

# THE SACRED JOURNEY

- A QUEST FOR VISION

*Discovering the Soul's Destiny*



by  
*Carol Hannagan*

**The great spiritual** paths of the world cross a varied landscape of cultures and traditions, but nearly all have a tradition of “alone time” in the wilderness. On these “quests” an individual may ask to be strengthened or healed and for a vision of their life’s purpose.

Our Western culture has taught us more about “doingness” rather than “beingness” and, as a result, we have lost touch with the natural rhythms all around us. We need time alone, away from the routine responsibilities and distractions of everyday life, to help renew our relationships with Self, Others, Earth, Spirit, and “All Our Relations.” Our soul yearns for this connection and it is up to each of us to answer this call.

The Sacred Journey of discovering our Soul’s Destiny brings us clarity, peace, harmony, direction, balance, and healing in our everyday life and with All Our Relations. This time honored ceremony has benefited humankind for centuries and will help you heal past wounds and discover your soul’s purpose!

The Sacred Journey—A Quest for Vision  
by Carol Hannagan  
[www.sacred-journeys.com](http://www.sacred-journeys.com)



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*Carol Hannagan*

The Sacred Journey—A Quest for Vision  
Library of Congress Control Number: 2006939828  
ISBN # 1-4276-1237-4

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First Edition: December 2006

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# About Carol Hannagan

Carol is a naturalist, environmentalist, wilderness expert, and offers earth spirituality experiences through her organization—Sacred Journeys. One of four generations of native Californians, Carol Hannagan has studied and learned in almost all of California's wilderness areas. From the age of six, her grandfather and father took her out to hike the mountains, fly fish the rivers, track animals, hunt, backpack and weather watch. They trained her to survive in nature in a balanced and harmonious way. Knowing these skills she worked with search and rescue teams for many years.

She learned respect for all of nature, from the plants to the rocks and soil. She knows how to touch the Spirit which moves in all things. After many requests, Carol is now teaching others how to go back "home" to the earth and feel safe, secure, and loved by all that is part of Earth Mother.

Carol has studied with many of the masters in wilderness training. She has discovered through this learning, commonalities of techniques and customs, and now teaches others so they may feel the joy of being at one with nature.

For many years Carol worked as a top executive in the retail corporate world as a buyer and operations manager traveling worldwide. Then, unexpectedly she became critically ill. After months of confusion from the doctors and no improvement in her health, Carol knew she had to take her healing into her own hands. She went back to the ways of her Native People. Blending traditional medicine and the ancient ways she began the slow recovery back to wholeness that took over two years. A shaman told her that she was incongruent with her purpose in life and it was her purpose to teach people how to tap into the Spirit of Earth Mother. She was told to return herself back to the earth for her direction as she had done when she was little. She then began the long journey to discovering her purpose through the process of the ancient ways of the Vision Quest.

Making the transition from the corporate world has not been easy for Carol, but the rewards have been overwhelming. The most rewarding part is the realization that she is doing her Sacred Medicine and helping others heal and discover their purpose in life. She uses ancient healing techniques in helping people heal emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Carol also is a Special Education teacher working with severely disabled students empowering them to reach their fullest potential in life. This is extremely challenging, but also a way of giving back to her community. Students are able to learn their gifts and become productive within the community. The joy to be the channel for Great Spirit is more rewarding than anything she could have ever imagined!

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Three Toed Lizard Basking in the Wonder of the Milky Way

## About the Artist – Arlene Meade Connolly

Arlene Meade Connolly is a professional artist and teacher living in Utah. Her passion for petroglyphs has motivated her to develop an artistic career emphasizing both preservation and recycling of them. Lost history plus the effects of vandalism and natural erosion on rock art panels is this artist's motivation to preserve the treasures of ancestral art.

Not only is Arlene an artist, but she is also a historian. She has studied the history of the inhabitants who made the petroglyphs. She is an avid reader of archaeological research and seeks to understand the messages.

*“When I stand in front of rock art, time dissolves, the ancients reach out through the past to present a message written in stone. At that moment, the message is there for me. I hope you will feel it as well.”*



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# Introduction

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**T**his book is intended to allow one to understand the process of the Vision Quest. For clarification, the use of the word Creator will be used for Great Spirit, God, Jesus, and any or all Higher Powers people use to seek spiritual direction. There are many pathways for gaining a deeper connection to each person's God, and we honor all of them.

Within the book, we refer to real experiences of people who have been on a Vision Quest. Their permission was granted to use these powerful examples of how Creator works in magical ways for healing as well as direction. We honored the privacy of those individuals who did not want their names mentioned but allowed their story to be told. These examples are but a few of the magical ways in which Creator works to help us obtain answers to our heartfelt questions.

We thank each quester for doing this profound work, not only for themselves, but for all of their people. We also thank them for allowing us to share these experiences with others on their journey to their soul's destiny.



*Please note:* the Vision Quest is a powerful and ancient tradition that should never be undertaken alone, without proper preparation, or without a trained vision quest guide to look after your spiritual welfare as well as physical and emotional safety.



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# History of Questing

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**A**s all the masters—Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed—have known for centuries, the spiritual path HOME is found in alone-time in the arms of our Mother Earth. Because our Western culture has taught us more about “*doingness*” than “*beingness*” we have lost touch with the natural rhythms that exists within everything around us. We need time alone, away from routine responsibilities and distractions of everyday life to help us renew our relationships with self, others, Mother Earth, Great Spirit, and “All Our Relations” that Creator has created.

The Vision Quest is not an exclusive tradition of Native American people. In all cultures people have gone out in nature to be with their Creator. In Christianity, Christ went out for 40 days and nights; in Buddhism, Buddha went out seeking direction; in Islam, Mohammed went out seeking oneness. In all civilizations people have gone out to be with their God—questing for answers to their questions of direction, purpose, healing, and most of all—a knowingness and connectedness with their God.

All Indigenous people have gone out and still do go out on a regular basis seeking *Vision*. Native People would go out and ask Great Spirit to direct them where to move their camps for better food in the spring and summer.



*Fourteen Going Courting*

The hunters and scouts would be sent on a Vision Quest for direction on where the tribe should migrate for the good of all and to find out where the animals were waiting to sacrifice themselves for the tribe. This was and still is a normal process for Indigenous People.

In most Indigenous cultures, time alone in the wilderness was done for seeking direction, peace, and most of all a deeper connection with all that Creator has created. Also to establish a more intimate connection with one's Creator. All young people have benchmarks for what was known as "Rites of Passage" or significant transitional times in their lives. This was a pilgrimage with the Elders of the tribe who knew the right time, place, and purpose for time alone with Creator in the wilderness. Celebrations were conducted with many traditional ceremonies prior to going out, during the time alone, and the whole tribe would celebrate the return of each quester.

One primary reason a person goes on a Vision Quest is because that person is in *Transition*. It is time to allow one phase of his or her life to unfold in a new direction. It is a time of passage. It is a time of *endings* and *beginnings*. It is called a *Rite of Passage* because we pass from one way of being into a new way of being—the old ways are released and the new ways are fostered in.

One may know that *What-No-Longer-Serves* them is over, but does not know what comes next. A Vision Quest is a process of going out in the loving arms of Mother Earth to be with Creator to receive the answers to our deep heartfelt questions. In doing so, one attains a feeling of connection with Creator as well as all that has been created.



Butted Out

During this *Rite of Passage* one is letting go of the old and moving in a new, often unknown, and sometimes scary direction. At this time, one goes out on the skin of Mother Earth, free of distractions and everyday obligations of life, to learn and listen as well as "being" with oneself and one's Creator. To connect in a way that you are able to hear the answers you are seeking; see in a way you need to see; and feel the answers from the source—Creator. This is an individual and intimate connection for each person.

In traditional times, a Vision Quest would be done with honor during different stages of life. For example:

- Around age 8, when one is transitioning from childhood
- Age 12-13 when one is entering puberty
- Age 16-17 when one is entering adulthood
- Before marriage
- Before becoming a parent
- Career changes
- Upon entering menopause
- Upon retiring
- Becoming a grandparent
- Becoming an elder/crone

In between these stages one would go out on a Vision Quest for direction on a particular issue. For example a person may seek direction celebrating a birthday, deciding on a place to live, raising a family, employment decisions, emotional challenges, loss of a loved one, health challenges, relationship issues, and always when seeking a deeper connection with one's Creator.

The community supports each person and prays while the person is out doing this profound work. This is not just about the person, it also affects the whole community. Therefore, the Elders will be near those seeking vision, praying and asking Creator for guidance, direction, and healing for the quester. They are also crying out for the vision and many breakthroughs to occur. They are there as protection as well and are aware of physical safety issues. The camp Elder holds the spiritual space and is able to unravel the many metaphors Creator gives to the quester. It is important to have someone to tell the story to, and the Elder assists in mirroring back the messages and processing the experience in optimum spiritual light. Without assistance, who knows your story? Your witnesses help keep your story and your transition alive. For these reasons, *one never does a quest on their own* as it is tradition to be supported by the Elders and Wise Ones trained in this tradition!



Single Shaman



Weaving Lesson

Vision Quest is a divine appointment with you and your Creator. Oftentimes, there is a knowingness of one's Creator calling for one-on-one time. There is an overwhelming need to connect with Source to get direction or answers to the questions which have been weighing on one's mind and heart. These may be new issues or ones that have been coming up for some time. One feels the tugging of Creator's calling. This calling will get louder and louder until we honor it.

Synchronicities begin to reveal themselves either by "unusual appearances in nature," breakdowns, health challenges, or losses. Creator has ways to let us know when we are incongruent with our soul's destiny and will create this time for us to do our inner work—not only for us, but our community as a whole. Traditionally, the Elders of the tribe would know these warning signs and instruct the person when it was time for them to go out on a quest.

Today, we are in a society that is full of distractions, diversions, and "obligations" that keep us from doing our personal soul's work. Also, most people are not familiar with the process of the Vision Quest, making it more difficult to be guided to this sacred ceremony. But, Creator has a way of revealing the right and perfect pathway for each of us. The *Quest for Vision* is a sacred journey of exploration as well as discovering one's true connection with one's own Creator. The journey is a big part of the quest itself and must be taken with great diligence, determination, fortitude, intent, and gentleness with oneself. When you are called to do this profound work, the journey will bring many changes for you and your community.

As one quester writes:

*"Everyday I sit at my computer and pray that I be guided to those areas of the web where I can connect with people who will add their voice to pages of the web so the healing of my soul can take place. One day the idea of the Vision Quest came to me so I started my search. I had found one site that looked appealing and requested information, but it did not feel right to me. Then I was guided to keep looking and then found Sacred Journeys. It took me years to discover the process and Sacred Journeys, but I now know that this was all part of the process. I now have tangible information for what my purpose is in life and how to manifest this in the world. This has been a truly a sacred journey for which I am forever grateful."* – David, 1998



Seven Arizona Antelope

In traditional Native American philosophy, based on Lakota Sioux teachings there is a deep knowing called *The Seven Generations* of which we all belong. In this teaching, it is believed that what we do today has a profound effect on the next seven generations. So, if we were to clear cut the forest, it will take a minimum of seven generations before the forest will have the same ecosystem it did when it was cut down. We must be aware and realize that the actions we take today often affects at least seven generations or more!

From a psychological and spiritual level, accepting the Lakota belief, we can help heal ourselves and our people of pain, false beliefs, myths, and dysfunctional behavior by changing our destructive patterns. We are told by our Elders and wise statesmen that we can, in fact, do positive work for ourselves and the next seven generations by going out on a Vision Quest, having time to pray, meditate, and release our problems, . We can also help to heal the past seven generations of their pain by healing it within ourselves. Many myths and false beliefs have been handed down from generation to generation and many may no longer serve our people at large. The Vision Quest process allows us to look at all of these beliefs and issues and decide if it is for all of our people's highest good to accept them or to release them. Each of us has the ability to change our lives for the better and to determine what our soul's destiny is really meant to be.

The Vision Quest has been done for centuries by all the masters. It is one of the oldest and most powerful ways of being alone with your Creator to discover your personal path and your contribution to community.

*Accepting the divine appointment to do this profound work is a gift  
you not only give to yourself, but to All Your Relations from the  
past Seven Generations to the future Seven Generations.*





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# Why Go On A Vision Quest?

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## Discovering the Soul's Destiny



Creation Shield

*"The first peace,  
which is the most important,  
is that which comes  
within the souls of people  
when they realize their relationship,  
their oneness with the universe  
and all its powers,  
and when they realize  
that at the center of the universe  
dwells the Great Spirit,  
and that this center  
is really everywhere,  
it is within each of us."*

– Black Elk

**P**rior to committing to do a Vision Quest, many issues come to the surface for us to examine. One may have heard the calling for years, months, or just days but has a sense of knowingness that there is something more in store for them in life. There has been a tug on the heart. The tug and knowingness becomes stronger and stronger and finally can no longer be ignored. The soul is screaming out for purpose, direction, clarity, focus, meaning, and most of all—for a connection with something or someone who has infinite wisdom. A persistent yearning for answers to questions that come from deep within one's being, the need to discover what has heart, truth, and meaning in this life.

This poem was written by a 13 year old boy while in prison for killing his mother and father:

### **The Rose**

*And the day came  
When it was more  
Painful to stay closed  
Than  
It was to be open and radiate  
LIFE, JOY, LOVE !!!*

This yearning for answers has taken people to therapy, church, retreats, inspirational books, yoga, meditation, life coaches, gurus, doctors, spiritual lectures, as well as friends and family members. But sometimes this journey may cause even more questions—bringing about disharmony, *dis-ease*, dissatisfaction, confusion, bewilderment, and sometimes a breakdown of what was known as happiness, peace, harmony, serenity, and wholeness. Ancient voices within us get louder and louder, calling for answers to questions that have been asked throughout the ages:

- *What is my purpose?*
- *Who am I?*
- *Who is my Creator/God?*
- *Why am I here?*
- *Why can I not communicate to my Creator?*
- *How do I know when my Creator is speaking to me?*
- *How can I feel connected to my world again?*
- *What brings me joy and happiness and how can I truly be happy?*
- *Who are my People?*
- *How can I make a contribution to the world at large?*
- *How can I bring more compassion, understanding, peace, harmony, and tolerance to our world?*
- *How can I heal this deep pain, spirit wound, which has stopped me from living my life to the fullest?*
- *How can I properly serve my People?*
- *How do I become whole?*
- *Where do I start to discover the answers to these endless questions deep within me?*



*“The wilderness holds answers to more questions  
than we have yet to ask!”* - Nang Newhall



*The pulling and tugging gets so that one knows it is time  
to discover these answers from an ancient process  
that all masters have done. – The Vision Quest*

Nature, in all its functions is remarkably purposeful. The bear knows when to hibernate, salmon know how to return to their spawning grounds, geese know when to migrate south, and Monarch butterflies know the migration routes of their parents. Who then could possibly imagine that he or she was born into this world without a purpose? We are all from the same source of wisdom, knowledge, love, grace, and joy. We are being asked to discover our purpose and put into action the profound gifts each one of us holds within our soul's destiny—our own *Sacred Medicine*.

## The Drum

*It started when we lost our drums.  
We were lazy one month and didn't bother with them.  
The spirits got angry and took them away.  
We were silenced except for our tongues and our brains.  
Without the drums we forgot how to listen.  
Our hearts and our minds grew crusty with lack of use.  
Our power declined.  
We lost our ability to communicate.  
Our bodies forgot they had spirits.  
Our spirits forgot they had bodies.  
We got lost and started believing we were machines  
so we built other machines to pass the time.  
We became surrounded by machines  
and thought they were our brothers.  
We had no sisters but we didn't know it mattered.  
Since we thought the machines were brothers,  
we let them advise us.  
We thought they knew more than we did.  
We did everything they told us.  
We forgot how to breathe.  
We had to struggle to be happy and we were confused about love.  
We tried to kill or stifle anyone who didn't act like a machine.  
We treated our bodies like machines and they began to break.  
We tried using tools to repair them but it didn't work.  
We grew old,  
But we didn't die. We just divided and multiplied  
until we filled up the whole planet. We began to suffocate.  
Then the spirits took pity and returned the drums.  
At first we thought they were toys.  
We used them with our sound machines.  
But gradually their power seeped into the backs of our memories.  
One by one, we learned again how to use the drums.  
We resumed the beating.  
The rhythms began intertwining again.*

Our hearts labored up  
and began loving of their own accord  
without the brain to organize and confuse.  
The brains took a much needed rest.  
The machines fell into a cold, brittle sleep.  
We found our sisters again and our bodies woke up  
and remembered how to die.  
With the return of death our power came back in full.  
We used our tears and blood of the sisters to heal the damage we  
had done when we thought we were machines.  
The damage was immense and also irreversible.  
But the spirits returned with the drums just in time.  
It took many years and some new rhythms added to the old.  
But now the Earth is green again and we breathe deeply  
and walk the sacred path.

