

"Let a horse whisper in your ear and breathe on your heart.

You will never regret it." ~ Author Unknown

White Horse Dancing

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The shamanic journey time I spend with horses is similar to a vision quest. By creating stillness in both body and mind, one is able to transcend the mundane aspect of this world and enter into a state of consciousness that reveals aspects of the self to be recognized, both pleasant and challenging. The act of taking a shamanic journey can be profound, as what is experienced in between the worlds can appear to be quite real and can influence the subconscious mind in a transformational life-altering manner. These journeys are for those who seek experiences in two worlds, physical and the spiritual, and who are ready to venture to the other world to become whole and healed.

I took the journey I will speak of with several other people dedicated to their path of exploring consciousness with horses. Before the journey, each member of the group asked themselves a specific question, with the intention that the vision they were about to have would reveal the answer to the question. The question I asked was, "What is my original medicine? What is the medicine I am here to work with?" My conscious mind felt confident it knew the answer, but I figured I might as well ask. I felt comfortable, excited and open to what the journey might reveal to me. An observer, I was unattached to the experience.

Pads and cushions covered the room. It felt a bit like an adult playroom. Each of us had established our space and got comfortable with pillow and blankets. The room was dimly lit, with just enough light so that if you needed to get up you could see where you were going. On the edge of the room were several facilitators that were ready to support us in our process.

The Journey

Music and sound filled the room to stimulate the journey and carry us to the other side. As I shut my eyes and focused on my breath, my journey began immediately. My consciousness

drifted into murky canyon waterways with high dark cliffs, painted walls within the depths of my mind. Then I found myself lying in a canoe, and as I looked up, the sky was filled with night. I sensed the muddy waters and the thickness of my direction; it felt like I was traveling through a great passageway, moving deeper into the cliff walls, where solitude prevailed. Reflected in the water was a dark shadow. I lifted my eyes to the sky that opened up above me where a large bird circled, and I was caught in its upward spiral.

Suddenly things shifted. The deep dark silence filled with a deep drumming. The primal beat aroused my body, I felt the rhythm capture me, my body beginning to move and respond. The beat was heavy and angry, a primal beat of great intensity. Warrior energy burst forth in my body, even as fear became very present. The war cries moved through me as if I were becoming one of the natives. Suddenly I was sitting by a fire. The fire was not small, nor was it large; it was the perfect height and width to sit by. The ambers glowed, as if it had been burning for a while. A warrior chief sat beside me; his legs crossed in front of him. His wrinkled leather skin and still eyes spoke of great wisdom and knowing. There

were feathers, and a pipe laying by his side. His pointed chin and wide cheeks gave his square face definition and strength.

The feeling of humility began to bubble through my body. My eyes steadied as I took in the scene. Not too far away a white horse stood, a real beauty, strong and sleek; his hide was smooth. He had no saddle and wore no paint. His handsome head wore only a simple rope halter. As he shifted his weight from one side to the other he turned his head and one eye glanced at me, taking in all of me, in just one second. Dust rose from the ground as his restless hoof struck with impatience. Darkness surrounded us.

Legs crossed and hands on my knees, I sat with the chief watching the fire, the horse, and breathing in the beat of the drums. The intensity grew and grew. The chief seemed calm, smooth like an ocean during the lull before a storm. He looked like he was waiting for the beginning of a peace ceremony, yet the energy felt like war to me. I risked another glance at the chief. He was old, very old, and not just in years, but in his soul. His calm nature carried relief to me, yet, I was confused about what might transpire.

The Chief leaned into me. His arm lifted slowly. He pointed a strong finger in my direction, reaching over and placing it directly onto my heart. The pressure was firm and gentle, direct and solid. He rocked me back just slightly as my breath drew inwards. He withdrew his hand and placed it on his lap, his eyes returning to the fire.

The drumming continued with cries from a distant coyote and the war song of natives dancing nearby. My courage grew as I continued to breathe and sit in the swirling war cries and ceremony. I prepared myself for the possibility that I would be part of a battle, and that this could be a part of my journey. Even as I experienced the journey, a part of me was watching objectively, as if I were experiencing something and simultaneously watching it on film. It felt as if I were in two places at the same time.

I turned to the Chief and asked him, "What is my original medicine?" The white horse began to dance, moving side to side, and his restlessness constant and unrelenting. He began to snort, blowing hot air from his flared nostrils. Around and around he moved, joining the natives in the war dance.

