

Soul Authority

for Transformation Trailblazers

A 7-Step Ego-Eco Healing System to Restore Trust in
Ourselves, the Truth, and Social Justice

By Loraine Y. Van Tuyl, PhD
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What people are saying about Loraine Van Tuyl, her methods and memoir
Foreword

Preface - *Meeting on Higher, Not Just Common, Ground*

Introduction - *Who are Today's Transformation Trailblazers?*

Dedication

My Liberation Story and Transformation Trailblazing

- *The Predictability of Oppressive Patterns vs the Creativity of our Natural Genius*

Why this Book is Right on Time

- *Hearing the Calls of My Ancestors and the Wild*

All Men Are Created Equal

- *But Not All Men, Let Alone All Genders, Are Treated As Equals*

Making a Bigger Impact in the World

- *Freeing the Canaries and Closing the Coal Mines - For Good!*

The Age of Aquarius

- *A Great Cultural Shift in Consciousness*

How to Use this Book and What to Expect

- *How to Become a Butterfly Instead of a Longer, Stronger Caterpillar*

Setting up a Soul Sanctuary within Mother Nature's Womb

- *Because We Need a Chrysalis to Transform our Colorful Emotions into Wings*

Step 1. Sacred Ancestral Tree: Wondering why you feel overwhelmed and what "ancestral-deficit" and "nature-deficit" have to do with it?

As Above – So Below

How to detect and correct inner climate denial, ego-ecosystem misalignments, and rigid good-bad thinking that are squashing your soul

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEPS: realign your ego-mind with your body's ecosystem and soul's grand design

Step 2. Air: Need clear direction, creative inspiration and fresh ideas, but unable to blow steam and purify a thick smokescreen of mental fog and smog?

Wisdom

Why losing your mind could help you to find your soul

Accessing the spiritual order under mental dis-order

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEPS: set daily intentions with clarity

Step 3. Fire: Tired of putting out fires and emitting toxic fumes of resentment but dismissing personal warning signals and burn-out?

Protection

Boundaries are your best friend: how to be kind and wild, soft and strong
The root cause of our love-hate relationship with healthy anger: what it is and isn't

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEPS: say yes or no with courage

Step 4. Earth: Paving over unresolved problems with quick fixes instead of pulling them out at the root?

Grounding

How to heal and compost pain and trauma into new growth and beginnings
Earth has your back: the magical and magnetic powers of your assertions and actions

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEP: take aligned action with conviction

Step 5. Water: Unable to keep your head above water or compulsively rescuing others downstream instead of stopping the dumping upstream?

Clearing

How to clear emotional dams and transform fear of flooding and drowning into creative flow
How to identify and nurture subtle and intense emotions without overidentifying with them

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEPS: soothe your heart and soul with compassion

Step 6. Heart Compass: Is your inner compass giving you the runaround instead of guiding you to True North?

Soul Authority

How to dethrone your trauma-body with your truth-body and ground in self-love
Fierce compassion vs compassion fatigue: guerilla self-care and serving others from the inside out

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEPS: transform self-doubt into confidence

Step 7. True North Living: Breathing, healing, loving, and leading with soul authority or taking yourself too lightly (or seriously)?

Visibility and Impact

Get out there and share your message because it is and isn't about you
Why re-naturing your de-natured mind heals our nation, humanity and the earth

ALCHEMY MEDITATION & ACTION STEPS: fulfilling your soul's mission with commitment

Restoring Trust in the Truth, Social Justice, and One Another
- *The Power of the Human Element in Balance*

Foreword

If you've gotten unmoored by 2020's perfect storm of pandemic, political and planetary woes and its tumultuous aftermath, allow Loraine Van Tuyl to show you how to reconnect to your core self and stay grounded.

Her brilliant book, *Soul Authority for Transformation Trailblazers: A 7-Step Ego-Eco Healing System to Restore Trust in Ourselves, the Truth, and Social Justice* will guide you back to center with clarity and courage. This is your best defense in meeting and integrating the intense feelings that threaten to flood and overwhelm transformation trailblazers like us.

In my roles as clinical psychologist and neuropsychologist at the Summit Center, as a functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner and as a student of the Intuitive Way, I've identified and assisted hundreds of gifted individuals with the unique challenges they face in navigating their academic, emotional, social and spiritual paths within society.

These professional experiences have deepened my appreciation for Loraine's skills, dedicated service, extraordinary gifts and multidimensional "rainforest mind" since meeting her 25 years ago in graduate school.

I've celebrated Loraine's amazing growth and the development of her soul authority solutions for sensitive and gifted people up close and personal over the years.

I can attest that the solutions that Loraine shares in this book are cutting-edge, powerful, foundational and ideally suited for transformation trailblazers like us. They will boost your confidence, especially if you are a highly sensitive empath, a natural-born leader, healer, or wisdom keeper who doubts your gifts and ability to help create a more socially just, environmentally sustainable and peaceful world.

If you have been hurting, hiding or holding back, now is the time to step up your self-care and stretch as a leader. We need you!

Loraine's transformational toolbox will fast-track your growth by enhancing your clarity, intuitive resilience and self-trust. Her tools are practical and aim to deliver immediate results at home and work, while guiding children, clients or teams, in activism forums, and when speaking up in your social circles, sharing your bold vision in writing, and designing the progressive programs and policies that we need for true reform.

It has made me even more grateful that Loraine ultimately found her way here after a military coup in her native Suriname uprooted her family.

Her courageous journey of healing and spiritual awakening — which included a spontaneous initiation in our clinical psychology graduate program — helped to scaffold the earliest iterations of this refreshing new book, *Soul Authority for Transformation Trailblazers*.

The fact that Loraine's focus is just as relevant today as it was more than two decades ago speaks volumes. She has a good eye for identifying universal patterns that exist within every human without diminishing their individual story.

You're going to love this book and learn so much from her hard-earned wisdom.

Lorraine's mastery in grounding overwhelm, fear and self-doubt during trying times like these is unparalleled because of the many losses and similar tests she has already overcome. Her devoted spiritual practice and natural gifts in doing deep soul integration work have furthered her effectiveness.

She is able to immediately put clients at ease, no matter how distraught or intense the issue at hand, because of her grace-under-fire disposition, fierce compassion, and expertise in grounding and harmonizing imbalanced energy and unruly emotion.

She has touched and uplifted countless lives in her holistic practice, her online courses and through her participation in shamanic healing and clearing rituals for the earth and the community — ranging from hospitals, schools, government buildings, and social services agencies to offices and homes of healers and public servants in Oakland and the greater San Francisco Area.

I highly recommend Loraine's clear guidance, especially if you feel overtaken or overwhelmed by intense emotions that won't let you rest or recharge. She will help you to tackle obstacles that seem insurmountable, and transform self-doubt and setbacks that are zapping your vital energy and creative ideas.

Lorraine's aligned strategies and action steps will infect you with a can-do attitude and renewed passion to regain your soul authority so that you can finish your important work with greater ease and enthusiasm.

I'm so delighted that Loraine has infused her game-changing methods, one-of-a-kind tools, and signature sharp focus into a compact, easily digestible book. Her strategies have empowered hundreds of transformation trailblazers in her practice, her online forums and her Soul Authority and Natural Genius courses, but through this book, so many more conscious leaders and readers like you will get to explore and expand your soul authority and highest potential in service of the greater good.

This is precisely what's needed at this critical juncture in history to transform today's world into the boldest and brightest vision of a healed and peaceful tomorrow—for future generations and the planet.

Jeannie Lopez, PhD, FDN-P
Licensed Clinical Psychologist & Neuropsychologist
Summit Center

Preface

The Hill We Climb

*Somehow we've weathered
and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished*

*We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all*

*It's because being American is more
than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it*

*We've seen a force
that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
And this effort very nearly succeeded*

*For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us*

*We will raise this wounded world
into a wondrous one
We will rebuild, reconcile
and recover*

*The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it*

- Amanda Gorman

I believe that the reason why we're having such a difficult time uniting on common ground right now is because we first need to set our sights on higher ground. To really meet eye to eye, we need to lift our gaze out of the haze, heal our debilitating wounds, and climb to the top of this hill that we've been stuck on for centuries.

To truly connect, heart to heart, we need to raise our vibrations to the likes of our shared Earth Mother with humility and genuine reverence. Her stillness makes it so much easier to quiet our monkey minds and understand at the core of our being that we're only harming our own family members and ourselves when we harm her and one another.

It's a tall order and one that we may not fulfill in our lifetimes but this shared aspiration and goal may be enough for now to tie us together in focus, effort and fate.

Remember that no matter where we are positioned around that mountain, its peak is a point of reference that all of us can rely on when lost or disoriented. It's also a point of inspiration that offers anyone who is willing to tackle the climb, the widest, longest and most beautiful views of life and the best big picture clarity.

Sadly, many of us have forgotten how exhilarating it is to enjoy this higher vision and truth that awaits us at the top because we have gotten so caught up in dealing with the real and imagined threats coming from the other side of the mountain.

Meeting in goodwill and peace on higher ground requires that we embark on this journey with the best of intentions.

We need to curb our survival instincts to race to the top and stake it out with our flags.

These common assumptions often get in the way of our higher vision. Take a moment to see if you can relate.

Your first inclination is to conquer this vantage point to fight others off who haven't made it yet. A part of you feels entitled to attack anyone who gets too close to you or the top because:

- 1) they should know they're trespassing. You were here first so it's yours (whoever may already have been there for centuries and didn't stake out the territory should've been smarter and doesn't really count).
- 2) if you don't take ownership of what you've worked so hard for, someone else will take over your spot and just roll you down the hill.
- 3) you need to form alliances with as many allies as you can to overpower your enemies or you won't survive.

You may be wondering: *What's wrong with these beliefs? They make perfect sense to me. There isn't enough room for everyone at the top. Isn't survival of the fittest the rule of nature?*

Here's the caveat. Competition in the natural world doesn't resemble the ruthless dog-eat-dog and winner-take-all methods that we humans have learned to operate from when threatened.

Survival of the fittest doesn't mean proving to the world that we are too great and powerful to heed and learn from the natural consequences of our actions (or the law for that matter). We will end up blowing each other and the whole mountain up if we continue down this path.

Many of us have lost our connection to our true nature and can't re-member who we truly are. This makes it hard to trust our ability to regulate and read the depth of our layers, hardened emotions and uncomposted history. It makes it even more challenging to trust others who seem very different from us.

It may help to re-member that we are nature. We are expressions of earth and subsets of an infinite field of love far greater than we will ever fathom.

Nature's ways are quietly confident, generous, complex, nuanced, intricate, layered, abundant, cooperative, regenerative and diverse. Nature also offers us natural consequences, not to punish us, but to guide us along a path that's balanced, for our own good and protection.

Nature is not trying to make us feel small or insignificant although we might feel this way when our egos get too blown up and we don't want to align with scary truths. Remember our vehement reaction a few centuries ago when we first learned that the sun didn't revolve around us and the earth and we weren't in the center of the universe?

We are going through a similar shift, so don't believe and trust everything your ego-self feels and thinks until you have sure footing on higher ground.

When your ego deflates in deep moments of reflection, you may notice your soul feeling empty and sad and wanting to be inflated.

One way to do this is by imagining Mother Earth's perspective and looking at the world from her high vantage point. She looks forward to embracing us all at the top of the mountain, in light that shines upon her from sunrise to sunset. At night, she will provide us the warmth of a sacred fire that burns through the darkness and cold.

She sees us not as potential threats but as her children: potential risks to ourselves unless we re-nature our de-natured modern minds.

She looks upon us with tenderness, those of us east of the mountain basking in light in the morning; those of us west of the mountain basking in light in the afternoon. Sometimes dark clouds collect on one side of the mountain and block the rays and light of the sun for a while.

I hear her say: Don't be afraid to let it rain. Don't be afraid to let it pour. Love your tears. Give yourself enough space to feel your feelings, grieve, grow and reflect on their guiding wisdom. This is what will cleanse your soul and give you a fresh start.

From our Earth Mother's perspective, there is no right or wrong way to climb her mountains. Some like to climb straight up in a line. Others meander, zig zag, or prefer to spiral to the top.

Depending on your starting point, you may need to go left, or you may need to go right, or you may do both and find your own independent way.

But forcing others to do exactly what worked for us creates an oppressive climate and divisiveness.

Exercising our freedom and soul authority doesn't mean getting to do everything our way. It means empowering ourselves and one another, and effectively containing the fears and hate that hurt and overpower.

These limits don't deprive us of our freedom. They make space for it.

In this sacred, protected space, you will be able to access the strength and courage to see and be the light.

And when embodying your light and soul authority, you will feel as solid, supportive, and grounded as the mountain, as generous as Gaia, and as powerful as her love, a love that doesn't diminish but keeps multiplying when shared.

Introduction - Who are Today's Transformation Trailblazers?

*We do not become healers.
We came as healers. We are.
Some of us are still catching up to what we are.*

*We do not become storytellers.
We came as carriers of the stories
we and our ancestors actually lived. We are.
Some of us are still catching up to what we are.*

*We do not become artists. We came as artists. We are.
Some of us are still catching up to what we are.*

*We do not become writers.. dancers..
musicians.. helpers.. peacemakers.
We came as such. We are.
Some of us are still catching up to what we are.*

*We do not learn to love in this sense.
We came as Love. We are Love.
Some of us are still catching up to who we truly are.*

- Clarissa Pinkola Estes,
A Simple Prayer for Remembering the Motherlode

I had a lot of nightmares as a child.

Fighting became my full-time job as soon as the lights went out, until I was, one night, stabbed and killed during a lightning-fast sparring match in a dark cave. I didn't see it coming. Not the knife nor the dying. I face-planted in the dirt and was certain that I was dead. The gods of the dream realm assured me that I was still alive. But someone told me that you couldn't die in your dreams, flashed through my mind. I heard that if you die in your dreams, you end up dying in real life too. I commanded myself to get back up, and to my surprise, my legs and arms responded.

Once you break the "you can't die in your dreams" rule and reawaken from your nightmare, everything changes. I couldn't remain stuffed in the cramped little box that I was in before. An ancient part of my soul got a taste of my immortality and reminded me of my superpowers.

Apparently, I'd lived, fought, died, and lived again many times before. I kept forgetting my previous gains, but this time was different. Some of my past learning had crossed over and gathered into a few pockets of my dream world like warm, golden nectar in the cells of a giant beehive. The nectar that had been

saved up couldn't be accessed or depleted, no matter what happened to me. Once the fear of losing this golden essence dissipated, I relaxed and stood my ground like a mountain goat. Whatever was out to get me finally left me alone.

- Excerpt from *Amazon Wisdom Keeper: A Psychologist's Memoir of Spiritual Awakening*

We transformation trailblazers were born for these times.

We know that the recent political spectacle and dysfunctional power plays at the highest levels of government have been operating for a long time in subtler forms in every institution and social system that we're a part of.

We feel called to restore trust in the truth, each other, and our most powerful leaders and institutions because we intuitively get how much our personal health is influenced by our collective well-being and wholeness.

We're best suited to tackle these issues because we're most shaken up and uprooted by neglected emotional, social and environmental wounds and imbalances that are not addressed in society and cause a lot of harm.

We are also good at surfing the waves of historical pivots, and know when the tides are turning. We're going through one of those major transitions.

We go by many names. Call us consciousness pioneers, highly sensitive wise souls, starseeds, holistic healers, freedom fighters, thought leaders, social justice activists, renewable energy and climate warriors, nature lovers, natural-born leaders, modern-day bodhisattvas, spiritual gangsters, seekers and teachers.

This is what we do best: trailblaze liberating paths of transformation for others.

We ache to contribute to meaningful movements that benefit all sentient beings, including our planet, because we recognize the urgent need to restore humanity's soul, overall health and integrity.

We come from all walks of life and from every region of the planet. This is what we have in common: many of us were born awake. That means that our clarity and vitality have defined and energized our sense of self and true nature for as long as we can remember.

We often didn't realize how precious this was until growing social pressure to belong and survive caused fear to seep in and occupy our minds, hearts and bodies.

What's perhaps different between us and other children — who were similarly awake but more readily dimmed their light, natural genius and vitality as they get older — is

that this solution tends to create considerably more inner conflict, objections and unbearable symptoms in us than in them.

Therefore, our sensitivity to social pressures doesn't necessarily mean that we immediately succumb to them. Many of us challenge outdated, patriarchal, and oppressive norms within our birth families with our sheer presence and stubborn symptoms, even as school-aged children. We're often the reason why our families finally seek outside help for long-standing issues: we make it really difficult to remain in denial because the truth is often the only thing that grounds and releases us from suffering.

We learn to honor our bodies and symptoms more as we grow older, often because it's the only way we can truly be at ease: by setting fierce limits with all imbalances that cause dis-ease.

Authentic and free

Our disposition explains why transformation trailblazers are driven by a deep need to be authentic and free. We are by nature extraordinarily loyal to our inherent joy, wholeness and integrity (after all else has failed), and are willing to withstand numerous trials by fire when tested.

We're also very passionate about social, political and earth justice causes and are devoted to serving people and causes who need our help. We discovered, often the hard way, that our well-being, physical health, and soul fulfillment require us to take a stand for humanity's highest good, which means empowering the disenfranchised and silenced. We thrive when engaged in meaningful missions and acts of compassion that heal others and the planet.

When we boldly own our natural genius, healing wisdom, and gifts, we're magnetic, unapologetic, and exponentially impactful. When we dare to trust ourselves and our daunting missions, we transform the circles and communities that we're a part of with our brilliance and big hearts. In our element, we're capable of leading consciousness revolutions with fierce compassion and clear plans of action.

Unfortunately, we face far more pushback than most for willingly and unwittingly ruffling feathers. We need all the support we can get not to betray our souls and missions in exchange for safety, belonging, thwarted love, financial security, and other promises of conventional or misaligned success and power.

Demographics and psychographics

Transformation trailblazers are very diverse in regard to age, gender, class, sexual orientation, education level, physical ability, spiritual and religious affiliation, national origin, ethnic ancestry, racial background, and many other qualifiers that often box us in. Students and clients in my soul authority courses, retreats and private practice

represent every decade (their ages range from 19-74), but the majority of them tend to be between 30-55 years of age.

The professions and careers that seem to provide the best structure and public interface for their deeper soul missions involve academia, social work, holistic healing, coaching, the arts, humanities, conservation, renewable energy, renegade economics, yoga and mind-body practices, spiritual entrepreneurship, non-profit services, social and earth justice, law, politics and psychology.

As a group, we tend to have well-developed intuitive gifts and off-the-charts emotional and spiritual intelligence (EQ & SQ) that help us to see through facades, social conventions and lies more easily than others, starting as early as childhood. Parents, teachers, and other adults may appreciate and recognize us as revolutionary old souls or as nuisances that threaten their worldviews, biases or social privileges.

My mother was often exasperated when I stood my ground and often called me “eigenwijs” - a Dutch expression that has an ambiguous meaning. The literal translation is “own way/wisdom,” describing an admirable strong person who follows their own wisdom. When that wisdom goes against the preferred grain, it means “being as stubborn as a mule.”

I was astute enough to notice the flicker in my mother’s eye when she admired how “eigenwijs” and resolute I was versus when she believed that I was being annoyingly difficult just to get my way. Because of her reactions to me, I questioned throughout my life whether or not my intense *eigenwijsheid*, my “own wisdom” was ego or “indigo” powered, the word I used after reading the book, *The Indigo Children: The New Children Have Arrived*, to help me to assess whether or not my impulses were ego-ecosystem aligned (indigo-driven) or not (ego-driven).