— the Northern People

**O**ur *Sacred Medicine*, that unique gift Creator placed within each of us, is yearning to not only be discovered by each of us, but also to be given away for the benefit of all our people. When we are in this sacred space of doing what we were put on Earth to do, we are not only energized, empowered, and filled with divine wisdom, but we are also given the gift of giving others permission to seek the joy of being who they were put on Earth to be! This longing of knowing that there is something so much more, is truly calling us on the spiritual path of being with Mother Earth and discovering the answers to some of these questions. Together, with the help of being in Nature's quiet moments, we can identify our own soul's truth. It is in this quiet space or void that all our answers are found. More and more of us are being called to be part of bringing more light and truth into our world. With all of us working together, we can help protect Mother Earth and all her People by finding our soul's true destiny!



*Spiritual Bungee Jumper*

*"We are all one and what we do to one we do to all  
—including ourselves." - Native American prophecy*

## Your Journey

– by Susan Squellati Florence

**T**here is a journey awaiting you  
It comes in truth and promise  
When you reach the point of not knowing who you are or where to go  
This most precious but often painful passage is the journey of yourself  
You will travel to places never before visited,  
Where you meet unspoken fears and unearth buried truths  
You will climb high and perilous mountains. . . those that rise up from inside yourself  
You will explore forgotten waters held deep in the sea of your soul  
You will be stranded in the wilderness and find a way through pathless land  
You will be lost before you are found. . . You will be empty before you are full  
You will cry the deep sobs of the earth and tears of rain will cleanse the house  
around your heart  
In time. . . because life, like birth and death, knows its own time  
Your fears and struggles and unknowing will be transformed  
You will become a mountain place where eagles soar  
You will become a reflecting pool which sees and knows the mysteries of your life  
Your heart will be light like a butterfly as you follow the currents of its true desires  
The flight of the honeybee will be yours as you seek the nectar of what brings  
sweetness to your daily life  
Most of all you will become who you truly are  
Your life will hold truth and promise and meaning  
And the heart of the heavens will hold your heart.



Many believe we are in the middle of the “Photon Belt” or the “Golden Age,” which is a time of true enlightenment. We are being asked to examine anything that truly *is not* coming from love, peace, harmony, and grace. Anything that is incongruent with these principles is exposed. This provides a chance to look at and see the truth beneath and to know that Creator is based on love and not fear. We have the opportunity to correct our erroneous thinking and actions—allowing light and healing into the situation.

Currently, we have the choice and opportunity to see the miracles that are occurring in these times of unrest and upheaval. It is up to each of us to choose to accept the miracles given us from our Creator or to focus our attention on the fear based ideology of a few. When collectively we know the truth from our inner voices we will truly have peace. We can take right actions to correct the wrong actions.

*It is this inner truth and knowingness that we are seeking.*

Native People remind us that Creator created All and that Spirit is in All Creations. This includes all the winged-ones, finned-ones, creepy-crawlers, four-legged, standing-tall people (trees), plant people, stone people, and everything else on the planet. We can listen and hear the voice of wisdom from all that Creator has created. There is a great opportunity for each of us to play a critical role in the manifestation of good, hope, peace, prosperity, and understanding for all people on the skin of Mother Earth.



Spirit of the Wind

*“There are two ways to live:  
One way is as though nothing is a miracle.  
The other is as if everything is a miracle.”*

- Albert Einstein

# Discovering The Divine Sacredness Of Self

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A long time ago, the gods got together and decided that the search for the meaning of life was to be the most rewarding endeavor of human beings. Not to make the search too easy, however, they discussed where to hide this wondrous gift.

*“Let’s put it at the bottom of the ocean,” said the first god.*

*“No, they are sure to look there,” the others replied.*

*“Let’s put it on the moon,” the second god suggested.*

*“No they are certain to look there also,” the others said.*

*After thinking long and hard, the third god smiled and said,*

*“Let’s put it inside of them; they’ll never look there.” And they all agreed.*



The quest for discovering these answers leads to many different pathways. Pain and suffering sometimes occurs when we are not able to be alone with our “self” or when we choose relationships that are not in our best interests. We are seeking things from the outside to fill the “void”—our sadness, grief, sorrow, pain, loneliness, anger, and confusion. This journey can often lead us to more *dis-association* with ourselves, community, family, and friends. To be successful we must surrender and totally let go of the situation and its outcome. In this manner we will see the truth and realize on a soul level what our life lessons have to teach us.

Prior to his Vision Quest, one quester wrote explaining why he was going out on his journey of discovery:

*“My life, thus far, has been a good one though filled with diversities. I hail from a small country town in Alabama. I was raised by an alcoholic father and a drug-addicted mother both of whom I still love very much. I was a problem child for them and left home when I was age 12 to go to my sister’s after my dad and mom had a fight and my dad shot me. I was also a victim of molest for several years. I spent a lot of time in half way houses until I was 16 and allowed to join the Army. When I was 18, a friend and I were driving to Kentucky by way of Texas and picked up some hitch-hikers and my friend was murdered (stabbed to death at 17) after being kidnapped for three days by the hitch-hiker. I was also stabbed, but played dead. The murderers were convicted and one was executed last year in Texas by lethal injection for which I watched.*

*I have been fortunate enough to save many lives both in my career in the military and in civilian life. One was a young woman who had been beaten by her drug-dealing boyfriend and had her newborn child taken from her by the Welfare Department and*

*was about to throw herself off the building in San Diego. I was able to pull her back onto the ledge at the moment she had jumped, almost throwing myself over with her. I recently also helped in capturing a murder/rapist in my apartment complex on July 4th, these are only a few of the things I have done in the way of life-saving.*

*About three years ago my youngest sister and her two small children were killed in a fire and the same year my youngest brother lost an infant in a fire. My mother is very ill and will be passing soon along with my father who is in his nineties.*

*I do not share these things to blow my own horn or to have people feel sorry for me, but in hope that in some way you may understand me and in that may be able to help me understand myself and enable me to let go and become the person I would like to be.*

*I have been married twice both producing children as a catalyst for getting married both times. The first lasted one year and the second lasted two years. I am not close to my first son though I pay child-support and call him from time to time. I am however close to my other two children from my second marriage, (a daughter and a son). I have a lot of guilt for not surviving these marriages even though they were unhealthy for everyone involved. My second wife and children live about two hours away and I see them often. We all get along very well now.*

*I have been out of the military for 1 year, 4 months, and 16 days as of this date, and am doing fine. I have met a wonderful woman, who is strong, bright, and loving and have been with her for almost 1 year. She has been a shining light for me since the day I met here. She has encouraged me to go school and pursue my dreams when others in my life have just laughed at me. She has also been the main encouragement to go and do a Vision Quest.*

*Because of the entire trauma in my life I have developed a phobia of medications, (I had anaphylactic shock to penicillin in 1986). I have been trying to beat this and am able to take herbs and vitamins now which is a big step for me. I also have post traumatic stress syndrome. My intent to find out who I am and forgive all that has happened in my life.” – Dee, 1996*

Out on the land, Dee was able to release almost all of his life's traumas. He was able to find meaning in his life. One concrete step he completed, using his skill from being the World Tae Kwon Do Champion for five years, is working with battered women in a program called BAM. This program teaches women self-defense so they can protect themselves from being battered again. He is also working on becoming an Emergency Room Doctor in low-income areas.

After Dee's Vision Quest, he was able to forgive family members, "friends," military people, and most importantly—himself. He let go of all that had blocked him from living his true soul's destiny. Dee had experienced and lived through more traumas than any person should have to go through in one lifetime. He had been in five wars by the

age of 32 as a Marine, member of Special Forces, and an undercover agent; he jumped out of airplanes in the dark-of-night over jungles in Columbia for the Department of Drug Enforcement looking for members of the Drug Cartel; he saw innocent children shot and killed in the ravages of war; he stepped in front of a bullet meant for his mother that had been shot by his father; he had several failed marriages; and he suffered from debilitating post traumatic stress syndrome. This man had been carrying around a huge burden that totally blocked the essence and beauty of his soul from him.

Dee came to the site dressed in full military combat gear with all his medals pinned to his chest and a heart full pain and sorrow. He was a true warrior to have survived this far in his life. His Spirit, as well as his Soul, were screaming out for ways to integrate and heal these traumas, and to find a way out of such severe pain. The pain had overcome him in so many ways—from profound depression to the illusion that this was “normal,” that his life was a “good one” though filled with “diversities.”

Many dysfunctional patterns are so embedded in us that we are, for the most part, unaware of them. These patterns are so familiar that they take on the appearance of being “normal.” We may come to believe that our family settings, circumstances, and experiences are not that different from everyone else’s, and may deny Spirit’s messages that try to tell us differently. This delusion can proceed to the point of our thinking we have chosen this life of pain, sorrow, hurt, abuse, and that we are not worthy of peace,



## Risking

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.

To reach out for another is to risk involvement.

To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.

To place your ideas and your dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To live is to risk dying.

To hope is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken.

Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

If you risk nothing and do nothing, you dull your spirit.

You may avoid suffering and sorrow,

But you cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, and live.

Chained by your attitude, you are a slave.

You have forfeited your freedom.

Only if you risk are you free.

— Anonymous



happiness, joy, and unconditional love. This can even lead to the belief that we have “created” or “deserve” this because we are not lovable, or are evil, and have no meaningful purpose of life itself.

Dee was able to erase these false beliefs and mythologies from his conscience mind. He was able to release the pinned-up tension, pain, anger, fear, sorrow, hate, and anguish from his body. He walked on Mother Earth allowing her to transmute these negative emotions into a small but clear vision of something bigger—a more peaceful life ahead. Dee saw that the way he had been living his life—the fear, pain, anger, and survival behavior—would no longer work. Although he did not know what was to be next, he was able to let go of what had been destroying him physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

First and foremost, we must quiet our minds to make sure we are free of distractions so we can have time with ourselves and our Creator. Often, we are forced to do this either by illness or by a desire to walk away from all our obligations for a short period of time. We may “sense” that something isn’t right, but not know what it is or how to fix it. Most disconcerting to our Spirit is how our busy lives keep us from addressing these issues, keeping us so involved in trauma, illness, and dysfunction that we cannot take the time to figure out what is wrong. We spiral faster and deeper into this frenzy, and then justify it as “normal” everyday life. The recurring patterns of disharmony, disease, and dysfunction reinforce the myths and false beliefs placed on us that not only are we the cause of the pain, but that we are not worthy of having true unconditional love in our lives. Finally, something from the core of our being triggers our mind allowing us to see (although dimly at first) that something is not right. This *dis-ease* with the way things are, becomes overpowering. We are overcome by the realization that this pattern of “living” will become impossible to endure for much longer.

The Soul and the Spirit rejoice in finally getting our attention. They tell us of Creator’s wish for one-on-one time. The moment has come to relinquish our false sense of control, and move into the greater good of the Creator. This is the opportunity to review the beliefs and myths that we have accepted as truths and let the false ones go. The time has come to release our dysfunctional thoughts, acts, behaviors, addictions, and heal the spirit wounds that caused them. The only way out of pain, sorrow, anger, rage, dysfunction, illness, depression, and disassociation—is through it! Through it, we find the truth of why we were attached to it in the first place, as well as how else we may have gained and benefited by holding onto it.



Playing to the Stars

At first glance, it seems there are benefits to certain behaviors, but further observation reveals a different reality. For example, the “victim” who benefits by getting sympathy and/or attention from their situation. This attention becomes so much a part of their life, so comfortable and familiar, that they come to depend on it. They can not see how it denies the authentic self from doing their life’s work.

Some of the patterns and benefits from other behaviors may include:

- Not being willing to do the difficult work necessary to break the patterns of abuse for one’s personal gain.
- Staying in a meager job (comfort zone), not challenging your “limitations,” not drawing attention to oneself.
- Not dealing with painful issues and/or burying oneself in *busy-ness* and work so the pain and sorrow of the past does not have to be felt.
- Ignoring your body and health issues so one can become physically disabled as well as emotionally disabled.
- Seeking a “cure” from others by becoming a seminar or workshop junky, but never doing the inner-work required for transformation.
- Self medicating with drugs, alcohol, food, sex, sports, or work in order to numb the body and mind and to avoid “dealing-with-it.”
- Giving advice to anyone and everyone on how to “improve” themselves, but not taking the responsibility for dealing with your own issues.
- Being the one that tells your “story” over and over again, reinforcing the myth of not being worthy or whole, continuing to justify bad behavior.



The Storytellers

Within the Lakota Native American tribe, the belief is that one can come and receive support from the Elders and Wise Ones. The Elders and Wise Ones will give help, support, and spiritual healings for whatever the issue may be. It is critical that each person come as soon as they feel they have a problem. Each person has an opportunity

to tell their “story” four times and receive support. After the fourth time it is not discussed again. Legend has it that four is a completion number and when we continue to dwell on an issue past that number, it will become lodged in our soul.

Each time we tell our “story” it reopens the wound which then requires additional time to heal. So, every time we tell this “story,” we are peeling the scab off the wound, experiencing the pain again, and not allowing the wound to heal properly. Our wound finally heals, but it leaves a deep scar. Each time we look at that scar we will be taken back—emotionally, physically, and spiritually—to that place and time where the injury occurred. Therefore, we can tell our story four times and get help, but after that, it is done. On the Vision Quest this is your time to tell your story and discuss all unfinished business with Creator—and leave it on the land!

Some people go on the Vision Quest with a clear idea of what they are looking to gain, but Creator has another higher purpose. When one couple went out on their Vision Quest, they were asking for Creator’s direction as to whether or not they should get married. With this type of transition in their lives, they wanted to make sure they had Creator’s clear direction as well as blessing.

Both people were very successful professionals well established in their careers. The woman was a pediatrician with a thriving practice totally committed to her young patients and their families. The man was a professor who taught Religious Studies at a junior college. Both had developed a deep spiritual connection to their individual Creator as well as to each other.

At base camp, while preparing for the Vision Quest, other more pressing issues often come to the surface to be healed. In this case it was revealed that the man did not wish to have children. For the woman, it surfaced that several years earlier she had aborted a child she conceived with another man. He had abandoned her when she told him she was pregnant making it unbearable for her to go ahead and have the child. She had repressed this painful memory for many years knowing it conflicted with the oath she had taken as a doctor to save lives. Feeling ashamed, humiliated, and disgraced the priority for her Vision Quest became to heal this very deep spirit wound. She wanted to be fully present and free of this painful trauma before they united in marriage.

Sorrow and despair over ending this tiny soul’s life had taken a serious toll on her. She had completely immersed herself in her medical practice, spiritual classes, books, social activities, and seminars to keep from thinking about her pain. It was now time to enter into the pain and sorrow buried deep in her soul and heal it. Creator was directing her to shed herself of this pain and allow Mother Earth to transmute it into good. When the Spirit, Soul, and Mind are ready to release, Creator will be there to assist us in the right and perfect way.

Creator worked in a magical way in this situation. She was able to let go of the pain, sorrow, and hurt surrounding this event. It also became clear that she did not want to marry a man who did not want children. She was not willing to give up the possibility of becoming a mother. She truly loved and wanted children and saw that

she would be sacrificing a huge part of herself if she married him. Abandoning her needs and dreams was not her soul's destiny. Her fiancée also realized it was not his wish to deny her the joy of having a family but he did not want to abandon his wish to not have children. By going out into the wilderness, free of the distractions of everyday life and obligations, these two people accepted the divine appointment of one-on-one time with Creator. They each made time to truly listen to their soul's destiny. It was an honor to witness the love, compassion, and understanding they shared with each other.



*Carry on Bag*

After the Vision Quest both these loving souls were able to compassionately and courageously receive the message from Creator that they were not to marry. Accepting each other's true commitment regarding children enabled them to see the greater good. Also, they believed and trusted Creator that, in time, each would find the right and perfect partner. This belief has been manifested, each is now happily married. Months after the Vision Quest, the woman was contacted by the father of her aborted child and resolved past hurts. They are now married and have a wonderful eight-year-old child who is full of life and definitely full of Spirit! Three years after the Vision Quest, the man married a woman who had participated in the same quest. They are happily married and childless.

Because each was willing to create the quiet space for Creator to speak to them, their soul's destiny became clear. It is in this void, or quiet time, that Creator speaks to us and we are able to listen. Even though it was extremely difficult at times to stay true to the unknown path Creator mapped out, each allowed it to unfold.

For most people, the main reason for going on a Vision Quest is to develop a deeper connection and more intimate relationship with Creator. They understand that this connection will bring answers as well as direction to their heartfelt questions, that love and wisdom will be received from Creator. There is a need to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives. They have a deep desire to release all the fears, false beliefs, myths, and negative patterns that burden them. They wish to experience all the joy, happiness, peace, and love Creator has to give. They open themselves to trusting Creator and the Vision Quest process knowing they will be guided to the highest good, not only for themselves, but for all their people.

