

Appendix 6. Selected full responses to the question "If the land could talk, what would it say?"

Table A6.1

Selected full responses to the question "If the land could talk, what would it say?"	Relational values themes and empathy codes present
<p>Hmm. [little laugh] I don't know. Again, I don't – I, uh, I'm sorry I don't have any answer for that. It isn't that, ah. I – I guess I just don't really think about it that way. You know, its probably a shortcoming on my part, but. Ah, I mean, I think, if we could listen, uh, not so much if the land could, if we could – the land is talking, in its many many multitudinous ways. But if we could listen better we'd probably do a better job at living life. [pause] You know, we'd learn a lot more about patience, and, you know, sharing, and, you know, we'd learn, we'd learn to recognize greed for what it is, and waste for what it is. If you think about it, there's no waste in nature. Why is it that there's so much waste in what we do? What's that tell us? I just was reading this article. This horrific article on garbage. You can't recycle garbage. China no longer accepts our waste, so the whole recycling thing that we are pretending to do is a lie. In a lot of places. It's just not happening. So there are places in the world that are [hard to hear – I mean it's?] it's just unbelievable. Anyway, I just got finished telling you I try not to surround myself with this stuff. But, once in a while I have to get educated, I guess. [little laugh]. Anyway.</p>	Life teaching

[Breath out through nose]. Wow. That's not in your list! Um... I don't know. "Crazy old bat?" [5 second pause] I don't know. "You done well? You tried." Maybe that's the word. "You tried. You left it better than when you started." I don't know. Maybe "you haven't done enough." Probably, I think it's all of those. "You haven't done enough." I know I haven't done enough. I can't do enough. I want to do a lot more but I can't. I'm alone. And I've got a wife and kids and grandkids, but I'm alone. You know, they don't have the same values I do. Uh, that is, my wife doesn't. I think the kids, two of the kids do. The third one is off and running. I think "you tried. You did alright. You haven't done enough." All of that! "I'm better off than when I started." Um. "Keep going, pass it on." I think all of that. Um... go from there. You know, I've got work to do down there at the bottom because of the god dang poison ivy, poison parsnip, but I can keep it under control and go from there. And just, "don't hurt me," and the other thing is "don't hurt me too bad" when I use the poison, when I use the herbicide. "Don't hurt me too bad, little bit, ok," or when I use the commercial fertilizers, "ok, a little bit, but don't hurt me too bad." And I wasn't anticipating going to organic fertilizer. But as repellent also. And by gosh it works. So. It's not bad. It's three dollars a bag more expensive. I, for what little I use, I can spend three bucks. And it's a good selling point. Ok. Yeah. So "don't hurt me too bad, we'll treat ya." The roads up there, "yup, I need a haircut. Yeah, I need a haircut. But don't hurt me too bad. I need a haircut," doing a little thinning, it's like a haircut. Every ten years I do a haircut. And that's what it is. Haircut you need. But you don't need a buzz saw. And I try to do a haircut. When I was sugaring, uh, I didn't tap every tree. No way. Left a veneer. I tapped most of them, but I didn't tap every. Just like I did the ash, I didn't take them all. I left some, different sizes. I didn't take, oh I wanted to, I took some basswood, but I didn't take them all. Oh, oak, I left some. Maple, you know. Same way with the deer and all the rest of them. I didn't take them all. You need to get it under control, but... Go from there. And we cut the hay, you know, for, ten years we had a guy come in and he did the haying here and he was getting four cuts. But I left the hay up top. That was first of July. The birds had that place up there to do their nesting. The birds had this to do their nesting. Yeah, there was manure. But there was also commercial fertilizer. But we put the manure and we did the soil tests did all the rest of it here. So. Eh, I didn't hurt it too bad.

Bequest, care about, partnership, stewardship (care for), empathy

Participant: "Wake up!" Yeah, "wake up!" "See it! See me as I am. See yourself as other you are. You're here, we're here." You know. This is, this is really, you know it's, it's just, it's like, I don't know, it's everything. And everything is driven, everything is driven by, [chuckle] is driven by reproduction and thriving, and um, you know, it's, it's just like, it's saying "you look, look at what you are, look at what you are," but also understand impermanence. You know, it's like, we're blossoming, be we gotta get it all done now because the cold is coming. These temperate climates really teach you that. I think in the tropics you don't see that nearly as much. But like, in these areas where you're really struggling to survive, they're kind of teaching you about hardiness and all those things. But I think it's just inviting us to look around and kind of, but also to, the land is very neutral. It doesn't really care. That's one of the cool things about it. It it, it doesn't care if you die on it. You know, that's what life does, it dies on land. Land isn't attached to your outcome. So it allows you to formulate whatever philosophy you need to from it, and that'll be the right one. As long it's not a conquering mentality, you know, but like, there's a lot happening there, and the land is very brutal, it's a tough teacher, um, and when you get into some areas that will kill you, quickly, uh it reminds you that the land is powerful. Yeah, so, but you gotta have a lot of respect too. You know, one of the things that our ancestors were good about was not taking unnecessary risks. There's certain things that are just a bad idea. You might have to if your calories depended on it. But overall there was also an idea of "ok, don't be dumb, man, you know, it's a storm, we're not going out right now. We sit, we sit through a storm." uh, you still see it up north a lot. The reason why there's not more deaths on the land up north is because people are conservative. They have to be. You have to have a respect or you aren't going to last long. Here you can get away with it. But in other lands you can't get away with it. It doesn't take long. "Pay attention! Be alert!"

