

# EXUBERANT ANIMAL<sup>®</sup>

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS



COMPILED BY FRANK FORENCICH,  
DR. KWAME BROWN, JOSH LEEGER AND  
THE BAREFOOT SENSEI

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Exuberant Animal glossary. The following concepts and terms form the core of the Exuberant Animal lexicon. This list is derived from several sources including multi-disciplinary sciences, humanities, earth studies and inspired creativity.

This glossary is intended for general use, but is also an integral part of the Exuberant Animal Trainer certification process. All prospective Exuberant Animal Trainers are expected to study this list and become fluent in the use of this terminology.

Trainer candidates will be tested on their mastery of this terminology: either in writing or orally as appropriate.



# EXUBERANT ANIMAL CULTURE

## YOISH!

Greeting of exuberance. Implies a coming to attention and a willingness to engage.

## EXUBERANCE

A state of psychophysical happiness, integration and engagement. The power of the natural world that courses through our bodies. Playful and curious; ideal state for learning, discovery and performance. The prefix *ex* suggests a stepping out, an action, a movement. The root is from the Latin, 'being abundantly fruitful' and the verb *exuberare*. A quality of growth that is abounding, branching, expanding and overflowing.



## THE MANDALA

The comprehensive range of elements that contribute to healthy human experience: Mind-body-spirit-land-tribe-ancestry. Aka "aboriginal holism," this formulation is commonly used by indigenous and native peoples around the world. By moving beyond the common formula of "mind-body-spirit," the mandala moves us from "me" to "we."

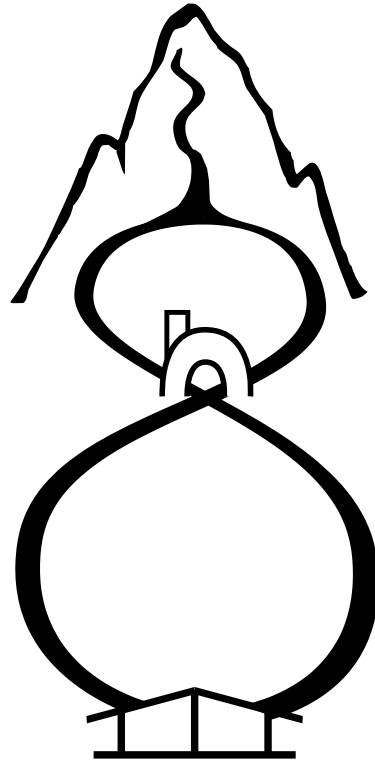


## DOJO RULES

Guidelines for behavior in martial art studios and similar environments. Common themes include respect for persons, process and place, full-engagement, being on time, proper clothing, etc.

## THE FIGURE EIGHT PATH

Experiential journey from city to hut to wild land and return. Integrates lessons from both city and wild into a single unity.



## SPOTTING

The physical practice of controlling another person's stumble or outright fall. Executed from a stable stance using hands or arms to channel and control momentum. Essential practice for functional and play-based training.

## HECKLING

Physical practice of nudges, light pushes and pulls. Intended to challenge stability and stimulate sensory-motor nervous system adaptations. Applied with a generous, playful spirit.

## PARTNER-RESIST

A physical practice in which one person provides smooth resistance to another.

## RAPPORT

Positive, healthy relationship marked by communication, movement and attention. Substantially non-verbal. Objectives: to establish and deepen rapport with our bodies, our people, our habitat and our work.



## ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP

Physical training relationship in which individuals coach one another's movements. Coach's objective: to challenge athlete to best possible effort

## SAFE EMERGENCY

Ideal tone and culture for group training experience. Perfect stress level in which individuals are challenged but simultaneously supported.

## SOLE CAMP (AKA SOUL CAMP)

As opposed to "Boot camp." A group training experience dedicated to reconnecting the body with natural habitat through vigorous movement and sensation, especially via skin and bare feet.

## ANIMAL STICK

Primitive training device constructed of stick and stone.

# PRIMATE'S PREDICAMENT

## PRIMATE'S PREDICAMENT

Mismatch between the evolutionary heritage of our bodies and the conditions we find in the modern world. The vast majority of human experience on earth has been as hunter-gathers in natural environments. This mismatch causes or exacerbates many of the diseases, anxiety and unhappiness that we experience today.