How transformation trailblazers play small

Being a transformation trailblazer is very challenging in today's world. These are a few of the creative solutions that we default to when unable to be both authentic and attached (fully accepted by our social groups):

1. We disconnect from our inner wisdom and play a smaller and more conventional and demure role to fit in and fly under the radar.
2. We withdraw into our own world, and end up identifying as quiet, counterculture or dark with a very active imagination and an unfair share of mental health challenges.
3. We assume the warrior role, openly resisting being boxed in by external pressures. We willingly risk being misunderstood and pegged as being too precocious, particular, meticulous, stubborn, difficult, righteous, or an old soul, outlaw, maverick, scapegoat, and devil's advocate who's a pain to be around.

4. Even as a rebel, we may have knowingly or unknowingly taken our big mission and important soul callings underground and have scaled them way down to minimize harm and hassle.

5. As (older) undercover agents, wearing whatever disguise or hat necessary not to draw unnecessary or harmful attention to ourselves, we may try to do our work as safely and easily as possible. We do this within a demanding modern-day context while often juggling many other responsibilities. It can be a lonely and hard journey with no end in sight.

Being in the world but not of it

Clearly, being a transformation trailblazer doesn't mean that we don't feel and behave like a hot mess at times.

The symptoms of dis-ease most transformation trailblazers struggle with include complex PTSD and stuck, old and layered grief, often not realizing that this is at the root of their depression, anxiety, bipolar symptoms, addictions, interpersonal distress, and many stress-related and autoimmune physical symptoms.

PTSD and grief stem from a wide variety of relational abuse and messy boundaries that are repeatedly aggravated by "dirty pain" (unhealthy avoidant) coping patterns that perpetuate intergenerational, ancestral, planetary, and large-scale societal violence and devastation.

Recent triggers that trouble transformation trailblazers include the pandemic, climate change, the Capitol siege by radicalized extremists and domestic terrorists wearing or waving confederate, White supremacist, and Nazi-related symbols and propaganda, incited by former president Trump, and the Homeland Security threat that they now pose.

Trauma imprints

Transformation trailblazers in my practice have ancestors from around the globe: i.e. England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Spain, Italy, Eastern Europe, Iran, Afghanistan, Thailand, China, Japan, Korea, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, West and South Africa, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and the United States.

The wide range of undigested traumatic residue and psychic imprints that have emerged during deep soul authority healing sessions include tribal warfare, massacres, genocide, imperialism, the Holocaust, feudalism, crusades, witch hunts, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the enslavement of indigenous and African people, colonization, segregation, lynchings, ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe, drug cartel terrorism in Latin America, sex trafficking, patriarchy and misogyny in the form of religious, physical, sexual, political and racial violence everywhere.

These imprints often intersect with their current issues and the subcultures and regions that they are from, still living in or escaped — if residing in the US, some examples of these areas are inner cities, reservations, well-to-do but soul-impooverished suburbs, rust- and Bible-belt areas, religious cults, and the deep South.

Despite carrying a heavy load of emotional labor, transformation trailblazers are still best suited to forge new paths of liberation and inspire others to embark on their own journeys of healing. Those close to us know that we remain shaken up and off unless we recalibrate our energy and emotions as quickly as we can when out of alignment.

After a lifetime of diligent practice, we have become quite good at this.

The central role of holistic healing

We have a lot of practice and know-how in tending to our neglected and bypassed needs through meditation, writing, psychotherapy and heart to heart talks with friends, loved ones and colleagues. Learning to set fierce and compassionate limits challenges our big-hearted disposition but is key to our well-being.

We often unlock our inner strength, refine our clarity, and protect our innate gifts by exploring holistic healing modalities and courses in plant medicine, mindfulness meditation, shamanic journeying, art, journaling, and energy and body work, such as acupuncture, massage therapy, craniosacral healing, yoga, Qigong and tai chi. Psychotropic drugs in low doses can at times offer inner support and stability that's hard to access or sustain in other ways.

These healing methods help many transformation trailblazers realize just how much interpersonal, sociopolitical, historical and ancestral oppression and inherited trauma have shaped us into the people we are today. Many of us have built armor around our hearts and souls for protection, and pushed scary truths out of our cognitive awareness. This may have helped us to succeed and even thrive in some areas of our lives but it is nevertheless blocking our greatest potential.

The default scapegoating we endured has oppressed and double-binded us. We've learned to associate our power and highest truth with rejection, persecution, terror and punishment. The solution to this is learning how to set firm energetic limits with past trauma and alchemize it into creative fuel to deal with today's problems.

We do this by being double-minded: learning how to be in the world but not of it. It requires learning to be one degree more in the deep NOW while staying simultaneously attuned to the deep MESS so we can transform it with energy from the infinite Source of love and healing that we're tapped into, instead of infinitely toggling between these two.

My mission

My mission is to guide and empower as many transformation trailblazers as possible with these soul authority skills, because we have the proven potential to change every social system, government institution or business that we are a part of from the inside out just by honoring and embodying more of our authentic selves.

With one foot out and one foot in the troubled world and armed with savvy soul authority tools, you too will learn to access sacred clear space and alchemize intense emotions into a bright torch that generates healing light, energy, wisdom, projects and missions.

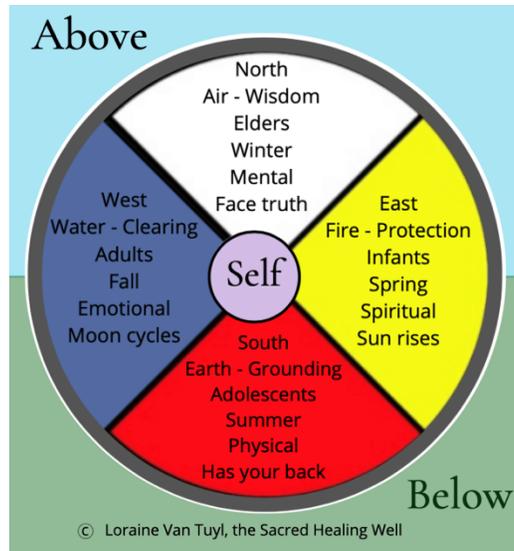
My soul authority system will offer you the guidance and support you need to reconnect to your core self, embrace your mind, body, heart and soul AS IS and cultivate more trust in your natural genius' ability to realign your ego-ecosystem. Eventually, you will learn to associate your authentic self with purpose, joy, soul authority, meaningful social connections and true attachments.

Soul Authority's medicine wheel structure

Soul Authority is a minimalist and seamless integration of modern expertise, ancient wisdom and nature-guided meditations, based on almost three decades of contemplation, rigorous study and testing. Ego-ecosystem alignments are held within a 7-sacred-directions medicine wheel structure and are supported by the sacred 4 elements that have guided, protected and empowered ancient earth-keepers and astrologists from every continent on the planet.

The first two directions represent the As Above - So Below hermetic axiom, symbolized by the sacred tree of life. Next are the 4 sacred directions, Air North Mental – Wisdom, Fire East Energetic – Protection, Earth South Physical – Grounding, Water West Emotional – Clearing. The 7th direction is our sacred heart compass, guiding us toward True North.

Each elemental guide around the wheel offers the ego-mind personalized insight into ego-ecosystem misalignments as well as guidance from a dreamteam of elemental and nature guides how to correct them.



The soul authority journey starts with setting up an elementally-balanced soul sanctuary and connecting with our ancient ancestral tree that will help you to relax into your paradoxical true nature: your direct, felt experience of your dynamic wholeness, your vast support from spirit allies, and your creative genius in absorbing all of this energy and harmonizing polarities.

You will also learn to become more aware of your ego-mind, its roles and identities, its reactions and feelings toward your soul, its need to control and its willingness or resistance to partner with your more expansive mind.

Each elemental guide around the wheel offers the ego-mind personalized insight into ego-ecosystem misalignments caused by dirty pain patterns, which are most easily detected by rigid polarities and fear-based worldviews about life. Reality and life experiences are painted as either all good or all bad, light or dark, pain or pleasure, life or death, self or other, mind (ego) or body (ecosystem), rather than recognized and appreciated for their complex, interdependent yin-yang relationship.

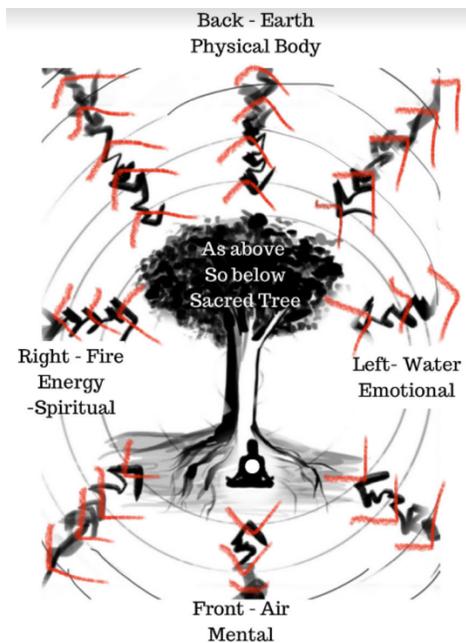
Clean pain practices are aligned with renewable energy solutions and incorporate the regenerative aspects of emotion, grief, and post traumatic recovery and growth into your healing rather than treat these challenging emotions as the enemy. An example of this is making space in your heart, mind and life for all of your feelings and embracing the messages they are attempting to communicate.

Chapter structure

Each chapter of my book starts with a lesson that consists of curated, fire-tested guidance sprinkled with awe-inspiring stories, scientific studies, client reflections, helpful resources, and word-for-word meditation scripts that can be recorded and played back to build a soul sanctuary from the ground up. Each chapter also builds on soul lessons

from prior chapters to guide you down a labyrinth pilgrimage toward your sacred heart center - the 7th within direction.

Here's where the tree, the elements and a dreamteam of personalized guides from all six directions intersect. At this aligned heart center (that you can spiral back to an infinite number of times), karmic gridlock and inner climate denial dissolve, personal warming signals burn mental fog and smog, and energetic boundaries and immunity strengthen.



In modern psychological terms, you can think of soul authority as a streamlined system that picks up circular and spiral momentum to get stuck grief or trauma unstuck. Once you've re-established your dynamic wholeness, you will simultaneously be able to root yourself in your still center and in the deep now of the 7th direction.

As you can imagine, an aligned True North heart compass provides the most trustworthy information and creative and aligned solutions around any issue — personal, professional, sociopolitical, artistic, spiritual, ecological. This invaluable clarity greatly enhances the effectiveness, confidence, and soul authority of leaders and healers like you who are ready to transform self-defeating coping patterns and self-protective “playing small” into superpowers that will help to usher a re-natured, socially and environmentally just world into being.

A sanctuary and cauldron for alchemizing pain

Your unique sanctuary will not only provide you a safe refuge and respite from the onslaught of stimuli and demands that may overwhelm you on a daily basis. You will also learn how to creatively metabolize your pain, grieve loss, and turn past suffering

into healing energy and insight for posttraumatic growth and the development of your soul purpose and leadership potential.

Your powerful transformations will occur within a protective womb-like soul sanctuary that's radically accepting and able to contain and rebalance all parts of yourself. This is because it's regulated by your brilliant and expansive mind, which is much larger than your coconut brain.

Within your elementally-balanced sanctuary, you enjoy heightened awareness and appreciation that your body resembles a mini-earth and mysteriously functions like a private eco-system that's both aligned with and held within the womb of Mother Nature.

This conscious set-up allows you to optimally honor your soul authority and devotion to wholeness. Instead of getting in your own way, you will become a powerful grounding rod and surge protector for short-circuiting emotional triggers, a tree-like carbon/chaos-sink for overwhelm, and a harmonizing change agent for toxic polarizations and charged fragmenting.

It requires learning to trust and align your ego-mind with the energy that runs through your ecosystem and fiercely protecting your re-natured integrity. Your powerfully aligned ego-ecosystem will organically inspire and motivate others to regroup into a higher version of themselves and update outdated social structures and systems accordingly.

This is how we transform the world and trailblaze liberating paths for others from the inside out.

Elegant and minimalist

This elegant and minimalist system expands with you for life. It's always in dynamic motion, and able to integrate all that you are discovering about yourself and your true nature through all of your inner and outer adventures and journeys.

After gaining and sustaining elemental harmony within your sanctuary, you will learn to invoke your own personalized dreamteam of archetypal, animal, ancestral, mythical and angelic guides to further help you to digest neglected and buried clean pain, decipher intense emotion and sane symptoms, and re-member split parts within yourself. These guides will continue to strengthen and stretch your truth-body vessel with the courage and fierce compassion you need to prevent future emotional short-circuiting while navigating oppressive systems to do your powerful soul work.

What you will enjoy the most is your heightened confidence and clarity when your truth body is finally seated at the throne of your divinity and anchored in your unwavering soul authority, for good.

Core values, benefits and features of Soul Authority

This timely, relevant and important system of soul restoration and healing relies on deep, universal truths and promotes both personal and collective transformation and benefits.

Here are its key components and features to give you a quick overview and sense if this soul authority, ego-eco re-naturing system is right for you.

Core value

Integrity: the core objective is to uncover and integrate all split-off energies and parts, align mind-body-spirit-heart activity and agendas, connect core personal truths to the greater good and bask in a sense of dynamic wholeness and well-being.

Core benefits

These core benefits will enhance your ability to surf the ups and downs of life. They are the sacred 7 C's that energize your chakras, starting at the root and ending at the crown:

- 1). Calm
- 2). Creativity
- 3). Confidence
- 4). Compassion
- 5). Courage
- 6). Clarity
- 7). Consciousness

Core relationship areas

With nature – learning to trust mystery, earth, elemental, and animal wisdom and spirit guides as an essential aspect of self and sustain a balanced, reciprocal and harmonious relationship with all.

With yourself - enhancing mental, emotional, physical, energetic levels of well-being by expanding self-awareness, cultivating radical acceptance and emotional maturity, and healing wounded past selves.

With others - supporting the greatest good of all by setting clearer and healthier boundaries with partners, children, parents, friends, colleagues, bosses, ex-es, community members, ancestors, entities, news, politics, social media, problematic people and perpetrators.

With soul purpose work - examining and redefining default contracts to our careers, callings, status, service, money, power and soul purpose work to fulfill your highest potential.

The daily benefits that a regular soul authority practice can offer you are:

- Grounded presence and more space for you
- Greater ease in setting boundaries
- Discerning truth from lies, manipulation, and trauma patterns
- Magnetic, irresistible pull to wholeness, integrity and the sacred
- More self-compassion, resilience and patience
- More empathy and fierce compassion for others
- Less overthinking and worrying
- Less stress, reactivity and frustration
- More energy, joy and free flow of emotion
- Embracing vulnerability as a source of character strength
- Greater intentionality and courage
- Fewer addictions and distractibility
- Loving life and yourself
- More confident and skilled in dealing with confrontations
- Feeling at peace and content
- Better pacing and emotional regulation
- Greater mind-body-heart-soul alignment
- More graceful transitions

Here are a few concrete examples and ways in which you will be able to implement soul authority skills in your personal and professional endeavors:

- Turn your inner critic into an inner mystic and guiding voice (rather than a berating one)
- Recognize narcissistic, antisocial and sociopathic patterns in yourself or others
- Be less manipulable, gullible and impressionable
- Experience deep soul transformations and fulfillment
- Transform hiding and hurting into healing and leading
- Shift self-centeredness into a desire to be of service to all sentient beings
- Rediscover your unique gifts and superpowers, and understand why they matter
- Clear symptoms of psychological and emotional despair, anxiety, irritability, insomnia and overwhelm
- Regulate and reduce many stress-induced physical ailments: inflammation, headaches, back pain, hormonal imbalances, tense muscles, irritable bowel syndrome, rashes, swelling, and break-outs
- Balance heart and mind and connect feelings with facts
- Speak and write about yourself and powerful transformative experiences with more clarity, authority, authenticity, and vulnerability

- Feel motivated and committed to eat healthy, sustainably-farmed and raised food and exercise regularly to enhance your sense of well-being, play, perseverance and vitality
- Improve conflict resolution skills, set limits with challenging people and cultivate work, school, friend and family environments where openness, support, and laughter are the norm
- Offer your child(ren) conscious and effective parental guidance, structure and discipline that makes it easy to enjoy quality time together and foster a relationship of mutual respect, fun, and growth
- Experience deep trust, intimacy and safety in your romantic relationships by being fully present, differentiated and honest about your needs
- Confide in and connect with friends during times of hardship and times of joy when in need of a break or just wanting to celebrate life, relax and enjoy their company
- Thrive in your professional endeavors and career by doing stimulating, creative and risk-taking work and feel recognized and generously compensated for your original ideas, designs, programs, books, solutions, and contributions
- Sustain your focus and transform yourself and the world from the inside out with unstoppable momentum
- Develop trust in your experiences, insights and intuition even if others are in disagreement
- Gracefully transition and integrate all parts of yourself into your new butterfly self and highest expression
- Speak about and commit to your mission with ease, joy and confidence.
- Touch each person in your life with your essence and gifts just by being your most aligned and potent true self

Here's a summary of Soul Authority's unique structure and purpose:

- 1). Elegant, minimalist, compact, complex, sophisticated, and highly effective
- 2). One-size-fits-all simplicity but infinite number of unique possibilities, like fingerprints
- 3). Elemental to advanced, takes you to your growth edge and grows with you for life
- 4). Structured but free-flowing, predictable yet organic, natural and accessible to anyone
- 5). Attuned to nature's rhythms, harmony, our highest good and the greater good of humanity
- 6). Truth-body vs trauma-body aligned and synched with the vast field of love and healing
- 7). A chaos sink, grounding rod, creative troubleshooter and solution regenerator
- 8). Self-healing and self-regulated to enhance self-trust, peace and boundary setting
- 9). Composts suffering and gracefully transforms karma into dharma

- 10). Practical with concrete soul purpose guidance for daily ceremony and ritual
- 11). Social and earth justice centered and empowered by alchemy assertions and action steps
- 12). A post traumatic recovery, psychological growth and grief cycle accelerator
- 13). Self-directed pace: from micro-dosing to free-falling and deep diving
- 14). Congruent with all forms of holistic and soul searching, psychotherapy, healing, and spirituality
- 15). Anti-bypassing support based on strong ego-ecosystem alliances and felt-experience
- 16). Organized, nuanced, and layered yet intuitive and easy to learn
- 17). Tried-and-tested with built-in safety measures imparted through “ego whispering” and reassurances
- 18). Agile and responsive to urgent matters without compromising well-being and remaining grounded in the deep now
- 19). Ground-up re-naturing instantly disrupts rigid stories for optimal top-down re-wiring
- 20). Shame-free, guilt-free exploration and re-alignment of energy and all emotions
- 21). Designed so that the infinite part of the self aligns with soul and truth body and the impermanent part of the self aligns with the ego and trauma body (we tend to do the opposite)
- 22). Clean pain patterns and vulnerability are no longer feared and dirty pain patterns lose their appeal as a source of control, blame and power
- 23). Invested in soul healing and root solutions, not in harm-reduction and coping strategies
- 24). Each person’s private ecosystem — mini earth — is safely held within the womb of Mother Nature to heal and realign misalignments from the moment of conception
- 25). Acknowledges and reharmonizes ancestral, past life, and planetary trauma and violence in service of greater equity, diversity and inclusion of all
- 26). Available to all earthlings, regardless of nationality, political affiliation, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, class, ability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other artificial separations and divisions

My Liberation Story and Transformation Trailblazing

- The Predictability of Oppressive Patterns vs the Creativity of our Natural Genius

I wanted to tell you my liberation story and the key highlights that contributed to the earliest discoveries of my own soul authority and subsequent transformation trailblazing.

May my story reveal how unoriginal and predictable oppression, domination and divisiveness are compared to our natural genius.

Free to be me in the jungle

Growing up, no one in the world understood my timeless soul yearnings better than Mowgli. Sensitive and tomboyish, I often pretended to be him and looked like him too. Born and raised near the edges of the Amazon rainforest of Suriname, one of the most forest-covered countries in the world (98.2%, The World Bank, 2016), I have been rocked by the arms and rhythms of nature ever since I was a baby.

