

TOGETHER

A few years ago, I felt Called (*with a capital "C"*) to FINALLY get SERIOUSLY involved in Animal Rescue. Now, when I was a kid, I'd felt called (*with a little "c"*) ~ as we all are ~ by my own heart's desires. For me that was to be a Rock Star ~ like my idols, *The Beatles!* I didn't really care about fame, *per se* ~ I just wanted the sheer FUN of singing and performing on stage for huge crowds! Now, to be clear, I also wanted to make a fortune... BECAUSE (*as I said earlier*) I wanted to start an animal shelter, with the luxury of not having to "beg" for donations (*because fundraising sounded really scary to me*).

But in 2009, when I was struck by that "*capital C*" Calling that I just mentioned, it felt vastly different from my teenaged dreams. Don't ask me to explain how or why ~ I'd never experienced anything like that before ~ but I was absolutely sure this Calling was not just from my own heart, but also from "God"! Somehow, I could feel a fierce new kind of "mature passion" ~ whatever that means?! ~ and an unwavering and unconditional commitment arising from the very depths of my soul, from the Sacred Within... but also, strangely enough, arising from something outside of me and so much bigger than me, toward a goal of something so much more than I had ever imagined...

Anyway! A year later, I founded *WolfStone Ranch*, a small no-kill shelter on a pretty little place tucked into the lush, rolling foothills of the Ozark Mountains... AND I was armed with a vision of a distinctly different approach to the mission of dog and cat rescue. The need, of course, was ~ and remains ~ great. And the work can be very rewarding. But you can ask ANY front-line responder, it can also be gut-wrenching being the one responsible for immediately responding to any kind of traumatic crisis. While my compassion compels me to be there, my heart bleeds, seeing up close so much agonizing fear and pain ~ not to mention the added tragedy of how so much of the suffering that so many precious, innocent animals go through is ~ and always has been ~ caused by HUMANS, whether through their ignorance, neglect or abuse... and not just of dogs and cats, but also of other domestic animals, wildlife, and all of Mother Nature ~ and hardest of all to fathom ~ even of each other, our fellow human beings!

One day, a few years into running *WolfStone*, I read in the news (*for the millionth time*) a story of animal abuse... and as usual, the perpetrator had received just a slap on the wrist... a small fine, but no jail time, and absolutely no thought of anything like compulsory treatment for what I considered to be

his “*mental illness*” due to his compulsive cruelty. And, equally devastating, nothing whatsoever to prevent him from repeating his depraved behavior the very next day!

For the millionth time, my heart and soul were crushed... too many stories of too much brutality... too much suffering, all so needless... I was giving literally everything I had to this mission of mercy... but it felt like one tiny inconsequential drop of cool, fresh rain in a great parched desert of blazing hot pain! All you superheroes out there know exactly what I’m talking about! Because... like all nonprofits seeking to address the desperate needs of our damaged world, my biggest problem was not finding enough partners, enough volunteers, enough donors to make a REAL difference... to REALLY change things!

So on that fateful day, I just couldn’t take it anymore... and I collapsed onto the grass in the dogs’ exercise yard in a heap of tears and despair! And I cried out to the Universe...

“Why did I have to be born here and now?! Why on earth did I have to be born into this horrible world filled with so much brutality, so much hate, and so much apathy ~ creating so much trauma and pain?! Why couldn’t I have been born into a world ruled by empathy and caring for one another?! Where everyone has the freedom to be themselves ~ and yet where everyone enthusiastically embraces their responsibility to look out for each other, especially for the weakest and most vulnerable among us...”

Why on earth couldn’t I have been born into a world where all the communities we build are dedicated, in part, to fostering a culture of compassion in action... where everyone understands that the only way in which ANYONE ~ any living creature ~ can live a life of LASTING safety and abundance and (trite as it sounds) peace and love... is if EVERYONE ~ yeah, every living thing ~ can thrive with these same precious blessings?! Why couldn’t I have been born into a world where we don’t just understand, but truly GROK, that we really are One Worldwide Tribe... that we truly are One Holy Family????!!!”

Because in a world in which only a privileged few are allowed and able to live The Good Life, while the vast majority are struggling just to survive, let alone thrive... it’s just a matter of time until the dire consequences of this gross injustice catch up with such a heartless world. And if you don’t believe me, just take a good hard look around you at our world today!! But I digress...

As I lay there on the ground, sobbing, my imagination suddenly transported me to a planet just like I was crying out for! In this “*daydream*” (*I guess you’d call it*), I was an indigenous inhabitant of an incredible planet in a galaxy far, far away...

