

LYSSA ADKINS

**#future-fit
leaders**

**EQUALLY
CONSIDER HUMANS
AND NATURE**

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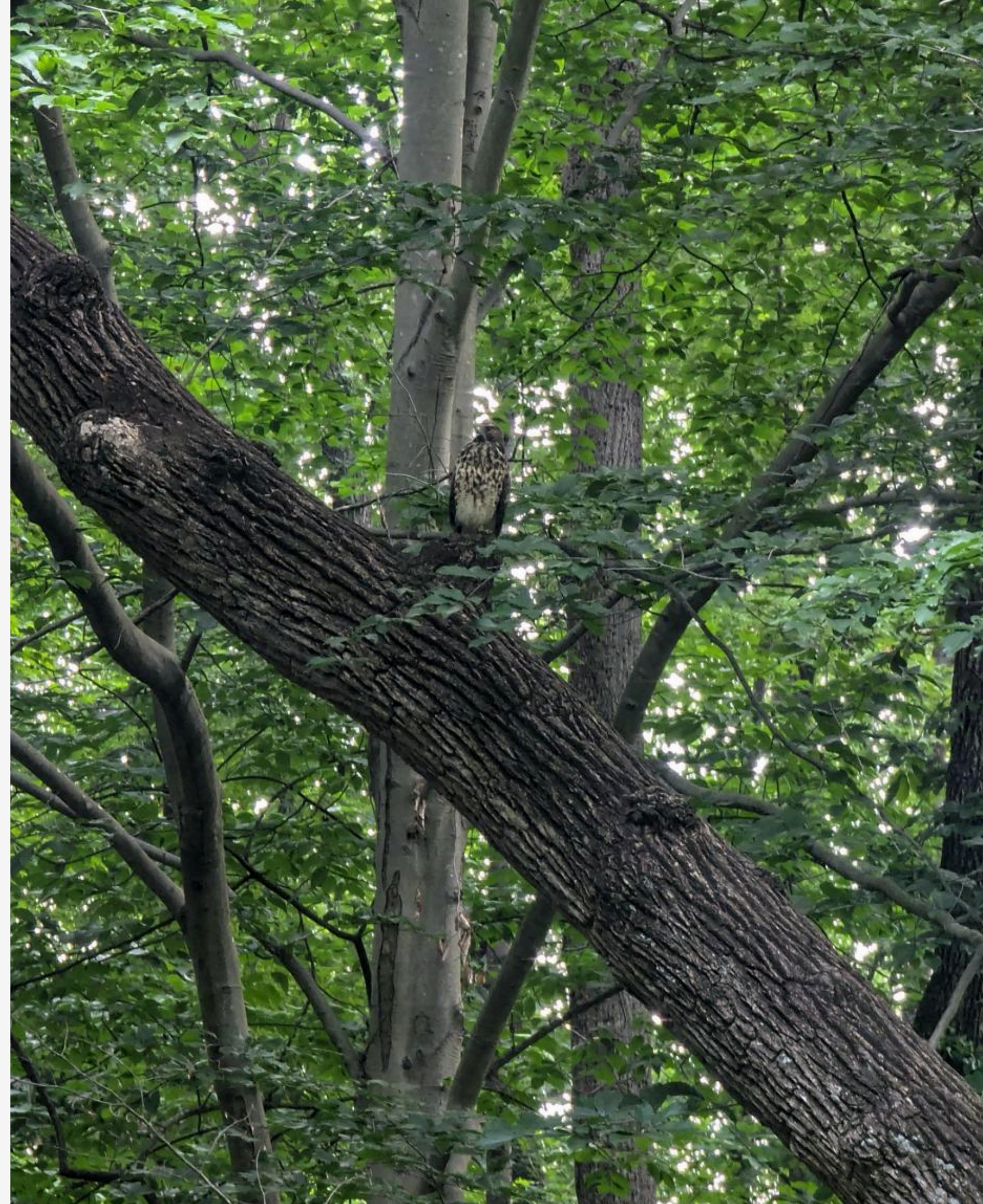
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The Disconnect Between MODERN LIFE AND NATURE

Most of us in the modern business world live our lives separated from the daily experience of being in nature. We may take a trip to a national park or go hiking for a couple days. Maybe we walk on a wild beach during a yearly vacation. We rarely immerse ourselves in nature, and when we do it is often a short-lived experience.