As a hollow bone and very sensitive old soul, I was particularly attuned to relational conflict and emotions that were never acknowledged or talked about at home or at school.

I often felt pressured to deny my inner climate and ignore unspoken tension and harmful energies that acutely jarred my innate sense of harmony and wholeness. It stormed daily in my personal ego-ecosystem with no sign of calmer weather on the horizon. I regularly shed tears of overwhelm and frustration, and was teased for being a cry baby by peers or criticized by my mother, my aunts and my teachers for being overly sensitive. I longed to be seen, heard, helped and honored for receiving and running a lot of energy and guidance through my little body, and couldn't face the painful truth that this wasn't likely to happen in the near future.

A true canary, I was prone to absorbing toxic "coal mine" fumes wherever I went. I dreamed of running away and of living in the jungle all by myself, just like Mowgli. His reservations about humans and the modern world perfectly mirrored mine. His story made me feel less alone. My adventures in patches of mystical Amazon rainforest all around our home and weekend visits to four acres of mostly uncultivated farmland and jungle outside of the city soothed my heartache and nourished my lonely soul.

In the jungle, I could breathe freely and be my true wise self. I felt on top of the world, climbed trees, and played with intriguing insects, critters, self-made toys and all the wonders of the elements and nature until the sun went down and crickets indicated that it was time to go home. I was regularly on the prowl for creative solutions that could quiet my inner turmoil, and I soaked up intuitive guidance that I picked up from ancient living traditions I was exposed to like a sponge.

My survival instincts, wisdom, and 6th sense developed most rapidly in the jungle where my mind had lots of space to wander and daydream as I, armed with a rusty machete, roamed around with my pants stuffed in hefty black rubber boots. My free play caused the stuff I'd read about in my favorite library books to bubble to the foreground and align with what I was picking up from nature and ancestral guides through spontaneous inquiry and introspection.

Imaginary soul mates and spirit guides

I had relatable, imaginary soul mates, like Anne Frank, Joan of Arc and Helen Keller, who became my first spirit allies. Their stories gave voice to intangible energies and offered me insight into hard concepts like injustice, patriarchy, antisemitism, ableism, precognitive awareness, misogyny, religious oppression, inner freedom, wisdom vs intelligence, courage, compassion, self-trust, and nature as refuge.

As if preparing me for what was yet to come, they provided evidence that young girls and women could be leaders, could be wise, could be warriors and could be inspired by their mysterious connection to nature and a divine Source of guidance. It implied that there was nothing wrong with me. Like Helen Keller, I had an extrasensory gift and this was a good thing. I needed to understand that this gift was prone to evoke self-doubt and denial because the people who didn't like the painful truths I might unwittingly or clumsily expose would try to shut me down.

These kinds of objections trapped me in an irreconcilable double-bind: either be awake and alone, or asleep and accepted.

I figured out how to use my intuitive gifts to creatively resolve this inner conflict. My wise guides inspired me to write a book to tell my parents and other grownups what was really going on in the minds of children, on my terms, just like Anne Frank had done (I had no journal or diary, so I mostly filed key ideas away in my head). They made it okay for me to know things and have secrets that some adults didn't understand. I could decide when to share them and to whom. I woke up to the profound knowing that I was the sole author of my life, even though I had no words for this epiphany.

From double-binded to double-minded

This double-minded solution, the earliest roots of soul authority, gave me hope that I would be accepted for who I was, even if it didn't happen today. The support of my dream triad of friends meant a lot to me and made the delay feel okay. Before I was presented with this possibility, not being heard, seen, or understood by those who were supposed to, like my mother, tormented me to no end. Not having any space where I could exist and simultaneously connect to other living humans, in particular my immediate family, evoked intense annihilation terror and rage.

I was relentless in my attempts to get through to them, and had exhausted all possibilities that were available to me at that age. I'd once even blurted out to my

mother that I wanted to run away and live in the jungle. It was meant as a threat that I hoped would make her stop and think about her harsh parenting. She sharply retaliated with, “Go ahead. Who’s stopping you?” and fiercely stared me down until I acquiesced. I may have been seven or eight. I decided that day to NEVER tell her or anyone my painful feelings or plans ever again.

The audacity to trust my soul authority and guides was my only protection from crushing self-blame and emotional abandonment, especially when my mother didn’t get or support me, and my father wasn’t home during the day to get what was happening.

I didn’t know yet that a near-death experience in a past life had contributed to my precocious soul authority inklings as a young child, but I did know that I needed to record my wise insights and coping strategies in a book to gift to the world to educate people like my mother.

Losing my rainforest sanctuary

The natural world served as my go-to safe haven and sanctuary until a military coup uprooted my life at the tender age of ten. There were bombings and fires, kidnappings and protests, and disappearances and killings of those who dissented. My parents had the stern talk with my brother and I. We were warned not to ever say anything that could put our safety and lives in jeopardy. I was already well-trained in keeping my mouth shut, and went on with my life as usual.

Three years later, at the height of ordinary adolescent mayhem, my family emigrated to Miami, Florida to flee the ongoing chaos and political unrest that was only getting worse. Not until my daily sanctuary was completely gone did I realize how lost I was.

My spiritual True North and lifeline

Fortunately, my deep connection to the rhythms and wisdom of nature that my childhood spirit guides had awakened in me never left and became my new spiritual lifeline and True North in the concrete jungles of the US. This spiritual True North helped me to navigate a whole new set of challenges—self-doubt, survivor guilt, grief, culture shock, racism, selective mutism, second-language anxiety, PTSD, rebellious behavior, being blackmailed by an abusive teenage boyfriend, panic attacks, hearing things, fears of going crazy, uncontrollable crying and everything in between—well into adulthood.

My reliable inner compass also guided me toward a professional career in clinical psychology, and got me through a spontaneous shamanic initiation and several soul authority tests while in graduate school. It also helped me stay the course while undergoing rigorous study in Depth Hypnosis, Buddhist Psychology, shamanic counseling and energy medicine after receiving my doctorate.

Empowering other freedom fighters

My dreamteam of guides exponentially expanded over the decades and helped me to mix and match effective interventions and design my own signature healing systems that I wished existed when I needed them in the past.

I discovered that there were lots of other transformation trailblazers, natural-born healers and leaders, playful story tellers, freedom fighters and perceptive Mowgli-types in the world who'd similarly learned to undermine their superpowers for safety and survival (and who the universe was mysteriously sending my way!).

Like me, they'd been battling oppressive systems, cultural conditioning, family conflict and persecutory fears. They too had buried deep truths in their bones and primal essence for as long as they could remember and had been waiting for a sign to come out.

They'd been stuck in a similar double-bind that had kept them safe, but small. They were just not getting the traction they needed to get out of the muck. In the meantime, drums, alarm bells and the calls from the other side, wanting them to step up and take their life by the horns instead of hide, were getting louder.

If you can relate . . . this is your sign!

I'd love to help you transform self-doubt and align your true nature with your powerful emotions— your energy-in-motion—in service of your mission and the greater good.

In recent years, I've tweaked and finessed my holistic ego-ecosystem and energy-efficient strategies even more with the guidance of master teachers in mental health and ancient healing traditions. I chronicled how I obtained them in published articles and in my award-winning memoir and how I used them to empower hundreds of transformational trailblazers in holistic health, academia, the arts, social entrepreneurship and renewable energy in my practice and online.

I generously shared my trade-secrets in trainings and talks at the UC Berkeley counseling center, the Native American Health Center and professional conventions in psychology and spirituality, and enjoyed talking about their effectiveness as an expert guest in women's circles and on podcasts and radio shows across the US.

And this is only the beginning!

In reviewing my journey of transformation, it's hard for me to wrap my mind around the fact that the same withdrawn, young girl who hid in the rainforest and was selectively mute for almost a year as an adolescent (in a cold war with my American peers and pretending not to speak English) has shared her truth in front of cameras, with eloquent radio and podcast hosts, in articles and blog posts, on virtual platforms, and to live audiences and groups of more than 70 people.

It feels surreal, but it's the truth. By healing my fears and daring to speak up, I have inspired and helped thousands of other sensitive souls with my story and intuitive grasp of deep healing and soul integration work.

MY BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY: We are the ones we have been waiting for and our self-doubt is robbing ourselves and the world of our powerful gifts and hidden talents! If you've read this far, you are a rare treasure chest filled with dormant old soul wisdom and potential that those in your circles of influence need more than ever.

As I tune into today's challenges, I'll also be raising my own bar while writing this book and will provide you the most relevant and effective secrets to add to your toolbox and healing arsenal.

Your turn to shine

May my gifts to you allow you to trust yourself and shine brightly as a creative, intuitive, and caring problem-solver, bridge-builder, visionary, parent, colleague, friend, healer, writer, non-profit director, spiritual leader, policymaker, educator, artist, administrator, social entrepreneur, anti-sexism and anti-racism activist, community organizer, or transformation powerhouse and change agent.

Embracing and sharing your truth will not only liberate you from self-doubt and the particular coal mine you may be trapped in, but you will help close all toxic coal mines by fortifying the earth and social justice movements you've been longing to energize your entire life.

So let's roll up our sleeves.

There is no better time than NOW to transform yourself and the world with the help of these powerful soul authority tools and strategies.

Why this Book is Right on Time

– Hearing the Calls of my Ancestors and the Wild

*Walking, I'm listening to a deeper way.
Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me.
Be still they say. Watch and listen.
You are the result of the love of thousands.*

- Linda Hogan

*What's the problem with being 'not racist'? It is a claim that signifies neutrality:
'I am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism.
One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or
confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist.*

- Ibram X. Kendi

Hearing and honoring the calls from my ancestors and the wild propelled me to write this book.

I'm used to listening and surrendering to their guidance, but the degrading, cowardly and callous way in which George Floyd was slowly suffocated on May 25, 2020 shook me to the core and took the volume of their calls to a whole new level. It didn't take long for me to realize that the intensity of my rattled inner state wasn't going to release its grip on me until I explored and made space for what needed to come through.

It all felt deeply personal to me, directly threatening my core existence and racial ancestry, even though I don't look Black nor need to deal with the anti-Black racist slurs, microaggressions, institutional racism, or serious assaults to my psychological integrity and physical body that those with Black racial features and darker skin color grapple with on a daily basis.

I was overcome by anguish and rage every time I imagined the psychological agony, exhaustion and fury that this atrocious hate-crime was stirring up within Black homes and communities, probably landing like the last drop in buckets full of daily racial trauma and denied injustices.

This is how George Floyd's death and the upsurge of the BLM movement became the blaring siren and impetus I needed to capture what my ancestors had wanted me to prioritize for a while.

Their request was loud and clear. I needed to pivot during this crucial turning point in history and start book two: the how-to book that I'd left on the backburner of my to-do list while designing and offering my soul authority courses.

Ancestral bleed-throughs

I suspected that my maternal great-grandmother, a descendant of Ghanaian slaves and my central ancestral guide, was most active and invested in this new chapter of my life that was quickly taking shape.

She'd protected and guided me in spirit throughout my childhood while playing in the Amazon rainforest and was the first spirit guide to come through when I was a clinical psychology student, at risk of losing my core self in graduate school.

While contemplating the competency guidelines of my profession in my ethics classes, I started to hear familiar drumming sounds in my inner ear (kind of like a song stuck in your head). They sounded like the drum beats that I often heard on radio Apinti and on television. I also started to see flashes of the Maroon people who were dancing to the sounds of the Apinti drum at my elementary school during a powerful and magical cultural ceremony.

My feelings about the relentless drumming were all over the place. They evoked a dire sense of extinction that I'd linked to rumors of large-scale logging of Suriname's rainforest.

Fears of going crazy

Because of the traditional clinical psychology setting I was in, it was easy to work myself into a paranoid frenzy. I was constantly worried about going crazy, or of being perceived and diagnosed as crazy, psychotic or unfit to become a psychotherapist should any of my mentors and peers find out about my state of mind.

I was relieved when I discovered that the jungle was not at risk of being cut down nor that I was losing my mind. I realized that I was, however, at grave risk of losing my soul and my connection to my true nature and the heartbeat of the forest.

The modern world was encroaching upon us and suffocating the ancient and indigenous ways. Not only did I need to note this: I apparently needed to do something about it!

I'd assumed that the mental health field was one of the last safe places in the world, a sanctuary where I could finally take my guard down, but the pressure to rely on evidence-based practices (that didn't represent people like me) was messing with my mind and creating a great deal of inner turmoil.

During a hypnosis session, I learned that the drumming sounds were the alarm bells and rally cries that my great grandmother used during this phase of my life to get my attention and wake me up. Even though my body and soul instantly knew what was up, it took my scrambling mind quite a while to connect all the dots and trust the process.

Summoning power

Escaped slaves who'd set up villages in the rainforest, starting in the 1700's, drummed to communicate with one another, to celebrate and dance, and to call on healing spirits and energy for the community. I was blessed to experience the power of their rituals and energy first-hand during unforgettable, life-altering close encounters with Maroons, the descendants of these escaped slaves who'd set up small, intriguing looking homes on patches of communal land around the edges of the capital — the only "city" in Suriname, inhabited by a few hundred thousand residents — when I was a child.

They'd formed six distinct tribes and most of them remained hidden in the dense jungles of Suriname from the late 1600's until the late 1900's, preserving their distinct languages, wood carving skills, architectural styles, and traditions. What I learned through my mystical connection with them was that escaped slaves vigorously beat their drums to summon power and protection from spirit allies and instill fear in plantation masters when about to attack and burn a plantation to free more slaves.

They were trying to rescue me and pump me full of courage before it was too late. I didn't know how to stand up for myself because I'd intuitively lived by my convictions and inner knowing without ever needing to conceptualize or articulate them. My innate wisdom was at risk of getting bulldozed over and buried by a huge, authoritative body of knowledge that I couldn't compete with.

The way of the spiritual warriors and freedom fighters

My ancestors stopped me in my tracks before I could cut myself off from a lifeline that had guided and protected me my entire life. I needed to consciously choose which path was right for me instead of passively submitting to a professional perspective that was not aligned with my inner wisdom and would continue to make me unwell.

When I could finally see what was happening and felt the support of my ancestors, it was a no-brainer that the ancient ancestral path, the way of the spiritual warriors and earth wisdom keepers, was right for me. It began to feel less of a choice and more like relinquishing and relaxing into who I truly was, who I had always been, and who I could never desert, even if I wanted to.

My great-grandmother helped me to re-nature myself and revive my inner wisdom and shamanic gifts. I assisted with the soul healing of our ancestors who'd endured the horrors of slavery in spontaneous trance sessions. It involved recognizing their mystical powers and honoring them for who they really were, even when stuck for life in a social system that did not. I not only helped to release them from their shackles in the afterlife; I also freed my own hidden powers, my shamanic inklings and my true potential.

Opening the door for my larger soul mission

Through a great deal of soul searching, returning to my ancestral roots, and cross-national dissertation research to rediscover my core self, I discovered that my path had

another layer. I couldn't just turn my back on my dreams of becoming a psychologist, and simply decide to become a shamanic practitioner instead.

That would've been too easy. The imbalances and biases in the mental health field were like a thorn in my side, and would eventually burst my bubble of isolated well-being. My soul purpose was to reveal the compartmentalization and overpathologizing that were so prominent in the mental health field and to help reform them before they harmed more people like me.

I also needed to own and dissect why I felt so disillusioned, distraught and mystified. My most authentic and whole self had been robbed from me. Why did I feel least supported and most misunderstood in a helping field that encouraged so many vulnerable souls to place their last shreds of hope and trust in its care?

I'm sure that I wasn't the first and wouldn't be the last to feel wedged apart from my healing intuition and the wise teachings of my ancestors. I was at a loss how to resolve this systemic issue. I had insider privileges and more power than most to do something about this, and yet I felt utterly helpless and bat crazy for wanting to confront a giant a hundred times my size.

Self-trust and clarity

Desperate for answers, I retreated and consulted with my wise guides, something I learned to do as a child while roaming in the rainforest. I grokked that my mission was to immerse myself into this problem and profession, like a journalist, and expose all the roadblocks, dead-ends, and tight knots that made it so challenging for me to be present. I surrendered to the guidance. I wrote in secret about my doubts and the many inner and outer conflicts I wrestled with while traversing uncharted territory.

I didn't trust anyone, but I used to trust myself when defying authority figures as a child. By regularly sorting out my thoughts and feelings with the help of nature and spirit guides in my imaginary parenting book, addressed to adults who didn't get it, I taught myself how to be mindful and reflective. I figured out throughout the course of my life to remain devoted to the truth, no matter how painful, by being an observer, by NOT taking everything personally, and by finding meaning and openings in hardship and closed doors.

To my delight, my self-trust and clarity were coming back full force. I discovered while writing that my reflections were finally ripe and seasoned enough to be compiled into a spiritual memoir. While it was an arduous challenge to integrate my premonitions and intuitive insights as a child with my awakening journey, professional training and cross-national dissertation data as an adult, it felt right, aligned and powerful.

Round two of ancestral book guidance

I recognized that a similar awakening and writing process was taking root within me during this catalytic moment in history, bookended by the chaotic rise and fall of the Trump administration. Because of what I'd experienced in round one of book writing, I anticipated that this creative undertaking would provide me the best possible buffer during this turbulent and triggering transition and vice versa, this trying time would serve as the best creative muse to dig up and reckon with our nation's biggest blindspots and skeletons for greater accountability, healing and trust building.

The rich and promising golden thread that moved through me felt familiar. I traced it to a universal theme that I've struggled with throughout my life as a highly sensitive and intuitive empath. I would describe it as an overwhelming yearning to integrate and resolve the tension between two powerful forces which were at opposite sides of the spectrum:

- Unresolved intergenerational pain and social conflict that I couldn't harmonize and balance
- Mysterious and determined ancestral, spiritual and nature-centered guidance I couldn't fully absorb or put to use.

Back in grad school, I realized that the clients who were drawn to me reported similar challenges and that I wasn't alone. I felt an obligation to protect them and their missions but had no idea how.

The desire to bridge these two extremes — which were heightened by graduate school splits and callings from other guides, like my Taoist Hakka Chinese and Portuguese Jewish Dutch ancestors — eventually inspired me to design emotional regulation systems that effectively integrated these polarities within myself and those I served.

Since then, I have tested and refined these models in my professional roles as a holistic clinical psychologist, multicultural, diversity, and race relations specialist, Depth Hypnosis, practitioner, shamanic ecopsychologist, ordained minister, meditation guide and spiritual teacher.

For more than two decades, all seemed to move along smoothly in my practice until this screeching halt.

Stretching deeper, wider and higher

Because of my in-depth prior work, I was surprised how quickly George Floyd's death unraveled me. It revealed a buried layer that I didn't even realize was there. Underneath my infuriating heartbreak and sadness were feelings of hopelessness, shame, and utter defeat about our lack of consciousness and organized action in fighting racism as a nation and human race.

- All of a sudden, my dedicated practice, convictions and sense of spaciousness around “being the change” evaporated into thin, toxic air.
- I started to have serious doubts about our ability to make any meaningful social and racial justice strides as a global human family.
- The future looked futile and bleak because the most basic human rights — let alone the long list of unmet higher level needs — of a large segment of our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) relatives were still rampantly violated.
- Anti-Black injustices in particular were occurring on a widespread, blatant, and systemic level. Their diminished health, nutrition, and resources was the reason why disproportionately more Black people were susceptible to Covid-19 and dying during the pandemic.
- Donald Trump’s divide-and-conquer tactics and propaganda — the racist subtext of MAGA, Make America Great Again, his overt and covert undermining of policies, positions, and programs that support inclusion, diversity and racial equity and his dog whistles to white supremacists and QAnon supporters during tragic moments like these — were becoming more exasperating and a dangerous pandemic in their own right alongside Covid-19.