As I lay there on the ground, I became absolutely enthralled in a magical vision of a charmed world in which real life was just like what I dreamed “*heaven on earth*” could be. And I found myself ~ or I should now say, my dream-world self ~ found HERSELF (*as she apparently often did*) wallowing in the sheer delight of living on her beautiful and peace-filled planet, absolutely overflowing with abundance for all. And she found herself (*as usual*) downright dizzy with a bone-deep gratitude for being so lucky as to call that sweet paradise her “*home*”!

But then suddenly ~ in this fantasy completely out of my control ~ I saw a spaceship land and I watched someone step out of the spaceship and tell the curious crowd gathered around ~ including my dream-world self ~ about a planet called Earth, in a milky galaxy far, far away, where life had become pure hell for everyone and every living thing there! Upon hearing this, everyone in the crowd nodded their heads, remembering their childhood history lessons of a time long, long ago when THEIR ancestors had inadvertently created such a dangerous and destructive way of life that they too had nearly destroyed their planet and everything living on it, including themselves. BUT...!!!

Everyone in that crowd had ALSO been taught about how their ancestors had amazingly ~and just in the nick of time ~ risen above themselves and all their self-inflicted existential crises... about how things had deteriorated to the critical point in which they could no longer deny it... and about how the collective terror that had accompanied that shattering realization is what had finally prompted them to leap ~ LEAP! ~ into collective action...

Apparently, they had experienced what amounted to a stunning collective epiphany! They finally got it... they suddenly understood the karma that grew out of their willful blindness to the staggering reality that ~ like it or not ~ they were all bound to a shared destiny. And they finally saw that it was high time to change ~ or die! In a shocking flash of insight, like a bolt of lightning or a bombshell, they FINALLY grasped the crises-driven revelation... the blindingly beautiful truth... that all life on their planet was ~ and still is ~ and *inshallah* shall be forever more ~ One! Precious! Holy! Family!

But what happened next in my daydream-run-wild took my breath away, as I lay there on the warm earth... because I (*my human self*) heard her (*my dream-world self*) say...

“Oh my god, I must go to that planet ~ what did they call it? ‘*Earth*’? ~ I must go there and show them that it is within their power to stop the nightmare they are now living in! They must come to see that they really CAN transform the hell they’ve created into the heaven they’ve only been imagining! I must tell them how our ancestors on our planet had managed ~ miraculously ~ to change their selfish, insane and suicidal ways. And I must show those earthlings how they too can change... how they too can heal... how they too can start fresh ~ and birth a brand-spankin’ new world out of their sick and dying world ~ just as my ancestors had done!”

And I (*my human self*) was so dumbfounded by that utterly unexpected twist of events in my runaway fantasy that I was instantly snapped back to myself, laying there on the sweet green grass of the doggie play yard. I was flabbergasted. And I was transformed. And with that astonishing insight fresh in my mind, I leapt to my feet and threw myself into my daily animal chores, with a revitalized resolve...

I had cried out to the universe, “***Why did I have to be born here and now?***” My daydream had answered me on the spot... And I had heard my soul’s clarion response...

No! I wouldn’t want to simply escape this gargantuan mess we humans have made to go live on some other planet that someone else had cleaned up and fixed up and made whole again. Oh my god, I wouldn’t want to ABANDON my beloved Mother Earth! I can’t give up on Her ~ or myself! I must fight on and continue to give everything I have in me, to help Her heal and to help save ALL Her cherished children ~ !! Mitakuye Oyas’in, ALL My Relatives !! ~ whether they be my fellow humans, or other animals or plants, or my Mother’s very body ~ her mountains and valleys, her rivers and oceans, her deserts and great plains ~ her belly that births, and her bosom that sustains us all!

My epiphany? **I was BORN here and now... because I am NEEDED here and now!**

And you must remember this ~

YOU ~ yeah, that’s right

each and every single one of you ~

including you! and YOU! and Y-O-U!!

You each have UNIQUE and SPECIAL talents and skills and resources to share with the world and...

**YOU too were BORN here and now because...
YOU too are NEEDED here and now!**

In my brief daydream, I was not given any of the details of how the people ~ in that galaxy far, far away ~ had saved their world. But what had worked for them wouldn't work for us "earthlings", anyway, DUH! Because only WE can know what WE need to do to heal our MAGNIFICENT Mother Earth and to save ALL her GLORIOUS children! And that "WE" includes all of us here, with all our MARVELOUSLY diverse abundance of accumulated information, experiences, insights and assets.

What's more, I ~ WE (*gesturing to everyone on stage*) ~ happen to believe that... in spite of all the paranoia and polarity, in spite of all the suspicion and fear, in spite of all the hatred for and violence turned upon the "Other", in our country and around the whole world...