If you stop to think about it, you'll realize that in planetary time, we humans are mere new arrivals. Babes in the woods, if you will. But destructive ones. It has not always been this way. For about 300,000 years, humans have lived in a reciprocal relationship with nature, in a dance of give-and-take. We lived as humans *in* nature. But then came the fracture.

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The Shift from Interdependence TO DOMINATION OVER NATURE

In the run-up to the industrial revolution, a few key shifts occurred in our belief about ourselves and the world. These shifts were the foundation that paved the way for industry as we have known it these past few hundred years. The shift from humans *in* nature to humans *over* nature is one of these. A fracture occurred. We no longer saw ourselves as part of a cohesive whole. We carved ourselves out of nature and set ourselves above. To survive, we told ourselves, we had to “master” nature.

This led to the norm of subjugating nature, dominating nature, extracting from nature at will and with the belief that we can do so forever. These ideas are still the underpinning of modern-day business.

Much more about this in the work of [Regenerative Leadership](#) by Laura Storm and Giles Hutchins.

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Acknowledging the Benefits

OF THE INDUSTRIAL ERA

To look at the downside of the industrial era, I must first recognize and be grateful for the upside. The industrial era has given me, and others like me, incredible comfort, convenience and access. I am grateful for the industries that make possible the Zoom rooms of collaborators I get to work with across the globe. I am grateful for the interstate highway system and the car industry that has given me mobility and freedom.

Where would I be without my phone?

I remember a time before cell phones and I wonder how I ever got anything done. Thank you, computing and communications industries for making possible constant connection and instantaneous access to information.

Acknowledging the DESTRUCTION OF THE INDUSTRIAL ERA

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Now, I ask you to be brave with me and look at the flip side of the coin. It's only been a couple hundred years that we have been subjugating nature for our singular gain. In this relatively short time, we have brought ourselves to the brink of ecological and environmental disaster. I chuckle every time I hear someone say, "Save the planet." And I think, 'No, the planet's just fine. It's save the humans that we're really talking about.'

It would behoove us to recognize that we rely on Gaia, our Earth mother, for survival. She does not rely on us.

The decisions we make in our businesses are inextricably bound to this dependence, yet many pretend it's not so as we continue to deny the cost of environmental and ecological destruction. Future-fit leaders, however, bravely include humans *and* nature in their analysis and decisions.

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The Resilience of Nature

A few months ago, my husband and I spent a couple days in nature for a little getaway. I felt both free and bound to nature walking among the trees in the dense forest, among the tunnels of mountain laurel, and popping out to a ridge to overlook layers and layers of mountains, all covered in every hue of budding green trees on this particular spring day.

I have always thought this land was always this way. Natural, unspoiled, whole.

While relaxing at our lodging, I skimmed a book about the history of [Shenandoah National Park](#) and I learned some surprising information about the forest I have been hiking most of my life. The land has not always been this way.

About 100 years ago there was barely a tree left. At the time, it took 8,000 acres of forest burned into charcoal to fuel one small smelter to forge iron. Iron fed the growing building boom and construction of the railroads. 8,000 acres of trees for one small smelter. Even at that rate, I'm sure people thought there was no way they would use all the trees up, but they did. With the trees gone, cattle grazed until the hillsides were bare. The soil was poor, nothing would grow.

My lush green forest has not always been this way. Within 100 years of being protected as a national park, denuded mountains became teeming forests. Nature reclaimed and made whole again something that was nearly destroyed by humans. It astounds me how nature is so powerful and resilient.



HUMANS *AND* NATURE ORIENTATION

We are fortunate to have thought leaders guiding us toward a more conscious relationship with the natural world. It's more possible than ever to align our business practices with these principles. To start, consider a challenge within your organization—perhaps a struggling initiative or a product line that's faltering. Reflect on these questions, inspired by the logic of life:

- How can the initiative contribute more vitality than it consumes?
- How can it nourish relationships to create win-win-win situations? (we win, they win, the ecosystems and networks we impact win)
- How can we incorporate diversity to bolster its strength and adaptability?
- How can we support it in sensing, responding, and evolving?

By contemplating these questions, we can align our thinking with nature's wisdom. In doing so, we take a bold step toward a humans *and* nature orientation in our decision making.

