

TREES TALK

Hello! Did you know that trees are the longest living organisms on Earth? My relatives were here in what you refer to as the Jurassic age – 160 million years ago! It amazes me that we have survived for so long....As a Redwood tree, our average life span was 600 – 2,500 years. In 1850 people started logging and now only 4% of my old friends are still around. What's our secret?

Things you can learn from a Redwood Tree:

Great things start small – Our seeds are only 3 times the size of a pinhead and yet we have the potential to be taller than a 35-story skyscraper!

The surface is only part of the story – We have an amazing underground root system that goes down 10-13 feet and spreads outward as much as 80 feet. From this root system new growth can sprout.

When the wind blows, hang on to your friends, family and neighbors - Our thousands of small roots create an underground web that allows us to hold onto each other and withstand violent windstorms.

If it's foggy – drink! - It is that darn fog that keeps this eco-system alive through the warm and dry summer months on the coast.

Share – take only what you need. - 20-50% of the moisture in this ecosystem during the summer comes from us Redwoods sharing the water we collect from the fog. We drink what we need and then drop the rest to those below us.

Let go of what is no longer useful – We lose 1/3 of our foliage every year! We don't whine or cry. We know that the little plants beneath our canopy will use them; they will create homes for small critters and ultimately create mulch and nutrients for our continued growth.

Don't give up! - Getting knocked down can be the best thing that ever happened to you. When we get knocked down, we continue to grow. Each standing limb turns into its own tree! Our established roots can make all sorts of adjustments to keep us growing.

Have thick skin – Our bark can be a foot thick.... if struck by lightning or fire, this thick skin chars and turns into a protective heat shield.

Don't be afraid to grow new roots. Flooding often kills trees but the redwoods know how to grow new lateral roots when needed. I knew one tree that had survived 7 floods by growing new roots.

Be naturally bug resistant – our high tannin content and thick bark help deter wood-boring insects and diseases.

When in doubt, grow up. We don't struggle with decisions about where to go... we grow up and if something gets in our way, we grow around it.

This is but a VERY short list of advice from a tree who has seen nations come and go, was here before Christ, and who hung out with the dinosaurs. We have much more to teach those willing to listen. So, I challenge you to take a moment, quiet your own voice and mind and listen to your elders.... what do you hear?