In one group of questers the same theme permeated each person's soul. Each had given up a huge part of their lives for someone or something they loved dearly, but now the soul's destiny was screaming out loud and clear! They did not know what the soul's destiny was at the time, but they did know what they were currently doing for others was draining them to the core of their being. A recurring theme of being out of alignment, but not knowing how or what to do to attain balance within one's life sometimes comes to the surface. Time alone free of distractions, obligations, commitments, and chatter allows us to be with Creator, to see and hear the disharmony currently in our lives. Through this we can identify our part in it and release it in a good and honorable way. It is important to note, that no shame or blame be attached to any of the process, not only for our loved ones, but also for ourselves (we will discuss this further in the Death Lodge Ceremony). When we empty out the things that do not serve us and our people, we create an opening to be filled with divine wisdom.

Within this Vision Quest group, one gentleman from New Zealand had put all his energy, time, and soul into his business. His was the first company in New Zealand to bring in fiber optics. Working day and night to develop and implement this new technology in his country took a huge toll on his personal life. After several years of expanding the only corporation to develop the Internet in New Zealand, he was approached by a company that wanted to purchase his business. He accepted their offer and sold his company. He remained on staff for another year to help with the transition. When that commitment was finished, he was at a loss of what to do next. Here he was, only 34 years old, with more money than he could imagine, but for the first time, without a purpose or direction in his life.

He was clear that he had given up a huge piece of his life for success. He had always known how to function in finances, work, and business but had no idea what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. Plainly, he was unsure and very uncomfortable with this situation. Looking deeply into his heart, he said that children brought him great joy, but he had not developed any relationships due to his work schedule and commitment to his business. Many of his friends had children and he longed for that experience but did not know how that could happen without being in a solid loving relationship. He spent many hours discussing this issue prior to going out for his solo time on the land. He was looking at what would bring him joy and how he could give back the love residing in his heart to his people.



*"I'm in the flow  
of I don't know,  
but God does!"*

Upon returning from his solo time, he realized it was his time for happiness! He had given his country the technology of the Internet. Also, he had developed a solid business plan and structured the sale of his company so his employees would be transitioned into the new company with financial and job security. All these things were exterior gratifications rather than peaceful joy coming from the core of his being. He had built a legacy of success, but now it was time for him to have a different type of success, one with joy that only presided deep within his soul. Now it was time to determine what truly had heart and meaning so his soul's destiny could be manifested and his *Sacred Medicine* could be revealed.



It's Twins!

*Sacred Medicine* is that unique gift Creator puts in each of us to bring our light and love to the world. It is a unique gift each of us has but seldom discover or manifest in our life. This “gift” often seems so “simple” each person thinks that everyone else must know this and it is not worth discussing or sharing. This unique gift, that comes so naturally and with such ease, can be identified by the joy we experience when we are actively involved with it.

*It was his time and his time only.*

*It was time to give to himself and bring this joy to his soul.*

In the year of his Vision Quest, before he returned to New Zealand, he toured the United States for three months and then Europe for three months. He had given himself the precious time to be one with his soul's desires. His soul kept longing for the innocence of children. He was able to grasp the concept of having children without being in a relationship and returned to New Zealand to adopt a newborn. Now, he is a father and is filled with much joy and happiness. He could have never attained this “knowing” without giving himself the gift of quiet time, listening to Creator, and allowing the process to unfold.

On the same quest, a couple from the Midwest also arrived with the same question of not only “What is my purpose?” but “When is it my time to fulfill my purpose?” The woman had been supporting her husband for the last nine years while he was in graduate school obtaining his doctorate degree in physics. They had moved from a small rural town nestled in the pines and oaks near the sweetness of running streams to downtown Chicago. The move to the city brought much sadness and despair to her. She was working for a computer company in a field she could not stand and felt drained and disassociated from her life's purpose. She loved to write children's books and was being distracted from doing this in the turmoil of a large city as well as being

distracted in a job where she felt no purpose or satisfaction. However, she was doing this job at this location for her husband's future career, or so she thought. Giving up her life's dream and soul's desire for his career was what she had been taught and encouraged to do by her family, friends, and colleagues.

While her husband was on his solo time, he discovered he was going to college working on his doctorate degree to get approval from his family even though, as it turned out, he had no desire to go into this field of work—physics. He had given up his soul's desire to please others rather than doing his life's purpose. He had no intention of working in this field, but was so vested in completing it that he could not bear discussing this with his wife, family, or colleagues. He had sabotaged his efforts and masked his reluctance by working very slowly towards completing his degree. This way he would not have to face the truth about how he felt. By staying in school he had a legitimate cover for remaining a “boy” and not becoming a “man.” He had a “reason” for not being authentic in his role as a husband providing for his wife. He knew he was incongruent with his life, wife, career, family, friends, and himself. It was time to discover his soul's destiny and become the man he truly wanted to be but did not know how. It was time to step up and be truthful about his fears, anxieties, and immaturity. It was time to become the person he was put on the Earth to be.

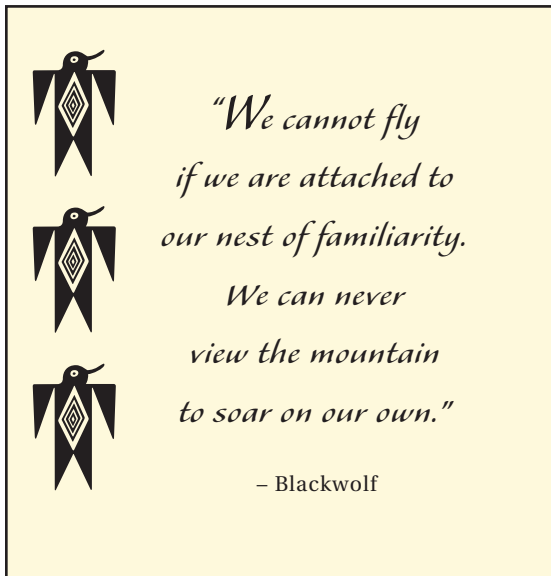


Upon returning from his solo time he explained his experience in the Elder's Council. He had returned a new person. He had cut his waist-length hair, shaved his full beard, and painted a warrior's mask on his face symbolizing his new zest for being a man. He acknowledged his fear of being truthful of his soul's desire and was able to release the false beliefs and mythology of trying to please others. Now he was free to speak the truth in a sacred space knowing his truth would set his soul free and allow him to complete its true desire.

Even though his wife was totally shocked at the news, she was relieved they could now discover their true *Sacred Medicine* and both could be fulfilled from the innermost place of their souls. In the process of the Elder's Council, he gave himself six months to finish his doctorate, ending this seemingly endless journey. Now, for the first time they each had a plan for nurturing their souls in doing what came natural and brought each of them joy. They moved back to a small rural setting in the Northeastern part of the United States and live in Victorian house. He is a computer expert and loves it while she is writing and publishing her children's books. They have a lot of acreage and are totally fed by Mother Earth's loving energy. The time had come to acknowledge each soul's destiny and allow it to show them the way back home.



When we give ourselves time to reflect with Creator, we can see the patterns, beliefs, myths, betrayals and also the synchronicities that have brought us to this point in our lives. Yearning to come out and be who we were put on Earth to be is one of the most difficult tasks facing us at this time. We all are trying to manage the many obligations, distractions, fears, and societal pressures put upon us. But deep within our soul, we know when we are incongruent with our purpose.



Vision Quest gives us the opportunity to see with clear eyes; listen without noisy distractions; and feel from the heart without resistance. We are able to identify and release unwanted patterns, beliefs, thoughts, myths, and stuck feelings. This is the time to have the courage to walk away from past hurt, pain, sorrow, fear, guilt, shame, anguish, sadness, blame — for it no longer serves us or our people — *it is time to let it go!*

People that have been severely injured or hurt have the need to feel safe, to know what is coming next. They struggle in trusting Creator to create the perfect path and situation for them. However, once they make the commitment to work with the time honored tradition of the Vision Quest, Creator supports them in finding the right guide and perfect place for their journey.

Now is the time to celebrate what has gone before and cherish all that is now. It has defined you and made you the person you are. Honoring this in Ceremony is critical for the both your spirit and soul. This is a time of discovering the true essence of who you are! Celebrate, rejoice, cheer, laugh, cry out, and know that the blessings within you are ready to come into full-bloom. Your story is valuable, essential, and critical for your soul's development. It is a story worth honoring not only for you, but for all your people to learn. Now is the time to give it to Creator and become the person you truly are—for the universe to behold the unconditional love that resides within you. It is time to give back to Mother Earth and let her power to transmute heal you.

*It is time to leave your past on the land and soar with the Eagles  
with new eyes, ears, awareness, and unlimited unconditional love!*

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# Preparation For Vision Quest

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Dreamers

**P**reparing for a Vision Quest or Rite of Passage requires Spiritual, Mental, Emotional, and Physical preparation. One must come from a place of *clear intent* rather than *expectation*. In order to come from clear intent one must be focused and directed on the “intent for the quest” as clearly as one has been for anything in one’s life. The differences between intent and expectation are vast! *Intent* is to be firmly directed, purposeful, and have attention focused on a goal or result. *Expectation* is anticipating a specific result, a result that may or may not happen at this time.

SPIRITUALLY— one must be clear as to why they are going out to have one-on-one time with their Creator. It is important to know how one’s Creator communicates to them.

- Do you hear words when you communicate?
- Do you have a thought come into your mind?
- Do you have a vision of something come into your sight?
- Do you have a feeling about doing something or a feeling of comfort?

## The Stonecutter



*Diamonds are a Girls Best Friend*

Once, a poor stonecutter worked everyday, chipping away at huge stones on the mountainside, but he was dissatisfied. He saw a rich man passing by, and thought, "I wish I was that rich man." A magical spirit was listening, and granted his wish. He became the rich man!

As the rich man, the stonecutter felt infinitely powerful. He gave his servants order after order. But one day the sun shone hotly on the rich man. "The sun is more powerful than I. I wish I were the sun!" The magical spirit granted his wish,

Now he was the sun. Shining down on the earth, he scorched it mercilessly. But one day a cloud passed in front of him. "The cloud is more powerful than I. I wish to be that

cloud!" Again, the magical spirit granted his wish.

As the cloud, he blocked the sun day after day, causing darkness and cold weather. But one day a wind came up, and blew the cloud away. "I want to be the wind!" Again, the magical spirit granted his wish.

As the wind, he blew dust storms and hurricanes. Nothing could stand in his way. But one day he came to a mountain and couldn't move it. "The mountain resists me. Let me be the mountain." Once more, the magical spirit granted his wish.

As the mountain, he was immovable. Nothing could budge him. But one day he felt something chipping away at him. It was a poor stonecutter. "The stonecutter is mightiest of all! I wish I were a stonecutter." One last time, the magical spirit granted his wish . . .

Maybe you do not know how your Creator will communicate with you and this is why you are going out on your Vision Quest. Most people are seeking a deeper level of communication and a yearning to know that their Creator is in fact there with them. They are eager to be able to ask questions and receive the wisdom, understanding, and direction of their Creator in answer. Cry out for that illusive connection with Creator from within! Now is the time to be open to the knowledge you are worthy of having the peace, harmony, joy, happiness, and knowingness of having a meaningful relationship with Creator. Also, that your being here has meaning as well as purpose on the planet at this time. You are an important piece in the grand plan Creator has for each of us. You must be open and receptive so you can be filled with divine wisdom. This is a divine appointment and you must decide if you are ready to accept the changes that will occur. You will be able to see with different eyes; hear with different ears; and feel with a much different touch!

Some have been attempting to find this harmony in different arenas such as the Stonecutter. But when the soul decides to truly let go and fulfill its destiny, all needs are taken care of in ways not imagined and one is at peace.

**M**ENTALLY—one must understand that our known patterns no longer fit us. There is much more in life to experience. This *Transition* or *Rite of Passage* leads to a new phase in life. Often, the way of doing life the “hard way” may seem okay because it is familiar, but this embedded pattern is wearing thin. We can release all past and present destructive conversations in our minds and relate in new ways. We can learn to just “*be*” rather than “*do*.” Now is the time to:

- Allow the mind to take that much needed rest and not think!
- Create the space where we only hear our breath, heartbeat, and Spirit within.
- Listen as the Ancient Ones whisper on the gentle breeze in the distant tree tops.
- Hear the bird’s wings whisking in the wind.
- Hear the leaves fall from the trees.
- Hear the hummingbirds fly.
- Hear the stream’s deafening roar.
- Hear the Red Tail Hawk’s screech.
- Hear the coyote’s howl.
- Hear the deer’s gentle footsteps on the deep softened pine needles.
- Hear the bee’s hum.
- Hear the linguistic Raven speak in the most developed language of nature.
- Hear the owl cry.
- Sense the bat’s radar.
- Hear the Eagle’s clear shrill voice echo throughout the wilderness.
- Hear the fly’s buzz. Listen! Creator’s precious messengers share many miracles in a profound and personal way.
- Release all fears and be with Creator and Mother Earth and know that you are not alone and there is nothing to fear.
- Allow yourself to be one with all of Creator’s wise ones.
- Know that all are rejoicing as you listen to their wisdom and receive their gifts.
- Be in rhythm of Mother Earth and know that everything is in perfect harmony.



**E**MOTIONALLY—one must be prepared to relinquish past fear, anxiety, anger, sorrow, and any trauma that may have stopped one from being whole. Many of us do not know how to do this deep work, but it has been my experience over years of doing Vision Quests that one just has to be willing to let go and trust—Creator will work with the vision quest guide and do the rest.

When we call out these fears and painful issues with Creator they begin to lose their power over us. We must identify these emotional issues so we can release them while also looking at what may have been the secondary gain of holding on to them for so long. Questions to ask yourself:

- *Why have you allowed these issues to have such a hold on your life?*
- *Why have you given them such power?*
- *Why are you allowing people, situations, or circumstances to dictate your life?*
- *Why are you allowing yourself to be disempowered, dishonored, or disassociated with your Soul's destiny?*
- *Why are you allowing yourself to play small and not be the glorified powerful person you truly are?*
- *Why are you fearful of success?*
- *What is stopping you from being all you were meant to be – right now?*
- *Are you ready to become the instrument of Creator's perfect plan for you?*
- *Are you ready to live your soul's purpose?*

So, are you:

- *Ready to feed the good, honorable, joy-filled spirit that resides within you?*
- *Willing to enter into the void of not knowing; to be guided and directed to be your true Self?*
- *Willing to stop, look, and listen to Creator in the quiet of the wilderness?*
- *Willing to ask for help from Creator when you need it while out on your quest?*
- *Willing to see synchronicities Creator gives you while out in the wilderness?*
- *Willing to let go of the "mind chatter" for a short period of time and know that this is your time with Creator?*
- *Willing to stop and "BE" rather than "DO" on your solo time with Creator?*
- *Willing to listen to Creator even though you may not know how?*
- *Willing to accept all the miracles Creator has to give you?*
- *Willing to accept the help and support from all that are there to help you unconditionally?*
- *Willing to release how it is supposed to look and allow Creator to teach you a new way of looking at life?*

*What we feed  
grows!*

Native American saying



If so, you are ready for your time alone with Creator  
knowing all your answers will be given to you.



Aura of Fire

## Fire in the Soul

– by Carol Hannagan

It's that burning fire that we are all one,

It's that burning fire that what I do to  
my brother and sister I do to myself.

It's that burning fire that I must be  
strong and tell the truth.

It's that burning fire that I do have  
the unlimited fuel to be present and make the contribution  
I was put here to make.

It's that burning fire of really seeing my gifts  
and sacredness of this Divine Appointment on  
Earth at this time.

It's the burning fire which has illuminated the often hidden  
truth of why I'm here and  
what I'm to do to make my love radiate to All My Relations!

It's that burning fire which has helped me to  
survive up until now but, also to see the survival ember  
NO longer works!

and that Living the Sacred life Now  
is the only fire . . .

It allows me to see those shadows in the corners  
and closets which I am now embracing and seeing in a  
profound, painful, honest, loving way I've never done  
at these depths before.

It's that burning fire that has allowed me to go into  
my fear, anger, sadness, and surrender of self to become that person  
GOD wants me to be rather than what I wanted to be.

It is that burning fire that gives me the courage to  
Continue this Sacred Path not only for myself,  
but for my brothers and sisters!





Spider Woman

**P**HYSICALLY—we must prepare for living in harmony with Mother Earth regarding the following:

- Weather
- Terrain
- Diet change
- Trekking
- Living outdoors for up to ten days

Many have had the opportunity to backpack, camp, and hike. Many have not. The primary focus is to allow each person a gentle, easy, but thorough Vision Quest. Preparation on the physical level will make your time on the skin of Mother Earth a more rewarding experience.

