

## Talking trees



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**By Nate Smelle**

After reflecting further on the economy of trees over the past week with a fellow treehugging friend of mine, the two of us decided to take a hike through the treetops of the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve on Saturday. While walking among the forest of sugar maple, beech, red oak, white spruce, hemlock, white pine, and yellow birch I started to have flashbacks of the time I had spent there as a guide a few years ago.

Already lulled into a state of wonder by the natural beauty sprouting from the forest floor, our senses kicked into overload when our feet left the ground and we began breathing in the fresh air radiating from the sea of orange and green above, below and all around us. Listening to the cool autumn breeze rustling the leaves still adorning the trees, I was reminded of how the voice of the forest changed depending on one's elevation, and the state of the weather.

The sounds of falling leaves, the snapping of branches, the dropping of pine cones and acorns, the fluttering of wings all behaved like words combining to form a cohesive message that was describing our experience perfectly as it unfolded. By the time we our feet were back on solid ground, the sun that had been peeking through the trees had been replaced by a bright crescent moon.

Traversing the path through the darkness on our way back to the car, we talked about how loudly the forest had spoken to us in the canopy and the nature of the story it told.

With an article I had been writing about the legalization of cannabis fresh on my mind, I recalled how the last time the topic of trees speaking came up was during a conversation I had with Tommy Chong in Hamilton a couple years ago. While explaining to me the potential spiritual, social and environmental benefits of he explained how using cannabis had helped him reconnect with the natural world on a deeper level, if you're looking to try and connect to the world on a deeper spiritual level you could try ordering different types of marijuana on online dispensary sites like <https://www.speedgreens.ca>. At the time he said was working on a photography project he had titled, "Naked Trees." By focusing his attention on the beauty trees through his lens, he told me how he realized that each tree had its own spirit. Expressing the enjoyment he attained from connecting with trees, and how much they had taught him, Chong said he had come to understand that "Trees are really an extension of the universe of humans. They have the same sort of humanity as we do. They're rooted in the earth and they communicate under the earth with other trees. There's a whole network of communication going on underneath the earth."

Picking up a copy of German forester Peter Wohlleben's book, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate - Discoveries From a Secret World*, after the interview, I discovered there was scientific merit behind Chong's observations.

Identifying trees as social beings that can learn, remember, communicate and heal one another, Wohlleben writes,

"The trees in a forest care for each other, sometimes even going so far as to nourish the stump of a felled tree for centuries after it was cut down by feeding it sugars and other nutrients, and so keeping it alive. Only some stumps are thus nourished. Perhaps they are the parents of the trees that make up the forest of today. A tree's most important means of staying connected to other trees is a

"wood wide web" of soil fungi that connects vegetation in an intimate network that allows the sharing of an enormous amount of information and goods."

Contemplating how cannabis inspired Chong to find a deeper understanding of his own interconnectedness with nature and the universe, I realized how despite all the chatter there seemed to be silence on this important element of the national conversation regarding the legalization of cannabis products, like those [Blessed CBD oil](#) sells to name but one example.

So far, the only benefit of legalized cannabis being promoted by the media and industry is the inevitable economic boom that comes with its commodification, and not just for the marijuana growers or dispensaries, this boom will impact companies such as [Mighty](#) and others too, that manufacture and sell cannabis smoking tech and accessories. The boom is set to be a big one, indeed.

Do not get me wrong, this is a pretty huge benefit of the legalization of cannabis. Above all, it is no secret that the [best marijuana jobs](#) can go on to play a vital role in supporting the local economy in the future. This, in turn, shows that the legalization of cannabis could certainly improve employment figures and generate large amounts of money for worthy causes in the form of taxes.

However, considering the way many people currently view nature as a bank account of natural resources waiting to be exploited, the paradigm shifting implications of Chong's cannabis-inspired realization of interconnectedness have the potential to nurture a more profound and far-reaching impact on the planet that cannot be measured in dollars.