

HAPPINESS TOUR

Desert Botanical Garden

Welcome to Desert Botanical Garden! This Happiness Tour guides you to six tranquil locations in the Garden where you can experience the natural beauty and peace of the Sonoran Desert. Please allow yourself plenty of time, free of distractions, to experience this special journey. We recommend having a Garden map, pen, journal, phone or tablet, headphones, as well as walking shoes, sunscreen, water and a hat. *Let's begin!*

1

Relaxation through Breath



Deep breathing is one of the most relaxing things you can do. Shallow breaths can create tension and build anxiety. Breathing through your nose allows oxygen into your body and can release strong emotions.

Welcome to *Ottosen* Entry Garden.

Find a comfortable spot to sit or stand with your feet shoulder width apart.

Gently close your eyes. Breathe deeply in and out through your nose for five cycles.

When you open your eyes, notice of how you feel. Observe the nature surrounding you. Write your experience in your journal.

If you enjoyed this exercise, repeat it with an additional component. As you breathe in, quietly say to yourself “let” and as you breathe out the air say to yourself “go.” Do this for three cycles.



Open your eyes.

Take note of how you feel physically and mentally. Re-discover the Garden around you now that you have relaxed. Write how you feel in your journal.

Use your map to continue to the Center for Desert Living Trail.

2

Sensory Engagement Countdown



Your five senses include sight, sound, touch, taste and scent. The outside world shapes life experiences—especially while young. The five senses are your body and brain’s way of staying in tune with your surroundings to become aware of your environment for survival. This creates meaning and memory. The more you engage your senses, the more you are tied to a moment. Intentionally engaging your senses also increases your creative spirit and brings a sense of calm, presence and happiness.

This is the beautiful Center for Desert Living Trail.

Take a look around you. Notice five different things you see. They can be anything. Slowly and meaningfully, say each aloud. Examples include “white clouds”, “pink cactus flower” or “Garden path.”

Notice four textures you are physically feeling in this moment. How do your feet feel? Is there a breeze on your skin? Do you feel the sun? Say these four touch aspects slowly and aloud.

Notice three things you can hear in this moment. Before speaking, take note of the sounds around you, including your breath. Say the three sounds you hear aloud.

Did you know your sense of smell is stored in the same part of your brain as your memories? Take a few deep breaths and begin to notice two scents you smell right now. Say them aloud and slowly.

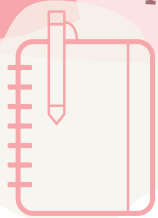
Close your eyes and sense one taste in your mouth. Swallow and note the sensation in your mouth and throat.

If you enjoyed this activity, remember, you can apply it anywhere and at any moment, you feel unfocused, anxious, agitated or ungrounded.

Head back to the Desert Discovery Loop Trail for the next stop.

3

Mindfulness Observation



Your journal and pen is recommended for this experience. Use this peaceful reflection time to answer the following questions or prompts in your journal.

When you move quickly through life and each day, you can miss the beauty around you. This stop on the tour encourages you to slow down and take notice of nature along the trails. Observe every detail of the plants and animals you pass along the way.

What are the different shapes of plants? What do you see?

How many different colors do you see? How many different shades of green or brown do you notice?

Be mindful and focused about the textures you are viewing. How would you describe them in words on a page?

Share in your journal all the little details of the plants in front of you that you might not notice if you were just walking by quickly.

What plants do you find most interesting as you sit and notice the amazing work of nature in front of you? What is it about the plant that connects with you?

Head to the Sonoran Desert Nature Loop trail for stop 4.

4

Heart-Centered Music and Human Heart Connections



We will tap into the power of music. Listening to music releases happy hormones that counteract stress hormones to make us feel better and think more creatively. When you combine nature and music the combination is quite powerful on our heart, mind, spirit and energy.

What type of music do you enjoy listening to? Jot down some of your favorite types of music, artists and songs that make you happy.

Now put on any music that evokes happiness once you select your playlist be sure to put on your headphones.