My tipping point

The resurgence of the BLM movement gave me the courage to reach the boiling point that I’d been avoiding. When every cell in my body culminated into a hard “NO” from one day to the next, it registered how much fear and extra baggage I’d been carrying.

It was the hard stop and clear limit I didn’t dare to set, despite being given many opportunities to do so while steeped in some form of anti-racism work since 1990.

I never realized how much I was still haggling with fear and self-doubt that hadn’t composted. These are some of the issues that were still lingering in some far traumatized corner of my mind and blocking my fullest potential:

- I was afraid to take a fierce, uncompromising stand against anti-Black racism and confront the most charged social injustices head-on because of inherited persecution fear.
- I indulged a knee-jerk protective reflex that signaled that I’d be in danger and targeted if I came out of hiding and became more visible to an omniscient, invisible enemy.

- I was continuously adjusting my inner climate, expectations and strategies by subconsciously catering to an external social climate that was always in flux, in charge and used to monopolizing shared spaces.
- The worldviews of those around me and the perceived threat that they posed to my inner safety shaped my behavior and unconscious thoughts, biases and assumptions more significantly than I wanted to admit.

While my harmonizing talent has been a valuable asset in many contexts, it compromised my ability to anchor in my core values and protect my energy, soul and integrity as well as they needed to be.

This diminished my inner strength and wellness, and made it harder to remain focused on my mission and push the envelope further.

The things I cannot accept

Angela Davis challenged my take on things and helped me to up the ante with her battle cry, “I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I’m changing the things I cannot accept.”

For thirty years, I’d invested the bulk of my energy into who was ready to change and on what seemed manageable to tackle, just like the original serenity prayer suggested. Despite doing lots of good and powerful work this way, this approach didn’t challenge white privilege nor my own — enough.

Something continued to feel off within myself. How could it not, when considering the parts of our collective human body that are still riddled with pain and neglected every single day?

BIPOC, and in particular Black and Indigenous people, continue to experience a disproportionately high degree of police brutality and murder, poor access to adequate housing, education, nutrition, transportation, social support and medical care, and have extraordinary high rates of incarceration, poverty, domestic instability, violence, substance abuse, and mental and physical health issues that are already disadvantaging future generations and setting them up for repeat.

Those at the margins and most stuck in harmful situations will remain oppressed, and those driving the inequities for profit and selfish gains will remain in power and do harm for far too long if we continue to do our fulfilling, meaningful work in the way I had been.

Complacency and privilege allow us to remain in denial and ignore these very disturbing facts because they’re not causing us daily pain and frustrations.

We can remain comfortably padded and sandwiched here for a few more generations or we can shake up the status quo and take more responsibility for our contribution to these long-standing problems.

We can't breathe

I'd been to many protests and marches. I'd never before felt so jarred to my senses and uplifted by the sights and sounds of others who'd also had reached this "enough is enough" limit as I did during the BLM marches I attended.

The camaraderie and physical presence of thousands of diverse protestors of every generation, skin color, age and gender truly got to me. It was beyond electrifying to be engulfed by unstoppable energy and momentum belonging to a growing critical mass that peacefully, yet vehemently, expressed their outrage toward a grave injustice that we had been too quiet and complacent about.

Perhaps it were the passionate, "We can't breathe" rally cries. Perhaps it was all of us being cooped up for two and a half months, straight, in a confined space during the Covid-19 pandemic after four years of gasping for air under the suffocating weight of an oppressive Trumpist administration.

We pumped one another full of courage and clarity by naming the unacceptable and locking elbows against systemic oppression and status quo denial. I realized that the lone wolf, the survivor and the warrior in me didn't want to admit how much I longed to join forces and defend the civil rights of the most disenfranchised with a growing and unified majority of citizens across all kinds of artificial divides.

Their electrifying presence and unstoppable energy nourished and helped me to become clearer and stronger in ways that I never could on my own or within the supportive, but marginalized communities that I was a part of.

Racial healing

Before the data from various polls, including Pew, N.O.R.C, Kaiser Family Foundation and Civis Analytics, had come in, I already knew in my heart and soul — thanks to my ancestral guides — that these marches would herald a defining moment in US history.

In June 2020, Dr. Gail C. Christopher, Executive Director of the National Collaborative for Health Equity, released an official statement, entitled "America Urgently Needs Truth And Transformation To Bring Unity, Equity And Racial Healing To Our Nation."

Millions of Americans agreed with her observations. Over 4,700 protests had taken place and as many as 26 million people had participated in them by July 3, 2020, far surpassing numbers from other notable marches, such as the Women's March in 2017 and the Civil Rights marches of the 1960's.

Anti-racism books dominated the bestseller lists and were sold out amid these mass protests with Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to be an anti-racist*, on the NY bestseller list for 13 weeks.

Daily anti-racism activism

How can we keep this momentum going? What would help the millions new to the movement become everyday anti-racism activists?

Kendi, who is a professor and historian of race and discriminatory policy in the US, explained in his book that it's not enough to claim that you're "not a racist," which is our knee-jerk response around the topic of racism and often based on a quick comparison of our daily actions and beliefs with those of a self-proclaimed neo-Nazi or white supremacist.

This stance is not fierce and savvy enough to pierce through institutional white privilege and covert racist policies and inequities that are embedded in the many norms and social structures that we've inherited.

To actively challenge and up-end racist norms and policies that infiltrate our institutions and influence our daily habits and privileges, we need to become anti-racists.

It needs to become increasingly more clear that we either endorse default racist claims and ingrained assumptions that entire groups of people are responsible for their own demise and driven by negative, self-defeating, culturally or biologically inferior influences or intentions, or we recognize that those of us in historically dominant positions or with greater access to privileges, power and resources are failing them on a daily basis while deliberately, obviously or quietly benefiting from our one-up position and hence, their one-down status.

Becoming an anti-racist activist requires taking a hard look at our past and our racist origins to dispel our modern-day myths, assumptions about the nature of reality, and face the deceptive and destructive path that we've been on.

Resmaa Menakem, racialized trauma specialist, healer and New York Times bestselling author of *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, has us focus on two kinds of pain and coping patterns— "clean pain" and "dirty pain" — especially while navigating this tricky racialized terrain.

This is how he discerns clean pain (higher self inspired) from dirty pain (lower self inspired):

"Clean pain is the pain that mends and can build your capacity for growth...Dirty pain is the pain of avoidance, blame, and denial. When people respond from their most

wounded parts, become cruel or violent, or physically or emotionally run away, they experience dirty pain. They also create more of it for themselves and others."

It is through dirty pain that we develop emotional problems or mental illness. It's also the root cause of scapegoating, white supremacy and our long history of covert systemic racism, founded on centuries of overt racist brutality that has not been able to properly compost because of our ingrained and pervasive dirty pain patterns.

The only way for us to come up with root solutions is by excavating the dark secrets and skeletons that we've dumped in mass graves or just left to rot without proper burials.

We hold all of this denied history and suffering in our bodies and souls. Opening the channels of communication between them is what will alchemize them into a higher form and ultimately release them out of our bodies.

Resmaa calls this process: "Somatic Abolitionism . . . a living, embodied practice and culture that requires endurance, adjustment, stamina, and discernment."

All Men Are Created Equal

- But Not All Men, Let Alone All Genders, Are Treated As Equals

*I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction.
Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me
there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality.*

- Alice Paul

In writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, owner of 200 slaves and several plantations, proclaimed that “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

He thought that it was powerful enough of a claim to ultimately end slavery. We all know how that went down. This proclamation was fought tooth and nail for more than a century until it resulted in outright war.

Roughly 750,000 Americans died in the Civil War, a fight that was, at its core, about granting Black Americans their equality — their voting rights, power, resources, possessions, culture, respect and freedoms — vs continuing to exploit them for self-gain through racist institutions — slavery — and beliefs that justify their inferior status.

Abolitionist Thomas Day, a transformation trailblazer of his time, was baffled by the widespread cognitive dissonance and denial that existed in 1776. Today, he would probably be considered a “radical, social liberal” for pointing out the obvious: “If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves.”

Even religious leaders endorsed white supremacist ideologies and racist practices while simultaneously and hypocritically preaching about peace and love. Some claimed that Black people were the cursed descendants of Ham, and therefore cursed forever into enslavement. Or they would claim that according to science, ethnology, or biology that Black people by nature were predisposed to slavery and servility. That this was God’s will and nature’s law, which absolved white slave masters of their savage mistreatment of people purely because of the color of their skin.

Lip service and lofty ideals

In 1975, in an essay marking the approach of the nation’s bicentennial, the eminent historian John Hope Franklin accused the Founding Fathers of “betraying the ideals to which they gave lip service . . . human bondage and human dignity were not as important to them as their own political and economic independence.”

That America's founders gave lip service to their ideals to amass more wealth, land and political clout — above all in regard to the subject of race — is an enduring charge. Generations of political leaders followed suit and to this day, discard these ideals in exchange for more wealth, land (to exploit and mine) and political clout.

There has been a lot of speculation that indigenous cultures and values influenced the lofty ideals that America took full credit for but could not live up to.

Jerry D. Stubben examined the research presented by the critics and proponents of the indigenous influence theory.

He wrote in the September 2000 edition of the *Social Science Quarterly* journal, "This research analyzes the writings of historians and other scholars involved in the study of the indigenous influence theory, the writings and speeches of sixteenth-to eighteenth century European political philosophers, the founding fathers, and indigenous peoples, and government documents. The scholarly debate has gone beyond proving that indigenous societies did influence the development of American democratic norms, values, and institutions to defining the degree of such influence."

Jefferson was fascinated with Native cultures and languages, spending his spare time studying and reading about them. He believed Native American peoples to be a noble race who were "in body and mind equal to the white man." Nevertheless, like many of his contemporaries, he believed that Native Americans were culturally and technologically inferior because they didn't exploit and take private possession of their ancestral land.

European patriarchy and entitlement

Jefferson and European settlers and colonizers (many who were political and religious refugees escaping poverty, persecution, disease, and misery at the bottom of the social ladder) felt entitled to take over the Natives' lands. They either assumed that the Natives "had plenty" or that these were public lands up for grabs because they were unmarked and unfenced.

Their motives and attempts at emulating all that's "cultured," "civilized," and more advanced — knowing the value of individual land and accruing wealth — were influenced by what they had endured at the hands of feudal warlords, religious tyrants and rich aristocrats who'd oppressed them in the Old World for who knows how long.

Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello was filled with Native artifacts obtained from the Lewis and Clark expedition that he commissioned shortly after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 to explore and map newly acquired land and to establish an American presence in this territory before Britain and other European powers tried to claim it.

It didn't even register at that time that the empty democratic ideals and proclamations that were copied and portrayed as America's foundational backbone sounded empty

and ridiculous amidst slavery, colonial fervor and pillaging of indigenous life and land because of racist white supremacy norms.

This is just how things were.

Long standing denial of denial

Under the guise of “expanding civilization,” the fury to acquire land, widen borders, and either enslave, eradicate or convert “native savages” to Christianity incited centuries of violence and death. Less than 300,000 Native people remained in the 1890’s of what was once a vibrant population of 12-15 million perhaps even more.

The biggest killers were smallpox, measles, influenza, whooping cough, diphtheria, typhus, bubonic plague, cholera, and scarlet fever, killing off entire communities and villages in excruciatingly devastating ways. All of these diseases were brought over by the Europeans colonizers.

As horrific as this was, the brutal savagery inflicted on Native tribes by early colonizers was much worse. Throughout the “500 year war” which some call the American Indian Holocaust or the Native American Genocide, Native people were subjected to more than 1500 wars, attacks, and raids. Hundreds of men, women and children were tortured and murdered at the time. Most of these massacres were authorized by the United States government.

A lot of our fear and paranoia about undocumented intruders ruining and exploiting America today may be the skeletons from our own closeted, criminal and racist past. They will keep on haunting us if we don’t reckon with the unacknowledged greed, fear, hatred and vileness that were passed down our lines and heighten our xenophobia.

This disowned racist energy is once again targeting the most vulnerable victims of the times and turning them into dangerous savages and “bad people” — portraying undocumented asylum seekers and refugees, mothers and children who are escaping war, drug cartels, danger and injustices elsewhere, as violent criminals and refuting any contradictory evidence from the get go.

Not taking responsibility for our barbaric past

When Germany began a process of national self-criticism after World War II, investigating atrocities of its Nazi past, creating large-scale education programs and confronting history were understood as a necessary part of moving forward.

Many other countries followed suit.

The notable omission from the list of countries: The United States. No “truth commission” or “holocaust memorial” has ever been undertaken by the U.S. to

acknowledge—let alone compensate for—the historical violence against Native Peoples.

To this day, some people dispute whether the Native American genocide by the U.S. ought to be called “genocide.” Even academic writers have trouble acknowledging the historical record.

The late Pulitzer-Prize winning historian and Harvard educator, Bernard Bailyn, who died at age 97, spent most of his life meticulously reinterpreting and clarifying America’s blurred and barbaric early history. He has no qualms calling the countless massacres and ruthless obliterations of Native Americans a genocide.

In his last book, *The Barbarous Years*, he portrays the 1600-1700’s as a grand drama in which the glimmers of enlightenment barely surpassed the rampant savagery.

“Nobody sat around erasing this history, but it’s forgotten,” he said during an interview with Ron Rosenbaum from the *Smithsonian Magazine*.

“Conveniently?” Ron asked him.

“Yes,” he agrees. “Look at the ‘peaceful’ Pilgrims. Our William Bradford. He goes to see the Pequot War battlefield and he is appalled. He said, ‘The stink’ [of heaps of dead bodies] was too much.”

“The ferocity of that little war is just unbelievable,” Bailyn says. “The butchering that went on cannot be explained by trying to get hold of a piece of land. They were really struggling with this central issue for them, of the advent of the Antichrist.”

It is very telling that most Americans don’t know what occurred on that dreadful day in 1637 near present day Groton, Connecticut. According to William B. Newell, a Penobscot Indian and former chairman of the Anthropology department of the University of Connecticut, more than 700 men, women and children of the Pequot Tribe had gathered for their annual Green Corn Dance, their Thanksgiving celebration.

In the predawn hours, the sleeping Indians were surrounded by English and Dutch mercenaries, religious refugees escaping persecution, who ordered them to come outside. Those who came out were shot or clubbed to death while the terrified women and children who huddled inside the longhouse were burned alive.

John Winthrop, the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of about 1000 Puritan refugees declared this next day, “A Thanksgiving Day . . . For the next 100 years, every Thanksgiving Day ordained by a governor was in honor of the bloody victory, thanking God that the battle had been won.”

Many of these massacres, including this one, didn’t involve “any battle” or resistance.

The innocent fable that most American children are taught in school is founded on a day of Thanksgiving once “celebrated” between the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony and the Wampanoag tribe in 1621.

A National Day of Mourning

Literature at the Plimoth Plantation, a living museum, reveals that European traders who first arrived in 1616 brought a plague that killed — in just four short years — up to two-thirds of the Wampanoag, then numbering around 50,000 -100,000, and occupying 69 villages in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Because of the women and children that disembarked from the Mayflower in 1620, the Wampanoag didn’t see the Pilgrims as a threat.

They initially kept their distance but eventually helped the Pilgrims plant corn, fish and gather berries and nuts. They even entered into a treaty of mutual protection. During their “first Thanksgiving” meal, they did not sit down together for a big turkey dinner and it was not an event that the Wampanoag knew about or even had been invited to.

The Pilgrims had a good yield, used their firearms in celebration, and the Wampanoag showed up to help, thinking the Pilgrims were under attack.

There wasn’t enough food for the 90 extra warriors. Hunters went out and five deer were shot to feed everyone and add to the three day festivities.

Today, Thanksgiving is a National Day of Mourning for the remaining 4,000 to 5,000 Wampanoag. In 1970, Wampanoag Wamsutta James was invited by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to give a speech at an event celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ arrival. He was disinvited when the organizers discovered that the speech was one of outrage over the “atrocities” and “broken promises” his people endured.

He’d written, “This action by Massasoit was perhaps our biggest mistake. We, the Wampanoag, welcomed you, the white man, with open arms, little knowing that it was the beginning of the end.”

It’s time for TruthsGiving

I wonder if we will sound as ridiculous to our descendants 250 years from now for making this same claim, “all men are created equal,” while mindlessly partaking in hurtful and racist traditions and practices that portray huge cognitive dissonance, denial and blindspots that we don’t see or refuse to see.

Indigenous activist, Christine Nobiss, introduced and coined the concept, Truthsgiving, to dispel the lies and myths about our past, including the real story and meaning behind our most celebrated and observed holiday in the US, Thanksgiving.

Over the decades and centuries, our whitewashed minds and colonized bodies have learned to reject our own inner wisdom and intimate connections to ancestral pain and truths in favor of patriotic and sanitized stories that willfully omit or distort the facts.

So much has been obscured and diffused in history books, that sobering and important facts about the most heinous of human rights violations and war crimes that were primarily orchestrated and financed by European countries, royalty, missionaries, colonists, slave owners, and traffickers — such as the Native American genocide and the trafficking, enslavement, exploitation and torture of 12 million African people over hundreds of years, involving 45,000 horrific transatlantic voyages to the Americas and the Caribbean — are still swept under the rug.

Conveniently forgetting these horrors is irresponsible, racist and privileged, but intentionally erasing them takes white supremacy and entitlement to a whole other level.

Deliberately erasing and attacking historical works

According to historian Bailyn, no one was deliberately attempting to erase our treacherous history: it was just conveniently forgotten (the Wampanoag and others would disagree).

Until Donald Trump arrived at the scene. He not only attempted to erase historical facts and truths that are crucial to those who've been lied to for centuries. He blatantly refuted them as untruths, slandering educational programs as toxic and divisive —just months after criticizing and falsely portraying BLM protestors as Antifa (Anti Fascist) domestic terrorists who are trying to stir unrest and trouble.

In September of 2020, he specifically attacked the New York Times' 1619 Project, a Pulitzer prize-winning endeavor by Nikole Hannah-Jones. Her goal was to cast a spotlight on the 400th anniversary of the first slave ship arriving in America and illuminate how the legacy of slavery continues to impact our daily lives.

According to Trump, her 1619 Project “warped” the American story. He claimed that the country’s early foundational reliance on slave labor and the longtime disenfranchisement of racial minorities is a “web of lies” and “child abuse.”

He also called curriculum on race a “crusade against American history” and “toxic propaganda, an “ideological poison that, if not removed, will dissolve the civic bonds that tie us together” and “will destroy our country.” He threatened to cut funding to California schools that teach the 1619 Project and ordered the crackdown on federal anti-racism training, calling it 'anti-American.'

During the closing days of his administration, he fulfilled his promise to issue a report that promotes a “patriotic education” about race and the birth of the nation. He released the "1776 Commissions Report," on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no less, to refute

teachings on systemic racism, critical race theory, and deeper examinations of how slavery has affected American society.

Violent attempts to preserve our racist past

According to Dr. Jonathan Holloway, president of Rutgers University, historian and author of *The Cause of Freedom: A Concise History of African Americans*, “Many of the insurrectionists who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 were driven by a belief that they were acting in accord with the principles fashioned at the birth of this country, that their protest embodied America’s long history of patriotic rhetoric about freedom and citizenship . . . This patriotic rhetoric fundamentally ignores centuries of efforts to make sure that only certain people are protected by the nation’s laws, and that Black Americans, even if freed from slavery, remain second class citizens. Even for abolitionists who believed that slavery was a sin, the breadth of what was meant by freedom for enslaved Africans was a deeply contested idea.”

