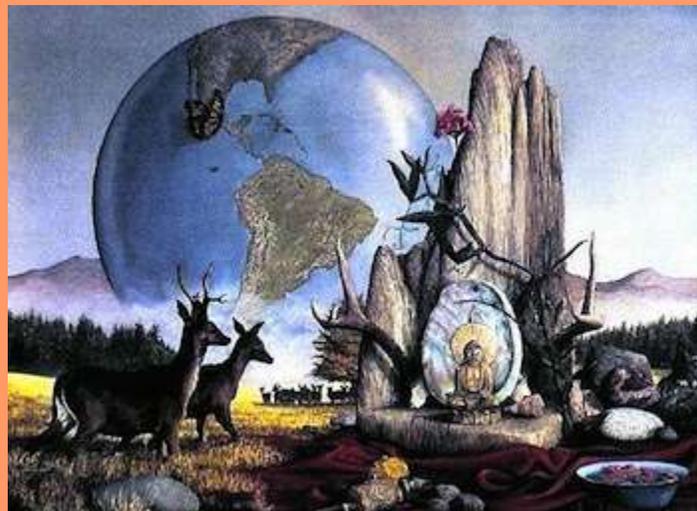




Volume 5, Issue 2

February 2011



“Virtue is one of the passive qualities of power. When you pull back the bow, preparing to set the arrow and define your target, you use the strength, the will, and the focus that you have collected within that part of yourself called *virtue*. Virtue is where you find inner truth. It is a place of illumination, and as that radiance grows within you, it becomes integrity. Without virtue, there is no inner balance. Virtue comes from the unknown, quiet things that you do for the world and other people. With each act, your spirit shield becomes stronger and more beautiful with the symbols of your inner life. Like the deer, they are quiet symbols. Virtue marks your path on the other side. Like the one who walks last, the virtuous person is in a position of power. Power often comes quietly. Walk in beauty and virtue.”
 (“Virtue” card, [The Power Deck, Cards of Wisdom](#))

Dear Friends,

In the beginning there is love, the pure, unconditional love of the Great Spirit and all the beings of light. Then we come into this earth walk and lose our way; we become distracted by the frailties of physical existence and forget all about the over-arching embrace of Divine love and the great mysteries of life. Sometimes we have to come back for many lifetimes of forgetting and remembering before we finally find our way back home to divine love.

All over our beautiful Mother Earth, cultures have different ways of celebrating love, from romantic love to the love and joy of celebration with family, friends and community, to our love for the Divine and the blessings of life. February is the month for celebrating romantic love here in the United States, so I thought it might be fun to talk for a minute about the origins of that celebration and how it is celebrated in other places in our world.

Sometime before 2500 B.C., the Ancient Egyptians built a Temple to honor Isis, the goddess of love, on the rocky island of Philae in the middle of the Nile River. In 1909, the island of Philae and Isis's Temple were flooded by the building of the Aswan Dam. In the 1970's, over a nine-year period of time, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization came together with a community of nations to dismantle and move the Temple of Philae, meticulously, stone-by-numbered-stone, from its ancient home on Philae and reconstruct it on the much higher Egilica Island, where it now stands. What an alchemist you are, Goddess Isis, Mother of Love, that even in our jaded and embattled modern world, whole nations can be inspired to rise above their self-imposed ideologies of separation and domination to come together and gift this magnificent Temple back to you and to all the people of this world.

The Egyptians built temples for many of their other gods and goddesses, as well, among them Horus, the falcon-headed sky god who is the son of Isis and Osiris, and his wife Hathor, celestial goddess of love, music and joy. Each summer for centuries, they would carry the bust of Hathor, from her Temple at Dendara, down the river to be with her husband, Horus, in the great hall at his Temple of Edfu, where they would celebrate the Feast of the Beautiful Meeting.

Many of our celebrations of love began as fertility festivals. As happened all over the world, Ancient Rome had wonderful festivals celebrating fertility and the gods and goddesses thereof, especially during planting season. Over the millenniums, the names of the Roman gods changed so much that finally, during the Augustun period, the god Lupercus was chosen to be associated

with the Roman festival of fertility. The festival came to be known as the *Lupercalia*, held each year on February 15th.

