . . .

*touch - listen to - talk with - sit leaning against the trunk of - climb - sing with - smell
- dance around - hug - simply be present with*

. . . this living being that is part of your community.