



## **A Recommended “Treatment” for the Misery of Conflict and Fear**

### **The Peace of Wild Things**

By Wendell Berry (1968)

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

I read all kinds of material as part of my quest to understand what moves people to make choices that aggravate or resolve conflict. To continue learning and working successfully as a mediator, I search for captivating fiction, nonfiction, images, and poetry. I almost always find something inspiring that encourages me to be optimistic.

Wendell Berry’s poem, “The Peace of Wild Things,” is my latest find. Individually and collectively, we all crave and seek peace. As in mediation, people have opportunities to find their own peace, which, at least temporarily, is a healing force that permits clear thinking, better decision-making, and greater happiness.

Find nature. Note that animals, like the heron, do not worry about the future. To find peace, immediately or long-term, go anywhere natural, even a patch of grass in the middle of the city. Pay attention to the details. Marvel at the exquisite organization of all of the life - and death - of the world of nature right around you. Relief, even if fleeting, is yours. It is a quick fix to find what seems so elusive.