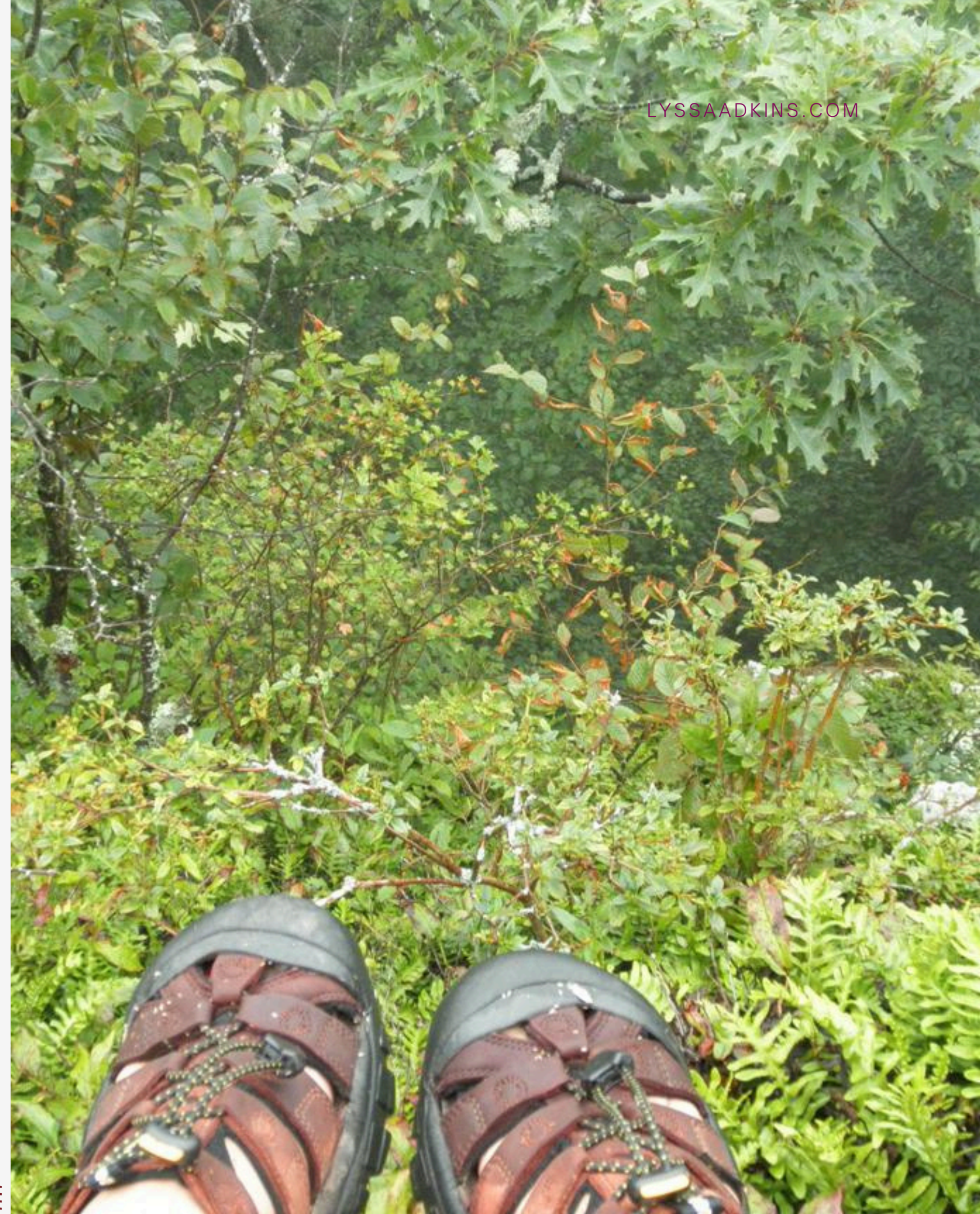
Let's count ourselves lucky. Among the many things Gaia is, she is also remarkably resilient, and possibly even forgiving. Just ask the trees, the birds, and the green, green buds of spring in the Shenandoah.

A Preview of FUTURE-FIT INSIGHTS

To give you a sense of where we are going, let me whet your appetite with the next headline:

**#Future-fit leaders dance between
left and right-brain thinking**

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LYSSA IS A LEADERSHIP COACH & AN EXPERT IN THE FUTURE OF WORK

Explore being coached by Lyssa

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