## ANCESTRAL ENVIRONMENT

The environment of human origins and evolution. Classically, the semi-wooded grasslands of East Africa and Asia. Every detail of our anatomy, physiology and psychology is the way it is because of this ancestral experience.



## ALIEN ENVIRONMENT

Any non-ancestral habitat. Typically, the modern urban environment. Marked by built infrastructure including roads, buildings, dwellings, vehicles, noise, distorted sensory and tribal experience. A threat to human health.

## DOMESTICATION

The process by which a population of animals or plants, through a process of selection, becomes accustomed to human provision and control. May also be applied to humans themselves.

## THE SITTY

Alternative spelling for “the city.” Describes the sedentary living common to urban environments.

## SHOEBOX

Any building, house, dwelling or vehicle. So named for the tendency to cage, restrict and inhibit human movement, experience and sensation, especially via the foot. Also conceptual: that is, a “shoebox” may be any idea that constrains and domesticates the natural wildness of our bodies.



## THE SPELL OF THE SHOEBOX

Domesticated narrative, memes and cognition, with an emphasis on order, safety, power, control and indoor experience. Divorced from natural oscillations, qualities and forces.

## SHOE SALESMAN

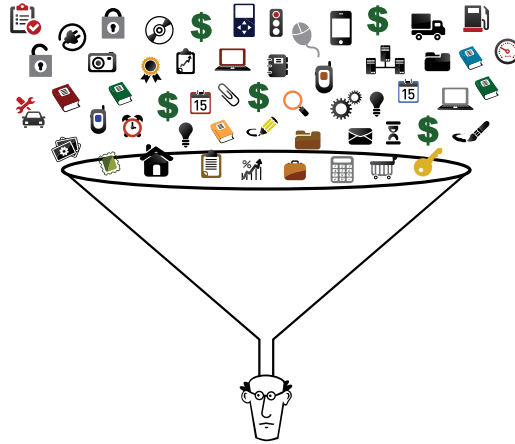
Any person or organization selling the trappings of civilization.

## NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER

From Richard Louv’s *Last Child in the Woods*. Insufficient contact with natural textures, colors, sounds and sensations. Associated with poor health status, anxiety, depression and attention problems.

## COGNITIVE OVERLOAD

Flood of information, facts, concepts and choices, many of which demand decision. Increases stress and decreases performance.



## SCHIZOPHONIA

Disconnect between sensory experience and the real world. Most notorious in the use of portable music players during walking, running and outdoor training.

## EARTH, BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

### CONTINUITY

The fact that human beings are continuous with all other life forms on earth, bound together by a shared history and common genetic mechanism. We are literally embedded in the biosphere; we are one leaf on one branch of an immense and ancient tree.



## BIOPHILIA

Literally “love of life.” Innate desire to affiliate with the natural world. Coined by E.O. Wilson.

## NATURAL SELECTION

The primary means of evolution. Operates by differential reproduction.

## FITNESS

In biology, the ability of a species to adapt to habitat and environment; the ability to leave successful offspring. May or may not have anything to do with “cardiovascular fitness” or “muscular fitness.”

## CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Endogenously driven 24-hour cycle in biochemical, physiological, or behavioural processes. Fine-tuned and entrained by environmental cues, especially natural sunlight.



## PRIMATE

A mammal of the order *Primates* which includes prosimians and simians (monkeys and apes—including humans). Primates arose from ancestors that lived in the trees of tropical forests; many primate characteristics represent adaptations to life in this challenging three-dimensional environment.

## APE

Primate group that includes gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, gibbons and humans.



## PALEO AND HUMAN ORIGINS

### PALEO

The Paleolithic period, literally “The old stone age.” Distinguished by the development of primitive stone tools. Extends from the earliest known use of stone tools 2.6 million years ago, to the end of the Pleistocene around 10,000 BP. Constitutes the vast majority of human history.

### PALEOLITHIC RHYTHM

First described by Eaton, Shostak, and Konner in *The Paleolithic Prescription*. (1988). A lifestyle oscillation of highly active hunting excursions followed by rest and relaxation back in camp. Similar to athletic training rhythm (periodization) and rhythm of childhood living.

### BIPEDALISM

Ability to walk erect on two feet. Arose about 6 million years ago.

# BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM

## SYNAPSE

Interface between two nerve cells. Signal transmission via chemical packets of neurotransmitters.

## AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

The branch of the mammalian nervous system responsible for visceral functions such as heart rate, digestion, respiration rate, salivation, perspiration, diameter of the pupils, urination, and sexual arousal. Operates mostly below the level of consciousness.

## LIMBIC SYSTEM

Brain region associated with emotion, learning, memory and social affiliation. Also known as “the Paleomammalian brain.” Operates by influencing the endocrine system and the autonomic nervous system.

## AMYGDALA

Part of the brain’s limbic system responsible for emotional memory, vigilance, threat assessment and fear. Becomes sensitized with chronic stress.

## HIPPOCAMPUS

Part of the brain’s limbic system responsible for explicit, short-term memory processing. Damaged by chronic exposure to stress hormones.

## PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Anterior part of the frontal lobes of the brain, responsible for planning complex cognitive behaviors, decision making and moderating social behavior. Executive function includes the ability to differentiate among conflicting thoughts, determine good and bad, future consequences, working toward a defined goal, prediction of outcomes, and social “control” (the ability to suppress urges that, if not suppressed, could lead to socially-unacceptable outcomes). Inhibition of limbic or emotional impulses.

## PLASTICITY

Specifically, the ability of the nervous system to grow new neurons and establish new connections. Ability to “work around” areas of weakness or dysfunction.

## NEUROGENESIS

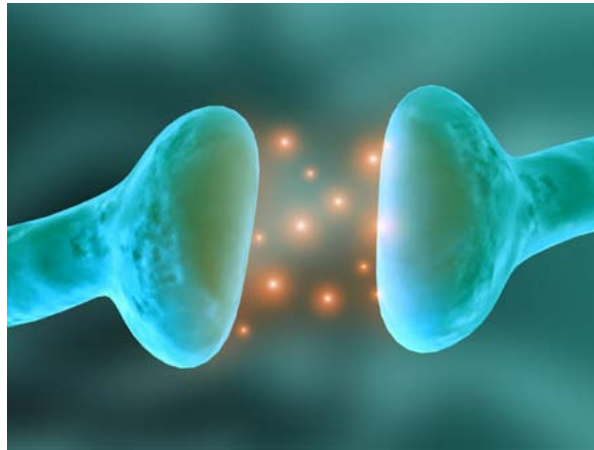
The generation of new nerve cells, especially in the hippocampus. Takes place throughout life. Increased by aerobic exercise, play and novelty.

## MYELINATION

Insulation wrapping of nerve cell axons. Increases speed of transmission. Use-dependent.

## LTP: LONG TERM POTENTIATION

Increased sensitivity of post-synaptic membranes with repeated stimulation. An essential process in learning.



## NEURO-FATALISM

Old dogma claiming that the nervous system is static and that no new nerve cells are generated.

## NEURO-OPTIMISM

The modern belief that the nervous system is capable of continuous growth and revision throughout life.

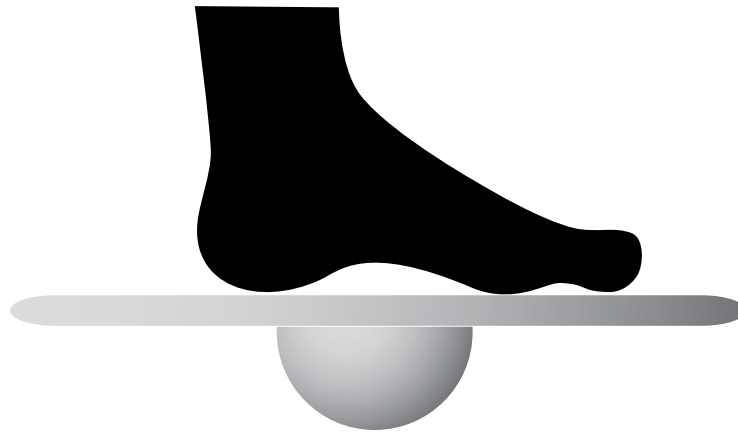
## NEUROTROPHIC FACTORS

Internally-generated brain chemicals that stimulate new growth of synapses, dendrites and neurons. Produced in response to aerobic or high-intensity physical exercise, novelty or play in positive social settings.

