



"If you speak to a person who is standing in a powerless position and ask her to take her power, she becomes frightened because you are implying change. She must take a step into the mystery of the unknown to become powerful." Agnes Whistling Elk

My trusted teacher and friend Agnes Whistling Elk often says that we are frightened of the unknown because it is so unfamiliar to us. Why is it that we have grown so afraid of the unfamiliar, especially when much of what is "familiar" is exactly what is blocking us in life? What has happened to the great human spirit of discovery and invention that has brought so much good into our world? This is not a question that anyone can answer for you. It is something you must answer within yourself. Then, when you find yourself standing in a powerless position, you will know what you must change in order to become powerful in your life.

It is a fundamental precept of shamanism that power is born from the unknown. If you could sit in front of Stonehenge or the great pyramids of Egypt, you would understand that you are in the presence of great power, power that comes from an unknown source yet is as undeniable as it is mysterious. You don't have to travel to Stonehenge or Egypt to find the mysterious world of the power that already resides within you. All you have to do is become willing to venture into the unknown wilderness of your very own self, the place within where your own personal truth resides, the place where you are one with the Great Spirit and all of life.

I know this because it is something I have learned from my own experiences with my teachers, experiences that were often as terrifying as they were difficult, at least for me. When I first found Agnes Whistling Elk and Ruby Plenty Chiefs – and through them the other women of the Sisterhood of the Shields – I was filled with fear. In the beginning, I so desperately wanted change, but it was the thing I feared the most. I was terrified of the unknown. As my training progressed, it became imperative that I lose this fear, that I learn how to grow beyond it and stop using it as my crutch and excuse for staying stuck in a life I

did not want. My teachers showed me that if I would become willing to let go of my fear of the unknown, I could move into the sacred mystery, where the miracle of existence emerges from the darkness and transforms us into the higher spirituality that we so want to attain.

One of these frightening experiences was in the jungles of the Yucatán with Zoila, a *chamin curendera* of Mayan descent and member of the Sisterhood of the Shields. Much to my dismay, Zoila challenged me to overcome my fear or give up any possibility of learning from her or even discovering what I was really capable of doing in my life:

Zoila and I were walking through the jungle at a quick pace and I had trouble keeping up with her. The Yucatán was so flat and the foliage so dense that I easily lost perspective on elevations and didn't realize that we had been climbing. I could hear the far-off sound of rushing water, but it meant nothing to me.

Suddenly Zoila stopped and motioned to a ledge in front of us. We approached it, and when she pointed downward with her staff, I gasped. The jungle fell away into an enormous crater so deep that I couldn't see the bottom, which was obscured in mist, and we were standing on the rim. To my right was a jagged trail down the side of the canyon to a river below, a tiny ledge carved into the rock. I followed it with my eyes as it curved out of sight, spiraling around and around inside the caldera, down to the center. I laughed, but my stomach was doing flip-flops.

"Zoila, there's no way that I can go down that trail," I wailed. "I'm not good at heights. I'm not sure that I could ever make it."

"Let's get started," Zoila said and she left me standing there. Mortified, I stayed put. She stopped to look at me.

"Agnes said that you had courage. Perhaps you don't. Now you'll never see what's at the bottom." She turned and began her descent down the narrow trail.

I didn't have much choice. Zoila was about to disappear out of sight. I had come here to learn something from her, and like it or not, I had to trust her. I had to change. I had to shape-shift out of my fear or lose everything that I was working so hard to attain. Over my mind's strongest ravings, I put one sandaled foot in front of the other, pressing against the ledge, and started down. I knew I had to get control of my thoughts, or even better, not think at all. The trail became even narrower, barely the breadth of my foot. I didn't dare stop and forced my will to pull my body ahead. Zoila was still in view, walking slowly and carefully, like a mountain goat. She moved more quickly when the trail permitted.

Because of my fear of heights, my mind didn't want my body to continue. But some deep longing made me willing to follow Zoila. It was if all my concepts of self had exploded in my head, leaving me with only my will power to help me survive. My mind and its fear were useless on this precarious pathway. I was battling with my conception of who I was and what I could do. Knowing I couldn't do it, I did it anyway. This process produced a numbness of thought, so my fear did not paralyze me.

