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Dear Friends,

During my apprenticeship with Agnes Whistling Elk and Ruby Plenty Chiefs, I was so very fortunate to visit the Yucatan, and meet with another beautiful member of the Sisterhood, Zoila. One day she invited me to go for a walk with her. “Now we must go with the sun to la caldera in the west,” she said. “Does that mean ‘cauldron’?” I asked. “Yes, this is the cauldron of the earth mother.” Together, we walked a long way through the dense jungle, and began to climb a great distance. Finally we arrived at the east lip of the caldera, and began our descent down again. I was shocked and terrified when I realized that we were going to follow a narrow ledge carved into the side of the canyon, which spiraled around and around inside la caldera, down to the center, far out of sight.

Despite my fears, I followed Zoila down the steep, uneven and exceedingly slow-going trail. Finally we stopped to rest, and I saw how far I had come, and was amazed. Then a glint of sunlight caught my eye, and I found a gold Mayan mask inlaid with turquoise, emerald and jade stones, carved in exquisite stones. Zoila said, “It is a beautiful trinket. You take it. It is a gift from the spirits of la caldera.” But I couldn’t take it. “I simply can’t,” I said. “I don’t know why, but I can’t. You take it, Zoila.” I’ll never forget what she said; “Never. Treasures belong to the one who first sees them.” Even then, I left the beautiful treasure behind me.

As I followed Zoila to the bottom of the canyon, we began to walk across the swampy ground towards the whirlpool at the center of the bottom, near the falls. Zoila moved on ahead, jumping from one stone into a wall of reeds and a bank of mist. As I tried to follow her, I began to sink into the mud and sand, the earth was shifting underneath me, and soon I was stuck up to my knees. I screamed for help, I struggled and sank to my thighs. I was struggling, sinking, and losing hope of ever getting out alive. The more I struggled, the more securely I was held. Finally, Zoila came back, and looked at me. “Stop struggling and listen to me,” she said.

“You’re stuck because you think too much. You think your knowledge is going to get you out of the mess you’re in. You believe you’re going to master the situation with your mind.” She chuckled at me. “Your mental gymnastics will take you five feet under. You’re in this

situation because you don't listen to your will and you are full of fear. Your clinging mind has brought you to this sad state."

As I tried to control my mind and listen to my entirety, my whole self, Zoila continued. "We have trouble finding our way back to the center of the spiral of our life because we have enthroned the mind. As long as the mind is the ruler, you will spend your life stuck in a swamp just as you are now. You are full of addictions that will strangle you, just as the quicksand will if you let them dominate. When that happens, it's all over for you." She laughed! I did not think that was funny, and said so.

"But it is funny," Zoila replied. "The joke is that these addictions prop you up in a false way, just like the mud with no bottom is propping you up. You felt safe when you got to the bottom of the canyon, and didn't notice that you were on a dangerous foundation and were sinking. Now you could die. Ponder the lesson of life. We come here to go back to where we came from. But when our mind tells us we need props to survive, we believe the king we have enthroned in our mind. We obey him and choose suffocating props such as fear of success or fear of failure or fear of death. You felt like you weren't good enough at the top of the canyon, and when the spirits of la caldera offered you a treasure, you couldn't let yourself feel worthy of such riches. You were afraid to take your power."

As I realized the truth of her words, I began to sob uncontrollably and began to try to throw myself forward. "I'm sorry I didn't do better," I wept.

"That's King Brain talking, incessantly talking, Lynn," Zoila said. "You're only punishing yourself more. You're too hard on yourself. You allow King Brain to rack you, to whip you with your fears and your addictions. Your fear of desertion is one of his big whips and your need for approval. All these addictions leak your power right out of you, and make you slumber."

Eventually, I allowed Zoila to guide me, and ceased struggling against the mud. "Don't battle with me. Don't think. Just pull gently on my hand and let yourself be pulled up and out. The mud will release you if you will release it."

As you know, I did get out, and learned such a valuable lesson that day. Never before had I realized how much I allowed my brain to lead me around, instead of using my brain as a tool to help me move in the direction I chose. Zoila was right; I had enthroned my mind as ruler, and listened carefully to all it told me. The more I listened, the more it chattered. And I also realized that I had lost out on the beautiful treasure of la caldera because I didn't think it was really meant for me, or that I deserved it.

"Remember the sacred spiral," Ruby Plenty Chiefs told me. "At the center is the formless unknowable. The center represents your shaman death where you finally let go of the lodges of the mind and ego and relative sense of time. On the perimeter of the spiral is our form and our lodges of earthly endeavor. When I talk to you about enlightenment and merging with the centers of the sacred spiral, your mind becomes frightened. Your mind understands only the concept of enlightenment and loss of form. But we have enthroned the mind as king of our lives and it is really only a tool like your hand. When you speak of a shaman death or formlessness, the mind thinks it's going to die. There is also a keeper of the mind. The keeper would rather see you go crazy and develop many addictions than become a formless shaman. The mind, in its confusion, thinks that's the only way it will survive as a mind."

This year, I am traveling all over to be with as many of you as I can. There are two big trips I'm taking, and inviting you to join me! Will you avail yourself of this wonderful gift and join me?

Your presence in my life is such a blessing! I hope you will join me on one of my trips this year, and with joy I offer you the next opening in my series of On Line Courses: "Creating Harmony and Balance Within; Meet the Keeper of the Brain."

In love and spirit,



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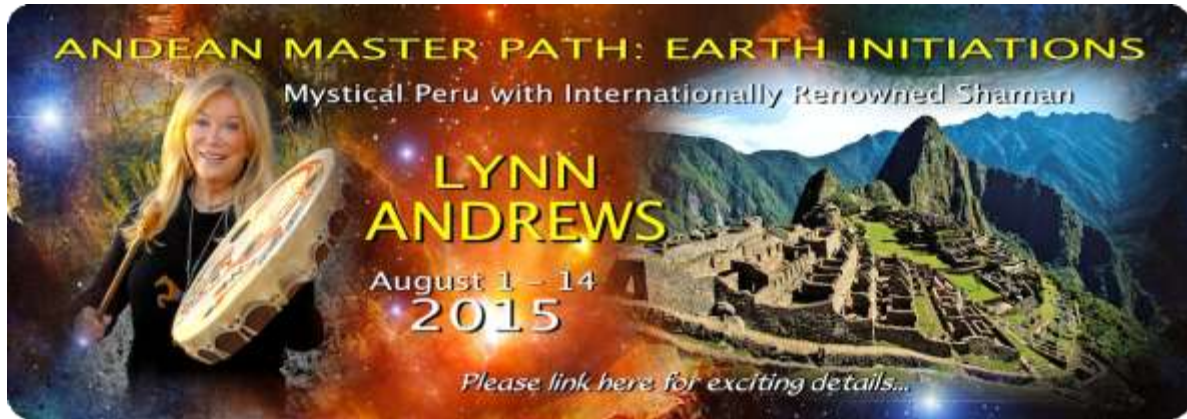
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