These ingrained, contentious and ongoing power struggles and debates involving the lives and concerns of BIPOC — nowadays concealed as a political game and sport between dueling parties, especially when on campaign trails — emerged in full glory during the Capitol siege to “Stop the Steal,” the alleged stolen election. It also explained the Republican Senators’ complicated relationship to their party and acquittal of Donald Trump, who’d been impeached for spreading the lies and inciting the insurrection.

None of these events happened in a vacuum. And neither do the many incidents of anti-Black police brutality and the disproportionate imprisonment of Black people, for that matter.

They are all the result of racist tension between two forces caught in an epic battle in the US between ‘domination and privileges for a few’ (white, heteronormative, cis-male enjoying but denying most of these privileges, now claiming that their freedoms are under attack aka their historical position of dominance and superiority is at risk of getting toppled) vs ‘freedom and equality for all’ (the opposing party trying to live up to the founders’ claims of equality yet barely able to do so).

Group loyalty vs loyalty to the truth and our integrity

Truth and justice are often secondary to these long standing partisan loyalties, beliefs and policies that define these two parties.

The fact that ten house representatives and seven senators from the Republican Party showed support to impeach and convict Trump indicated that some scales may be tipping because the underground coercive pressures and political blackmail to remain “loyal” are getting exposed and backfiring. It was only a matter of time.

The hope is that it isn’t too late and that courageous and fierce resistance will move fast enough to squash this dangerous force that will rear its ugly, desperate tail until the

bitter end. Seeing the options presented as a zero-sum, cut-throat game — it's either my neck or yours — threatens to shatter anyone who insists on sharing.

Political pundits speculated that if it weren't for the grueling backlash, the possible end of their political careers, the unnerving death threats and public attacks stoked by the ex-president himself (Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Jason Crow hoped that this would give the GOP a taste of the unfair, ignored and outrageous aspects of the job description that they and other politicians of color and their allies regularly endure and haven't let it get in their way), many more Republican senators would have openly parted ways with Trump (the majority who convicted him were not running for office again).

Polls after the insurrection and impeachment trial indicated that Trump's base didn't believe he was guilty and would still support him as the frontrunner in the next presidential election. Some loyalists took the opportunity to start endorsing his relatives and pawns to replace "traitors" running for political office during mid elections.

Racist madness on steroids

In just four years, Trump has injected steroids into dormant racist madness and molded the party into a cult of personality, one likely to leave a long shadow in the historical record.

Especially in the Senate, where smaller, rural and predominantly white states have had disproportionately more representation, his prominent influence can only be curbed by a deep understanding that our long denial, lip service and blind's eye to our buried racist history and neglected civil rights have contributed to this frightening rise of deranged power.

The demand of a growing majority to actually live up to a 1776 democratic claim in the 21st century, thanks up the BLM movement, has significantly threatened the alternate reality of Trump and the members of a patriarchal, white supremacist universe.

He has frightened and devolved them into cornered animals who must fight this threat as if their own lives depend on it. He did this by making life and an identity outside of this patriarchal and white supremacy paradigm as degrading, humiliating, shameful and intolerable as is humanly possible, basically exposing his own underbelly, his unmetabolized suffering and what motivates him every day. By provoking the opposition and driving deeper wedges into the chasms, reaching across the aisle has become less appealing and realistic for all parties involved.

White politicians who'd been neutral but not openly anti-racist are now at risk of needing to become the representatives of openly pro-racist and white supremacy groups or lose their seats.

This is the tragic cost of neglecting widespread white privilege, the “kinder, harmless cousin” of more extreme white supremacist, alt-right and neo-Nazi groups. After just four years of raising temperatures and lighting fire under all of our behinds, Trump became a messiah and mastered polarizing, radicalizing and locking in disowned and unmetabolized suffering into dirty pain patterns.

Many claim that he has “majorly failed” at this because he received a much lower popular vote than Biden. They argue that the eight million vote gap is the biggest it has been in most prior presidential elections. It’s all a matter of perspective. The 75 million votes he did receive is the second biggest number of votes ever received by a presidential candidate, shocking, given what he stands for. Recent polls that are no longer interested in what the majority of Americans think, but what the members of each party believe, consistently show that 80-90% of his followers and victims have been successfully mind-controlled to believe his boldest, most calculated and transparent lies, regardless of how robust the counter evidence and contradicting facts are.

Now what? Neither the emperor nor his growing base are wearing clothes

It’s one thing for everyone to pretend that the emperor has no clothes. It’s another when almost half of the population who admire and want to emulate him are now also walking around naked, convinced to be wearing clothes and waiting for his return.

All the legal elections and votes in the world won’t make such a society a true democracy.

We’ve reached the mother of crossroads and need to summon all of our power, clarity and soul authority to inspire as many of our fellow brothers and sisters toward truth at the top of the mountain and guide them out of the trenches of deception and manipulation.

White supremacists getting officially elected in key posts by aggressive constituents is not just one party’s problem— it’s our collective problem.

It took Hitler more than a decade to radicalize enough people and position them in key posts. Of course our situation is not the same, but it is similar enough for us to be aware and concerned about what may be brooding behind the scenes and in the sewers. Today, it is as crucial as ever for all of us to cultivate the health, well-being and integrity of all of our citizens and voters so they are in the best psychological position to choose their leaders wisely.

A tentative new precedence of courageous truth telling and integrity is emerging and needs to be wildly supported for it to take firm root.

Republican Rep. Herrera Beutler, one of the party’s few women of color and, unfortunately, part of a dwindling number of congressional Republicans who hold seats on the West Coast, said after the insurrection, “I am not choosing a side. I’m choosing

truth. It's the only way to defeat fear." She is getting terrible backlash for it, but there is still time for all of us to stand up to these forces wherever we can.

May a growing number of brave GOP members and Republican citizens understand what is at stake. To prevent brave politicians like her from becoming extinct, follow suit in reviving your courage and truth as your lighthouse and backbone.

Brave trailblazers of the next generation

Trump has not only wreaked havoc in the White House, he has also wrecked many homes and families, some belonging to unrelenting and unstoppable transformation trailblazers. January 6, 2020, was the last straw for many to take a stand and sever ties with loved ones, as painful and hard as this was.

A few white teens, whose stories have made the news, are enduring crushing criticism and backlash for telling the FBI about family members at the Capitol Siege. They are incredibly strong and clear, but also overpowered and vulnerable because of the intense attacks on their character.

It's imperative that we find more ways to show them support because they are instrumental in changing and shaking up their families and communities from the inside out.

"It was my moral compass, kind of, to do what I thought would protect not only my family, but my dad himself," Jackson Reffitt, 18, said after tipping the F.B.I. to his dad's actions.

A Massachusetts teen similarly turned in her own family after recognizing her mom, uncle and aunt amidst the Capitol rioters last week.

18-year old Helena Duke told "Good Morning America" it was an emotional thing to decide to do but it was the right thing to do.

"Keep your beliefs strong," was the message she sent to other brave souls and Gen Z teens in an interview published in Teen Vogue.

Trump drove deep wedges in existing family conflicts and splits. His vitriol didn't only get to strangers from opposing parties who could live in either blue states and red states, if they couldn't stand each other.

Almost all of my clients have experienced painful fall-outs and deep ruptures within their immediate families and close social circles in the past four years. While the conflicts that tore them apart were there before (and all hinged around social justice related topics - sexual assault, misogyny, non-conforming gender, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism, etc.), Trump fueled and fanned manageable flickers and transformative flames into raging fires and impenetrable firewalls during his presidency, and has added mask

wearing, pandemic denial, absurd conspiracy theories and mind control to the list of family strife.

It will require all of us to salvage and repair what's left of our bonds and social fabric and especially look out for these incredible trailblazers and Renaissance workers that are invested in creating authentic purple bipartisan partnerships of goodwill and true cooperation.

They are all around us and an integral and inspiring part of my practice.

With savvy soul authority skills, they were able to establish fierce and compassionate boundaries with problematic people, jumped on break-through opportunities in their relationships, and trusted when they'd done all that they could.

Prevention and herd immunity from mind control will become crucial in moving forward. It may be good to know that undigested wounding is the most dangerous pre-condition for contagious pandemics involving manipulation of the mind and psyche.

Done with the 'free speech' koan

May our nation's "one man, one vote" and "all men are created equal" empty democratic promises start to sound more problematic and hypocritical to all of us each passing day. Similarly, may racist brands, covert discriminatory policies, twisted propaganda and conspiracy theories become more apparent, aversive and non-acceptable to an awakening anti-racist dominant majority.

We've treated right-wing groups, i.e. the Proud Boys, and what they stand for like a "free speech" koan. They've trapped us time and again into analysis paralysis, afraid to trust our inner wisdom that it makes no sense for a political party or a president to rely on the support of or openly provide support to extremists, domestic terrorists and white supremacy groups in a nation that claims to be a democracy in every sense of the word. Nor has it been helpful to let them fester in darkness without interventions or recruitment prevention programs, assuming that they will not grow in power.

Their slipperiness and verbal acrobatics to get away with murder and avoid incriminating semantics are getting more refined. How have our uncertain, uncivil rights helped to make it possible for these groups to wave their confederate flags and display coded white supremacy and neo-Nazi symbols in plain sight, so they can do what they do best: wiggle through loopholes, exploit our democracy's weakest links and even embolden influential supporters in powerful media positions?

This was what Carl Tucker from Fox News took away from Joe Biden's Inauguration Speech after obsessing on this line in particular, "And now a rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat."

Tucker was confused and wanted to know, “Now that we’re waging war on white supremacists. Can somebody tell us in very clear language what a white supremacist is? . . . [Biden] has now declared war. So we should know specifically and precisely who exactly he has declared war on. We have a right to know that innocent people could be hurt in this war. They usually are.”

Newsflash: the burden is not on us to prove who is and isn’t a racist or a white supremacist.

Political yo-yo-ing vs securing a civil rights bedrock across parties

During the first hours of his presidency, Joe Biden overturned more than a dozen executive orders, many that undermined the civil rights of ethnic, racial and sexual minorities during the Trump administration — i.e. he nixed the 1776 Commission Report, revoked the Keystone XL pipeline, abolished the Muslim ban, banned discrimination against LGBT and non-binary employees, protected the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and proposed legislation making Dreamers eligible for citizenship.

It was a clear example and statement what intentional anti-racist and racist actions and policies look like and where the main divisions lie between our two main political parties.

Despite the great relief that Biden’s reversals brought to many, we won’t make real progress if the civil rights and freedoms of BIPOC and other marginalized groups keep yo-yo-ing and toyed with every time we change administrations and party leadership.

Putting civil rights of BIPOC on the chopping block — either blatantly or through coded terms, policies, and promises that boost white privileges and power—during every election campaign is racist.

This bar is far too low in terms in terms of diversity, inclusion and racial justice standards. For BIPOC and other marginalized groups to legitimately feel like equals, our civil rights need to be treated like unchallenged birthrights and eventually not even come up as a point of discussion.

The majority of white moderates need to become more aware of the painful undercurrents, dog whistles and hidden jabs, deliberately poking into ancestral wounds and unhealed trauma each time our lives and rights are politically partied with, and not fall for the gaslighting that conveniently blurs and muddles past and present racism, white privilege and inequities during these duels and debates.

BIPOC see what’s happening and are not only incensed and put in their second-class place by the harmful messages and energy that are sent out each time. The fact that this happens under the noses of the masses who hardly bat an eye is shocking. It’s also upsetting that so much privilege and power to make real change is not even bothered to

be put to good use while others with so much less are scrambling around every day to squeeze every drop out of the driest lemons to catalyze change.

All of our ancestors, not just the ancestors of BIPOC, are not yet at peace because of this tragedy. The racist practices and deranged beliefs that robbed them of true freedom, well-being, joy, authenticity and dignity is a sore point, but the shackles that still enslave all of our minds and hearts is a bigger one. They will keep rattling our cages and blare their sirens until we do something.

Restoring our sacred interconnectedness

Our trust in humanity, the truth and our sacred connections with each other, our ancestors and nature will be restored when we are no longer neglecting and harming any social group or living entity, including our highest, wisest selves and our planet.

The civil rights of disenfranchised groups of people can no longer remain the brand of one political party and the butt of a joke of another. It's high-time that in coming years and decades they become the solid bedrock between all social and political groups.

This moment in history is more idyllic and ripe than ever to make these kinds of real and lasting changes.

Meeting on higher ground means coming up with innovative ways to set limits with and dissolve ingrained and unmetabolized trauma patterns, unjust social norms and self-destructive and crippling scapegoating.

Our climb to the top of the mountain — the actualization of our egalitarian and libertarian ideals — is no small task but it's possible to find sure footing, more stamina and strength, and an increasingly clearer and more welcoming path as long as we allow the truth, our higher self and our integrity to lead the way.

Our shared desire, focus and determination to grant liberty, inclusion, justice and equity to all can be a powerful enough soul authority force, if exercised, to move the needle in significant ways during this optimal time for global transformation and consciousness shifting.

Your deep presence is a powerful gift

Start the journey by daring to be more authentic and present. It will open the doors to your highest truth and once this power takes deep root, it will be impossible to contain it.

Your clarity and integrity will inspire others and new policies and practices in family, work, school, political and church environments where soulful and holistic living, radical acceptance, clear boundaries and compassion will eventually get adopted as a foundational baseline for anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practices.

Public opinion influences CEO's, NGO directors, politicians, investors, bankers, philanthropists, small donors, journalists and consumers on a daily basis and helps them to decide where and how to spend their dollars, days, time and energy.

The more people agree and laser in on what is unacceptable, the greater our success in replacing oppressive practices and policies with programs and solutions that promote racial healing, social justice, diversity, and inclusion.

We, transformation trailblazers, are natural-born leaders and consciousness pioneers, continuously scouting what a socially and environmentally healthy planet needs in order to freely breathe and exhale for generations to come.

Our biggest gift to the world is our unshakable commitment to our well-being and wholeness, and our hard-earned wisdom that all of life benefits when our mind, body, heart and soul are in alignment.

We need to continue to do what has worked, but take it up another notch.

This is how we will eventually heal and compost all the muck into fertile, rich soil, as individuals, a society and a global community.

It looks like the stars and planets are on our side and lighting up the way.

Making a Bigger Impact

- Freeing the canaries, closing the coal mines (for good!)

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

- Anais Nin

When I dare to be powerful to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.

- Audre Lorde

After I'd established a higher baseline for myself, I could not imagine guiding the "canaries in the coal mines"—the transformation trailblazers and sensitive wise souls who I work with – in the same way I had before.

I slightly panicked as just calling my tribe "canaries in coal mines" had in the past been very effective in empowering them. It was a major upgrade compared to being perceived, and often perceiving ourselves, as the black sheep and troublemakers in our families and circles.

My practice was finally running smoothly. It had taken considerable blood, sweat and tears to seamlessly integrate my most effective esoteric and shamanic methods with conventional psychotherapeutic interventions and openly share these in any space.

I was really enjoying the ease and magical flow of this plateau. What was being asked of me now?

My denial and complacency

It takes tremendous courage to summon and ask our guides and higher self if they agree whether or not our behavior, our systems, our policies and company cultures are aligned or another iteration of the racist, offensive, and pervasive denial that we've inherited.

Understanding and uprooting our tendencies to overpower or power through body and heart signals, and replacing these with empowering, ego-eco aligned soul authority practices is important. It dissolves the debilitating shame, insecurities and guilt that often block true intergenerational healing.

The many shiny objects that seduce us these days have no mercy on our monkey minds. Depleted and foggy, we fall prey to denial and complacency that sound like this:

- I can barely keep my head above the water. I really can't put anything else on my plate. I'm doing so much. This is someone else's mission.
- I'm emotionally overwhelmed and practicing setting healthy limits. I don't have the bandwidth and energy to help, and frankly need to heal and help myself and my family first. We are a hot mess.
- I can't imagine being of any use. What can I possibly offer that will change social problems that are so ingrained and pervasive?
- I don't want to be in the limelight and risk getting publicly attacked, picked apart and humiliated. I don't have what it takes to deal with this aggressive nonsense. I need my daily peace and sanity.

That was me too. I was doing so much already. I didn't want to risk destabilizing the delicate balance that I'd finally mastered by fiddling with my formula.

The truth is — we are all harmed by these rationalizations. We gaslight ourselves and try to talk, medicate or numb our bodies and souls out of their true experience and purpose. No matter how persistent we are in avoiding these truths, our symptoms will be more effective in exposing our self deception and how entangled we already are with all of these issues.

We keep coming up with excuses and explanations instead of leaning and feeling into undeniable truths that will free us from our daily ego-mind prisons and emotional overwhelm.

The revolutionary reframe

As I'd mentioned before, we are often bearers of the "family's cross" because of our sensitive nature. That means that we end up struggling the most with psychological symptoms and emotional conflict that the rest of the family prefers to push underground. If we are not adequately supported when young, we're likely to become the "identified patients" in the family system and in many subsequent systems where we end up playing the same familiar role.

Parents, neighbors, relatives and friends often don't get why we find it so important to confront and integrate painful memories and emotions that they have learned to dodge and tip toe around. We see the problems and feel the pain that these unresolved issues cause and know that they won't disappear by themselves.

Those who'd rather "let bygones be bygones" and prefer to "keep the peace" believe that we are making mountains out of molehills and creating problems that aren't there. They may view us as cry-babies, weirdos, hypochondriacs, and rebels without a cause, or as crazy, troubled, demanding, overreactive, hypersensitive, and difficult to deal with,

depending on how invested and forceful they are in keeping their own vulnerability and emotions off-limits and at bay.

Even teachers, mental health providers, psychiatrists and psychotherapists may pathologize and diagnose us rather than offer us validation, tools and skills that would help us to determine what's our unresolved stuff and what isn't.

Many helping professionals have been taught and trained, as I was, to look at presenting problems through an individualistic lens and overlook or downplay contextual, holistic or transpersonal influences — such as being a sensitive transformation trailblazer trapped in an “unhealthy coal mine” and unable to share your true self and important message, not even at home.

This is unfortunate because many transformation trailblazers are able to reframe their inner sense of “black sheep” to “scapegoat” — by realizing that they've been unwittingly carrying their family's or ancestors' fears, unrealized dreams, confusion and dis-ease— and instantly experience a powerful reset and soul shift thanks to this change in perspective.

My soul authority system has also helped those who need a bit more assistance to access clarity, restore their sense of self-worth, and radically accept and ground their emotions and protective anger. These skills and tools are key to setting firmer energetic, emotional, and physical boundaries.

Loyal to a fault

These are the answers that I received in response to my earlier question how to step up my game. Being devoted to the truth doesn't mean that we automatically need to bear our family's crosses or carry other people's karma and baggage. As one of my clients so poignantly said, we can care without carrying. We will become more effective in our missions by no longer making knee-jerk sacrifices that harm our health and well-being.

This analogy was offered. Canaries have an unwavering zest for life. *They keep on singing, even when caged and stuck in a dark coal mine.*

There was an uncanny resemblance between their disposition and the disposition of the human canaries I guide, myself included. Our hardiness, resilience, and direct access to innate joy and truth definitely had its advantages, but the disadvantages of this disposition are that it makes us more prone to inner climate denial and dissociation patterns. Our quick-to-ignite joy and compassion for others tend to drown out and diffuse personal warming signals, healthy boundaries and self-protection.

In times past, when toxic gases in the coal mines reached dangerous levels, the canaries stopped singing, got ill and died. This signaled to the coal miners that they needed to exit the premises right away.

Canaries supposedly lived short but “important and meaningful lives.” Of course, important and meaningful to those who consciously and intentionally used them for these purposes. They were greatly appreciated for making (forced to make) this sacrifice, and while this is a step up from not being appreciated at all, we can do better and did do better.

Today, modern carbon dioxide detectors have replaced these canaries, sparing their lives and allowing them to enjoy their freedom in the wild instead of being cooped up and living their days in a cage and dark coal mine.