Then an amazing thing happened. The further we traversed down the caldera, the more sure of myself I became, letting go of my first level of terror. As we went further, other, deeper levels of terror came up and were released, until an ecstatic feeling flooded through my being. (From *Jaguar Woman*)

When you are ready to bring much-needed change into your life, you discover that it is all a matter of perspective. You can either choose to see change as something to fear or you can see it as something to embrace, a gateway to discovering the seeds of success, harmony and your own potential in life that are already within you.

So how do you take this step into the unknown? How do you really change? Are you frightened of change, or do you embrace it?

If you want to change, you must look at your fear of change for what it really is: Your own self-imposed limits that come from unhealthy life conditioning and the layers of fear that your mind tells you to believe as fact. I certainly had those self-imposed limits at the top of the canyon. If the trail were truly not traversable, Zoila wouldn't have started down it in the first place. When she challenged me and pushed me and I managed to climb down to the center of the caldera, I changed how I saw myself and what I could really do. I changed from someone who wanted power to a woman who was ready to take my own power. As Agnes says, if you want to have power in your life, you must make a place for power to live within you. You do that by letting go of your fear of power, letting go of your fear of the unknown, letting go of your fear of change.

Power is something that you build through having faith in yourself. When you back away from your power, as I did so often when I began working with the Sisterhood, what you are really doing is expressing a total loss of faith in your own capacity. But how will you ever know what you are truly capable of doing until you take the risk and try? Take the risk of seeing yourself as the co-creator of your own life, along with Great Spirit; you have the capacity to do that!

As you move toward your own capacity, you move toward embracing change. That is when you step into the mystery of the unknown, simply by doing something you didn't think you could do. Take the time now to look at all you have done in your life and be proud of yourself and what you have accomplished. Look at all of the changes you have already embraced and recognize that change is only frightening when you stand on the edge and do nothing. If you want to move forward, use the strength you have gained and what you have learned about yourself from what you have already accomplished and let them energize you for the changes you are about to make as you continue this amazing journey called life. Then you can replace your fear of change with your passion for what you want to accomplish and move forward with beauty and strength!

"Ecstasy is a buoyant state of joy. One of the finest ways to maintain a state of joyousness is to examine the dark side of your being, that instinctual nature that most human beings repress in civilized life. Within our instinctual nature are the seeds of ecstasy. We tend to live in our minds, in our emotions, occasionally in spirit, and almost never in our instinctual depths. We are born as wild as mountain lions but live most of our lives like sheep, forgetting and denying whole parts of ourselves. Sit on the earth with your back against a tree, and get in touch with your

roots, which move deep into middle earth; this will restore your joyousness and balance. Each day, listen to your body-mind and your heart. What are they telling you about a given situation? Ecstasy is like a windhorse waiting to be ridden – the last wild ride before your passage into enlightenment. Take courage and live your passion in ecstasy." ("Ecstasy" card, *The Power Deck*)

"Great Spirit whose voice we hear in the winds and the trees, Mother Earth, whose breath gives us life, help us to walk in beauty and strength, and to learn the lessons that are hidden in the stones and the trees and the waters of the sea. Give us the strength to fight our greatest enemy – ignorance. Great Spirit, hear the sounds of our grateful hearts, and help us to find the wisdom and joy and power that is locked within each of our souls. We are the reflections of you, Great Spirit. Join us on our path as we join you, for the days of our lives. HO!"

In Love and Spirit,

Lynn

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Prepare to enter the third hoop of power by understanding and making peace with that which you fear the most. [Online Courses](#)

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On the road with Lynn Andrews:

Sunday, 11/16, 12:30 p.m. – Holistic Living Expo, Fresno CA. To register for Lynn's lecture, contact fallingfeathercreations@yahoo.com.

On the air with Lynn Andrews:

Monday, 11/3, 4-5 p.m. Pacific Time/USA: Lynn will be the guest on the Suzane Northrup show. Join Suzane Northrup live, call-in 1-877-230-3062. Listen on www.contacttalkradio.com/listen.htm. All shows are live, archived and ipod downloadable. (Suzanne Northrup, www.theseance.com)

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