When Rome converted to Christianity in the 4th century A.D., the people continued their ancient festivals and celebrations so the church set aside February 15th as a day to honor the Virgin Mary. The Roman people, however, celebrated the day as a festival of match-making for young couples, and it is certainly a 'kissing cousin' to our celebration of Valentine's Day on February 14th in honor and celebration of love and St. Valentine!

Who St. Valentine really was remains shrouded in mystery, because the Catholic Church has three saints named Valentine. The most popularly accepted association is with a 3rd century Roman priest named Valentine. Claudius, who was emperor at that time, decided that single men made better soldiers than married men, so he banned the marriage of all young men. It is told that Valentine, the priest, believed that this was very unjust. In defiance of Emperor Claudius, he continued to perform marriages of young men and women until he was imprisoned and ultimately martyred. Legend says that while he was in prison, Valentine fell in love with a young woman and actually signed one of his notes to her, "From your Valentine," which, of course, is still a popular Valentine's day greeting today.

Historians like to say that our modern concept of romantic love actually originated in medieval England during Chaucer's era and the movement of 'courtly love,' as befitting Chaucer's legendary 'knights of old.' As a shaman woman who has studied ancient tradition and beliefs and worked with shaman healers from many different continents, I'm not so sure that people haven't felt the stirrings of romantic love for eons. Just think about the elaborate preparations that were made for the Ancient Egyptian "Feast of the Beautiful Meeting" between the goddess Hathor and her husband, the god Horus.

What is certain is that the heavily marketed American celebration of Valentine's Day as a day of romantic love is making itself felt in the customs and traditions of people all around the world, along with their own rich history and tradition honoring and celebrating their gods, goddesses and celebrations of love and fertility.

On the other hand, many modern celebrations of love are often married to celebrations of friendship across the world. In parts of Central and South America, February 14th is known as *Día del Amor y la Amistad*, or the Day of Love and Friendship, when people give love, candles and balloons to their loved ones and find special ways to show appreciation for their friendships. In Guatemala, they celebrate the *Día del Cariño* or "Day of Affection"; and in

Brazil is celebrated the *Dia dos Namorados* or "Day of the Enamored" ("Boyfriends'/Girlfriends' Day") on June 12.

Before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Israelis held the celebration of *Tu B'Av*, a celebration of joy through a night of singing and dancing, on the 15th day of the month of *Av* in the Jewish calendar (July-August in the Gregorian calendar). After the fall of Jerusalem, it went unnoticed on the Jewish calendar for centuries, resurfacing recently as a celebration of song and dance that is increasingly becoming known as a Hebrew-Jewish "day of love."

Who can define love? For every person, love means something different, just as loving another is a different experience for everyone. For me, I can best describe love as a profound feeling, a stillness in which I sit quietly and ecstatically, basking in the center of a continual flow of bliss.

Love is the force that brings the good things in life to us. It is a state of being, from which all of our doing comes. True power comes from love. True power is love.

To me, the essence of love is accountability, being accountable for what you create in the world; being accountable for the things that you do not do, as well. When you move fully into the realm of accountability, you find that you are coming from a place of genuine caring, a place of commitment to yourself and to the world to live with impeccability. When you live with impeccability, you are living from the place of perfection within you, the place where you are one with Great Spirit. The greatest love in life is the love of Great Spirit.

To create acts of love in the world, whether it is the act of loving another person or an act of creating, for example, a work of art or a great business plan, you must have love within your own being. This means you must love yourself first, for you cannot give away what you do not have. When you really love yourself, you naturally express who you are in the world; you do not hide your glorious light under a barrel.

In my work with the Sisterhood, my teachers taught me about the healthy balance that is needed when you are experiencing romantic love. When you are in love and in balance, then each person in the relationship allows the other to be him- or herself. So often when I see modern couples, and one partner is either taking more from or giving more to the other partner. While there will always be times when one partner gives more to the relationship than the other, there must always come a state of equilibrium, of giving back to the relationship and taking care of the one who has taken care of you.