Each time we go out into Nature and spend time there we are visiting Mother Earth on her terms, not ours. We must be prepared for any “events” she may bring us. *Proper equipment is absolutely critical!!!* Therefore, we need to bring clothing and equipment with us what will provide a balance, so our attention is focused on our connection with Creator rather than on survival! *Our intent is to create an arena for each quester to have a gentle, easy, but thorough quest.* This approach is different than others; some cultures believe that the quester must be torn down to the core and then be built back up. We believe that we are the ones that have made life hard and it is time for gentleness, harmony, and grace to come into our lives. We believe Creator is loving, caring, and filled with compassion for all that are willing to accept it. So, your experience does not have to be hard if you chose “gentle” with clear intent. But, if you chose to have it “hard,” that too will be provided.

Physically, we must prepare as best we can by:

- Walking
- Dieting
- Drinking lots of water



On most quests, people chose their sites less than a mile from base camp (the terrain is much different than in our urban environments). To get your body conditioned, start walking regularly and briskly (one mile working up to three miles several times a week is advised). At higher altitudes the air has less oxygen, the better prepared and conditioned your body is, the better you will feel. So, if you smoke, now may be a perfect time to quit. Also, if you drink alcohol, take drugs, or have other unhealthy or abusive behavior, now may be the time to examine this behavior and seek help.

**S**PIRITUALLY— we prepare ourselves by setting the intention to connect to our Creator through our higher consciousness. In this regard, I want to take a moment to discuss *Soul Loss* and *Soul Retrieval*. In Indigenous cultures, when a person has a real or perceived trauma, a Soul Retrieval is done immediately. This is normally done by the Shaman of the tribe. (For more information on this subject, contact Sacred Journeys and read *Soul Retrieval—Mending the Fragmented Self* by Sandra Ingerman.)

Some of the warning signs of Soul Loss are:

- Forgetfulness
- Memory loss of childhood
- Sleep disorders
- Anxiety attacks
- Addiction to drugs or alcohol
- Fragmented relationships
- Being a workaholic
- Repeating the same mistakes but expecting different results.

Children experience a great deal of things that may or may not be explained in a way young minds and spirits understand. They do not know how to protect themselves because they came into this world filled with unconditional love. Unfortunately, that same unconditional love is not always given in return. Some children experience molestation, whether it be physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. Souls do not know how to integrate this and may become *dis-associated* or create *dis-ease* from this trauma. Sometimes when a young child has to have surgery, be anesthetized, and stay in a hospital without their parents, the experience may cause trauma that could lead to soul loss. Later in life, issues regarding safety when seeking medical attention may occur.

Spiritually, the soul cannot integrate this trauma and part of the soul may leave the body. Sometimes others can take a part of the soul for their own benefit. There are cases of multiple abuses that devastate the person, creating a recurring pattern that is difficult to break, these patterns may cause parts of the soul to leave or shutdown.

Trauma can range from witnessing a horrific event like 9/11, experiencing a car accident, or having a friend or family member die. All these can cause soul loss. It can also be as seemingly insignificant as falling off a bike when young. This may bring up issues of safety and security at a very young age which can carry over into adulthood.

Emotional trauma may cause even larger soul loss. The death of a loved one, including a pet, can initiate a loss. Suicide of a loved one or family member can cause a serious spirit wound leaving tremendous soul loss. Divorce of parents or a loved one may leave what some call a “hole in the heart” with physical side effects. The rages of war and bearing witness to awful visual images can cause major soul loss as well as physical disease. All of these can and have been the causes of long term *dis-association* and *dis-ease* for many people due to the spirit wound created by the original incident.

Spirit wounds may show up as being disoriented, unfocused, sleep disorders, feeling separated and not whole, anxiety attacks, and diseases such as breast cancer, colon cancer, skin cancer, and addictions. The Soul Retrieval ceremony can and does bring into balance issues that may have been going on for years. It is a ceremony by which the original causation (spirit or psychic wound) is healed and the part of the soul



Star Nation

that left is returned to the person . . . reframed with love and understanding. This is a very traditional process used by Indigenous People for centuries. For souls to be prepared for a Vision Quest, some people may need a Soul Retrieval *prior* to going on their solo time. The Spirit wound may be the cause

of many underlying issues. In order to be whole we must have all our parts and a Soul Retrieval will return and help heal these parts. If possible, discuss any issues with your vision quest guide prior to your quest.

Several people have gone out on their Vision Quest to resolve physical issues. One quester was only 5'3" and weighed over 265 pounds. This person had always wanted to go on a quest, but couldn't bear the thought of not being able to eat and binge. She was fearful of being alone in the wilderness, worried about being able to get up off the ground, was unsure about going to the bathroom in the wilderness, but most of all, concerned whether she had the ability to keep up with the group while hiking. Although yearning to be one with Creator as well as spiritually being called to deal with this excess weight, her fears made the Vision Quest process seem unavailable.



Medicine Woman

Finally, the call became so loud and persistent that this person chose to make the necessary changes to honor her body and deal with the root cause of the eating disorder. After a year of discussion and doctor's consultations, a plan was established for her quest. Panic attacks, excessive anxiety, monumental fear, and physical challenges aside, the quest took place with Creator's assistance.

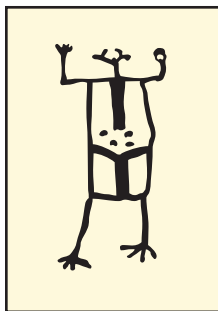
*Deep spirit wounds were healed!* In the last two years, this quester has lost over 95 pounds, works out six times a week, and goes to yoga twice a week. She now has a totally new outlook on life with more energy than she ever believed possible. She now knows the gift of loving oneself. Releasing all the pain and sorrow resulted in a new freedom. Handling issues surrounding family matters is now totally different because the attachment to the pain and the dysfunctional behavior no longer has the trigger or effect it once had.

Whether it is eating, drinking, denying our true sexuality, discounting our feelings, denying the emotional trauma of war, or drugging to numb our pain—there comes a time when the pain becomes too much for us to push down. It becomes an infected, festering wound that is ready to be opened and cleaned of its poison. Spiritual healing comes by releasing this pain from the physical being and turning it over to Creator. For us to be living our true purpose, we must have clear intent and be willing to listen to Creator giving direction and answers whenever we are in need.

In preparation for being on the skin of Mother Earth, we must learn to live in harmony with her. To do so we must have the proper equipment. During your three-day stay at base camp each quester will have the opportunity to learn how to properly use their minimal equipment. It is strongly advised to follow the list in the Appendix as well as becoming familiar with and using the equipment several times before your quest. If you do not have some of the items on the equipment list, most sporting goods stores will have rental equipment. (See Appendix Equipment List.)



Happy Home



Preparing for your quest also includes your physical body. While out on your four-day solo *each quester will fast*. In order to prepare your body for this process, a time tested fasting schedule must be followed. This will gently and easily allow your body to transition into this phase of the quest. The purpose of fasting is to become free of the distractions of preparing and eating food, and most importantly—cleansing your body of toxins. It is easier to be filled with the divine when you are empty.

*Each quester will have four gallons of water during their solo time in order to help them empty out That-Which-No-Longer-Serves them.*



Three Toed Lizard Basking in the Wonder of the Milky Way

While at base camp, prior to going out on the solo phase of the quest, only fruits and vegetables will be eaten. It is advised to put fasting into your weekly routine prior to going out on the land. It is best that no caffeine, alcohol, sugar, white flour, or drugs be used for several weeks prior to the quest so the body is ready for the fasting process. Prescription drugs are to be continued to ensure the proper health of each quester.

*If medical issues are present, the vision quest guide must know!*

Paramount to a successful Vision Quest is being prepared! Safety and one's well-being is the responsibility of each quester. The guide can prepare the intent, materials, and training –*but ultimately each quester has the responsibility for their own experience!* Taking risks by not bringing the proper equipment or by not being properly prepared can be dangerous! Mother Earth can create weather changes not normal for a typical season. For instance it can snow in the mountains in June, July, and August. Mother Earth can bring high winds and heavy rains to the desert in April and May. It is critical to be prepared for anything and everything that can be given to us.



*Be prepared and follow the list or you may put yourself at great risk !*

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# Vision Quest Process

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## Medicine Walk

**T**he *Medicine Walk* or Solo Day Walk is meant for each quester to become aware of one's intent as well as becoming familiar with Mother Earth herself. It should be done around one month prior to the actual quest itself. If possible each quester should do their Medicine Walk in the wilderness or in nature. But, if this is not possible a large city park will have to do.

Prior to going on the Medicine Walk each quester must determine the proper setting for them. It is best to take a weekend or two days and camp at the trailhead or starting point. Notify friends or family of your location and possibly have them go with you to your camp to be there for you. Pick a place without crowds, traffic, or any major distractions. Clear your calendar of obligations and any pressing issues that would distract you on this day of exploration and wonder. Ask in meditation/prayer for guidance in discovering the location for your Medicine Walk. Ask permission from Creator to have anything that needs to be exposed be done in a gentle easy way that you can see, hear, and feel so you will know what needs to be addressed on your quest. If possible scout out the area for your Medicine Walk several days or weeks in advance. Prepared your emergency kit (see Appendix B), water, map of the area, journal, pencil/pen, hat, insect repellent, sun block, proper clothing including rain gear, emergency blanket, matches, comfortable shoes, and flashlight. Leave a clean set of clothing, food, and water at your camp or at your car for your return.



*Capable Hands and A Solid Foundation*



Hunter's Moon

At dawn create a ceremony for starting your solo *Medicine Walk* that will last from dawn until dusk. Invite in all the Ancient Ones, Spirit Keepers, Creator, God, and any of your personal angels to help guide and direct you on this day with Mother Earth. Make

this as rich as possible for your quest is to be filled with ceremony and ritual that you are guided to create. Know that Creator rejoices that you have chosen to be with all of Creator's creations and they are all there to assist you on your quest for wholeness!

Start your walk with a sense of wonder, inquisitive awareness, excitement, and openness of all that Creator has to show you on this magical day. Look up, look to the left, look to the right, and examine the wonders of Mother Earth in all her glory and perfection! Become aware of all that is around you, under you, and above you! If you are guided to explore the callings off trail, make sure you have a sense of where you are and how to get back to your starting point. Just "be" without any predetermined destination, just strive to walk in Nature on this day. Examine and explore as much as you possibly can with the intent

of listening, watching, and hearing any messages Creator has to give to you. Cry out for help and ask for ways in which Creator can show you the miracles of Nature and help you receive their messages. Pay attention to your thoughts—who and what comes up for you to examine: friends, family, patterns, synchronicities, behavior, school, work, or relationships. Allow Creator to reveal what needs to happen regarding these issues, they are what your quest is going to embrace.

*"If we love nature enough she will speak to us!"*

– John Muir



Birds

Upon returning to your starting point, rejoice in your experience. Create a closing ceremony that thanks all the animals, spirits, birds, Mother Earth, and Creator for all the gifts you received. Make a journal entry of your experience and your reflections on this day of discovery. Later discuss this with your vision quest guide to help mirror back some of the important parts of the *Medicine Walk* and the important elements of your intent for going on your Vision Quest.

## Severance



Explorer's Paradise

**S**everance—the severing the world in which we live in order to enter the world of the Creator—is a transition we must make in order to be fully present with all that lies before us. Leaving our families, friends, work, home, pets, and personal comforts to be in the rhythm of Nature is critical in order to allow the mind to rest so our hearts can be opened to listening to the *Spirit-That-Moves-In-All-Things*. We must learn to quiet our minds and open our hearts in a new way of being with Mother Earth. This will allow her to show us and teach us all the gifts we are worthy of receiving. In this place-of-quiet and silence we can be still and listen to Creator's messages, not only for us, but for all of our people. We can be one with ourselves in the quiet of our being. We can “*be*” rather than “*do*.” This is our time to relinquish all responsibilities for four days allowing the magic of Spirit to show us how to receive the messages we so desire. This is the beginning of your personal Sacred Journey where you leave behind your conventional world and step into the *Spirit World* where your answers live.

## The Road Home – by Carol Hannagan

You must travel your road like there has never been another before you.  
And each mountain you climb will be easier if you leave the last one behind.  
Let each river you cross cleanse and quench you for you can only drown  
in your own fears,  
or lose the road in blinding tears.

Travel that road like there will never be another before you.

Inspect it and feel it every inch of the way.

It's a road you should know,  
for all of it's beauty and struggle,

its mountains and valleys are made from your mind —

It's your choice.

Your Spirit -

YOUR SOUL !



God of Plenty

## Threshold

During the three days of training while at base camp, we will create sacred space as we walk the land. Each quester will discover their own sacred place that Creator has already selected for them. Creator knows exactly what location is best for each quester and it is up to us to find it in our travels on the land. It will “call out” for each quester and each of us must learn to listen to this voice that speaks out of the right and perfect spot. Oftentimes, while on the Medicine Walk or in a dream, a vision comes to mind as to what this place will look or feel like. Also, when we are walking the land there is a sense of knowing that this is the spot—and so it is!

Entering the sacredness of each person's personal *Threshold* or Gateway brings many emotions. This is the gateway to your solo time with Creator. This is the crossing over from our community of questers, helpers, and guides to entering *Sacred Space*.

Here each quester will be alone for at least four days without human companionship, food, and the security of base camp. For some this is very terrifying while others rejoice and cannot wait to be alone at their sacred spot in the wilderness. Over the next two days, each quester will spend several hours at their sacred site performing ceremonies calling in all the Spirit Keepers and Ancient Ones. This also gives them time to become more comfortable with their soon-to-be “home.” They will learn the path to and from base camp while exploring the area.

After all the questers have determined the perfect place for them to do their Vision Quest, they will transport their four gallons of water to their sacred sites from base camp. On the last day in base camp we will go as a group to visit each site and be shown the actual Threshold or Gateway, their Medicine Wheel, and Death Lodge location (to be discussed later). We will bless the site as a group knowing that all our love, support, prayers, and blessings will be with each person.



Stone Pile

- Each person will bring an item from their site back to base camp— it could be a rock, pine cone, flower, acorn, or feather.
- The object will be placed in the Medicine Wheel for the guide to hold and pray – checking on the progress of the quester as each item has the energy of the quester and site deep within its physical form.
- We will then determine a Stone Pile location for each quester.

The Stone Pile is a place about halfway between the chosen sacred sites that each quester will visit daily. Here they will leave a symbol that they were there. It may be pine cones, sticks, a note, a poem, some token they want to give to their fellow quester, or changing the arrangement of the stones. This is a lifeline telling the other quester they are doing well, they are not alone, and that they are safe. One quester will go to the Stone Pile in the morning, the other quester will go to the stone pile in the afternoon. This way they honor each person’s process while avoiding seeing each other.

In the pre-dawn hours of the first day of the solo time, the vision quest guide will use the rattle to awaken all the questers. Each quester will pack up their belongings and proceed to the Medicine Wheel at base camp. The guide will smudge them, pray, and release them to Creator for the profound work to be done on the sacred skin of Mother Earth.

### **Come to the Mountain**

– by Mary Anne Radmacher

*Come to the mountain  
here we stand  
above a sea of clouds  
and sail high.*

*Come to the mountain  
where we hear  
the symphony of praise  
from winged musicians.*

*Come to the mountain  
where heights are immeasurable:  
in stillness we feel the earth  
move beneath our feet  
Come to the mountain,  
my friend, where we can  
close our eyes and  
see our dreams.*

*Come to our mountain,  
my sweet friend, where  
together we will speak  
of all we may become.*





Solstice Shield

While the first day is mostly about setting up the site and learning to relax into the process, there is much to complete. The first thing is to set up your personal Medicine Wheel—where important work will be done (see Chapter 5, Medicine Wheel). Each stone, twig, and item being used in the Medicine Wheel has a *profound message for you* and must be blessed and later, after your quest, returned to the place it was taken from (remember where you got your items). We have no dominion over anything in

Nature and should leave no trace of our visit on Mother Earth.

- ❖ After the Medicine Wheel is completed, step inside using a threshold or doorway and face each direction while creating ceremony and ritual. Invite the spirits of each direction in with a song, poem, prayer, offering, and/or dance.
- ❖ Give an offering for each direction, it can be sage, tobacco, corn meal, or a gift you brought from home to signify that direction's unique gifts.
- ❖ Allow yourself to feel the different energy of each direction and know the importance of each direction. (See Chapter 5, Medicine Wheel.)
- ❖ Cry out for help with your intent! In your ceremony, let the Spirit Keeper of each direction know what you are seeking—what is your heart's longing.
- ❖ Spend plenty of time allowing the Spirits of each direction to speak to you, acknowledging they are there for you.
- ❖ The Medicine Wheel will be your new home for 23-24 hours a day. This is where you will get all your answers! Make it big enough for you to sleep in—sometimes we are given many of our gifts during dream time.

