

Biophilia and Being a Biophilic Org

- Speech by Toku (April 22, 2023)



Happy Earth Day!

Thank you for coming to this workshop session. My name is Toku. I am with Plantify. We have our booth right over there. Come meet our lovely team.

So as you all know, today is Earth Day. Does anyone know what the theme is for this year's Earth Day? It is "invest in our Planet". It is a calling for people and businesses to work together towards building a healthy economy for the planet, while also making sure we work towards a more equitable future for everyone.

Now let's pause for a moment and think about the progress humans have made over the last 50 .. 20 .. no let's say 10 years.

What are some words that come to your mind when thinking about the development of our planet in the last 10 years?



Technology .. automation .. destruction ..

This is a mixed bag of words, and these words are tied to a concept called the "human centered world." Yes, there are good things and bad things, but really it puts humans at the center stage with nonhumans.

I want to introduce a word to you all, biophilia. This is a noun.

Does anyone know what this means?





So the Webster dictionary on April 7th, 2023, just added this word and it is defined as:

“ .. the human tendency to interact to be closely associated with other forms of life in nature.”

Biophilic, is the adjective form. There has been uses of this word since 1979 and was eventually integrated into industry - architecture in the 1980s.

So some of you may have started hearing this expression - “biophilic design.”

It’s a coined word for architects and has been applied into their design for better human experiences.

There were companies and eventually organizations that wanted to expand this concept and published work that identifies patterns of biophilic design.

One of the most well known article called the “14 patterns of Biophilic Design” by Terrapin Bright Green lists these patterns:

1. Visual Connection with Nature
2. Non-visual Connection with Nature
3. Non-rhythmic Sensory Stimuli
4. Thermal and Airflow
5. Presence of Water
6. Light
7. Connection with Natural Systems - Season
8. Forms and Patterns
9. Material Connection with Nature
10. Complexity and Order
11. Prospect
12. Refuge
13. Mystery
14. Risk/Peril





Since then, architecture firms and companies have expanded biophilic design into principles of biophilia. Answering the question of what makes human built spaces more serene, natural, and provokes a sense of wellness.

So far, most of this has stayed within an architectural framework.

Ladies and gentlemen, Earth Lovers, I want to expand this framework into a broader sense. Not everyone are architects or curators.

If you have the chance to visit our booth, we have some products that we're selling and promoting - a Kokedama craft kit. A kokedama is a Japanese word that means: 'moss' and 'ball', which is a form that you have a plant in; thus calling it a 'moss ball plant'. I have been making kokedamas for over 7 years and, several months ago, decided I should make a craft kit for people to enjoy.

Not to digress, but I also decided to gift this operation to the nonprofit organization I founded as a source for revenue. The reason is because our mission is to connect people to nature and I believe our kokedamas are a product that does that for people.



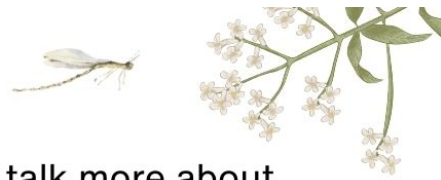
To circle back to biophilic design, I believe that the kokedama is a biophilic product. When I started Plantify, my vision became clear. I want to create a biophilic, perhaps the first, biophilic nonprofit organization.

We are an organization that aims to connect people to nature. We are hoping to expand this framework to include the natural world onto center stage with us humans.



For the sake of our planet, for the Earth, humans and nonhumans need to be more in harmony if we are to have a future together.





Now I know I said a lot, and so I want to step back and talk more about biohilia as it pertains to our framework.

It is about the process... the process of thinking about the ecological impact or footprint of our actions.

It is about intentions and understanding more about the materials that are used to make things that we consume; also known as sourcing.

Materials have a life cycle. Where does it come from?
Is it sustainable?



As it stands presently, Earth's resources are finite. What happens at the end of the material's life? It usually ends in a landfill!

Being mindful of this, I took action to apply the human, nonhuman, and ecological lens into building our kokedama kits. This, I believe, helps qualify whether it is biophilic or not.

I want to pause and stress however, this is new territory and I'm not in any authority to dictate what the standard is, since our planet is so vast with many different cultures and environments. I do think we can help each other and get to helping and keeping our planet healthy.

And to close, let's put some action into our thoughts, especially on a day like today.

Let's 'Invest in our Planet' y'all! Thank you so much for listening.