There are actually way way WAY more people who are open ~ either cautiously or enthusiastically ~ to exploring ways of learning how we TOGETHER really CAN break down those big ugly walls that separate us... and how we TOGETHER really CAN build big beautiful bridges... With a serious commitment to KINDNESS... and with a wholehearted GENEROSITY of SPIRIT... and with a passionate desire to honestly come to understand each other's hopes and fears... so that we truly all feel Seen and Heard...

Which THEN means that we TOGETHER really CAN create a shared vision of a worldwide tribe... and a shared goal of birthing a universal appreciation of the absolute truth that we are ~ like it or not ~

!! ONE HOLY FAMILY !!

[All Musicians]

!! ONE HOLY FAMILY !!

Amen
(So Be It)

***** ***** ***** *****

[1st Singer]

OK! Listen up now! We've got one more song 'n' drum to share with you. And after that ~ if you haven't already done so ~ please check out our *Circle of Heroes Tent*. There you will find a plethora of ways to get involved and share the wealth of ~ !! YOU !! ~ to help make this a kinder, safer, healthier world for every living being who resides on this splendid and spectacular planet we call "*Mother Earth*."

[2nd Singer]

We have our own "*Born Again*" booth, of course... but you will also find all kinds of superheroes who have started all kinds of organizations that are working so hard to turn these idealistic goals into everyday reality... they're already doing miraculous work serving those suffering from every kind of injustice we see in our broken world today... and they ~ and we ~ just need YOU to join us!

[3rd Singer]

You cannot kill your way to peace. And you cannot wish your way to paradise. It's going to take THOUSANDS more of us... MILLIONS more of us... to turn this hell that we humans have created into a heaven right here and now on Mother Earth. And we simply cannot do it without each and every one of you!

(PN): REGARDING THE LYRICS TO THIS SONG... For those who are uncomfortable with the word "God" or the phrase "God above", remember what I said back in the intro to the song "Holy Power"... I myself don't relate to God as a Father (or Mother) in the Sky (or in "Heaven")... while simultaneously deeply respecting and fully honoring that other people have just such a personal relationship with God. Here in this song, I'm referring to the Sacred within all of us humans AND within all living beings AND within the entire universe... but lyrics are a form of poetry, and "God above" is an example of my "God Talk shorthand"! I'm talking about centering and aligning ourselves in the Sacred Within All... for this is how we can work best with the universe and with each other. This is what I call... Golden-Rule Activism.

I'm but one lonely voice
crying in the night
for all the pain and sorrow
I see all around me

But what can I do
and who'll listen to me
I'm but one lonely spirit
crying in the night

So won't you help me change the world
Won't you help me make things right
Together helping others
And together seeking Light

Won't you help me save the world
Won't you help me right what's wrong
Together we're a power
Together we are strong
Together we are strong

Gimme gimme your mind (now)
Gimme gimme your heart (yeah)
Gimme gimme your time (now)
Gimme gimme your art (yeah)

Gimme gimme your treasure
Gimme gimme good measure
Gimme gimme your treasure
Gimme gimme with pleasure

Never get discouraged
for God will give us courage

Let's win with peace
Let's win with love
Let's never cease
to follow God above

Lord, teach us how to work together
Lord, show us how to win together

And teach us the power of "we"
Teach us the power of "we"
Teach us the power of "we"
Instead of "me"

I'm but one lonely voice
crying in the night
for all the pain and sorrow
I see all around me

So let's ask God to bless us now
Let's ask and then believe
Then let's join hands together
And see what we receive

Yeah, let's join hands to save the world
Let's work to right what's wrong
Together we're a power
Together we are strong
Yeah, we are strong
We're oh so strong

!! TOGETHER !!
!! TOGETHER !!
!! TOGETHER !!

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So finally, before we see you over at our *Circle of Heroes* Tent...

It's really important that you never forget this...

YOU WERE BORN HERE AND NOW

!! BECAUSE YOU ARE NEEDED HERE AND NOW !!

Amen! And please...

Make It Your Daily Practice to
See the Sacred in Every Living Being

And Always Remember to
Make Everyone You Meet Feel **SPECIAL**
Honor Them and Yourself
With Heartfelt Dignity and Respect

For You Are Not Alone
We Are **TOGETHER** in This Here and Now
And This Mission Is NOT Impossible
For **TOGETHER** We Can Embrace the Holy Power of **WOW!!!**

Shalom Aleichem
(Peace Be With You)

Namaste
(I bow to the Divine in each and every one of you!)