The second day is often one of the more difficult days, for now it is time to do the work you came to do. All the setting up is done, but the mind still continues to think it has many things to do—tasks undone at home, phone calls, work items, concern for family members, and the stomach saying “I’m here feed me!” The Monkey Mind is alive and well and running at full speed with conversation, doubt, fear, anxiety, and other distractions. All these are normal and to be expected,



Dreamweaver

but this is your time and it is time to tell the mind it is okay to take a much needed rest. Each thought is not welcome now. Only when we create the void of emptiness will we be filled with the divine wisdom of Creator's gifts. So call out and tell the chatter that you hear it, but it is not welcome and must stop right now! By calling out and naming the fear, anxiety, and meaningless thoughts we are able to release the power they have over us. *Just name it and release it to Spirit!* Be aware of all the distractions that clamor for your attention, both the physical and mental manifestations that try to control you. This is the endless challenge of being in the physical body as quester. *This is the way of the Spiritual Warrior!*

Normally on the third day things start to settle down. The mental chatter slows and being in Nature becomes more comfortable. The hummingbirds, hawks, eagles, ravens, finches, sparrows, rabbits, coyotes, flies, squirrels, deer, fox, and all the creepy-crawlers have accepted you. Now you are watching them as they continue to attempt to show you, speak to you, and allow you to be part of their world of profound order. They all have messages for you and it is best to ask them what that message is for your higher good. Sometimes they will be very demanding that you do indeed listen!

As one Vision Quester experienced on her quest says:

*"I was in my tent within my Medicine Wheel with the mosquito net as the door, when I looked up to see a bear at the edge of my wheel. I had been thinking that nothing is happening and I've been here two days now. This is a total waste of time and money! I was really pretty upset and having a tantrum and pity party within my small confines of my tent. I came all the way from Chicago to sit here for this nothingness. Seeing the bear I thought to myself that this bear must not know I'm here so I should open my door and stand up and tell him. But I knew bears have a fantastic sense of smell and I'm sure he could smell me for miles away. When I did that he looked a little surprised and jumped back a couple of feet. He appeared to be scared. I was scared as I was sitting down and he towered over me. He was less than six feet away, but for some reason I knew he was not there to hurt me. He stayed there looking at me for a couple of minutes that seemed like hours! He then slowly bewilderedly walked off into the forest never stepping into my wheel. Boy, I thought how could he not know I was here or he must have just been passing through the area.*



*Then while I was standing there a hummingbird came and was less than four inches from my face. I tried to bat it away, but it kept coming back and stayed staring at me eye to eye. I could hear its wings going so fast just staying in one place. I again tried to bat it away and it kept coming back many times. I thought it was because I had a tee shirt on with bright yellow, bright pink, and bright red on it. But, it was at my face not near my tee shirt. Finally, after about seven minutes it flew away off into the forest.*

*While I was up I decided to go to the bathroom away from my Medicine Wheel. So, I started up the hill a ways and all of a sudden a family of Golden Eagles came down on me. They literally brought me to the ground. I was lying face down against the earth scared to move.*

*One by one they would swoop down and dive bomb me, but missing me by inches. I could feel the air of their wings rush by my back. I thought maybe I was in their home and they were protecting their young. But, I could see it was a mother, father, and one baby Golden Eagle. They were huge! Finally, I rolled over and saw them just above me in the tree branches surrounding me. The noise was unbelievably loud and so clear! Then I remembered what my guide had said so I asked, "What is your message?" I had forgotten to ask the bear and the hummingbird, but Creator was going to make me listen. They all worked in harmony to teach me how to listen and to see how Creator works to get my attention. Many times in my life I had avoided the obvious.*



Star Face with Eagle Feather Crown

*From that point on, during my third day, I was able to truly know that I was not alone and that something magical was taking place. I was able to ask all the questions I wanted and instantly get the answer by watching what each bird, animal, tree, stone, or wind was doing. I was able to stay with the Eagles for over 3 hours and learn how they communicated with me on a very personal way. Yes, there were times when I thought this has to be a dream and cannot be happening to me, but how in the world could I have ever invented this in my imagination. The answers were clear concise and perfect! The rest of my quest was filled with miracle from Mother Earth's magical ways of communicating!"* – Nancy Chase, June, 1998

While in the Medicine Wheel and for the remainder of your quest, continue to ask the questions in the Directions you need to work. Create songs, poems, or make journal entries, but also pay attention to how these distractions may keep you from being in touch with your surroundings and with Creator. As the quester tells of her experiences, sometimes we dismiss what Mother Earth has delivered right to our circle. Honor all and call in Creator when you do not understand the events that are happening. Ask many questions because this is the time answers and directions, sleeping deep in the hidden places of your soul, awaken into your consciousness. Become aware of all that is around you and how everything is speaking to you, pay attention to the metaphors they show you. Honor all; bless all; and respect how Creator is working with each of you. If you do not understand, ask for help from Creator over and over until you are able to get the message.





Graceful Dancers

## Death Lodge Ceremony

During the third or fourth day, go to another site near your Medicine Wheel to perform your *Death Lodge Ceremony*. It is important NOT to do this before your third or fourth day in order to give your mind time to relax into the process—so now you may listen to all that wishes to come to you at this time. This is a time to complete any unfinished business with everyone. This is a very powerful clearing ceremony. In letting go of any and all past hurts, abuses, misunderstandings, pain, sorrow, or unsaid words of love, appreciation, and respect, we can empty out of our mind, spirit, and soul *All-That-No-Longer-Serves* us or any of our people. When we heal, we are able to help heal others of their burdens, clearing the way for authentic dialogue to occur.

- ❖ Prior to the *Death Lodge Ceremony*, many chose to bathe in a river, lake, or stream. We purify our bodies so we may enter into our sacred ceremony with dignity, honor, and respect for all that has transpired and for all we can release. Here we speak on a soul-to-soul level with anyone we choose to call in and complete any unfinished business with. Surprisingly, there may be souls you hadn't thought of in years showing up and asking for an individual audience.
- ❖ Prepare another Medicine Wheel separate from the main Medicine Wheel at your site. Again, remember where each item came from so you may return it after your *Death Lodge Ceremony*. Place stones in each of the Four Directions as the Medicine Wheel requires (see Chapter 5). Enter the threshold or gateway into your Medicine Wheel blessing each Direction with prayer, song, gratitude, poem, and/or offering

while inviting in the Spirits of the Four Directions. Create a ritual or ceremony to start your Death Lodge in whatever way comes to you. Allow plenty of time for your ceremony—it can often take six to eight hours. Bring plenty of water and your emergency kit with you.

- ❖ After you have created your wheel and invited in all those Spirits that wish to be with you for your ceremony, call in whomever you feel you have any unfinished business with, one-by-one. These may be people or pets you love dearly and have not told spiritually how much you love and honor them. These may also be people that have hurt you or caused you pain. Here is the chance to discuss the pain and sorrow you felt. Examine any and all patterns and unfulfilled expectations that you continue to repeat with the people you have chosen. Notice the many lessons. Cry out all of your love, sorrow, hurt, happiness, pain, joy, betrayal, closeness, and deep connections. Let them know your true feelings. Tell them everything you need to say at this special time. It is very important to give them time to respond back to you about their understanding as well as intent in the situation. Each person does not have to reside on the physical plane at this time as the spirit never dies. You can communicate to them spirit-to-spirit as well as soul-to-soul. Don't forget to bring yourself into the circle to forgive yourself for any past regrets. *This is a time of total and full disclosure!*
- ❖ After you have completed all your unfinished business with the people you called to your *Death Lodge Ceremony*, call in any and all people that have any unfinished business with you. Allow anyone in that truly wants to speak to you. Engage in a dialogue with them to create a true authentic Spirit-to-Spirit conversation. Let each one come and discuss any and all issues so you, as well as they, can be complete. Next, thank all the conversations and revelations for the good and honorable way they have come into your Medicine Wheel.
- ❖ Next it is time for your *Funeral Ceremony*. It is important to decide how you want to be celebrated. Do you want flowers? If so, what kind do you want to have and where? Where will your celebration be held? What kind of music will be played? Who will be there to honor your life? Will it be indoors in a church or outdoors in Nature? Who will preside over the ceremony? How do you want your body to be presented? Who will sing the songs you chose? All these decisions are up to you as to how, who, and what will take place at the celebration of your life.
- ❖ During the celebration there will be people who will talk of your legacy from all parts of your life. There will be someone from your family tell of your impact on them. Someone from your line of employment speak of your involvement at the

workplace. Someone from your circle of friends tell of your influence on them. Someone from your Spiritual community inform of your connection with them. Someone from your community tell of your relationship with them. Someone from your casual community reveal your impact on them. All of these people in your life will share with you your profound contribution and how it affected them. It is wonderful they have decided to let you, and everyone that came to your celebration, know what you have meant to them. Sit back, see who shows up, and listen to what they say about who you really are to them and what impact you had on their lives. This gives you the opportunity to see how the legacy of your life is developing now and if that is, in fact, what you choose to leave behind. If what they say does not truly represent the



Detail from Holy Ghost Panel

essence of who you truly are, you have the opportunity to correct the errors when you return to your community. Also, you may go back into your community and ask different people if they were to speak at your funeral what they would honestly say. Now is the time to make sure you are representing your soul's destiny in all your dealings with All Our Relations. So, what is your legacy and what are you projecting in your community?

- ❖ After completing your Death Lodge Ceremony, thank all that have come to your celebration. Take all the objects from your Medicine Wheel back to their rightful locations. Return to your main Medicine Wheel and make a journal entry of your experience. Some like to take a nap after this profound experience while others are full of energy. Honor your body and do what feels right for you at this time. From this celebration Native Americans say, "This is a good day to die." Now one is clear of all that needs to be said and all is complete.

*"I didn't understand what people meant when they said they felt totally at peace and loved by God. I now know and have the love and peace in every cell in my body. It's like my DNA structure changed on my Vision Quest. I have purpose for the first time and know I have forgiven those I couldn't before with unconditional love in my heart, also for the first time! I am love and am loved! Unlike many other workshops and seminars I've done in the past, this doesn't go away it just makes me feel stronger and more connected with myself, God, Family, and my community. It has been 8 years now and I still feel whole. This ancient tradition works!"*

– Neil Brown, 1995

Because the Vision Quest is not only about you, but a great deal about your community, it is important to ask what you can do for your community when you return home. Cry out for direction from Creator as to what concrete step you can take to enhance your community. Be prepared to commit to this in Elder's Council with your fellow questers. It does not matter if it is something large or small, it is totally what you and your Creator have developed.

One young quester who was 18 and just graduated from high school hardly spent any time at home with his family. He had been in continuation school, which is a school for defiant and sometimes troubled students. His family was very concerned about his lifestyle and choice of friends. They were very loving and caring, but had no real clear picture as to where he would go from high school. So, he decided to go on a Vision Quest after he heard of the process from a friend. He came back from his quest feeling the love, compassion, support, and understanding his family had given to him. He realized he had not been showing them respect, dignity, honor, or thankfulness in return. His concrete step was to go back home and truly be part of the family. This meant



Butler Wash Shaman and Helpers

cleaning his room, staying for dinner, mowing the lawn, helping in the family business, and most of all telling his mother and father how much he loved them! This was huge for him as well as his family! For now they are truly a family filled with unconditional love and gratitude!

- ❖ On your fourth and last night, each quester will remain awake, becoming aware of the animals, sounds, and beings that reside in the deep darkness of the wilderness.
  - The world of the dark is also the world of the silence for which we all are a part within our Spirit.
  - The world of the dark is also the world of aliveness and much activity!
  - This is a time to cry out for *dream time vision* to come into your conscience mind and into a reality. This is a time of knowingness that we are one with all of our Mother Earth.
  - Embrace the oneness of the darkness and allow the light of Creator to illuminate your Soul's destiny to make our world a better place for all of our People!

- BE one with Creator, Mother Earth, and All Our Relations and cherish the time of being the passive observer while the vision unfolds.
- This is a time to let go and allow Creator to show you that you are not alone, but have unlimited support from all the Spirits Creator created.
- This is a time of great gratitude, severance, peace, harmony, and knowledge that we are all one.
- Cry out for your *spirit name* from the quiet. Be one with your new name and know that your soul rejoices at knowing this new you.



Heaven & Earth

- ❖ Finally, when the sun rises in the morning feel the light of Creator illuminate and fill your heart, soul, spirit, and body with the divine wisdom. Be thankful for all Creator has given you on these four magical days. Savor the moment of knowing you have just given yourself the gift of Self that will allow you to be the light of Creator back to your world. You have allowed others to heal as well as yourself! For the next year, you will be shown many gifts, pathways, and messages to enrich your soul's journey. Be mindful of all the signals, messages, synchronicities, animals, thoughts, and feelings that Creator is showing you on your path to your soul's destiny!
- ❖ The fifth morning is the time when you will rejoin your community at base camp. Each quester will clean up their camp and leave no trace of their sacred time with Creator. The person that goes to the stone pile in the morning will go and put the items back in nature so there will be no trace of this sacred spot. Give back the love, gratitude, blessings, and thankfulness for all the gifts you have received from Mother Earth. Some of the gifts and lessons may not be evident at this time, but will be revealed in the days to come. While returning to base camp, rejoice in all the gifts of communication the animals, stone people, insects, birds, wind, sun, moon, and Creator have shown you. In this experience you have been taken care of in many ways. Others were guided with loving directions which allowed them to be nurtured by Mother Earth and the Spirit Keepers. Learning the lesson of "*not my will, but thy will be done.*"
- ❖ Upon reaching base camp each quester will re-enter the Medicine Wheel for a prayerful greeting and welcome. Many are filled with excitement of being back with their community as well as a sense of accomplishment of completing the quest of the soul's destiny! Some may want to stay and continue time alone with Creator, not rejoining "society" immediately. Communications continue with each person's Creator, allowing connection with all of life and also the source of our creation. This will never go away and will only build in relationship as time goes forward. Each

has accepted the divine appointment of spending time with their Creator and each will not be disappointed in the life's direction from this point forward. Creator has a perfect, wonderful, and individual plan for each of us. Oftentimes, it is so radical we could not have imagined the turn of events that is before us. But, Creator knows and will guide each into the right and perfect direction for the good of all.

## Incorporation

Upon re-entering base camp, one knows their world has shifted. Things start to look different, feel different, and sound different. Looking at your fellow questers, each knows something profound and magical has happened. You can see it in each other's eyes, in their facial expressions, in the way they now carry themselves. The weight of the world has been lifted and there is now a serene feel of knowingness. As a group, you have done something few have ever experienced, that of connecting to the core of your being and of birthing your soul into this world. This is a time to savor the moment of a profound experience. One may not know exactly how profound, but something did take place in the last four days that has allowed for a shift to happen that could not and would not have happened prior to this experience. By allowing yourself the gift of being one-on-one with your Creator, now you are truly one.

Some people may question what happened out on the land or discount their experiences as coincidental. Others may think that the animals that came were just unaware of your presence. Others may think that the warm sweet breeze that came up right at the perfect time was just happenstance. Others may think that their spot was a spot of convenience and not directed by Creator. When coming from this “non-ordinary reality” to “reality,” it is human nature to discount events that occurred out on the land. *But it did happen and it is real!* The feelings, messages, animals, stones, trees, creepy-crawlers, winged-ones, streams, stars, wind, and weather were all speaking to you in ways that you could hear; touching you in ways you could feel; and showing you in ways you could see—for you did truly communicate with Creator. This was a well-orchestrated symphony just for you. How could it not be real? Creator was honoring you for coming to spend time with all of them!



Char after Her Quest



# Elder's Council

After everyone has settled into base camp, Elder's Council, with all our fellow questors and your vision quest guide, will resume. This is a time when each person has an opportunity to tell their story of what happened to them while with Creator on Mother Earth. Telling their experience allows each quester to voice the actuality of the magic that happened on their sacred journey. It is very important to acknowledge these events and bring them into view. There is meaning and worth woven into the web, a connection in all your experiences for you, the group of questors, and your community.

At first, some questors are not able to see the significance of a tiny event or how it could become a major instrument for healing or direction. All events are significant and have occurred for the benefit of the quester whether they are aware of it at the time or not. The Elder will mirror back these events to help the quester in understanding the significance or gain some insight from the message or metaphor.



Nevada Spiral

The web has been delicately woven and sometimes has hidden messages that will be discovered in the years to come. Each encounter is important and has been given to each quester for a specific reason and purpose. Embrace each rich story with honor, respect, dignity, and gratitude because Creator has given a very important message concerning the events of your solo time. You may now have a *spirit name* and possibly a song or poem defining your soul's destiny. Your fellow questors may share their names and joys at this gathering.

*Elder's Council is critical in connecting the week's journey to the soul's destiny.*

After settling into base camp, the celebration of your quest is offered with a cup of tea, fruit salad, and/or vegetable soup to give the body physical nourishment. It is important to treat the body with small portions so it can become aware of the digestive process again. For the next two days in base camp each quester will eat small portions of food throughout the day to give the body ample time to adjust to and get in harmony with food again. It is critical to eat only fruits and vegetables or bland food as well as drinking plenty of water while giving thanks for the sacrifice the body has made over these last four days.