# FUNCTIONAL TRAINING

## FUNCTION, FUNCTIONAL ORIENTATION

Emphasis on practical movement skills. As distinguished from the cosmetic orientation that focuses on appearance. Both a training method and a metaphor.



## SAID PRINCIPLE

Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands. The body responds specifically to the way that it's challenged.

## SENSORY MOTOR AMNESIA

A physical forgetting and disintegration. Generally due to sedentary lifestyle and/or injury.

## SENSORY MOTOR INTEGRATION

Functional relationship between sensory information flows, especially proprioception, and motor control of muscles, joints and kinetic chains.

## PROPRIOCEPTION

Sensory system that informs the central nervous system of position and momentum of limbs and joints. Essential for sense of physical identity and effective production of movement.

## KINETIC CHAINS

Functional assemblies of muscles, joints, limbs and nervous system into wholes that produce movement. Kinetic chains span many joints.

## CORE

The entire neuromuscular system of the human torso, including the limbs. “Toenails to fingernails.”

## SUPER COMPENSATION

Process by which the body over-builds tissue in response to repeated training.

## SHOES, FOOTWEAR AND GAIT

### FLOWER POTS

Shoes and other footwear. So named for their tendency to dampen sensation and distort natural gait.

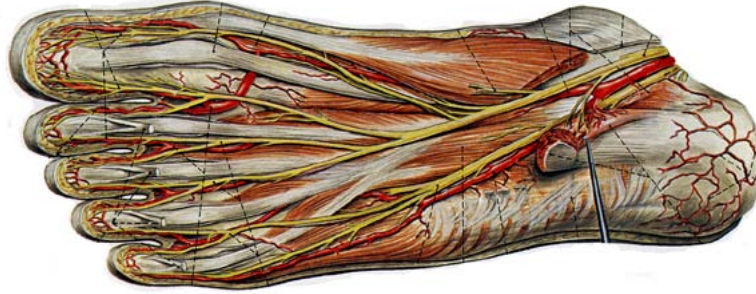


### HEEL STRIKER

Walker or runner who makes ground contact with heel. Dysfunctional gait pattern caused by chronic wearing of shoes.

### MARSHMALLOW SHOE

Any shoe with excessive cushioning. Produces dysfunctional gait pattern by obscuring sensation. Promotes injury.



## FOX WALK

Forefoot walk, favored by experienced barefooters.

## COW WALK

Heel striking

## CULTURE

### MEME

A play on the word *gene*. Any self-replicating idea, story, narrative, fashion or other cultural element. Copied with variation and mutation.

### VANITY INDUSTRY (AKA THE "ME INDUSTRY")

The combined industries of fashion, beauty, cosmetics, health and fitness - dedicated to promoting the primacy and glorification of the individual.

## TECHNOLOGY

### DIGITITIS

Over-reliance on and obsession with digital devices. Reduced attention to reality and the natural world. Addictive behavior and compulsion.

### DIGITAL DEATH SPIRAL

Vicious cycle: too much time with electronics leads to sedentary lifestyle and reduced physicality which leads to more sedentism and more reliance on electronic devices.

## DISEMBODIED COMMUNICATION

Abstract, neck-up messaging, especially as in email and texting.

## ATTENTION AND FOCUS

### ZANSHIN

From martial art practice. Total attention and concentration. Mono-tasking. Also associated with the practice of barefooting: “What’s the first thing that happens when you take your shoes off?” “You start paying attention!”

残心

### FLOW AND ENGAGEMENT

Immersion in task. Especially as described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in his book *Flow*. Characterized by absorption in task, concentration, lack of self-consciousness, time distortion and complete engagement. Most common in the sweet spot of skill and challenge.

### PRESENTEEISM

Condition of being physically present, but distracted or not fully engaged. “Absent presence.” Common in the modern workplace. Expensive.

### CONTINUOUS PARTIAL ATTENTION

A chronic state of low-level vigilance resulting from constant engagement with “always on” electronic technology such as “smart” phones. Amplifies stress, destroys natural rhythm and dilutes the beneficial effects of rest.

### MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Practice of calm awareness and stable attention. Sometimes described as a state of being that’s “objective, open, observing.”



