



Volume 4 Issue 4

April 2010

*The world is bereft of feminine consciousness. To bring Mother Earth back into balance, we must bring back our awareness of her. Language is a barrier between us, but woman has always communed with woman in an unspoken language. Her roots are entwined with the essence of Mother Earth, for she too is feminine. Woman is the Keeper of the Planet and must not let her energy be rerooted by the male systems within woman or man. We are all in need of world harmony. Mother Earth has been misunderstood, but she is the universe. She is the womb for all that lives. Feminine consciousness is the energy that embodies the wisdom you need at this moment. ("Feminine" card, *The Power Deck*)*

"My mind followed a labyrinth of symbols, images and primeval ideas, each somehow more fascinating than the last, yet behind each a terrible, aching loneliness. How few people ever surrender to a feeling of love, know it, breathe it. And now out of that dark, karmic wheel, a bridge was being formed. I knew from that moment forward I would always know my kinship with these women. They were my sisterhood. I had found my circle."
(Lynn Andrews, Spirit Woman)

Dear Friends,

Shortly before I was initiated into the Sisterhood of the Shields, while Agnes Whistling Elk and I were en route to the ceremony, I heard celestial music as the fog enveloped the canoe that we were paddling to a special, sacred place in the far north of Canada. As we quietly rowed, I could hear the music. I felt the air shift and tumble around me softly; it was like I was an infant, swaddled and held in loving arms. As we reached our destination, I could just make out the shape of the shields, each one unique. The women in the Sisterhood are all unique, powerful women. Some of them are married and have families. A few, like Zoila, a Mayan healer from the Yucatán, have husbands who also walk the path of the healer. We are all so very different, and yet we can often communicate without words.

In our world today, we are so busy that we forget the importance of community. Even if we have good friends, we often we feel that something is missing. Perhaps what is missing are women and men of like mind. I have been blessed to be in the circle of the Sisterhood of the Shields, and to teach and write and be able to move out into the world while keeping one foot rooted in the world of spirit. This is incredibly difficult, but, if I can do it, so can you. It is a balancing act that requires balancing the powerful feminine energy of receptivity with the masculine energy of moving out in the world to make things happen.

As you move about your Spring tasks, spring cleaning, clearing out, walking among new flowers, notice the natural world around you. Really see the groups of flowers, groups of trees, of birds and animals. Like ourselves they are all individuals, and yet they grow together in communities. I have often found that a circle of kindred spirits is like a grove of trees, standing separate, yet each rooted into the same magnificent earth.

I have been talking to you for some time now about the shift in consciousness we are all going through. Although there may be times when you feel alone, you are not alone and you are not experiencing this shift alone. We are all going through it, along with the plants and animals, all the children of the First Mother.

Connection is so important now, not just because of crisis, but in every way. During those times when you most feel separate and different, please know that you are never alone, and that spirit is there alongside you and within you and surrounding you in every way. It is time to move pas the isolation that we feel in our physical lives. What would it feel like if you were part of a circle, a council of kindred spirits? Sit with that feeling, just for a moment. Now, close your eyes...

You are walking along a trail in the north of Canada. It is spring, and the air is warm and fragrant with lush grass and wildflowers. Up ahead, you see Agnes Whistling Elk. Her braids are long and salt and pepper gray. Her beaded shield twinkles in the sunlight, as it rests against her light blue denim shirt. She smiles and offers you her arm. She picks up her shield and you walk arm in arm with her into the forest.

After a few minutes, you come to a grove of ancient trees, growing in a perfect circle. Ruby is standing in the East, Twin Dreamers in the West, and Face in the Water is standing in the North. Agnes walks you around the circle. You both enter the circle in the South. Agnes helps you lie down on a red medicine blanket. Your head rests in her lap.

Twin Dreamers and Face in the Water beat their drums as Ruby smudges you with her large Eagle feather fan. Agnes is holding her fingers next to your temples, just slightly in front of your ears. You hear the drum beat as you drift away.

You open your eyes, and you find yourself walking in a large open field. There are mountains all around you. Many women and men from different parts of the world are gathering. There is an air of joyousness. You may recognize some of these people or simply feel a sense of familiarity with them.

You walk to a place in the field. Everyone stops and sings together. You see women from many different parts of the world. Some are wearing Bhurkas, others are in tribal dress, and still other men and women are in suits, or jeans and t-shirts.

You hear Agnes' voice asking you to remember the differences and the similarities you observe and feel with these people.

Suddenly, the Sisterhood is standing in a large circle behind you and the others. You are all part of the central circle, surrounded by the members of the Sisterhood. They are holding energy, giving you energy and love, and they are playing their drums and rattles.

You and the others in the center circle, as one, bend down and pick up a large shield. You notice all kinds of symbols on the shield. And you recognize that this particular shield belongs to all of you, in common and with great love.

Feel the kindness, the joy, and the humor from all present in the circle. You notice that the shield has fibers that are connected to everyone, and that your fibers are now connected to them and to the Sisterhood of the Shields. You feel like a tree, with your roots entwined in Mother Earth, touching the roots of the trees next to you in silent communication.

The shield blows a brilliant white and gold, and begins to spin in the center of the circle. As it reaches an enormous speed, you hear bells, high pitched and lovely on the breeze. You disappear, and you are one with the shield and with the surrounding beings of light.

After a moment, you open your eyes and you are back in the ancient grove of trees with Agnes, Ruby, Twin Dreamers and Face in the Water. Agnes brushes the hair off of your forehead and helps you to sit up. Face in the Water hands you a tin cup with your favorite drink; Ruby opens up a box filled with your favorite dessert; and Twin Dreamers looks on with a twinkle in her eye. You sit with Agnes and the Ladies until the sun is nearly set. You are happy, relaxed, and fed in your deepest part of belonging.

I would like to invite each and every one of you to experience being in a group of kindred spirits. For many years, I have been fortunate to teach a gathering each Spring, our annual Joshua Tree event. Out of these gatherings many years ago came the International Councils of the Clan of the Whistling Elk, groups of kindred souls in towns, villages and cities all across the globe who meet together throughout the year, usually monthly, to share their understanding and experience of the teachings of the Sisterhood of the Shields. Agnes gave her name to these Councils.

During Council meetings, you have the opportunity to work with the teachings and create tasks that will take you more deeply into your own process of connection with Great Spirit and with one another, and many of the people who have studied with me are active in the

Councils. When I was initiated into the Sisterhood of the Shields, Agnes told me that their power would be my power, and that mine would mesh with theirs. The Councils are a way for all of you to explore this same kind of experience. We all work together, even though we are very different and come from various cultures around the world. Our work together makes our light shine even brighter. I treasure my time with my Sisters of Spirit, and I want to assist all of you in finding that same kinship.

Great Spirit, Mother Earth, powers of the four directions, our guardians and allies, the Ancestors, power animals and all the beings of light that love us,

We are all a circle. Our dreams and prayers are at their core the same dreams and prayers. Our circle will lead out into the world, and spread harmony over all the earth. To remind us of this circle, we envision one knot. This knot will bind us together in higher circles, each of us responsible for one other person's prayer, responsible for each other's prayers, and the prayer that our circle represents. We offer our knots up to the Great Spirit. We are now separate, and we are now joined. May our prayers be as one. May our unique spirits thrive independently and together. HO!

**In love and spirit,
Lynn**

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