# Homeward Bound

Driving out of base camp will require great focus and concentration on your tenth and final day. You will be leaving a sacred space and a way of being in a non-ordinary conscience mind—an altered state of being. *Caution must be taken in the re-entry of our world.* Our minds have slowed to be in harmony with Mother Earth and going back into the world of driving, freeways, airports, restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, and masses of people can be a shock to our system. The noise is personified. The pace is fast. The contact with people is uncomfortable. It can be quite unsettling to suddenly face the pressures of doing physical tasks after just being with Mother Earth and Creator. So, *it is important to ease into the world slowly!* Take some time to nurture your newly awakened soul. Treat yourself and your soul like a newborn baby. It is advised not to fly home the last day of the quest. It is also advised, if possible, not to go back to work the day you get home from your quest. Remember:

- Your spirit needs time to make the transition and your soul need nurturing.
- Balance is critical at this time.
- Be gentle with yourself by resting and eating properly.
- Spend time with Creator honoring your experience.
- Respect the truth you experienced on the land and allow time for reflection and assimilation.



*Now it is time to take your vision back to your people.*



*Journey in Search of the Center*

Each will bring back a different, but definite step or task to undertake . . . one filled with heart and meaning. Although we bring back this step/task given to us by Creator, we may still feel lost at times. Allow yourself to go back to that place in your heart and reconnect with Creator to gain more insight, direction, and the proper pathway. Remember to progress slowly but diligently while being guided by the divine. You may have doubts that these strange turns and twists that occur are leading you in the right direction, but trust that Creator has the precise and perfect plan for you! Advance with the sense of wonder in each day . . . *for this is your personal sacred journey.* Enjoy traveling the path that you have been seeking for so many years, knowing that you are not alone. The universe is supporting you in your discovery

of your Soul's destiny! Trust in the process and know that you will be tested in many ways. Stay aware of the shifts and stay focused on Creator's direction for sharing your sacred medicine.

***Be vigilant!*** When home, watch who you tell your story to. It is unnecessary to tell the intimate details. Be selective. Accept the miracles and do not allow others to distract you. The things that happened to you while on your Vision Quest are personal and sacred. Shifts in reality are easily dismissed by those who have not experienced them.



Before & After Pictures of Ken

Although your family, friends, and colleagues are interested in your adventure, most do not understand the process or why you chose this pathway. Select your words carefully and do not tell your complete story to them. Most people just want to know if you had a good time and got what you were seeking. Some questers have experienced negative remarks and bewilderment when they shared some of the things that happened in the Spirit World. Many have experienced family and friends discounting or not believing their account of their sacred journey.

*It is wise to keep your experience between you and your Creator.*

Let them know you did have a rewarding experience and that it is still unfolding. It will take time to totally grasp all that has happened in this short period of time, but it will be revealed! This process has never failed anyone who has come with good intent to be with Creator. Each quester will be able to see with different eyes, hear with different ears, and feel with the love of Creator's gentle touch!



New Mexico Sun Spots



The Vision Quest process is a year long process. In the time out on the land, the door to Creator's dream for each individual will open. That connection and communication will grow over time with many new messages and often a yearning to be out again in Nature to hear the messages from Creator. There is a knowingness of being connected to something much larger than ever thought possible. One has the chance to know what Native People have known for centuries:

*"We are all one!"*

After the quest, know this is true and seek that communication on a regular basis. To honor the year long process, questers are encouraged to go out on a 24 hour solo journey, 365 days later. Many even decide to do another quest to seek more information from Creator and to give thanks for all they have received.





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# The Medicine Wheel

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Solstice Shield

The Medicine Wheel is used by most all Indigenous People in symbolic ritual of becoming one with the universe. The wheel has no end and no beginning. It is the circle of all creation. It is where the answers to the heartfelt questions are found. It is where power of the earth's knowledge is available for all who ask. It is a place of protection, guidance, healing, and balance. This is a place of powerful enlightenment for which our soul has yearned to know. This is our way back HOME to Creator.

Although the Medicine Wheel has thirty-six positions, questers will only use five for the Vision Quest. Those will be the *North, East, South, West, and Center*. These will represent the four directions which each quester will face to meditate and pray for guidance. Each quester will stay in the wheel for the duration of the quest, except for going to the stone pile or going to the bathroom. On rare occasions, a quester may be guided to walk outside the wheel for revelation of an important message, but this is extremely rare and must be checked to make sure it is not a diversion from being one with Creator.

Prior to establishing your Medicine Wheel, determine if this site will be suitable by observing the topography and lay of the land. Make sure it is protected from the wind, sun, possible inclement weather, and the view of other people. This will be your *Sacred Site* for the next four days. Here you will:

- be doing your profound work with Creator.
- be conducting ceremonies, rituals, and shedding the old ways that no longer serve you or your people.
- becoming one with Creator.
- be singing of the songs of releasing; dancing with the joys of freedom; crying out the sorrows of betrayal; yelling the pain of anger; walking the path of hope; and dreaming happiness and wholeness.

Within the Medicine Wheel, each direction symbolizes the essence of an element, mineral, plant, animal, color, season, and most importantly—a lesson. Some tribes have different colors and animals for each direction, however, the essence of each direction is the same. Begin with the North and go clockwise .

## North

Element: Earth  
 Mineral: Alabaster  
 Plant: Sweet Grass



Animal: White Buffalo  
 Color: White  
 Season: Winter

Lessons: Place of the giveaway, physical healing, connection to the earth, spiritual grounding in the physical body, accepting of all, giving thanks, place of seeking wisdom from the Elders, physical elements of the body and relationship of the Earth.

## East

Element: Air  
 Mineral: Catlinite or Pipestone  
 Plant: Tobacco



Animal: Eagle  
 Color: Gold/Yellow (Rising Sun)  
 Season: Spring

Lessons: New Beginnings, creativity, new light, rebirth, innocence, awakening, illumination, spontaneity, playfulness, seeing clearly, flying high, clarity, unlimited possibilities, sacred energy for the body, and a deeper connection with Creator.

## South

Element: Water  
 Mineral: Serpentine  
 Plant: Sagebrush



Animal: Coyote/Mouse  
 Color: Red (Emotion)  
 Season: Summer

Lessons: Rapid growth, bearing time, emotions, fear, adaptability, humor, sorrow, pain, love, rage, don't take yourself so seriously, place to come to heal the heart, relationships, sexuality, love.

## West

Element: Fire  
 Mineral: Soapstone  
 Plant: Cedar



Animal: Grizzly Bear  
 Color: Black (Shadow Side of Self)  
 Season: Fall

Lessons: Responsibility for self, for the earth, and all our relations; harvest, strength, balance, resourceful, introspection, leadership, power, courage, grace, destructive shadow side.

## Center – Creator

Color: White (Wholeness)



I Will Lay Down My Life For You

Create your Medicine Wheel, make sure it is large enough for you to sleep and move around in (you will live here for 4 days).

- In each direction place an object that represents the color of that direction on the outside of the wheel.
- Place objects such as sticks, stones, pine cones, or a line to complete your circle.
- Step into your Medicine Wheel from the West through the threshold you created.
- Place your center stone (white) to represent Creator.
- Next create a ceremony facing each direction.
- Welcome all the Directions, ask each Direction's element, mineral, plant, animal, season, and lessons be with you during your quest.
- Ask each Direction for its Spirit Keeper to enter your Medicine Wheel and give you guidance during these next four days.
- Ask each direction for its name, a song, a dance, or a poem it would like to bless you with during your quest.
- Bless each direction with with gratitude, grace, and thankfulness and an offering such as tobacco, corn meal, sage, or a special item you brought from home.

While in the Medicine Wheel, sit or stand in the center and face the direction from which you are seeking guidance. Some questers spend a whole day in each direction, while others move from direction to direction for answers. Still others spend the entire four days in one direction depending on the issues at hand.



Medicine Wheel Drawing by David

Polarities—or the manifestation of opposing tendencies—of a Direction often give us the answers to our questions. For example, if you are facing the **West** and attempting to embrace the shadow side of your being (as well as responsibility, strength, resourcefulness, power, courage, and leadership) but are not getting any answers, turn around to the **East** for help. East represents illumination, that where the sun comes up, clarity, awakening, unlimited possibilities, and the new beginnings of Spring.

The same is true with the **South** in dealing with your emotional self. It is where you go to heal your fear, anger, rage, sorrow, pain, and relationships. If you turn to the **North**, where your Elder's reside, you get physical healing, spiritual grounding in the physical body, acceptance of all, wisdom, and gratitude for the experience.

**W**e can work the wheel with compassion for ourselves and All Our Relations. Cry out for all that needs to be transformed, letting Mother Earth transmute it into good. Release and let go of any and all That-No-Longer-Serves-You and Your People.

Let go of:

- Past hurts
- Abuses
- Pain
- Sorrow
- Betrayals

Let go of any destructive physical patterns such as:

- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Food
- Relationships
- Unhealthy Sexual behavior
- Gambling
- Deceitful or deceptive behaviors

Be willing to walk away from the past and into the future directed and protected by Creator. Cry out to the Spirit Keepers of the directions about the issues at hand and remember to listen and be still for the answers. The answers will come in the form of metaphors, words, signals, animals, wind, thoughts, feelings, or as a clarity of knowingness or understanding.

“When the mind is still,  
tranquil,  
not seeking any answer  
or solution even,  
neither resisting nor avoiding,  
it is only then  
that there can be  
a regeneration,  
because then  
the mind is capable  
of perceiving what is true  
and  
it is the truth that liberates,  
not our effort to be free.”

- Krishnamurti





*Kokopelli's Canyon Serenade*

Continue to ask for the messages that Creator is sending you. Ask that Creator speak to you in a way you can hear; show you in a way you can see; and touch you in a way you can feel. Also, ask that this be done in a gentle, easy, but thorough way for most have done hard long enough!



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# Listening To The Spirit That Moves In All Things

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Detail from Spirit of the Wind

Within Indigenous Cultures, it is believed that Creator created All, therefore there is *Spirit in All*. Everything created has purpose and meaning for being present on Mother Earth at this time in our spiritual evolvment. It is also believed, that most all of Creator's masterpieces know their purpose or Sacred Medicine except for most of the two-leggeds . . . man! Man has a difficult time listening as well as accepting the Sacred Medicine he was born with in his heart and soul. We two-leggeds need to use the Vision Quest to relearn how to listen, see, and feel the oneness. We must venture out with the blessed ones in the wilderness to experience all of Creator's gifts.

A complete array of animals, plants, stones, birds, insects, and weather will orchestrate metaphors to assist in communicating with Creator. One may learn these ways by being the observer and focusing intent. Each animal has a gift, a message, and a very important role in communicating what Creator has to tell each quester.

Vital to understanding the gifts the animals have to share with us, we need to become more aware of the sacred medicine each animal possesses. Following, is a listing of "messengers" with metaphorical attributes and how to use them on your journey. *Be aware that these animals are perceived differently by some Indigenous People* and can have several different "qualities" and "messages," both positive and negative.

There are several very good books that will help you learn and understand more about these animal messengers and their attributes (one of the more comprehensive guides is *Animal-Speak* by Ted Andrews). It will be helpful to read them prior to your quest (see Appendix A – Suggested Reading).

# Animals, Birds, Insects & Reptiles

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*Ant* ..... Attributes: *Industriousness, Order, and Discipline*

Ant is very community oriented and specialized, each knows its role within the group. They are extremely organized and systematic in working for the good of their community. When Ant comes into your life it is time to examine your personal commitment to doing the work at hand. Are you truly working with the effort, focus, and energy to get the job done? Are you getting help in the project from those who support you or are they giving only half the help? Are you giving all you have to accomplish the job? Do you have all the tools to get the job done? Are you working effectively?



*Bat* ..... Attributes: *Transition, Initiation, and Rebirth*

Bat is the only mammal to fly. It is believed to be the totem for working with fear. It can and will expose any and all fear hiding in the dark shadows of our being. The bat is a symbol of rebirth and transitions. Rejoice! Facing our fears is a huge part of the Vision Quest process. Our Spirit releases fear to Creator so we can become the person we were put here to be.



*Bear* ..... Attributes: *Introspection, Awakening the Power of the Unconscious*

In the winter months they do not fully hibernate, but fall into a deep sleep. This is also the symbol for the West in the medicine wheel, that of darkness and introspection. This represents the time of sleep and the time of going within to delve into both the subconscious and unconscious patterns. Look at conscious decisions made. For us to be in balance, we must embrace the shadow side, or the not so favorable parts of our character. Know that the strength to accomplish all that is in Divine order is available with the power of bear. Bear will give you the vision to embrace these parts of your self and also incorporate them with the grace you have within. They are there to show you how to play and nurture your unconscious dreams as well as giving you the power to fulfill them.

*Beaver* ..... Attribute: *Builder of Dreams*

Beaver is a master builder of not only houses, but also of our dreams. They are able to live in both worlds – that of land and also underwater. They can stay underwater for over 15 minutes at a time constructing their homes with fantastic engineering. Family and support of their family is extremely important to them as they mate for life and assist their young in developing the skills to build excellent dwellings. So if Beaver shows up, it is a time to look at family issues and see how to bring harmony, love, support, and collective cooperation into your life. It is a time to build dreams and to manifest these dreams into reality. It may be a time to look at repairing family ties to build solid relationships of love. If repairs are needed, now is the time to get them done.



*Bee* .....Attributes: *Fertility and the Honey of Life*

Bee is known to represent a very tight knit community. Without Bees our fruits and vegetables would not be pollinated to produce our food. Working tirelessly, they can pollinate large fields of crops in a few days. The energy they possess is unbelievable. When Bee comes into your life ask yourself if you are being as productive as you can be in your world. Do you have the community support that you need to produce your dreams? Are you honoring your community and supporting others? Are you taking time to reap the joys and sweetness of honey, the essences of life? Are you focused and keeping your attention on your goals while paying attention to Sacred Medicine as to how you bring this back to your People? In one case, the message of the Bee was to relax into the self and just “be”!

*Bobcat* .....Attributes: *Secrets and Silence*

Bobcat is a very solitary animal. They enjoy silence and observing the world around them. If Bobcat comes into your life, look at being the passive observer to see what is really going on around you. Also, listen to all that is said and be aware of the context of what is being said. Trust your intuition and go with it as Bobcat has great gifts in this area. They have physic abilities few have experienced. They learn quickly and benefit by using prior knowledge to their advantage.



*Buffalo* .....Attributes: *Manifestation of Abundance*

The buffalo is one of the most important and sacred animals to the Native American People. It was once plentiful and provided food and warmth to help them survive the harsh winter. There are a great many stories and legends accorded the buffalo due to its strength, power, and its gift of abundance; one of the most well known is the Lakota legend of White Buffalo Calf Woman. She taught that all things would be abundant and available to the People by using “right action” and “right prayer.” We need to honor and show gratitude for all that is given to us by Creator. If buffalo came into you dreams look for an increase in opportunities and abundance in your life. Remember to show gratitude for what you already have and to honor the efforts of yourself and others. Buffalo also indicates that synchronicities are happening in your life—changes will occur in the manner and time that is best for all.



*Butterfly* .....Attributes: *Transformation, Transmutation*

Butterfly represents transmutation from the caterpillar to the beautiful winged ones of the sky. This cycle of total and complete metamorphosis (egg–caterpillar–cocoon–butterfly) is astonishing. They are here to teach us how to look at each “stage” of our life and identify the lessons each has to show us. Through this we learn how to transmute our fears and bring our hopes, dreams, and prayers into reality. With the lightness, joy, and colorful characteristics of butterfly we too can become who we were meant to be. Listen to the lessons of Butterfly, they are telling us to lighten up and fly with delicate but focused direction. As with Butterfly, we will transmute into that which is the highest good for all.



*Cougar* ..... Attributes: *Leadership and Coming into Your Own Power*

The Cougar is known by many names: mountain lion, panther, and puma are but a few. It is the one of the fastest and most powerful animals in North America. It is a stealthy hunter that can leap over 30 feet, killing its prey on impact or with its bite and claws. The Cougar symbolizes knowing and owning your own strength and power. This power can sometimes cause fear or envy in others. Often when we assert ourselves, others do not like it or it can create conflict. Stand your ground—Cougar is okay with upsetting the status quo. If Cougar comes into your life ask yourself if you are being decisive enough? Are you speaking your truth, walking your talk, or are you “going along” with others? There may be many difficulties, but it is time to stand by your convictions and lead where your heart takes you.



*Coyote* ..... Attributes: *Trickster and Wisdom*

Coyote is known for being the trickster in folklore. By trying to be clever or wise, they sometimes become the fool—showing us the fine line between the two. They are extremely family oriented. The mother does most of the hunting while the male will stay in the den to watch over the pups. They communicate with each other with howls and yip-yip voices. Sometimes they will work together to catch larger prey by “tricking” and isolating it. They are masters at deception and can trick us with our emotions also. With their howls they are often telling us to lighten up and have fun with our emotions. Playing and joking is a big part of their day while the young ones enjoy hide-and-go-seek and other games. They love to howl for communication, but also for having a good time. So, when you see Coyote ask yourself if you have been taking things too seriously. Do you need to go out and howl a bit? What “tricks” have you played on yourself lately? Do you have the family support you need? Are you doing enough to keep your family in a cohesive unit? Is your mate giving enough quality time and emotional support to the children? Is there balance in the household? Use Coyote medicine—laughing, joking, and howling—to change your perspective and laugh at yourself when needed.