Owww! It's just funny. It's like, it's been smacked around and now my only way to make it healthier is to hit it again. Harder. You know. Which is not ideal but at the same time it's just like you know so many of these forests just like an exercise in resilience, you know. And the resilience of these systems, that these systems. It's been cleared, it's been high-graded. You know it's been eroded and knocked around and it still it just keeps on growing through all these changes and the forest is pretty amazing in that way. But I also think that you know it doesn't like I feel like there's a lot of hope here. The more I work on it like with those, I experience some anxiety thinking about regenerating those patches and what's going to happen if it's going to happen. When it's going to happen. But you know working in between the patches and seeing like that there I'm like oh there a healthy trees here. There is hope here, you know. And and I feel like the mindset that I'm approaching this place with like is it's going to be mutually beneficial cuz this place also makes me feel amazing all the time and I love it, and it's just a wonderful place to sort of be in partnership with. But I think we can benefit each other. And I wish that everybody who owned forested land like cared about it and thought about it as much as I do about this place. Cuz if they did they'd be there'd be, you know, most of the problems that we have to just go away. With regards to the management of forested land. I like I wrote the forest management plan, I had to update the forest management plan this year. I sent it to the Addison County forester, [name]. And it was just so funny to do because I'm like if I could explain to anybody how I feel about this land, like the concept of me ever doing anything to harm this land is so crazy in my mind, it like does not make any sense. It's like, you know, so the concept of like me having to submit this management plan that has to get approved to make sure that I'm doing the right thing to the land, I'm just like, you know, for most people it makes a lot of sense. For me I'm just like you don't understand. Like I would rather die than do something to hurt this piece of land. You know, it's like a different a different level approach.

Care about,
stewardship (care for),
partnership, empathy

Participant: Um. Depends, like, like what was originally here probably can't say anything because it's gone. Right? You know, like, the northern hardwood forest and the little tiny fen. I think actually there's a whole series of springs along here and some of them are just under houses or ditched or piped or whatever, but there's some fen vegetation up the road a little too, I don't know, I think maybe it would just be watching and kind of, probably not saying anything, just seeing what we do [chuckle]. Kind of, something like that...I don't think it's going to like thank me or scold me or anything. It's just, it, this is what happens, you do this, this is what you get, you know. It just follows its rules. And, you know, you could look at a broader sense and say a lot of these questions are...I really do believe all I say about biodiversity and conservation and stuff, but the bottom line is it's also just a matter of does our species end up surviving and moving on to being something else and doing something cool? Or do we just kill ourselves off and you know, get rid of most of the organisms, like act basically like a comet, and then stuff comes back later and tries again. You know? But I think that's kind of a pathetic way for our species to be, so. Maybe the land won't scold us, or maybe whatever weird cockroach won't scold us later, but we'll at least scold ourselves while we're dying [laugh] if that happens. So hopefully it doesn't. But I'm optimistic, I think we've got a chance as a species. 50/50 maybe.

Bequest, care about, partnership

Haha, which is better than what I hear from a lot of people. People are just assuming we're all going to die in a horrible...I used to think that too, actually, I guess, I don't know. Maybe I just delude myself more because I have a kid and I don't want it to happen. I don't know. We'll see. We'll find out. Or we won't because we'll be dying of some disaster [chuckle].

Interviewer: That intermediate time is hard for me to understand why it's valuable. Like no matter what we do, in five hundred million years, there will be something vibrant here, right?

Participant: Right, yeah. Or, or for some reason the Earth will fall into the sun and there'll be something else on some other planet, or whatever, yeah.

Interviewer: Yet we care, a little bit, for some reason?

Participant: I think we're supposed to care, too, I think it's in our genetic programming to care because for a long history of the Earth people who didn't care just died. And I think that we somehow got away with not caring, or our part of, this branch of society, for longer because we got a bunch of tools we could use in different ways, but it doesn't work in the long run. Like if you look on an evolution time scale, this will either change or go away, like what we're doing now. Or what colonialism is doing now. So like, yeah. I think we're actually, I think we are adapted not to want to wreck stuff. I think people just get scared or they want to protect their kids, or they get greedy. You know. It's easy to judge other people, who knows. But. Yeah. I think we're adapted to want, I mean we're adapted to game the system for our own kids, and I don't think it's... any point to stop that, that's just how it works. But we're also adapted to, we're probably supposed to be some kind of ecosystem engineer or something, not just scraping everything off. And you know, supposed to be is, you know, how do you interpret that, I don't know. But yeah.