Outgrowing the ultimate compliment

Are we as resilient, free-spirited and agile as these canaries? Is there enough wild nature left in us to want to co-create and live, uncaged, in a world free of coal mines (this question is for both the canaries and the miners)? Or have we become too domesticated, complacent and inhibited to desire and imagine what that would be like?

When my clients thought of themselves as karma carrying canaries called to heal symptoms that could shed light on humanity’s problems, it heightened their sense of soul purpose and determination. They’d suspected all along that their suffering hadn’t been in vain. It had helped them to grow, come into their own and make rewarding and meaningful contributions.

Being assigned to help someone in a similar boat was the ultimate compliment.

Our sensitivity and ability to remedy social injustices is indeed a gift to humanity. However, we need to be careful not to overidentify ourselves with our gifts and contributions. We are powerful consciousness pioneers, and confusing our past roles with our identities could cause us to obstruct further evolution and progress.

What this means is that we need to outgrow our canary pride.

I never anticipated that I’d ever feel this way but the idea of being a “canary in a coal mine” — within social systems and people who are, willingly or unwittingly, exploiting us to avoid the natural consequences associated with their imbalanced and often exploitative behavior — now evokes a hard “NO” in me and clarity that this is far from a compliment or an honor.

I often hear from my clients — who are sensitive to accusations of victimhood — that they are not thinking any of these things or feeling any canary pride. On the contrary, they are sick and tired of being in so much pain.

Our conscious ego-mind could be thinking one thing and not be aware of what’s happening at much deeper emotional, energetic and physical levels of yourself. When these deeper parts have been shut off and symptoms are the only truth-carrying parts of

you that remain, they are unwilling to give up the messages and consciousness embedded in them.

You'll be surprised how much easier it will be to dissolve tension and symptoms once you've excavated the gifts and messages that they'd been holding for you. There is a way to stop the madness, pain and suffering.

Just like the use of actual canaries has long been banned, the time has come for us, human canaries, to become an outdated concept. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we too could enjoy being free and wild?

Instead of being harmed first to provide proof of dangerous practices, how about we become trusted informants? We're more than capable of effectively conveying, in clear words, what toxic social conditions, dynamics, and enterprises to avoid and why, without giving ourselves up as guinea pigs.

We've got loads and loads of life experience that we can draw from.

Tested by Trump's rally in Tulsa

I was triggered and seething with rage and disgust upon hearing this news. This was my opportunity to walk my talk and translate my feelings into messages and information aching to be expressed.

Barely two weeks after the murder of George Floyd, Donald Trump announced that he planned to hold his first rally after the pandemic broke out on Juneteenth in Tulsa, of all places, the burgeoning Black Wall Street in 1921 where as many as 300 Black people were killed by mobs of white people.

Many considered this political move "blasphemous," "outrageous," "a slap in the face," and "insulting," given that Juneteenth (June 19) was a holiday commemorating the day slaves in the western portion of the Confederacy finally gained their freedom.

Russel Cobb, Associate Professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Alberta stated that, "a Trump rally near a site of a race massacre during a global pandemic already sounded like a recipe for a dangerous social experiment." Add to that the calculated timing, the heightened raw emotions of BLM protestors and the message that this was sending: know your place because history could easily repeat itself if BLM protestors were to partake in a "Black Uprising," which was back then and a century later a false accusation meant to provoke a violent outbreak.

A false news article with an unproven allegation that a Black man had tried to rape a white woman was the last straw that led to the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921.

Mayor G.T. Bynum, the "rarest of species, a Republican who has staked part of his political legacy on combating racism and ordering an investigation into potential mass

grave sites, even as many Republicans accused him of opening old wounds,” was asked to cancel the event, but afraid of crossing Trump, he equivocated.

After significant protest, the Trump administration decided to move the rally to June 20.

To my shock and dismay, there were some influential Black public figures who praised Trump for this decision. Burgess Owens insisted that, “Tulsa is the right place, and the day after Juneteenth is the right time, for this rally. It’s a celebration of the tenacity, work ethic, faith and entrepreneurial grit of an African-American community that has overcome both white racism and liberal paternalism to achieve economic independence. Let the rally begin.”

Owens is a Super Bowl champion with the Oakland Raiders, the US Representative (Rep) for Utah’s Fourth Congressional District and the author of *Liberalism: Or, How to Turn Good Men Into Whiners, Weenies and Wimps*. His book title cleared up my initial shock but not my dismay.

The only light around this sinister event was that it was sparsely attended by less than 7000 because TikTok teens and K-pop stans registered for thousands of tickets and didn’t show up, making the boasting of the million plus people attending sound even more ridiculous.

Tripped up by white backlash

This unfathomably vile move tripped me up. I could sense all the ancestors turning in their graves.

Despite a burning desire to unleash all my feelings and thoughts about this situation, I tried equally hard to dim my inner fire and pass on the torch.

It was much easier and less risky to sit back and let others who were eager to lead the way and show the rest of us their new anti-racist protocols, reading lists, daily, weekly and monthly calendars, missions statements, petitions, dialogue guidelines and criteria for becoming a committed BLM anti-racist activist.

They had teams of staff and support to get this all in place quickly and were doing a great job. Until they weren’t.

When similar patterns of white privilege and my own inner drama around this (criticizing from the sidelines instead of stepping up to the plate) started to play out, I took a hard look at how I was contributing to the dynamics.

I reminded myself of one of the most important life lessons from Audre Lorde. Your silence will not protect you. How could I criticize the silent majority if I didn’t speak up myself?

I decided that hiding behind the scenes and holding back weren't going to be an option.

Once I opened the floodgates, there was almost no stopping them. My soul had been waiting for this moment and was eager to revisit many topics that were so much more timely now than decades ago when I first researched and wrestled with them.

Everything that I'd bottled up began to flow out of me and into this piece.

Juneteenth vs Keti Koti

Happy Juneteenth. In Suriname, we call this holiday Keti Koti. Cutting of the chains. It has been celebrated since the abolition of slavery on July 1, 1863, but has been a national holiday since 1960 (it has been celebrated in Holland since 2002).

I think it's important to imagine what life could have been like for you and others if this day had been a national US holiday for 60 years.

What would it mean to be surrounded by statues, symbols and monuments that celebrate this big day of freedom – instead of still arguing over confederate symbols, flags, names of leaders, and statues that need to be removed from public and prominent spaces.

It sheds light on the claim made by Michelle Williams, dean of the faculty at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, that racism is a public health issue and that public acknowledgment of this harmful legacy of slavery is long overdue.

She goes on to explain that the pandemic alone, “is killing black Americans at nearly three times the rate of white Americans. . . As millions of people in the US and globally declare that 'Black Lives Matter' and demand real change, there has never been a more urgent time to address the inequities that rarely make the headlines but nonetheless claim lives every single day.”

As Williams notes, institutionalized racism has diminished the health, wealth, actualization and well-being of all Black Americans, which increases their risks of dying when dealing with added stress and challenges.

As a clinical psychologist and shadow-soul worker, I can assure you that racism does far more damage than this. Its oppressive power hurts other POC and marginalized groups, in particular. But this is the hardest truth: white supremacy culture and racism hurt the integrity of every human being and even non-human life and the planet.

It's just one symptom of a sickness traceable to soul loss, existential angst, scarcity, greed, competition, exploitation and scapegoating that is pervasive and has deep historical roots that we all need to heal from.

We hardly examine these psychological and soul roots, because we're barely on the same page around what's happening on the surface with the Black community, still dealing with the most basic of human rights violations.

Have you noticed?

Lines drawn in the sand

On one side, a critical mass is acknowledging that institutionalized racism is alive and well, and that it's high-time for us as a society to tackle it to the ground.

On the opposite side, white backlash has started to rear its ugly tail, amplified by its Commander-in-Chief.

I got a few people unsubscribing from my list – fortunately no nasty comments – most likely for taking a clear anti-racist stand, perceived as political (although I'm not the one conflating these). Or perhaps they left because I was still on the topic of racism.

According to some of my online social entrepreneurial friends, businesses were collapsing for not taking a clear stand. They were being punished mercilessly for not doing the "right thing" – many times by white followers. Harsh and impulsive, when no one had any clarity what that is. But no one seemed to care about that. As long as we were doing something that made us feel better or added ammunition to the fight, we must be in the right.

That kind of cathartic explosion could unfortunately do more harm than good. It can feel these days like we're navigating through a minefield and any little thing — what you say or don't say, do or don't do — can blow up in your face. I know for sure that this is not transformational or helpful in the long run.

Overnight anti-racist "experts"

This kind of climate breeds overnight anti-racist "experts" who're leading the way and hitching their organization and business to the BLM movement to attract clients and gain support, even if they are total rookies on the subject. They're sometimes not even able to reference a single anti-racist book, podcast or resource – according to both a white client and client of color who've been steeped in this work for years.

On the flip side, you can feel all eyes on you, if you're the only POC and are expected to take on the (often volunteer) role of diversity expert and share your perspectives on paper or in professional settings, on the spot, so we can all learn from you, right?

And possibly run off with your best ideas without ever giving you credit . . .

Nevermind the fact that having teeth doesn't necessarily make you a dentist, or having your wisdom teeth pulled certainly doesn't qualify you to operate like an oral surgeon —

implying that being a BIPOC doesn't make you an expert on the topic, anti-racist and anti-sexist educator, Lasana Hotep, explains.

Should you object to your volunteered role, you risk getting blamed for not being a team player and part of the problem.

You can almost hear the accusations, "What is it that you people want?" on the tip of someone's tongue. Perhaps it would have been blurted out if it weren't for the landmines.

There's no winning because the bar is so low

How dare we not be grateful that we've finally got a critical mass to agree that losing Black lives due to police brutality is a thing and awful and needs to be stopped?

Where is all this resentment, bitterness, apprehension, demand for more, and mistrust coming from?

Why can't we all come together and unite for a change?

Well . . . isn't it a bit twisted for a critical mass to finally agree that murder of Black Americans by excessive police force is wrong – in 2020? That this most basic human right is the big milestone to celebrate?

And this milestone is by far not set in stone yet. We were starkly reminded of this by yet another cold-blooded police killing of Rayshard Brooks that occurred when protests sparked by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery had not even died down yet.

Raising the bar with sensitivity and deep listening

How about equality in all areas of life? Health, financial security, professional success, representation, compensation, protection, basic and sophisticated respect?

Are we ready to truly level the playing field and play fair?

What stands in the way of our ability to share? Can we truly feel good about giving up some of our privileges, knee jerk assumptions and usual modes of operating - essentially, our usual sense of self - if that benefits a marginalized group?

I've been doing a lot of reflecting on what it means to raise the racial equity bar for everyone, including myself.

I've wondered what my reservations – in contrast to white leaders who have no qualms to yet again take their comfortable place on top, whether new to a topic or not – are

about in sharing my professional experiences and expertise in anti-racist discourse, research and interventions for a good thirty years.

Some of these years involved compulsive rescuing, others involved very fulfilling work at a university counseling center and police department, facilitating multicultural immersion circles, workshops and community-wide violence – hate crime prevention and interventions on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and all relevant diversity-related topics.

My intern and post-doc team members and I impacted thousands of students, staff, administrators, faculty, police, and community members, facilitating dialogue in residence halls, churches, classrooms, and student halls. We were first responders during intense times, like right after 9/11, but mostly focused on dismantling institutional and internalized racism day in, day out.

We won several prestigious awards for this work, such as the Chancellor's Achievement Award and the Deanna Falge Award, a Staff Diversity and Affirmative Action Achievement Award.

So it's not a lack of confidence or discomfort to shine or stand in my authority.

It's something deeper that takes me back to my roots and my ancestors, and what inspired this work and journey to begin with.

It's not humility. It's about wisdom held in paradox and non-polarizing.

I happen to be from a country that has been called South America's hidden treasure by adventure travelers like Simon Romero in his New York Times article that he concluded by saying, "Though I had been in the country only a few days, I felt as if I had traversed several continents and only now — drinking beer, shaking hands and striking up conversation with these men — was I getting a taste of Suriname's frontier."

He does an excellent job giving readers a taste of what it's like to live in a country that is ranked second (along with Brazil and Belgium) most diverse in the world, following Benin, in a formal study:

"The ranking was based around four overarching categories – cultural diversity, religious diversity, political diversity, and freedom for diversity – that incorporated such factors as the level of ethnic diversity; the number of immigrants; the number of languages spoken, religious beliefs and political parties; the level of religious freedom; LGBT rights and freedoms; and the level of personal freedom."

Retracing my racialized and racist roots for deeper healing

I make my first pit stop at age 27 in 1996, revisiting my headspace as a bushy-tailed 3rd year grad school in clinical psychology. I was specializing in multicultural psychology

and had just written a scathing paper, “The Psychological Lynching of Multiracial People in the US.”

I sent it to Maria Root, PhD, leading researcher, writer, and national expert on the topic. It impressed her enough to agree to join my dissertation committee. My cross-national dissertation — researching historical race relations and the multiracial experiences between mixed people in the US and Suriname—was quickly unfolding and taking me on an incredible journey.

I’d decided that returning to my roots for strength and grounding was the only way I’d regain my mental health and soul authority.

I’d explored all other options, and nothing was working.

As a highly sensitive person of multiracial, multicultural and multiethnic descent, I’d mastered swimming in and out of cultural streams and fish bowls throughout my childhood — intact and often celebrated.

This was thanks to being born and raised in a culture where fluidly entering and exiting different social groups had become the mainstream and the norm (after up to 6 generations of primarily non-white racial mixing since the abolition of slavery in 1863, same year as in the US. The key difference: descendants of white colonists made up only 1% of the population).

I’d immigrated to the US in 1983 at almost 14 and had been here a good 13 years. I was a quick learner and was ready to change strategy.

I desperately needed to change strategy, and going back to my roots offered me the most promise.

A sensitive and true canary, I had deeply internalized the gravity of white supremacy and race relations in the US. The racist bullying and hatred had started within months after moving to Miami.

Six years later, my burning questions and insightful premonitions had culminated into serious study. For years, I’d proceeded to either conduct my own research or contribute to several award-winning research projects at UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology on race, ethnicity, gender, and class in relation to eating disorders, couples communication, emotional expression, suicide among Chinese Americans in San Francisco’s China town, bullying of Muslim children, and effective interventions with Black and Chicano SED (Severely Emotionally Disturbed) children in public schools.

I’d counseled thousands of enlisted military of color at an Airforce Family Support Center, and had guided non-English speaking and undocumented Chicano clients in

East San Jose and low income Black clients in East Palo Alto, areas known for lacking culturally-sensitive mental health services.

In my 2nd year of grad school, I organized and led my school's Students of Color graduate group, and created eight student-run committees to reform our program's curriculum, enhance student attrition, hire POC faculty, do more community outreach, offer social support, improve communication and more.

I'd organized cutting-edge talks on race and race relations, put on a Color of Fear school-wide workshop, and founded a school newsletter, addressing the school's Board of Directors faculty, administrators, students and president, Allen Calvin. He was Jewish-American, responsive to my concerns and my biggest ally. He requested that copies of my newsletter be included into all the application packets that were sent out to new prospects.

I was unstoppable and on a mission. But when I started to feel bugs crawl on my skin in bed at night and heard the ancestral drumming in my inner ear, I realized that even though all of my efforts and energy were making a difference, a big puzzle piece was missing.

Me and my self-care

As an academic, I'd learned that relying on my personal experiences and perspectives, and even using the pronoun "I" was taboo. It meant that we'd lost scientific objectivity.

I'd been so entangled in this catch-22 trap that I couldn't see my way out of it. I was running in circles like a dog chasing its tail, doing all within my limited power to change a deeply ingrained system from the top down and outside in.

I'd tried to change things from the inside out and bottom up, starting at the soul root level, as I'd learned from my ancestors, but felt repeatedly dismissed. I was perceived as a naive, idealist, and young immigrant who just didn't get it. In America, only the tangible, physical, and material mattered, preferably in writing, policy, and law.

It created a lot of self-doubt even though I knew darn well that I got the issues through and through. I got the complex racial dynamics that existed in my native Suriname AND I got the complex historical and current race relations and inequities that existed in the US.

And even though I didn't get the intimately lived experience of every marginalized and racially oppressed person in the US (which BTW is not possible - not even people from our closest inner circle truly get our unique lived experience - it's their empathic abilities that you may be appreciating and we all know what that feels like when they lack these), I had clear insight into the contextual and historical contributions of the racial mess we were in.

I also had clear insight into the historical contributions and solutions to systemic racism that were so beyond the times and cultural zeitgeist that sharing them in 1998 was even more threatening than it is now:

- Few intact white families and the absence of white women (Karens, essentially) dramatically changed the hierarchical dynamics between Blacks and whites in a plantation colony that had a reputation of being one of the harshest in regard to its treatment of slaves. The growing power of escaped slaves who burned and terrorized plantations, and restored their culture and traditions by forming six separate tribes in the rainforest was significant. They negotiated peace treaties and made Suriname an undesirable treacherous region for future colonists.
- The integration of mixed children and freed black women started in the mid to late 1700's — recorded in church documents, baptisms, inheritance, land and property distributions, social events, government balls, and a legal marriage between a rich educated free Black woman (daughter of a freed slave, born in 1715) and White colonist in 1767, 200 years before antimiscegenation laws (prohibiting interracial marriage) were deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1967.
- There were no Jim Crow laws enforced after the abolition of slavery, no KKK or White supremacy groups, no brutal lynchings, hate crimes, and vicious massacres of Blacks (close to 4000 total in the US from 1882-1963), and more equal sharing of culture, music, language, religious values and traditions that set the tone and laid the foundation for future immigrants and contract workers from China, Indonesia, and India who later joined this interdependent fabric and colorful and complex mix.
- Police presence, force and brutality have consistently been very light and unfunded, and not used to keep Black people in line and subservient to racist law and order. There are no jails full of Black men and POC. But by no means a utopia, patterns of oppression appeared elsewhere. Military rule and violence peaked during sporadic periods of civil unrest and resistance (when my family left), following a multiethnic coup d'etat in 1980 led by a military commander, Desi Bouterse, who ran the country from behind the scenes, changed the constitution, and was elected twice as president. Unsuccessful in his divide-and-conquer politics in regard to the public, he was finally voted out in May 2020 after 40 years of plundering the national treasury, political corruption, exploitation of natural resources, drug trafficking and conviction of murder for giving orders to execute 15 multiethnic opposition leaders in 1982.

The following research data shed light into the psychological nature and common denominator underneath racial and institutional oppression (beyond white supremacy), and the way in which racial and gender pecking orders play out in different regions and cultural contexts.