*Deer* ..... Attributes: *Gentleness and Abundance*

Deer are known to have a tender yet understanding view of the world. They step through the forest with gentleness and ease, but also with visual clarity. They step lightly, making sure all is well and safe in their world. They are protective and nurturing of their young. The antlers give the males protection and status in the herd, but also show their age with new “points” each year. They quietly adapt to their surroundings with grace and flexibility. When Deer shows up for you look at the amount of grace you are giving yourself and the people around you. Are you stepping lightly and with knowledge of yourself and your surroundings? Are you aware of where you are and what is going on around you? Are you showing a degree of innocence with your actions in your life? You can also use the gentleness of Deer to heal wounds and create safety for others..



Abundance



*Dragonfly* ..... Attribute: *The Power of Light*

Dragonfly represents the reflection of light as well as the lightness of Spirit. Dragonfly reflects light in many different ways as we look at it. One may see purple, black, pink, and other iridescent colors. They start life in the water as nymphs and once they emerge as adults, always live near water—which represents the emotional side of our being. They have excellent eyesight having compound eyes that see hundreds of images all at the same time. Dragonfly allows us to add more light into the dark shadows of our being. They are there to help us transmute this darkness into light while bringing newness, joy, ease, and harmony into our transitional times. They are there to help us lighten up and fly with ease in this transition.



*Eagle* ..... Attribute: *Spirit and Light*

Eagle is an extremely powerful symbol for Indigenous Peoples and is celebrated as a creature of vision, power, and grace. Eagle represents the East—the illumination from the morning Sun, a deeper connection with Creator, and clear vision. Eagle has exceptional eyesight; they can see a small mouse or rabbit in a meadow more than a mile below. As hunters, the speed and force of their flight when they strike their prey is deadly. Their piercing eyesight is a symbol for allowing us to see through the darkness and connect with Creator's vision for each of us. Their agility to fly and maneuver reminds us that if we change our vantage point we can see a situation more clearly. Look for clarity of direction, purpose, and meaning in any situation when Eagle comes into view. Also, expect to orchestrate a smooth focused strategy to accomplish this plan with ease, grace, and power.




*Fox* ..... Attributes: *Camouflage, Shapeshifting, and Invisibility*

For centuries fox has appeared in folklore and ritual all over the world. Each culture has stories concerning its ability to survive by cunning and the “magical” powers of shapeshifting or blending in and becoming invisible. Fox is a keen observer that often goes undetected by those being observed. Fox is known for being adaptive, quiet, cunning, swift, and a master of camouflage. What lessons does Fox have for you? Do you need to learn the art of camouflage? Do you need to become invisible like the wind, weaving in and out of different situations and places? Or, are you to quiet yourself and become the observer? Use the information you gain for the good of all.




*Frog* ..... Attributes: *Transformation, Fertility, Cleansing Rains*


Frogs are amphibians that live both in the water and on the land. They start out as eggs, become tadpoles or poliwogs can only live in water, then transform into frogs that breathe air and live on the land—this metamorphosis is amazing. Frogs are also associated with fertility because of their abundant numbers after the spring rains when they are calling out for mates and “sounding” their territories. Because emotions are associated with water, Frog medicine usually involves being sensitive to emotional needs of others. They also hold the knowledge of weather and can call in the rains. If Frog has come into your life, change is on the way! Are you feeling stuck in the mud or waterlogged? Are you too sensitive to the emotional needs of others, ignoring your own? Do you need a fresh start or cleaning at home or work? Or perhaps it is finally time to get in touch with the water element and sound the depths of your emotions?

 *Grasshopper* ..... Attributes: *Giant Leaps Forward*


Grasshopper represents giant leaps forward. Grasshopper is very flexible and can travel over eight feet with each leap. When Grasshopper comes into your life, giant strides are ahead for you, know that leaping forward is possible. They are supporting you in this venture and will be with you all along the way.

 *Hawk* ..... Attributes: *Messenger, Visionary*

Hawk's medicine is being a messenger from the sky. They are powerful soaring visionaries with great strength, power, and grace while using the currents of the wind to take them to new heights. They have excellent vision to see prey from great distances and swoop down on them with grace and ease. Adults mate for life. Both tend to the young while co-creating a safe environment for their offspring. They spread their wings and seem to float on the currents of the sky. If you see hawk, it may be time to relax and allow the process of soaring to new heights begin. It may be a reminder to allow the universe to support you and not work so hard at what you are doing. Like the hawk, distance yourself above the whole situation and see with clear vision. Look at whether you are co-creating something or doing most of the work. Study the hawk and ask, "What is your message for me at this time?"

 *Hummingbird* ..... Attributes: *Joy, Nectar of Life, Stamina*

Hummingbird is the smallest of all birds, weighing less than an ounce! Its feats of flying and stamina are so amazing that it is hard to imagine the power and spirit of this small bird—but it is fearless. In flight it can go forward, side-to-side, backward, and hover mid-air with its rapid wing beat and magical aerobatics. Its iridescent feathers shimmer in the light, making them a joy to watch. They are here to teach us about flexibility, stamina, playfulness, the will to succeed, and how to enjoy the sweet nectar of life. When Hummingbird shows up for you, examine your mobility, flexibility, and tenacity. Are giving yourself the sweet nectar of life? Are you being as flexible as you need to be with your loved ones and yourself? Are you being as playful as you can in your life while still having the tenacity to reach your goal? Are you setting your sights on an end result with joy, happiness, and also the stamina to reach that goal?

 *Lizard* ..... Attribute: *Subtlety of Perception*

Lizard is filled with wisdom and a great deal of perception. They are ones that help us in our dream time. Lizards will bask in the sun and look as though they are asleep, but they are not. They are actually using the warmth of the sun to become energized. This subtle way is also how they hunt—waiting quietly for insects to come close so they can snap up a meal. It is time to become more aware of the subtle shifts of nature and energy that is all around you. While looking like one is asleep or resting quietly, you can become more aware of your surroundings and the subtle changes that are occurring. In the twilight time right before we fall asleep we enter a dreamlike state when Creator can enter our soul. Some say this is the time when we are most able to tap into our psychic and intuitive sides. As lizard, we must act on them with quickness and directed speed. We are not to rationalize or to think, but to move. This form of knowingness is the gift of lizard.



*Mouse* – ..... *Attribute: Attention to Detail, Scrutiny*

Mouse has a highly developed sense of danger because it is food for so many prey animals including birds, coyote, fox, snakes, and cats. Nature compensated Mouse by making it very productive, it has between three and four litters a year. Because Mouse is so attentive to detail, it is a good medicine to have in today's world of technology and microsystems. No detail is too small or insignificant for Mouse's attention. No puzzle too complex to study and scrutinize. But sometimes mouse forgets to look up and see the bigger picture. If Mouse came to you what questions did it bring? Are you always busy with the details? Are you so involved with solving problems that you forget to look up and enjoy the world around you? Do you have a tendency to "hold on to" things because your afraid to let go? If so, take more time to scrutinize your life, look for ways to see more than the details and embrace the dance of life.



*Owl* ..... *Attributes: Mystery, Wisdom, and Deception*

Owl is one of more controversial animal messengers. Because humans are fearful of the dark, Owl's abilities to see and hear in the dark-of-night seem like supernatural powers. Some believe that it is a bringer of death and messenger from the shadow side because it is nocturnal and flies on silent wings. But Owl medicine can also bring us wisdom and insight to our shadow side. Owl helps us see in the darkness and reveals much. We need to be able to understand and accept both the darkness and the light in ourselves in order to travel our path in harmony and balance. If Owl came to you, what questions do you need to ask? Do you need to be more perceptive? Do you need to see through the illusions of yourself and others without judgment? Are there dark secrets in your life that are keeping you from your soul's destiny?



*Rabbit* ..... *Attributes: Fertility and New Life*

Rabbit is one of the most fertile animals. They produce between two and five litters a year. The young are weaned early and eat on their own after 28-days. Once a new litter arrives, the mother kicks the older ones out of the nest. Rabbits are one of nature's main food sources for Coyote, Eagle, Hawk, Fox, and many others. To avoid becoming prey, Rabbit is very aware of its surroundings and blends in extremely well. They are very agile, making quick moves and sudden stops. When Rabbit comes into your life, look at your patterns: Are you are aware of your surroundings? Are your dreams fertile? What new beginnings are being produced? Are your children too dependent upon you? Do they need to learn how to fend for themselves?



*Raccoon* ..... *Attributes: Dexterity and Disguise*

Raccoon is known to be the master of disguise. They are experts at dexterity using their hands for washing as well as manipulating objects. The masks they wear demonstrate the masks of deception and secrecy. In the winter, they do go into a deep sleep and live off the fat in their bodies. So, when Raccoon shows up in your life look at the masks you may be wearing. Are you truly reflecting the true nature of your being or hiding behind a mask of disguise? Are you being agile in your dealings with your family, friends, dreams, work, and goals? Are you holding back the true secrets of your gifts and Sacred Medicine? Are you afraid of being disappointed in owning and using these gifts?


*Raven* ..... Attributes: Magic, Shapeshifting, and Creation

Raven is everywhere in the folklore and legends of Native American people. It is known as the shape-shifter of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual modalities. Raven is extremely family oriented as well as community oriented. Ravens have been known to help members of their extended families obtain food, build structures, and protect the young from prey. They are known to build several “false” nests nearby to protect their young from predators. They will go to the furthest nest and work their way back to where the young are, leading any predator away from the active nest. Raven has the most developed language of any animal including man. They communicate with different tones, pitches, and sounds. They use “tools” in building their nests as well as in hunting and finding food. They can playfully use the wind to fly through the sky with ease and joy. They are also known to reshape that which does not have form and bring it into form, making them magicians.



Potential to Soar

When Raven comes into your space rejoice that great things are happening. They are shifting the thoughts, emotions, and physical into a spiritual dimension of joy, playfulness, enlightenment, and unity. Have you been stuck in a rut without support of your community? Is it time to own your voice and speak your truth from power and strength without shame and blame? Do you have the tools to reach your goals and, if not, what tools are necessary? Have you left yourself open to have people take advantage of you in your home? What do you need to let go and shift any old thoughts that are limiting you from reaching new dimensions?

 *Snake* ..... Attributes: Rebirth, Resurrection, and Initiation

Snake has many healing powers. The lore of the snake is so powerful that many are afraid of it. In the symbol of the American doctor, two snakes are entwined around the cross to symbolize healing. Snakes feel vibrations on the earth and know when something is approaching. They also shed their skin prior to winter hibernation. During this shedding, they are blind and very dangerous—they cannot see and will strike at everything that comes near them. The reason they shed their skins is, although they hibernate, they continue to grow. Without this “shedding,” they would be restricted and not able to grow. When we encounter Snake it is time for us to shed our skins of that-which-no-longer-serves us and grow. We too sometimes become blind and strike out, but need to learn to protect and trust ourselves when we are letting go of unwanted patterns, beliefs, relationships, jobs, myths, and physical appearances. This is a time of transformation, initiation, and growth so we too must be aware of movement in our surroundings. It is a time for healing and what Native Americans call *death and rebirth*. So, allow yourself to let go and allow the good to come into your life.



*Spider* ..... Attributes: Creativity and the Weaving of Fate

Spider shows up in the myth and folklore all over the world. The Native American people refer to spiders as the Many-Leggeds, and have a deep appreciation and understanding of its ability to weave intricate webs to snare its prey; Spider plays a key role in many of their Creation stories. Spider taught humans how to spin and weave; how to create snares for catching animals and fish; and created the first alphabet, teaching us language and later—the magic of writing. Whatever you believe, Spider is essential to our very existence. Worldwide there are over eighty thousand species of spiders. There can be as many as 75 million spiders per acre. They feed primarily on insects and keep the ecological balance of our planet in check. Using computer modeling, scientists show that without spiders earth's ecology would become so unbalanced that life as we know it would cease to exist within two to eight days. If Spider has come into your life what questions do you need to ask yourself? Are you called to be more creative? Are you spinning too many dreams and not accomplishing what you need to do? Do you want to use the written word to tell your story? Is your life in balance, or are you tangled in your web?

*Squirrel* ..... Attributes: Preparedness and Activity

Squirrel is Nature's "boy scout"—always prepared! Squirrel is a member of the rodent family and can be quite social and vocal. We often see squirrel busy gathering food and digging holes or hiding his stash in a tree, getting ready for the winter. But we also hear their chatter and alarm calls when a predator is near. They announce its presence to all the animals and birds in the area. When not busy gathering food, squirrels love to play and chase and wrestle with one another. If Squirrel has a message for you, what might it be? Are you too busy, forgetting to play and socialize as well as work? Does your busy-ness have a purpose, or are you "scattering" your energy? Do you need to learn how to save and prepare for the unexpected?



*Turtle* ..... Attributes: Longevity, Mother Earth, Awakening to Opportunities

Turtle is the most ancient vertebrate animal on the planet today and has always been an important messenger in world mythology. It was believed that the turtle could bring together and unite the blessings of Heaven and Earth. To the Native American peoples, it represented Mother Earth who provided for all their needs. Turtle is also the symbol of the primal mother, and is associated with the lunar cycle and the female reproductive cycle.

Turtles live a long time and are associated with longevity. But they also have good hearing and can sense vibrations through their skin and shell. They have some color vision and they can see extremely well underwater. They live in the water, but travel to land to lay and bury their eggs. The young must struggle to break free from the land to return to their home in the water. This ability to live at the intersection of two worlds (land and sea), allow turtle to be the gate-keeper between this world and the world of spirits; it also has the gift of clairvoyance. What did Turtle ask you? Is your vision and hearing as good as it should be, or are you letting things escape your attention? Is your pace of life too fast or too slow, and are you paying attention? Is it time to go into your shell and get in touch with your creativity, or access your inner knowing? Turtle can help you with the answers... keeping life moving and finding heaven on earth.



*Wolf* ..... Attributes: *Guardian, Teacher, Loyalty, and Spirit*

Wolf has been a major figure in human myth and folklore throughout the ages. It captures our attention, sparks our fears, and makes our imagination run wild. Wolf is both loved and hated, and has almost been hunted to extinction in some areas. But humans have many misconceptions about the wolf. It is a loyal family member, forms strong bonds, and works with the pack for the survival of the family—it is not the wanton killer some make it out to be. Wolf preys on the weak and injured, thereby keeping the herd strong and healthy. Rarely will they attack a healthy adult animal. Wolves have an extremely keen sense of smell and very acute hearing—it can discriminate between thousands of sounds and smells, causing some to believe it has psychic powers. They are extremely intelligent and communicate with body postures, sounds, facial expressions, and eye contact. The pack raises the young of the alpha pair and are playful and caring, indulging their antics. They also interact with other species, most notably, the Raven.

If Wolf came into your life today it is time to create new rituals, learn to trust your insights, and take new journeys. Have you created sacred space in your life? Do you long to experience the freedom of the wild, to let Nature be your teacher? Do you trust your own judgment and insights and act accordingly? Are you loyal and supportive of your community? Let Wolf be your guardian and guide.



Red Moose

These are just a few of the animals we may see while out on a quest and it is beneficial to know what they represent in Indigenous Cultures. Along with the animals, the trees, plants, and stones also have *sacred medicine*. If you do not know the sacred medicine of each item you find in Nature, ask what the message is for you. Ask...

*“What is your message and what can I learn from your knowledge?”*

Be still. Often the message and knowledge arrives in the form of a metaphor. Communicate your heartfelt desire to understand what they have to say and be sure and thank them for all their gifts to you.

John Muir said about the wonderments of nature:

*“If you love it enough, they will speak to you.”*



When we are in sacred space the universe will support us in very unusual ways. We can ask a question and the Raven may show up to give us the answer. But then again, a soft warm breeze may come and kiss our face with such gentleness and love, we may think we are dreaming. Perhaps a small hummingbird or squirrel will show up to bring the message from Creator to us. We don't know how it will happen, but it will and it does. We just have to let go of our preconceived structure of knowing and allow Creator to perform the magic of using all that has been created to give us the answers to our questions and heal us in depth. Keep asking for the message to be revealed in a gentle, easy, but thorough way in which you can hear the pure clear sound, see with clear sharp vision, and be touched with a gentle love from Creator.



Thunderbird

## Weather

The weather can give huge messages during a Vision Quest. The day can start out calm, warm, and dry but turn into wind, rain, snow, or hail. This too can be a true gift of purification. The wind often begins to blow while one is performing the Death Lodge Ceremony. It will loosen up and take away any issues that are stuck. It can transmute issues into new form with a giant sweeping movement.



