

What Walley Taught Me About My Relationship with Nature

Fishing off my dock on Lake Lucerne I caught a huge female walleye. Somehow we were able to communicate by Extra Sensory Perception. She said if I let her go she would tell me the secrets of the lake. Since I was using a barbless hook it was easy to release her. It turns out she was stocked in the lake 10 years ago, and grew to 3 feet in length, weighing 20 pounds. She was stocked because the lake has issues with natural regeneration. She told me the fish stick project around the islands has helped because it protects fingerlings from predators. She also said that we should encourage anglers to keep bass, not catch and release them as they primarily prey on walleye fry.

She then told me about the bad effects on water quality from cutting all the trees on the shoreline, and planting grass. This eliminates habitat for insects and frogs which are a food source for fish. She said native plants should be used as they have better root systems that prevent runoff into the lake. She also told me about some invasive species that have taken hold in the lake, like minnows released alive can take over the habitat of native species. She said wake boats have become a recent concern as they create large waves that crash against the shoreline.

Then she told me about some other good things people are doing to help fish populations out. Like fish cribs for hiding from predators, slow no wake zones around the islands that protect breeding grounds, and bag limits that protect fish populations. She said she was happy about the lake associations who raise funds to protect the lakes. I thanked her for the secrets and wished her a good long life.