Here are a few of the most striking findings from my dissertation:

- The greatest racial tension existed between the two largest groups, the Creole (Black Surinamese) and Hindustani's (originally from India), even though their skin color is very similar.
- Hierarchical values and cultural / religious superiority, most prominent within Hindustani's and Chinese Surinamese groups, led to oppressive attitudes and behaviors within in-group members and between groups, portraying similar power plays involving privilege, stereotyping, and bigotry as in the US. There was a greater focus on preserving cultural and religious purity than on biological and racial purity, as is the case of white supremacy. I'm part Chinese Hakka and intimately familiar with racist and oppressive beliefs of this kind aimed at members within and outside of the in-group.
- The shadow of white supremacy was still palpable, where all groups preferred a lighter shade of themselves, and white foreigners were treated differently, either with unfair admiration or animosity.
- There is a much larger mixed group who have mastered the art of harmonious horizontal sharing in many social and public spaces, and enjoy the phrase, "We're all countries, but have no flag"—a sign of humility and giving up patriotic in-group loyalties for the greater good. The new 1975 Surinamese flag merged 5 different stars, representing each of the main groups, into one large yellow star.
- Ironically, Suriname is even among other Caribbean nations heralded for being most diverse and authentic in its expression of these unique ethnic heritages. My dissertation data showed that this was not accidental: participants produced unprecedented research data where they scored EQUALLY HIGH on horizontal individualism and horizontal collectivism scales and low on vertical scales. The US scored the highest on scales measuring vertical individualism (most competitive, win-lose, either-or mentality, and the illusion of individual effort leading to fair rankings) and Japan, India and China score the highest on vertical collectivism (outright value ranking and worth based on birthright—caste, class, gender, prestige, status, racial purity and roles within and between groups).
- Interestingly, fundamentalist, born-again Christians, regardless of racial ancestry, also had unusually high vertical collectivistic scores. Members of these groups were also flagged as being racist.
- The deep loss of culture and ethnic heritage among many white colonists and their descendants compared to their non-white Surinamese counterparts stood out. The same in the US. The unresolved historical trauma and social oppression (religious crusades, public torture, feudalism, witch hunts, etc) that led to this soul loss are embedded within Eurocentric either-or notions that pro-white = anti non-white, and other polarized notions of reality. This hierarchical pattern is woven in

colonialism, imperialism and the exploitation and domination of vulnerable people, their resources and the natural world for one's own benefit, as if trying to bandaid or balm a deeply impoverished soul and inferiority complex. These tactics miss the point altogether, and are ineffective. To heal an impoverished, hungry soul, it's important to first become aware of it. This is best done by stripping away addictions, privileges, and distractions, one-by-one, and embracing who emerges with curiosity and compassion.

- Americans are much more likely to associate being American with being white. When Surinamese people were asked to describe as a Surinamese person, they hesitated, tried to be inclusive and name everyone, or claimed that it wasn't possible because there was so much diversity. The best answer was, "I can't explain it. Come see for yourself."

Final analysis

Why is it that many people live in a chronic state of existential angst, fear (of poverty) and scarcity within one of the richest countries in the world? Right now, I'm not talking about the many BIPOC who actually live below the poverty line (but this is also an issue). I'm specifically addressing middle-class and upper middle-class white families and POC who either feel justified to protect their top dog position, or do all that they can to obtain it for an elusive sense of security that no one seems to harness.

Some call it capitalism, but it's more complex than that. It's collective soul loss that has deep historical and cultural roots that require digging up and healing, because this one-upping and hierarchical mindset is what drives institutional racism, pecking order anxiety, and white privilege.

The ladder of success in American life is perceived to be fair to the groups and people who benefit the most from its set-up. Rewards and privileges appear to be earned through honest to goodness effort and not the result of one's special status by birth, as is blatantly claimed in some hierarchically collectivistic cultures.

This makes it difficult to acknowledge that it still operates in very similar ways, provided that for generations the start lines, resources and obstacles along the way have been drastically different for different groups. The ones on top don't see the obstacles that they've been spared, and either truly don't get the problem, or feel relieved, entitled and happy that they are on top and not on the bottom.

It seems nearly impossible to envision a whole different set-up — less compartmentalizing, full of goodwill, abundance and generosity — that's thriving within Suriname, a third world country. This challenges common overgeneralizations that the poorer the people, the more interracial conflict and competition will be stirred up. There are other confounding factors (vertical individualism) that cause this conflict and are in need of closer examination.

It's not that Republican trickle-down economics are wrong. They are right. For centuries, a trickle of the wealth, rights, privileges, resources and well-being has gone to the descendants of ancestors who were worked to death to help build this country and make it what it is today.

Imagine a different possibility, a coming together of diverse people, like in a beautiful orchestra, where each musician could play her or his heart out, is heard, and never needed to worry about stepping on others' toes. On the contrary, the shining of each one would lead to victory celebrated by the whole.

Gaia's wisdom and guidance

Liberating ourselves from internalized racism (of both the oppressor and the oppressed aspects) requires that we all dig deep into our ancestral roots and heal our souls with egalitarian and anti-racist tools, knowledge, and consciousness that reconnect us back to a common home, plight, and understanding of wholeness, health and future survival of all.

Working with earth wisdom and re-naturing our de-natured selves have proven to be most effective in restoring and healing our painful legacy, no matter where we start along the racial divides. The harmony of nature is a lot like that beautifully synchronized orchestra, and offers us a focal point that we can all agree on.

And it's still accessible to all of us in a blink of an eye by just dropping into the body. Re-connecting to our true nature is also the quickest way to genuinely connect to our human family and feel our similarities in heart and soul.

Expanding our sense of "in-group"

I honor my ancestors - West Africans from Ghana, Hakka Chinese from the Guang Zhuo district, Jewish Dutch originally from Portugal - and their Surinamese comrades who've learned to stay true to themselves and expand their understanding of their in-group.

By no means perfect, they are the best role models I've had in transcending the personal and venturing into transpersonal healing dimensions where they could both be fully themselves, and trust that gifting this freedom to another would enhance their own joy and sense of wholeness.

My soul authority model and my mastery in holding powerful sacred and healing space for very diverse people have each been inspired by all the blessings and wisdom that they've passed onto me.

The Age of Aquarius

- a great cultural shift in consciousness

You must understand that in the Age of Aquarius, each one shall be the leader of his own spirit. Each one will be the pivot of her life.

- Siri Singh Sahib Yogi Bhajan

The Age of Aquarius is the age of excellence where personal purity shall absolutely matter.

- Harbhajan Singh Yogi

It was wonderfully cathartic to write my heart out. I felt so much more empowered, confident and clear about my mission. It was neither motivated by a false sense of entitlement or by false humility. I felt totally in my soul authority, clear about my qualifications and expertise, and privileged and blessed to be able to put to good use to empower many other derailed trailblazers stuck in the matrix.

After celebrating all that I had to offer on paper, I fully committed to writing this book. Within a week, all the right resources, including a scholarship for a book writing course, fell into my lap. It helped me to conceptualize and flesh out its core premise and table of contents in no time.

The next few months, more magical and auspicious signs that deeply resonated with my journey and private epiphanies were passed along by clients and ancestors (more on this later), reassuring me that I was on the right path. I kept following the breadcrumbs.

Eventually, something I'd consider at the top of my "wildest dreams" list occurred. The publisher of North Atlantic Books, Tim McKee, learned about my "groundbreaking" work from a student in one of my courses. She followed a hunch from her spirit guides to reconnect with him, and told me, "I didn't mean to, but your name and one of your teachings came up every 10 minutes in our five hour conversation!"

Tim McKee checked out my website and asked to see what I'd written up so far. It took a few weeks to prepare my book proposal and for Tim to review it. The Friday right before the Winter Solstice on Monday, December 21, 2020, he offered me a book deal.

I could feel vibrational shifts and transformations happening on every level of my being, mind, body, heart, and soul.

The divine timing and the generous support I'd received from my ancestors, the Universe and so many loving souls to get my work out in the world was overwhelming and humbling.

Like a time-release capsule dosage entering your bloodstream, I felt a boost of extra strength infuse my cells and clarity that I was born for these turbulent times. Not just me, but you and lots of wise souls are here, now, to offer guidance, support and grounding during this transition.

Throughout the pandemic — which cracked us more open than ever to deal with uncertainty, isolation, stress, frustrations, grief and fear — I guided transformation trailblazers in my practice through massive growth spurts. I also observed others in my immediate and online circles make quantum leaps of progress in their spiritual, personal and professional development. Like me, they could hear and respond better to callings after so much else in their lives had faded into the background.

The Great Transformation

Don't beat yourself up if it's been hard to see the forest for the trees and feel the uptick of this major transformation that we're still in the throes of. The intense political, pandemic and planetary challenges and losses of 2020 flooded many of us and 2021 didn't exactly start out as a cake walk either.

At first, we spent a lot of energy on regaining some sense of order and normal (both mental and physical) and when that didn't happen, it became clearer that the chaos was perhaps an opportunity, an invitation and calling of sorts. Some of us had the bandwidth to explore these openings, others were flung or fell into them.

Intuitive astrologer, Rachel Lang, had predicted in 2019 that 2020 would be full of planetary drama and could lead to a tectonic shift in political, economic, and personal realms. She was spot-on.

She knew that this was in the works because 2020 kicked off a decade of an astrological cycle known as the Jupiter Saturn Pluto Conjunction or the Great Transformation. As we all know, transformations are often two-fold, very intense and challenging but also full of promise, new growth and opportunities. This one was no different, just on steroids.

The Winter Solstice in December of 2020 was not just the longest, darkest night of the longest, darkest year. On this solstice night, Jupiter and Saturn came so close in the sky, they appeared as one large planet, symbolizing the birth of unified and fortified bright light. The last time Jupiter and Saturn kissed in the sky was in the year 1226.

I felt blessed that this extraordinary conjunction had converged with such a special soul purpose moment of my life — the ushering of this book into the world.

Astrologer, Kells McPhillips, articulated my inner experience in her Dec 2019 article, "2020 is Just the Beginning of the Great Transformation" that "this [Jupiter-Saturn] transit suggests a new beginning for us all and a turning point in our history. It shows us the best way forward is to bring our unique and individual ideas together in community

spaces, building teams and coalitions to create change. It's a liberating influence that starts with questioning your beliefs and thought patterns.”

The age of personal liberation

Some astrologers claimed that this Winter Solstice also marked the start of the Age of Aquarius — the age of freedom and personal liberation from collective karma, ego-soul splits, and oppression — because Jupiter was exactly conjunct Saturn at 0°29' of Aquarius during their Great Conjunction on December 21, 2020.

Just two months later in February of 2021, seven celestial bodies — the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and asteroid Pallas — clustered together in the sign Aquarius, creating a stellium that will boost its fixed Air qualities. This enhanced our ability to look at situations from a distance and come up with higher-level ideas and out-of-the-box solutions and definitely contributed to my writing, a great deal of it done this month.

An astrological age shifts about every 2150 years, when the Earth's rotation moves into a new zodiac sign, usually around the spring equinox, the time of year when the days are as long as the nights and we begin to sow seeds and new intentions.

The last time we were in this astrological age (12 constellations of the Zodiac) was roughly 25,800 years ago. The consensus among astrologers is that the Age of Aquarius energizes progressive forward-thinking, technological advances for social and economic equality, and a “we versus I” mentality within visionaries, rebels and innovators who will spearhead revolutionary reform within our institutions.

According to Adama Sesay, creator of Lilith Astrology, there will be a major shift in power dynamics during this era. The power that had rested for eons in traditional, oppressive hierarchical structures will get turned over to individuals. The focus will be on humanitarian pursuits that value each person's individuality, holding and taking care of each other as a unit, and in doing so disrupting dysfunctional and maladaptive systems and creating real community that are diverse, inclusive and equitable.

It's fascinating that the Pisces twin fish in the prior sign represent the Ego and the Soul, artificially split and in constant conflict and pursuit for reconciliation. Apparently, in the Age of Aquarius, we will find ways to reconcile this Yin-Yang dilemma in harmonious ways and will learn how to work together toward greater humanitarian goals, guided by an overarching, integrated higher self. My name for what propels this transformational, cooperative and holistic mode of operating is Soul Authority.

Fierce young trailblazers leading change across the globe

More and more courageous young leaders and especially female trailblazers are coming out of the woodworks and making their presence known in unprecedented and

unforgettable ways. They are starting movements and fanning all the sparks and buds of potential that are ready to burst into full bloom.

They are, no doubt, ready to free trapped canaries and close toxic coal mines for good. How can we join them and boost their movements with the energy and momentum of this era so that they keep going forward?

How do we make sure we don't revert to the pre-George Floyd "We can't breathe" era? And to the pre-Greta Thunberg "How dare you?!", the pre-Emma Gonzales "I call BS!" and the pre-squad and pre-Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) "My parents didn't raise me to take abuse from men" eras?

It's important to start with the right mindset and think of our collective journey of transformation as an ultra-marathon, not a sprint. This is challenging in a quick-fix culture, used to the world moving at microwave speed.

Re-membering, alchemizing and reconnecting split parts of ourselves with integrity will initially take longer, but will save time and energy in the end when done right.

For example, you may tune into age-old psychic imprints that were more constricted and entangled with the old paradigm and ways of doing things. Your boldness could evoke fear of pushback, punishment and abandonment — either real or imagined. You could very likely mistake this for free-floating fear and anxiety that is purely your problem and that you need to get over, medicate, or talk out.

What may be useful to know is that energetic bleed-throughs — i.e. triggered existential angst, despair and terror — that permeated the bodies and minds of traumatized ancestors and even younger and past life selves could be haunting you and holding you back.

The constrictions and undigested feelings were passed down by oppressors who likely felt better about themselves and their insecurities when scapegoating them onto others. They coerced their victims into submission with domineering tactics and did whatever it took to avoid the truth and root causes of their wounding, deep-seated inferiority, insecurities, rage, and unmetabolized suffering.

Top dog or underdog: don't matter, we'll all die too soon

This often meant becoming top dogs within their particular "coal mines." They ruled within the many hierarchical systems and learned to sell their souls for survival, belonging, political gain, social status, racial and gender privileges or insatiable greed for wealth and power.

These ancestral chains have harmed our systems and norms for a long time and have appeared as environmental, economic and social exploitation, excuses for cheap human labor and our dependence on "dirty" energy for personal gain. This is how we've

fueled the industrial revolution, religious wars, patriarchy, misogyny, slavery, colonialism, white supremacy, massacres, and imperialism throughout the world.

After crossing so many lines, we are now literally dying from toxic fumes, contaminated water, hurricane after hurricane, enormous wildfires, raging floods and brutal winters because of how severe and imbalanced the planetary conditions have gotten.

A growing number of people are regularly getting displaced as climate refugees. Some have no choice but to put up with their regularly flooded streets and homes or helplessly watch each one of their children rely on inhalers to manage their asthma because they can't sell their homes and afford to live elsewhere.

Climate change deniers

The death and massive destruction of life forms, such as phytoplankton and coral, and the end of ancient glaciers in the Arctic provide strong evidence that the variations in temperature that we are seeing now are not natural variations — as climate change deniers like to claim.

Even if the earth's tilt and being closer to the sun does increase the surface temperature of the planet, it clearly has not caused such extreme climate swings and irreparable damage ever before. It could take thousands to millions of years to restore a bleached coral reef for example that feeds hundreds of sea creatures and fish.

Human pollution is the only viable explanation for this kind of irreversible damage and it is already starting to roll into scary snowballs that need to be diverted now to halt a horrific sixth mass extinction that's already underway.

More than 500 species of land animals are on the brink of extinction and are likely to be lost within the next 20 years. We, humans, are solely responsible for bringing this 6th mass extinction into motion by neglecting, exploiting, and polluting our Earth Mother, even killing species, like bees, that are detrimental to our survival and food supplies. We need to quiet our minds more to see how all the self-destructive moving parts work together.

If the natural consequences of our actions and the adverse ripple effects gain more momentum — i.e. warming and harming our oceans as a result of glaciers melting —, it will get increasingly harder to restore equilibrium in the most delicate ecosystems on the planet.

The inner and outer climate denial we've adopted over the centuries is not serving us. As a matter of fact, it is requiring higher doses of pain and destruction to wake us up and protect the gift of life that we're squandering and desecrating. And instead of waking up, many of us immediately suspect foul play and devious motives from the opposite political party, just interested in making a quick buck with new technologies without properly resourcing who and what sustains these or what the ramifications are.

While this does occur on a small scale, do in-depth research and get all the facts yourself. Make decisions that align with your highest truth and good, regardless of what your tribe thinks. Your descendants are counting on you to do the aligned and right thing on their behalf.

Restoring our own and Earth's delicate balance

Far too many disenfranchised BIPOC, women, and non-conforming gender and sexual minorities have felt stuck in a permanent chokehold and can't breathe because of chronic "coal mine" fumes and toxic air that's significantly diminishing their quality of life.

This is happening in every imaginable industry or social structure, ranging from those dealing with energy and environmental issues, to the police force, education, social services, the military, Veteran Affairs, small businesses, health care, prisons, politics, mental health and more.

The harmful "viruses" and practices within these systems need to be stopped and dormant aligned ones need to be restarted. The longer we remain in idle mode and doubt what we've known in our heart and soul, the more paralyzed we'll get.

While we don't stand a chance in a face-off with nature and the planet, we are capable of dragging many other innocent species down with us. Our refusal to take responsibility for our unhealed wounding and unmetabolized karma will in the end majorly backfire on us and resurface somewhere else in exceedingly harmful ways.

It already is in mammoth ways.

Nature still has the last word

According to Mark Plotkin, ethnobotanist and president of the Amazon Conservation Team, "Plague is a zoonotic disease, an infectious malady which spreads from animals to humans. Anthrax, malaria and COVID-19 are other examples. A fascinating aspect of zoonotic diseases is that their animal hosts can remain healthy, posing little threat to our species when left alone. But when we invade or destroy their habitat, or when we cram them into filthy cages in fetid urban wildlife markets, they do pose a threat: the diseases they carry may then invade, sicken and kill us. That is certainly the case with COVID-19, which was an obscure and little-known virus just four months ago. In the eyeblink of those few months, globalization has enabled it to spread to every continent (with the possible exception of Antarctica). Barring a nuclear catastrophe, emerging zoonotic diseases — particularly viruses — are the most pernicious and costly threat to human health and well-being now and in the foreseeable future."

It's time to own and heal our own harmful implosive and explosive behavior, swinging from an inferiority complex to a superiority complex entitled to operate outside the law

and even the laws of nature, mystery and deeper truths, and using twisted religious ideas and fundamentalism to radicalize, divide and conquer.

We need to remedy our propensity to fragment, dominate and destroy parts of ourselves and all of life—which we do even when sleepwalking—by becoming more awake and intimately acquainted with our true nature, our environment and the elements that sustain us.

We cannot afford to keep dismissing our intuition and the invaluable data provided by our body wisdom.

We need to rekindle our interdependent relationship with ourselves as a biological organism and extension of nature and earth from the bottom up: by tuning into our sacred animal self and body.

A bottom-up re-naturing process will more readily disrupt the sabotaging mental patterns with embodied truths and compliment a top-down re-wiring process with greater effectiveness.

Analysis paralysis: definitive data will definitely arrive too late

One of our biggest obstacles: while we believe that our smarts are getting us ahead in life, our denial is outsmarting and oppressing us. We will never be able to outsmart wisdom, nature and mystery. The demand for and the waiting for the hard data that never seems to come to satisfy our modern-minds has given our denial uninhibited license to override our felt knowing, our common sense, our lived experiences, our self-trust and even our sense of safety.

Default analysis paralysis is the most common way in which we, complex, consciousness and compassionate trailblazers, get tripped up.

Closing the coal mines—whether in a literal and figurative sense — doesn't need to be “complicated” and is absolutely not too much to ask. We have been mulling long enough over socially conscious solutions, renewable energy technologies, and healing methods and resources that are ready to go.

In the concrete physical world, the overwhelming economic consensus is that coal is out, renewables are in.

“There's been over 50 bankruptcies in the coal industry over the past 10 years,” Derf Johnson, a staff attorney at the Montana Environment Center explained. As a result, for the first time in longer than a century, the U.S. got more energy from renewables in 2019 than it did from coal.

Now is the time for us to reclaim and usher our hidden potential and super powers out of dark closets, cages, coal mines and treasure chests. We need to do all that we can to join this momentum and doggedly close as many coal mines as we can.

We are as ripe and ready as ever to clamp down and put a hard stop to past practices and conventions that fell through the cracks and are gravely harming us, our planet, seas, and forests and more vigorously explore creative solutions that benefit the health and well-being of all.

Rather than seeing this as an attack against any one industry or group of people, we can see it as an offering and gift of love and life for all.

To those who've been in denial and afraid that they will be left in the dust if they pivot away from their dogged, rugged individualism and empires: outdated, hierarchical structures are not serving your soul. Many so-called privileges and profits are materialistic, poor cover-ups for empty feelings and not meeting the needs of an often undernourished and lost soul.