Weather Report

Rain purifies, cleanses, and nourishes the earth. Often, it will rain before and after the quest—another way Creator gives our dreams, hope, and prayers the nourishment they need to be manifested. This allows all the seeds of our prayers to germinate.

Clouds can also communicate with the formation of figures. They often create pictures in the sky—such as animals, feathers, and faces for us to see, reflecting images of issues that need to be addressed. Sometimes, they show us images to make us laugh when we are taking things too seriously. On one quest they showed us a Snoopy upside down in the sky. For three of the questers who saw it, it brought them thoughts of home, security, and happiness. The giant feather clouds brought them a sense of calm.

On one Vision Quest, the day started out in the 80's and moved to the low 50's at night—perfect weather. On the second day of the quest, wind, rain, and lightning blew in from the south. It rained over four inches that day without any clearing in sight. Everyone scurried to gather their markers for the four directions and get into their tents. The wind was blowing between 30-40 miles per hour. One would think this was a huge distraction, but in fact it was the ultimate gift from Creator. Each had to stay in the tent and had no distractions from the beautiful view of the red rock cliffs in the distance. As one quester said, “This is when God spoke to me and I could hear Him!” She was from Mexico City and was in fear that she would not hear her God. She was also concerned that she would not understand as she spoke very little English and only Spanish. I told her that her God spoke Spanish and she did hear her God in Spanish! This changed her life and now she can not only speak to her God, but she can hear the voice of her God.

## Stars



Star Kachina

The stars can also help us while out on our quest. The position of the star of Orion's large knife, the Paladins, the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, the Bear, and many more can be very helpful. Native Americans have known for years that the Star People have expert knowledge on the future and have gone to the stars for answers.

While on a quest that ended on 9/9/01, we all saw a huge band of greenish yellow streak across the sky. It was extremely wide and illuminated the sky for miles. It was very slow moving and none of us had ever seen any thing like this before. We asked what the message was from it and it told us not to worry that everything would be fine. Although we did not know of the coming events, we were aware that something huge was going to happen. Two days later, on 9/11/01, the Twin Towers and other horrific events of that day occurred, leaving the entire world stunned.

## Home Coming

by Carol Hannagan

Home at Last,  
Home at Last,  
Oh my little one  
So precious and so sweet.  
You've been to the depths  
You've been to the darkness  
You've been to the those closets where the shadows hide  
Where the secrets of your soul hide  
You've been to the mountain tops ...  
The vistas; where the sunrises and warms your soul  
And  
Grandfather Moon comes to show you the shadows  
To dance embracing you like a slow waltz  
You've come to lay your head on your Mother's breast  
Where she cuddled you and her heartbeat was thunderously  
loud  
so much so, it was hard to hear your self  
Oh yes –  
You come to self where the fear, the anger, the resentment,  
The resistance, the loneliness, the chatter, the rage, the  
sadness, the love and the peacefulness were all revealed to  
YOU!  
Surprised?  
But Why?  
You came to find your God,  
Where I told you all through the birds, the twigs, the stones,  
The raven, the flowers, the earth, the clouds, the trees, and  
Yes the gentle breeze of sweetness of who You really ARE ---  
That of ME – GOD!! Me!  
WELCOME HOME MY LITTLE ONE!





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# Appendix A - Suggested Reading

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## Books by Title

- Animal Speak* by Ted Andrews  
*Animal Wise* by Dan Millman  
*Awakening In Time* by Jacquelyn Small  
*(The) Book of the Vision Quest* by Steven Foster and Meredith Little  
*Call of the Great Spirit: The Shamanic Life and Teaching of Medicine Grizzly Bear*  
by Robert Lake-Thom  
*(The) Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield  
*Carnival of the Spirit* by Luisah Teish  
*Conversations With God Book 1,2,3* by Neil Donald Walsh  
*Dancing the Dream* by Jamie Sams  
*Dancing With The Wheel* by Sun Bear and Wabun Wind  
*Earth Prayers from Around the World* edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon  
*(The) Enneagram* and *(The) Enneagram in Love and Work Relationships*  
by Helen Palmer  
*Faith In the Valley* by Inyala Vanzant  
*Gift of the Red Bird* by Paula D'Arcy  
*Give Voice To Bear* by David Rochwell  
*Heart of the Soul: Emotional Awareness* by Gary Zukav  
*Heart Math* by Doc Lew Childre  
*(The) Hero Within* by Carol S. Pearson  
*Initiation* by Elisabeth Haich  
*Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn  
*(The) Journey of Socrates* by Dan Millman  
*(The) Last Ghost Dance* by Brooke Medicine Eagle  
*(The) Life You Were Born To Live* by Dan Millman  
*Lightning Bolts* by Hyemeyohsts Storm  
*Medicine Cards–The Discovery of Power Through the Ways of Animals*  
by Jamie Sams & David Carson



*Medicine for the Earth: How to Transform Personal and Environmental Toxins*  
by Sandra Ingerman

*(The) Mind of the Soul: Responsible Choice* by Gary Zukav

*Mutant Message From Down Under* by Marlo Morgan

*Nature Speaks* by Ted Andrews

*One Day My Soul Just Opened Up* by Inyala Vanzant

*Open Your Mind to Receive* by Catherine Ponder

*Peace is Every Step* by Thich Nhat Hanh

*Practicing the Presence* by Joel S. Goldsmith

*Quest – A Guide for Creating A Vision Quest* by Denise Linn

*Sacred Space* by Denise Linn

*Self Matters* by Dr. Phillip McGraw

*Seat of the Soul* by Gary Zukav

*Seven Arrows* by Hyemeyohsts Storm

*Shapeshifting: Shamanic Techniques for Global and Personal Transformation*  
by John Perkins

*Shared Spirits - Wildlife and Native Americans* by Dennis L. Olson

*Soul Coaching* by Denise Linn

*Soul Retrieval - Mending the Fragmented Self* by Sandra Ingerman

*Soul Story* by Gary Zukav

*Spirit of the Earth* by Bobby Lake-Thom

*Tales of A Female Nomad* by Rita Golden Gelman

*(The) 13 Original Clan Mothers* by Jamie Sams

*(The) Tenth Insight* by James Redfield

*(The) Way of the Peaceful Warrior* by Dan Millman

*(The) World Is As You Dream It: Shamanic Teachings from the Amazon and Andes*  
by John Perkins

*When Buffalo Woman Comes Singing* by Brooke Medicine Eagle



## The Invitation

By Orrin Mountain Dreamer - Native American Elder



*It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.*

*I want to know what you ache for and if you dare to dream of meeting  
your heart's longing.*

*It doesn't interest me how old you are, I want to know if you will risk looking  
like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.*

*It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon, I want to know  
if you have touched the center of your sorrow, if you have been opened by life's  
betrayals, or if you have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain!*

*I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine and your own, without moving  
to hide it or fade it or fix it.*

*I want to know if you can be with JOY, mine or your own, if you can dance with  
wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes  
without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, or to remember  
the limitations of being human.*

*It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true, I want to know  
if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself, if you can bear the  
accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.*

*I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore trustworthy.*

*I want to know if you can see the beauty even when it is not pretty  
every day and if you can source your life from its presence.*

*I want to know if you can live with failure, yours or mine, and still stand  
on the edge of a lake and shout to the silver moon, "YES!"*

*It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have,  
I want to know if you can get up after a night of grief and despair, weary  
and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for the children.*

*It doesn't interest me who you are or how you came to be here, I want to know  
if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.*

*It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied, I want  
to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.*

*I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like  
the company you keep in the empty moments.*





## Risking

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.  
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.  
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.  
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.  
To place your ideas and your dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss.  
To love is to risk not being loved in return.  
To live is to risk dying.  
To hope is to risk failure.  
But risks must be taken.  
Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.  
If you risk nothing and do nothing, you dull your spirit.  
You may avoid suffering and sorrow,  
But you cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, and live.  
Chained by your attitude, you are a slave.  
You have forfeited your freedom.  
Only if you risk are you free.

— Anonymous



# Appendix B – Serene Wilderness Tours

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## The Wilderness Quest: Preparation for Severance

Welcome to the Wilderness Quest. The quest experience is a “Rite of Passage” based on ancient ways of social and psychological development. The ritual is meant to mark a *time-of-change*, a *passage* into a new level of one’s life. The old life is exchanged for a new one. It is up to the participant to identify the changes that will be confirmed in the rite. We can help refine this awareness, but it is your passage. Think about what *it means to you*—this is an important part of the preparation work. To give you guidance in this matter we make the following suggestions for activities you can do now.



Butted Out

1. Send us a letter describing your reasons for wanted to go on a quest.
  - What are the important transitions in you life at this time?
  - What unfinished business do you carry from the past?
  - What pain or hurts do you have that you would like healed?
  - What do you hope to leave behind and what do you hope to come home with to share with all your relations?
  - What fears or concerns do you have about going on a quest?

We will be happy to correspond with you, reflecting your thoughts and feelings and encouraging you to take the work to a deeper level.

2. Start a journal for yourself. Explore your ideas and feelings. Journal writing is one of the most useful self-reflection exercises available. Give yourself time to express your innermost heart. This journal can go with you on the quest itself and will provide a permanent record of your experience.

3. Take a solo *Purpose Walk*. This is a quest in itself, a day of alone-time in Nature (though it can be done in the city if necessary).
  - Take no food from sunrise to sunset but bring plenty of water.
  - Bring your journal, extra clothing and emergency kit (see equipment list).
  - Walk in an intuitive fashion – try to be open to follow your interests and attractions.
  - Ask Great Spirit to be with you at the start of your solo walk.
  - Be aware of the Spirit in all things (birds, animals, grasses, trees, wind, clouds, stones, rivers, lake and the earth itself).
  - Be aware of the synchronicity of all the spirit that comes to you.
  - Listen to your inner wisdom and look for a sign or symbol offered you on your walk. You will know it when you see it. Whatever it is— it may not be a thing, it might be a sighting or an experience—bring it back in your mind and heart as a symbol of who you are and what you want from your Wilderness Quest (*it is not necessary to collect anything unless you wish to and only if can be done in an ecologically ethical way*).
  - Remember to walk in a safe and balanced way—always use your common sense.
  - Be sure to consciously have a *beginning* and an *ending* to your walk. You may do this in any way that feels right to you.
  - Record the story of your *Purpose Walk* in your journal. How does it reflect your life?
  - Thank all Great Spirits for a safe and rewarding journey.
  
4. Get plenty of exercise. The Wilderness Quest is not a precarious ordeal, but you will get more out of it if you are in reasonably good shape.
  - Try to spend time outdoors so you may attune more deeply to nature. Walking is a good way to do this.
  - If you have never fasted before, try it out now. Consult your doctor if you have any concerns about fasting or about your health in general.
  - Be conscious of the food you eat and enjoy more fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet.
  - Get acquainted with drinking lots of water—water will be your best friend on the fast.
  - If fasting isn't right for you, we'll discuss the alternatives.



5. Become familiar with your camping equipment. If you are new to camping, practice setting up your tent, rain fly, sleeping bag, and packing your gear. If you are familiar with camping, recheck your equipment. What is its current condition? Make sure all you have all the pieces and that everything is repaired and in good shape. Your equipment is the most sacred thing you will take with you on the quest! It will allow you to live directly on the earth in a safe and harmonious way.

- Being prepared with your equipment is an essential part of living mindfully.
- Don't cut corners—be deliberate and conscious—make sure you have everything!
- This kind of preparation will provide you with freedom during the threshold phase of the passage (the time of solo).

6. You will be responsible for providing your own medical insurance coverage for Wilderness Quest. Temporary policies are reasonably inexpensive. Part of the sacred pact you will be making with the earth on this Rite of Passage includes *taking responsibility for yourself*. We will be nearby to assist you in any way we can, but we *cannot be responsible for your actions when you are on solo*.

7. Think deeply about your community.

- Who are your people?
- What do you want to bring back for them?
- What gives you total joy?
- What special gifts do you and only you possess?
- When did you stop singing, dancing, playing, or laughing?
- What's stopping you from living your passion if you know it?



The quest can help you to focus your life and your work. Your vision will be revealed, not in spectacular phenomena during the wilderness threshold, but in the work you do in your community when you return. It is not too early to start thinking about how you might apply the profound experiences of the quest.

8. The Wilderness Quest experience will take place over a period of approximately *eight to ten* days depending on location.

- The first three days will be setting up base camp, and sharing our hopes and dreams for the quest.
- We will cover safety, developing sacred ceremony, symbolism and mythology of Rites of Passage, Medicine Wheel Ceremony, Personal Purification Ceremony, as well as how to Listen to the Spirit in All Things.
- We will go over physically living on the sacred skin of Mother Earth in a loving, supportive way with honor and respect for All.

# Wilderness Quest Equipment List

Assemble your equipment before the trip. Become familiar with any new and old items – make sure everything works!

## Equipment Check List:

- Backpack
- Sleeping bag (all season or 0 degree rating)
- Sleeping pad (foam or rubber, suitable for packing)
- Tent (rainproof) or with Nylon rain tarp (9X12)
- PLUS nylon ground cloth for tent AND tent pegs
- 50 feet of small diameter rope
- Small folding pocket knife
- Matches (in waterproof container) also, waterproof and windproof matches



## Clothing Check List:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts              | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat and/or Bandanna                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long pants          | <input type="checkbox"/> Wool cap                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light shirt         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mittens/warm gloves                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm sweater (wool) | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy wool socks (4prs.)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear           | <input type="checkbox"/> Boots                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long underwear      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tivas or enclosed sandals             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jacket              | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain coat and pants                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small day pack      | <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothes (left at base-camp) |

## Supplies Check List:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal toiletry items                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Two rolls of toilet paper (non-colored) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biodegradable shampoo and soap                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Wet Wipes (small package)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen  | <input type="checkbox"/> Large plastic garbage sack              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip Balm   | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight w/NEW batteries              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle (1 Quart)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gatorade powder  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cup, bowl, and utensils                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journal and pencils  | <input type="checkbox"/> Towel                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cornmeal or tobacco (offerings)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Camp chair (backpack type)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 water containers holding a total of 2 1/2 Gallons of water |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLUS an additional 4 gallons of water                        |  |

# Emergency Kit

The following items (some already mentioned) must be carried on your person at all times while in the field. Your day pack (whether shoulder pack or waist pack) should be ample size to carry the Emergency Kit.

## Emergency Kit Check List:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches (in waterproof container)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard candies               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candle (for fire starting)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Small folding Pocket Knife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least one quart of water  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Band-Aids and antiseptic   | <input type="checkbox"/> Jacket                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency First Aid Procedure Checklist<br>(will be provided at base-camp) |   |

## Do NOT Bring: (This is your time FREE of distractions)

- |                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Cell Phone       | * Pets                        |
| * Pager            | * Books, magazines, newspaper |
| * Lap top computer |                               |

It is important to keep in mind that during a fast most people tend to get colder than while eating. You have no calorie intake! During exposure in the wilderness it is impossible to predict with certainty what the weather will be. Weather changes rapidly in this area! It is well worth it to prepare for cold, wet weather. A prepared quester can enjoy and study the unfolding dramas of the environment without frantic struggle for survival.

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# Fasting Schedule

**FASTING:** Fasting cleanses the body and allows us to open to our internal rhythms and feelings without the distraction of food or its ability to make us feel “full.” We suggest that you begin preparing for your fast on the Sacred Mountain by fasting one day a week at least a month before the field phase of the Vision Quest. Please see the Handbook for more detailed information regarding fasting.

Date	Activity	Day	Fasting Schedule
_____	Severance . . . . .	1 . . . . .	Avoid caffeine, sugar, alcohol, drugs
_____	Severance . . . . .	2 . . . . .	Avoid white flour, processed and fried foods
_____	Severance . . . . .	3 . . . . .	Avoid red meat
_____	Severance . . . . .	4 . . . . .	Avoid fish and poultry
_____	Leave for Base camp . . . . .	5 . . . . .	Avoid dairy
_____	Base camp . . . . .	6 . . . . .	Avoid nuts and seeds
_____	Base camp . . . . .	7 . . . . .	Avoid grains
_____	Solo Time . . . . .	8 . . . . .	Drink 1 gallon of water daily
_____	Solo Time . . . . .	9 . . . . .	Drink 1 gallon of water daily
_____	Solo Time . . . . .	10 . . . . .	Drink 1 gallon of water daily
_____	Solo Time . . . . .	11 . . . . .	Drink 1 gallon of water daily
_____	Incorporation . . .	12 . . . . .	Add vegetables and fruits
_____	Incorporation . . .	13 . . . . .	Add grains
_____	Drive Home . . . .	14 . . . . .	Add nuts and grains
_____	Home . . . . .	15 . . . . .	Add dairy
_____	Home . . . . .	16 . . . . .	Add fish and poultry
_____	Home . . . . .	17 . . . . .	Add red meat