Again the chief raised his arm slowly and the strong boney finger came forward. My chin dipped to my chest as I watched the tip of his finger press against my heart. I did not understand. Why did he not speak? What did he mean by pointing to my heart? Worried thoughts began to fill my head as I lost my balance in the moment. I looked at him again, "Please" I said, "tell me my medicine, what am I to share?"

The white horse began to whinny, calling loudly. His front legs rose upwards as his weight shifted to his rear legs. He struck at the air in front of him, moving and dancing on his rear legs. I sensed he felt the battle approaching. The drumming became very loud and all-consuming. Who was coming? Why are they coming? Who were they going to fight? What was happening?

The Chief placed his wise eyes on mine, narrowing his focus to get my attention. Level and hard he stared at me. My eyes locked with his. His hand again reached up, and began to move to my heart. All of the sudden I was no longer sitting next to him. Instead I was lying down and looking up at the sky as my awareness floated out of my body. A flash crossed my eyes and a mass of something, blood red and bright, full of oxygen came into view; it was a pumping organ that looked like a heart.

The Chief's strong and time worn hands held the heart, gently and with care. Then I realized that the heart was mine. How vibrant and alive it looked. What was he going to do with my heart!

In another flash I was inside my body looking up to the sky again, the chief still next to me. His head bent over, his mouth came down next to my heart still held so tenderly in his hands. A deep long warm breath flowed from his mouth into my heart like a hot desert wind, steady and penetrating. It moved inwards, penetrating, bringing his wisdom with it. Deep warmth flooded my whole body. Next I saw the white horse, his nose suddenly just inches from my heart. He was calm now, his eyes warm and large. I could see his whiskers. His nostrils flared back as his eyes gazed steadily into mine. He inhaled and then exhaled his warm moist breath into my heart, blowing his power through me. Part of me was aghast at what I was experiencing, while the stronger part of me embraced the initiation I was receiving. I knew enough about Shamanism to know that what I was experiencing was a great honor. I knew the power held within and represented by the wind that blew through my heart. I was stunned to have such an honor. My whole body filled with a calm knowing, a warmth of being embraced and held. Slowly the image of the chief and the white horse dancing faded with

the beating drums and the crackling fire. The words "white horse dancing", "white horse dancing", rang through my head as I began to leave my shamanic journey and come back to the reality of the room where it began.

When I opened my eyes tears were streaming down my face and sobs softly released from my heart. I was humbled beyond words, empty of everything, and yet, filled with a knowing in every bone of my body. There was no turning back; I knew not exactly how my work would transpire, but I knew that it would and that I must allow my heart to lead me. I would have to allow the healing of my heart.

A lifetime of betrayal and a hurting heart had left me closed up and isolated from love, from relationships, and from being able to trust people. The realization sunk in deeply that my gift and medicine, the energy of the heart, was also my healing. To walk my path in the world would require me to heal my wounds. The old hurts of my little girl or inner child, who longed for things I never had and would never be able to have, would need to be released and let go of. The traumas of my life would need to be healed, allowing an integration of my whole self. Old grudges and judgments would need to be unleashed from my mind. Realizing the dark and light sides of

personality and ego would become opportunity for growth. Acceptance for self and others would need to become a way of life, a practice.

It was my responsibility and mine alone, to redo all of the stories of my past I held in my head and stored in my body, the memories that kept me angry and isolated, in a place that I thought was safe. I would have to dig deep within the darkness of my own soul and heal it in order to carry the medicine of heart energy into the world. It would take courage, take me to the depth of my soul and then deliver me to the brightness of my eternal being. This I now knew without doubt; however, "white horse dancing" continued to dance in my mind.

This journey was one of the most profound I have ever experienced. I felt washed clean, floating and grounded at the same time, but not fully back in the consciousness of the world. I walked outside to talk with the horses. The stillness of the night seeped with mesquite and the warm desert breeze caressed my skin. Snickers and murmurs shared from the horses. I stood next to my favorite horse, a white appaloosa with black spots. A large horse with a strong mothering nature, he placed his head on top of mine, resting for just a moment.

Grateful for the real feeling of the weight of his chin on the crown of my head, I silently thanked him for re-connecting me to my world. We basked in the peace of the night's solitude with the owl calling and the sounds of small desert rodents scurrying around us.