# **SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE AND INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY**

## **SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE-INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY**

The study of our extended social nervous system. Key concept: “The brain is a social organ.” We literally shape one another’s bodies, emotion and cognition.

## **MIRROR NEURONS**

Specialized nerve cells in the brains of social mammals. Respond to observed, intentional movement in others. Allow us to experience other’s emotions and intent in our own bodies. Believed to be the basis of empathy.

## **RESONANCE CIRCUITRY**

The social-neural circuit between people. Includes mirror neurons, limbic system, vagus nerve, deep body and prefrontal cortex. Allows unconscious sharing of emotional states and intent. Essential to human social cooperation.

## **OXYTOCIN**

So called “love hormone.” Associated with feelings of social bonding and affiliation. Antidote to stress hormones. Increases trust. Generated in safe social environments.

# **EMBODIED COGNITION**

## **EMBODIED COGNITION**

The notion that intelligence is distributed throughout the entire body. Implies the need to “think” with the whole body rather than just the head or brain.

## **BUTT-HEAD THINKING**

Technically, “disembodied cognition” or “sedentary cognition.” Thinking from the neck up. Formal operations on abstract symbols, divorced from environment, context, emotion, aesthetics and wider meanings. Dangerous.

# **PSYCHOLOGY**

## **LEARNED HELPLESSNESS**

Condition under which animals (including people) begin to generalize a perceived lack of control. Often begins in high stress-low control circumstances.

## LEARNED OPTIMISM

The learned ability to generalize success to a wider range of possibility.

## RESILIENCE

The ability to rebound after hardships and setbacks.



## EXPLANATORY STYLE

The way in which individuals explain their lives to themselves and to others. May be positive or negative. For example, a depressive narrative explains events as “personal, pervasive and permanent.” An optimistic narrative might explain similar events as “transient, controllable and specific.”

## MARSHMALLOW TEST

Legendary test of delayed gratification administered to young children. Ability to delay gratification is highly predictive of future success, in both academics and life. Study begun in 1972 by psychologist Walter Mischel of Stanford University.



# EDUCATION AND LEARNING

## SENSEI

Teacher. Literally, “one who sees ahead” or “one foot ahead.” Visionary.

## DOJO

Training hall or studio.

## TIME ON THE MAT

Used in martial art training to describe a student’s total experience and maturation. For example, “The key to success is time on the mat.”

## AUTO-TELIC

Any activity that is intrinsically rewarding and pursued for the simple pleasure of doing it. As opposed to externally-rewarded behavior. See Alfie Kohn’s *Punished by Rewards*.

## CLASSICAL-ROMANTIC

Distinction described by Robert Pirsig in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. The classical orientation emphasizes logic, rationality and linear form. The romantic orientation emphasizes experience, emotion, metaphor and holism.

## GRAVITY-LEVITY, DISCIPLINED ANARCHY, LIMITED SLOPPINESS

Training oxymorons. Polarities of seriousness and play. Hybrid, rhythmic pattern, ideal for education and training. Allows for playful movement, within bounds. See also Alfred North Whitehead’s “The Rhythmic Claims of Freedom and Discipline.”



## GROWTH ORIENTATION

From Carol Dweck, the belief that intelligence and capability are not fixed, endowed or gifted, but are plastic and can be developed through training and effort. Thus, her recommendation: “reward effort, not achievement.” See *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.



## STRESS AND STRESS EDUCATION

### SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Major branch of the autonomic nervous system: stimulates metabolism for action and movement. Fires in circadian cycles and in response to perceived threats. Stimulates “fight-flight-freeze” response.

### PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Major branch of the autonomic nervous system: stimulates tissue repair and regeneration throughout the body.

### EUSTRESS

Optimal stress level: experienced as exhilaration. enhances cognition, memory, learning and performance. Often experienced as play.

### GLUCOCORTICIDS

Steroidal stress hormones produced in the adrenal cortex. Includes the stress hormone cortisol. Activates the “fight-flight” response. In small doses, glucocorticoids enhance cognition, learning and performance. Chronic saturation leads to stress-related disease.

## FEED AND BREED

Psychophysical state of rest. Activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. Promotes tissue repair and healing. As opposed to “fight-flight-freeze.”