If you are not able to enjoy music on this tour, experience a human heart connection by connecting with at least three people you pass along the trail. You can do three ways:

Eyes: Look other in their eyes. Right eye to right eye is the most powerful eye contact. Hold your gaze for at least three second.

Smile: Smile at each person, you encounter. Greet each person with a salutation such as “good morning,” “good afternoon,” or a simple “hello.”

Heart: As you pass people along the path, imagine your heart sending a beam of light and positive energy to their heart. Sending loving kindness to other humans is quite powerful for the energy of our universe.

Walk to the Plants & People of the Sonoran Desert Loop trail

5

Sun Salutation Body Movement



Sun Salutation translates into “saluting the sun.” The sun provides energy and growth for plants through the process of photosynthesis. The sun also provides Vitamin D for humans through our skin. Vitamin D, often called the sunshine vitamin, helps our immune systems shown to fight feelings of sadness. Sun Salutation shows our gratitude for sunshine, what it provides for our universe and for the nature around us.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Imagine you are a saguaro that has roots reaching through your feet to the earth. Feel your center strong and balanced just like that cactus.

Place your hands in prayer position, palm to palm, at your “heart center” (the middle of your chest.) Press your thumbs gently into your chest. Gently bow your head downward.

Look up to the sky.

As you inhale reach your hands up to the sun with palms still connected.

As you exhale release your palms and stretch your hands up, out and around in a circle.

As you close your circle, bring your hands back to prayer position and bring your gaze back down and in front of you. Bow your head until the next sun salutation movement.

Repeat these movements three to five times.

Head to the Sybil B. Harrington Cactus & Succulent Galleries



Each human has a creative spirit inside. A creative spirit does not mean you have to be a formal artist who draws, sculpts or writes. Our creative spirit is simply that place in each of us that longs for authenticity, freedom and engagement in the world around us. Our creative spirit includes our thoughts, ideas, perspectives, observations and communications. That part of us sees the beauty in everything around us and honors the beauty in the people around us. The part of us is non-judgmental about ourselves and gives us the self-acceptance we all deserve.

You can now take pictures or sketch in your journal.



Take 3 interesting pictures with your camera or phone.

Imagine you are on assignment for national travel magazine. How might that photographer see interesting angles, colors or textures? Use your new perspective to observe the space around you and snap a few shots. Connect to your creative spirit.

Take these photos for you and no one else. Have fun and enjoy the process. If you do not like the shot, you take, simply delete and begin again.

You can also take a selfie in the Garden to share on social media or with your friends and family. Be sure to tell them you are on The Happiness Tour.



Open your journal and begin doodling and sketching some of the scenery you see. Spend about five minutes sketching or doodling. Draw this for you and no one else. Again, have fun, do not judge yourself and enjoy the process.

Congratulations! You have completed The Happiness Tour at Desert Botanical Garden. We hope you enjoyed your experience and that you feel happier in this moment. The Sonoran Desert is a perfect place to find refuge in our daily lives. We encourage you to continue to enjoy the natural world around you, appreciate the beauty of the desert and care about it.

Take some time to journal and reflect on your experience. There are many quiet spaces in the Garden or settle in and enjoy a meal at the Patio Café or Gertrude's restaurant.

Below are some guiding questions.

How do you feel right now? What emotions are coming to the surface? What stop or experience did you enjoy the most? Why? How did the Garden and connecting with nature make you feel? What do you find most interesting about the Sonoran Desert vegetation and landscape? What did you learn about yourself from this experience? What are five things you are most grateful for in your life right now? What are some activities you can do even after leaving the Garden to connect to your happiness?

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This tour is possible by a generous grant from The Walton Family Foundation as a way to support those who seek respite and quiet from the challenges in their everyday lives.

Thank you for joining us today and we hope to see you on the trails again soon.



ROB & MELANI
WALTON
FOUNDATION

A special *thank you* to Joelle Hadley of Culture Coaches for collaborating with the Garden on this tour.

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