Later, much later, I arrived home. The house was quiet and I was thankful. My mind serene and my body calm, a sudden thought flashed through; do an Internet search for the phrase "white horse dancing." The search immediately took me to a link about Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull was an Indian chief that had left his tribe to work for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Circus. During his time in the show, he became friends with Bill Cody, Buffalo Bill. Buffalo Bill gifted him a lovely white horse. Sitting Bull accepted this horse as he felt Buffalo Bill had treated him with respect. This horse was Sitting Bull's partner in the show.

Eventually Sitting Bull decided to leave the show and return to his land and people. He began to realize what the white men were doing to his people and to his cultural heritage, and to the land that belonged to his people. He had returned to his native people with the desire to honor their roots and to insure that their true nature, way and place in the world

would not be demolished as so many tribes were being destroyed at that time. Eventually he met resistance from the new forces of power, the U. S. cavalry who were running the west. The story described how he sat for the last time, waiting for the cavalry to come for him.

While his tribe prepared for war, Sitting Bull waited, with his white horse dancing close by. Sitting Bull sat with pride, and calmly waited for his destiny, for his death, while his white horse danced, as he had done in the shows while gun shots rang in the air. It is said that his white horse danced well beyond the death of his human companion, Sitting Bull. It is said that he danced until he could not dance any longer, dropping in a state of exhaustion, the only way he knew to honor his companion.

My eyes wide and my heart pounding, the journey had been mind-expanding enough without and now the story brought it all even deeper into my being. I felt as if I had been a part of that story; it was my journey, sitting by the fire, the intensity of the war that was to come, and the white horse dancing.

Sitting Bull had wanted was for his people to return to their authentic way in the world, the way of the heart, and to be less influenced by the white man. He had wanted their ways to live on, and the value of their tradition to be respected.

In mystical folklore the white horse represents and symbolizes the energy of one's authenticity, one's 'Christ' energy and connection to the divine. Through purging oneself of darkness and incongruent behaviors, the purest form, the white light of one's being is allowed to flow and be expressed in the world. This energy is every living person's given right, gift and responsibility. The totem of white horse encourages us to dance in our life, and to stand tall in our expression and loyalties.

The White Horse Dancing became my totem that night. The energy and symbolism carries itself deep within my heart. Visions are personal and meaningful in their nature. To truly honor the white horse dancing and the initiation I took, I must own that these experiences are a part of my life that ignite clarity about my path and my purpose in the world. This desire flows through me as I wish for each individual to tap into their authentic nature and to carry it out into the world with courage and pride. As I heal my heart and follow my

nature, the river of energy that is flowing through me in my life will carry its potential and to others. I must learn that often the power is not in the doing, but in the sitting still with courage, and waiting for the messages to come.

In my programs with horses we create experiences that help our participants connect with their source, God, the Divine, Creator, spirit, soul or whatever else they prefer to call it, and to bring their pure soul's energy, their life purpose, through and to the earth. In doing so they are serving everyone they know and the generations to follow.

To live a life of purpose does not mean that we must move mountains, or contribute in large grandiose ways. It does mean we become aware of what our gift is and how we touch or heal others, animals or the world.

To live a life of purpose is a choice that is made again and again as each life experience comes forth, be it a delightful heart expanding experience, or one that includes great loss. It is not a luxury to be on a path of growth and to dedicate one's self to higher awareness. I see that it is our *responsibility* to be on this path, to evolve our self and in that process of evolution to expand awareness to others and to

touch the animals, and the planet in a way that honors. We are given life in order to realize and actualize this responsibility. The act of responsibility takes us many places. It can take us to the depth of the sorrow we wish to avoid, to the rage and fury that scares us to death, to the depth of love that we long for but fear we cannot attain, and to the courage and power to act and speak the truth that lies dormant. It can bring us riches and rewards, in many unexpected forms, as the universe is more than ample in its abundance.

Every act of responsibility brings higher levels of integrity to all. We must remember that thoughts and acts of *kindness* to others and animals is the path of the spiritual person. We must learn to play and grow, because in failing to do so we are failing the primary purpose of our life, to be authentic and to let the inner light, the light of our spirit, our purpose and joy shine through.

When we live from our heart we can sit with the strength of Sitting Bull and dance the dance of our own White Horse Dancing.