## POWER LOUNGE

Informal description of serious, intensive rest session.

## STRESSCRAFT

The ability to harness stressful experience and turn it to one’s advantage.

## “THE DOSE MAKES THE POISON”

From the field of toxicology. The benefit or toxicity of a substance depends on the concentration or duration of exposure. Also applies to stress.

# PLAY AND GAMES

## PLAY

Exuberant movement marked by sense of relaxed exploration, curiosity, laughter and discovery. Types include locomotor, object, social, fantasy and imaginative.



## PLAY STATE

Ideal state of curiosity, openness, enthusiasm for movement and exploration.



## ROUGH AND TUMBLE PLAY

Highly physical social play. Enhances physical and social function. Fun.

## PLAY DEPRIVATION

Over-serious approach to childhood, education or living. Contributes to social dysfunction in adulthood.

## ROLE REVERSALS AND SELF-HANDICAPPING

Common in play, process by which players readily change roles and/or withhold power in order to continue the play.

## NON-ZERO SUM GAME

A cooperative game in which rewards are unlimited. As opposed to the zero-sum, competitive game in which rewards are scarce. Zero-sum games reward power and deception; non-zero sum games reward communication and transparency.

## FINITE AND INFINITE GAMES

A finite game is played *within* boundaries. An infinite game is played *with* boundaries

# HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

## EPIGENETICS

The study of changes produced in gene expression caused by mechanisms above and beyond the underlying DNA sequence. Especially relevant in matters of lifestyle and intergenerational influences on health.

## VERTICAL INTEGRATION

Unity of mind and body. As distinct from Cartesian mind-body separation. Unity of cognition and emotion.

## HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION

Left brain-right brain integration. Left side aptitudes such as logic, language, linear rationality balanced and complemented by right side aptitudes such as holistic perspectives, metaphor and somatic awareness. Powered by narrative.

## MOVEMENT SNACK

A short movement session, taken frequently throughout the day.

## OPPORTUNISM

Especially in matters of diet and exercise, the inclination to seek out opportunities for vigorous movement and good food, wherever and whenever they might happen to present themselves.

# CREATIVITY

## UNNOVATION

Orientation towards simplified designs, systems and processes. Doing more with less. See design philosophy of Yvon Chouinard and Patagonia.

# LEADERSHIP

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The skill or ability to identify, assess, and regulate the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups.

## EMBODIED LEADERSHIP

Full-bodied commitment to the process at hand. Walking the talk.

## WILDLIFE

### EARTHLUST

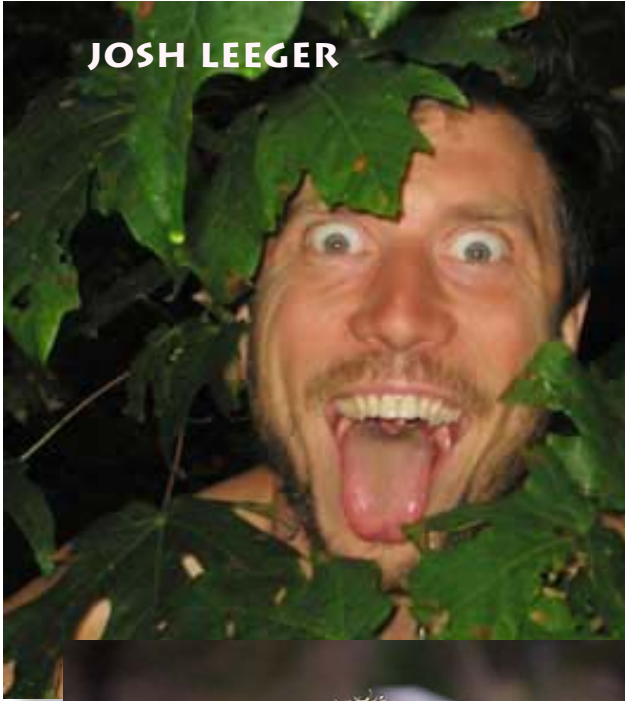
Intense and compelling desire to touch and experience land and habitat.

### ORGASM WITH THE EARTH

Ecstatic merger with the natural world.



**JOSH LEEGER**



**DR. KWAME BROWN**



**THE BAREFOOT SENSEI**



**FRANK FORENCICH**