This month, as you celebrate love and especially if you are celebrating romantic love with another, really take a look at your relationships. Take a look at your spouse or partner and see where you each share with one another; where or how you give away your power to the other; where and how you take power from them? Why do you do this? Is there an

equilibrium in your relationship, on balance, a mutual giving and taking? Or is there no balance at all? How is this working for you?

Romantic love is a vibrant and creative part of our lives, when both partners are each willing to heal themselves and be open and vulnerable to the other. We cannot truly love one another if we are always shielding ourselves from being overtaken by our partner, nor if we are attempting to control them in some way.

So, enjoy this month of love and romantic love and really open yourself to the celebration of everything you love, everything that connects you to the Divine. Celebrate Valentine's Day with flowers, chocolates, or a walk along a river and talk to your partner or loved one. Together, create a Talking Stick for you both to use to communicate with each other. Make it beautiful, and fill it with symbols of all of the qualities you admire in one another, and give it to one another as a gift and symbol of your love. If you are not in a romantic relationship, find someone in your life who you love, and celebrate their presence in your life and all of the good things that flow from it. But celebrate something or someone! Don't hide the light of your beautiful love under a barrel any longer.

Great Spirit,

As I cross the desert in the evening time, I look ahead at twin peaks, two magnificent mountains rising up out of the desert floor, reflecting the setting sun with purples and oranges and magenta.

These mountains, so similar in stature, yet standing apart from one another, are married in the earth, the roots of their being intermingling, taking life force and extending that energy to the sky fathers and the great cloud beings that circulate above them.

Great Spirit, a marriage is a beautiful moment. But how many times have I seen a great woman, her spirit shield shining in the morning light, meet a magnificent man, who holds his spirit shield high, reflecting the sun. At the moment of marriage, however, the man's shield is placed on top of the woman's shield, and her designs are hidden and scattered to the four winds. She is lost into the identity of his shield forever. What is to become of her spirit?

Great Spirit, I pray for all marriages and partnerships. I pray that they honor each person's identity and individuality, like twin peaks, shining now in the setting sun, each reflecting different shadows, different moments of light and darkness, but each grounded together forever in sacred Mother Earth.

I pray, Great Spirit, that all marriages bring a kinship of souls and a kindling of freedom. Hold your hands and arms open, you who are about to marry, allowing the winds of heaven to blow between you, fire and earth, water and sky, commingling, but always

retaining the individuality and the presence of sacred being. HO!

In love and spirit,
Lynn



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If you have any questions, please call Suzanne Edison the Enrollment Director at 800-554-7414 (USA and Canada) or 561-265-1838 (International)

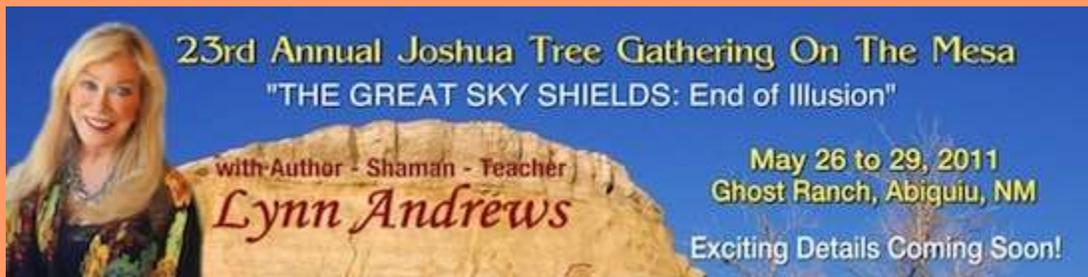


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Definition of the Virtue Card: In the painting on the face of this card, *Call from the Beyond*, an altar of sacredness, a sanctuary, is created in any place in the wilderness where higher thought is gathered. The monarch butterfly symbolizes the transformation to higher consciousness. The Buddha symbolizes the shaman spirit in reflection and meditation. The deer in virtue and innocence are drawn cautiously toward the spirit being. The abalone shell symbolizes the aura of light around the sacred space and being. The deer spirits imply innocence, caution, and beauty in the walk toward your own virtue.

Virtue is a south teaching, because it requires an understanding of your physical desires.

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