Material riches, status and power don't cross over with you when you leave your body, and they don't really benefit your beneficiaries. On the contrary, they end up inheriting "privileges" based on misaligned values and entitled, oppressive premises that keep them shackled and make it harder to resist the allure of money, power, political games and control within the material world.

Children of the same Earth Mother

Living in harmony with our Earth Mother and Sky Father can only materialize into reality if a big enough number of us aspire toward this goal and believe that it can be accomplished. It requires adopting a steady and no nonsense "one for all, all for one" mindset.

Tribalism, nationalism, racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, scientism, ageism, speciesism. These are some of the main -isms that are still dividing us and causing us to cut off our nose to spite our face. Those calling them out are not being divisive. Those denying them are, ignoring their own inner splits as a result of them. All of these wedges need to be pulled out and discarded so true healing can begin.

No one will be spared the harm and damage that we are doing to ourselves if we don't start to work together as an integrated whole and embrace the health and well-being this provides us in every dimension of human life.

With greater focus, more jobs, monetary incentives and skillful use of all the green technology and renewable energy expertise that we have amassed, irreversible destruction and climate catastrophes due to human carelessness and greed, can be prevented without hiccups and tantrums.

It requires putting our minds together, recognizing that we are all children of the same Earth mother and attending to the basic needs and civil rights of family members who have been mistreated and are hurting the most — for starters.

Not only is it the right thing to do, all of us sentient beings, including the planet, benefit when we function as one healthy, interconnected whole.

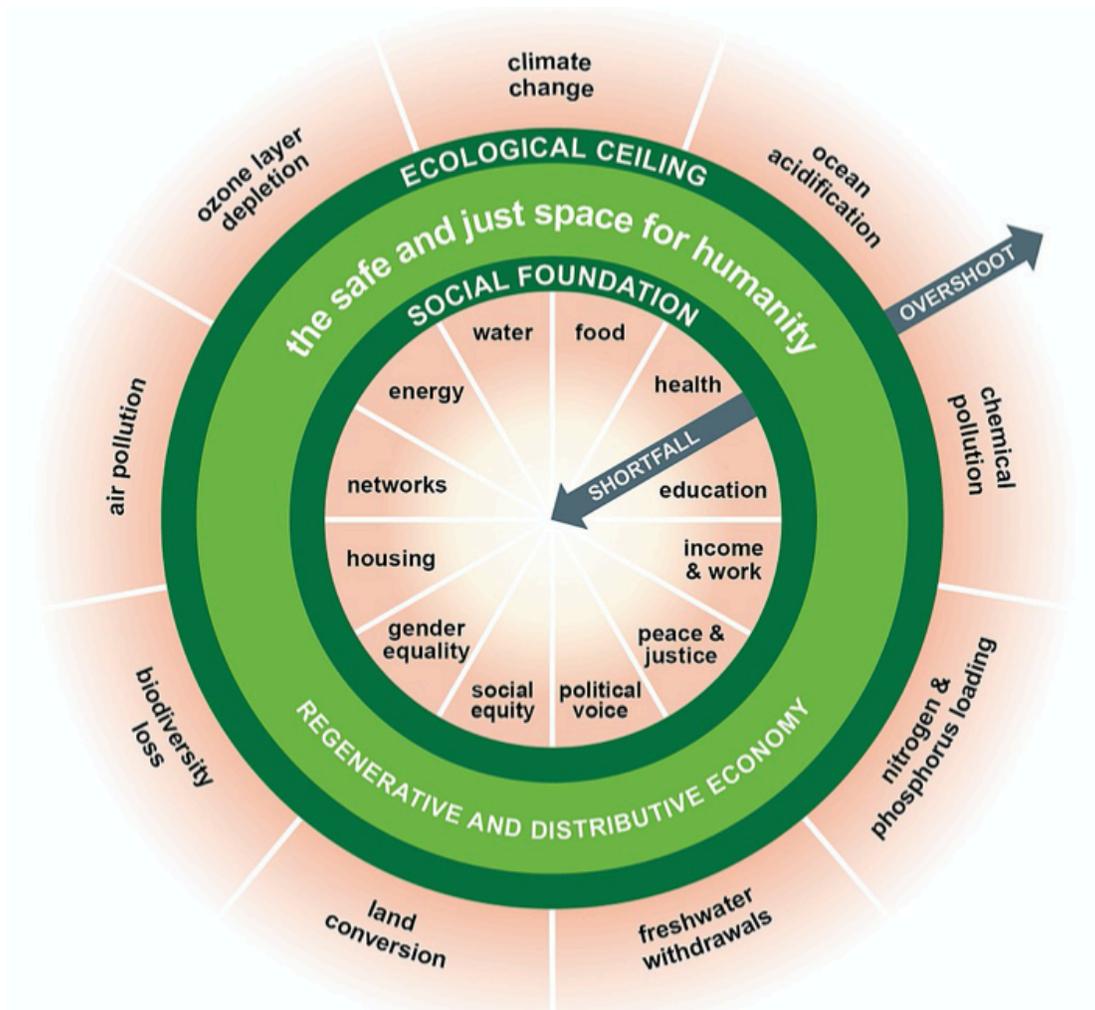
Doughnut economics

Kate Raworth, author of *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*, reveals in this revolutionary magnum opus why her circular model of economics is timely and optimally equipped to replace our old, harmful and unrealistic notions of neverending linear economic growth.

She argues that, “far from floating against a white background, the economy exists within the biosphere — that delicate living zone of Earth’s land, waters and atmosphere. And it continually draws in energy and matter from Earth’s materials and living systems, while expelling waste heat and matter back out into it. Everything that is produced— from clay bricks to Lego blocks, websites to construction sites, liver pate to patio furniture, single cream to double glazing — depends upon this throughflow of energy and matter, from biomass and fossil fuels to metal ores and minerals. None of this is news. But if the economy is so evidently embedded in the biosphere, how has economics so blatantly ignored it?”

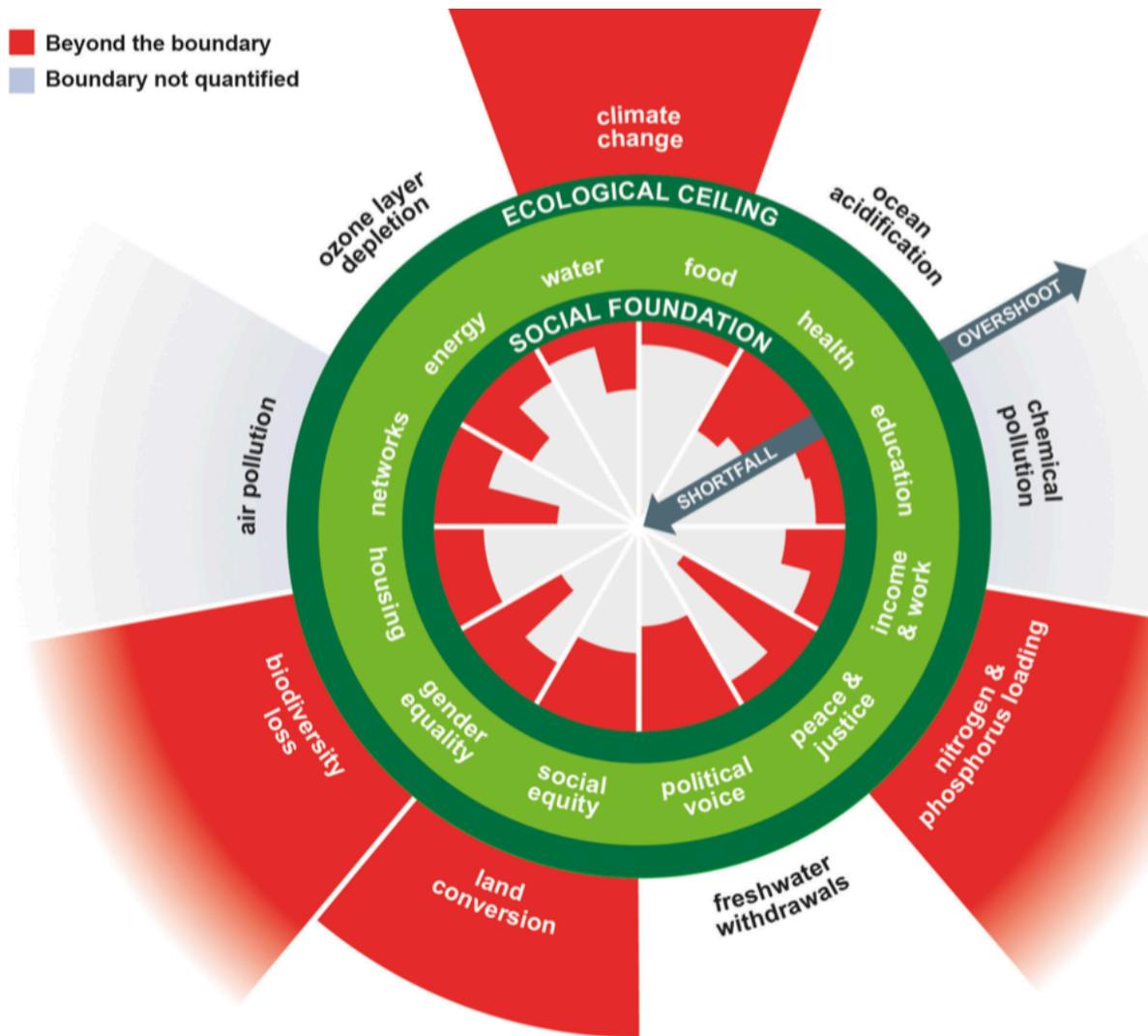
Raworth’s holistic model is ego-ecosystem aligned on a macro-level in the sense that it discourages a shortfall of key life’s essentials to human life (ego) and prohibits unacceptable overshooting behaviors that would harm the environment (ecosystem).

“Humanity’s 21st century challenge is to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In other words, to ensure that no one falls short on life’s essentials (from food and housing to healthcare and political voice), while ensuring that collectively we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth’s life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend – such as a stable climate, fertile soils, and a protective ozone layer. The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries is a playfully serious approach to framing that challenge, and it acts as a compass for human progress this century.”



The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries (Raworth, 2017)

“The environmental ceiling consists of nine planetary boundaries, as set out by Rockstrom et al, beyond which lie unacceptable environmental degradation and potential tipping points in Earth systems. The twelve dimensions of the social foundation are derived from internationally agreed minimum social standards, as identified by the world’s governments in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Between social and planetary boundaries lies an environmentally safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive.”



Areas that are not in the red are not out of the woods. There just isn't enough officially measured data yet to include in the model.

Interestingly, there seems to be a direct correlation between our ego-ecosystem misalignments and how these operate on the micro-level and macro-level. Our inner climate denial has resulted in outer climate denial. We ignore and dismiss global warming signals in the same way we've learned to ignore personal warming signals.

The shortfall and gaps in our social foundation have led to trauma experienced on the individual level and gaps in our psychological foundation — an implosion and collapse of our own energy and wholeness. Explosive, weird and erratic climate patterns result when Earth attempts to reharmonize implosions and imbalances due to, for instance, icebergs melting.

Humans and societies similarly are more likely to engage in erratic and explosive behaviors when parts of the system are experiencing a shortfall due to an implosion and problematic change in the temperature, circulation, and balance of vital life energy.



Mr. Lewis' last dying wish: laying down the heavy burdens

In June 2020, a month before his passing, Mr. Lewis visited the Black Lives Matter Plaza. Not even battling stage 4 pancreatic cancer at age 80 could stop him from absorbing the hopeful energy of today's BLM movement one last time.

Thanks to Mr. Lewis dedication and many sacrifices, we have a much greater and safer platform to assert our rights and express our truth without enduring the severe bodily harm and unacceptable repercussions he did.

May we continue his legacy and commitment to fight inhumane treatment of all people and life on the planet. May we find and utilize the liberating tools and trade-secrets that

allow us to do our powerful work without getting lost in the sabotaging clutches of overwhelm, fear and self-doubt.

Let's stand on the shoulders of these giants, and continue to evolve and push the envelope in this direction. His last wish is entirely within reach and one that I'm honored to dedicate this book, my life's work and my soul authority secrets to. This is what he wrote in his last letter before dying soon after:

"You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society . . . That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on . . . In my life, I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love, and nonviolence is the most excellent way. Now it's your turn to let freedom ring. When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide."

How to Use this Book and What to Expect

- How to Become a Butterfly Instead of a Longer, Stronger Caterpillar

There is nothing in the caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.

- Buckminster Fuller

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

- Maya Angelou

Think of this book as your back pocket guide and best friend. I wrote it for this soul purpose — to offer you reassurance, fresh, fire-tested ideas, and simple, do-able steps and techniques that will help you to effectively clear the most intimidating and stubborn obstacles from your path.

You will learn “clean pain” trade secrets and skills to escape convoluted, “dirty pain” mental and emotional traps. The ultimate goal is to demote your trauma body from its default central role and anchor more fully in your truth body.

Being anchored in your truth body vs your trauma body will allow you to operate from a place of heart vs hurt (Brene Brown’s phrasings of truth vs trauma) and soul authority. Your mind will synchronize with your soul’s blueprint and align with your heart’s True North so you can safely drop into yourself and trust the insights you are receiving.

A reliable sacred heart compass that’s informed by your truth is the ultimate secret to surfing the ups and downs of life and navigating oppressive systems with mastery, confidence, and clarity.

Your liberating journey starts with reconnecting and reacquainting you to your most undermined resource and underappreciated asset: YOU.

Where most sensitive trailblazers get stuck

All caterpillars went through a final major meltdown and messy phase of unidentifiable goop before transforming into a butterfly.

Unfortunately, this is what I see almost every day in our human quest toward greatness.

Sensitive leaders like us get stuck at the following crossroads. We resist softening up and surrendering to this mysterious process.

This resistance often blocks our passage into a higher form. When we approach this congested bottleneck, we turn onto beaten paths and hit a plateau instead of leaning into a new, inclining path that looks a bit more intimidating but needs to be embarked for growth and self-discovery.

Even though we live close to water (tears, creative flow, emotion, intuition, grief), we've tragically learned to associate our compassion, adaptability and vulnerability with being weak, broken, helpless or hopeless.

This was strategically orchestrated by those most threatened by our powerful presence and frankly, most afraid of their own feelings of vulnerability. The majority of us now mistrust our superpowers — our empathic sensitivity and emotional intensity — and avoid the signals that they send us at all cost.

How we were pitted against ourselves

I can attest that nothing could be more embarrassing and shameful for a sensitive kid than turning into a blubbling puddle in front of others. Many of us can remember how much we hated these moments of utter dread. They were especially traumatic if mean kids or harsh adults made another cut into our raw hurt with their snide remarks, calling us a cry baby or laughing at us.

Instead of relying on healthy anger to protect ourselves from mistreatment, we side-stepped self-advocacy and conflict when possible. We succumbed to pressures, diffused our intensity or directed our anger toward ourselves, hoping to improve the situation in a more peaceful, safe, or effective manner.

The root cause of self-hatred

This coping style worked to a degree, but created bigger problems. We may have successfully dodged jabs, jokes, slaps or punches by avoiding or de-escalating confrontation but it taught us to become *our own worst enemy*.

If you were directly or indirectly blamed for your parents' problems, it would have been impossible not to take this blame to heart. As a young child, you probably knew deep down that you couldn't possibly be the cause of your parents' headache, high blood pressure, gray hairs, depression, divorce, alcoholism, violent outbursts or suicide.

Sadly, you needed to dismiss your inner wisdom to survive and were forced to point your inner compass needle to danger (to avoid it) instead of toward your True North.

Slowly but surely, this navigational egosystem became more hypervigilant than healthy, and eventually overrode your body's natural ecosystem guided by your truth body). This is when your trauma body, fear and anxiety took the helm and started an inner war with your true nature.

Punished for exposing shadow parts

Wanting to connect with others from a place of authenticity, wholeness and integrity that matched ours is what often got us in trouble.

We either naively, spitefully or fearfully provoked shadow parts that they may have kept underground their whole lives.

Without deeper awareness of our soul authority, we are also prone to intentionally or unintentionally misuse our intuitive powers to fight back and stay entangled, assuming that this was the only way we would ever be freed of their harmful influence.

This is one of the reasons why we experience tremendous self-doubt and persecution fear (that sometimes even taps into past life persecutions, which was the case with me) when we imagine pushing back and standing up for ourselves.

Even if your mind understood these manipulative tactics that you got reeled into and you were somewhat effective in holding onto your clarity and boundaries, you still needed to play these warped social games to survive.

Dissociation from your body is bound to cause problems. It makes you very susceptible to dirty pain, especially since this is the mainstream and dominant way in which we deal with trauma in this society.

These tricky coping patterns need to be identified, tripped up and realigned because they do a lot of harm.

You won't believe how many sensitive leaders hate themselves for having no control over their tears or feelings when triggered or reminded of old heartache.

Sadly, not many realize that these very same triggers and feelings give them the best access to their inner treasures and power to alchemize clean pain.

Radical acceptance

Reclaiming your soul authority will require dropping into your core self, embracing your mind, body, heart and soul AS IS, and cultivating more trust than ever in your natural genius to harmoniously realign your energy, your emotions and your body's healing wisdom.

It will require quieting the trauma body, not getting distracted by the self-loathing and continuing on until you are able to see and appreciate yourself and your true nature in a totally new light.

The results and benefits will be profound and worth striving for. Practicing radical self-acceptance and self-love with the help of soul authority tools will help you to:

- Re-member and experience yourself as a wondrous vessel of light, love, and life just by Be-ing.
- Know in your cells and bones that you belong to a sacred web of life and that you are a beloved nature spirit that's an integral part and expression of the whole.
- Celebrate your natural genius by learning how to support the harmonious rhythms of the elements as they dance within and around you.
- Pull out your antennae receptors and translate subtle energies as well as intense emotions and grief into clarity, divine healing guidance and empowering action.

Walking your soul's labyrinth

I'll take you on a beautiful journey through hidden coves and passageways deep within your psyche. Before you know it, you'll be excavating jewel after jewel of personalized, custom-fit spiritual guidance and wisdom out of a buried treasure trove you never realized was there, waiting for you at the center of your soul's labyrinth and providing you the answers you most desire.

I get that it may be hard to believe that this is possible.

Remember that no caterpillar could ever have fathomed what the future had in store by looking in the mirror or examining the past.

Becoming a butterfly *requires total trust* in your intuitive body awareness and surrendering to guidance coming from deep within.

Starting something new or starting over both excites and scares the living daylights out of us.

Just the thought of confronting and cleaning up the individual and collective human messes and systems we've inherited or have wrestled with our entire life overwhelms the majority of the sensitive trailblazers and leaders who I work with.

Start with the end in mind

It would be nice not to have to drag old baggage around that we no longer need.

But how do you know ahead of time what you'll need and what you won't need? What to let go of and what do hold onto?

Who has time to take such massive inventory now?

This trick may help.

Don't ask, "Who am I without the baggage I've accumulated my entire life?"

Ask, "who do I want to become?"

Re-divine and imagine yourself as that butterfly and as the most glorious version of yourself.

What do you need to strip off and what do you need to keep to make this happen?

What will contribute to higher level thinking?

Can hard-earned wisdom and life experience *be salvaged—aka not be thrown out with the bathwater?*

Yes!

You'll learn to shave off all that no longer serves you and continue to make the best use of the tools and systems that do work.

The guidance that I'll be offering you in the following chapters will help you to make these important discernments and show you how to integrate your existing frameworks with mine.

As Albert Einstein once said, no problem can be solved at the same level of consciousness that created it.

By stretching your spiritual muscles and mind you will be able to make more space to integrate your energy, rich life experiences, and most effective healing strategies, intuitive insights and psychotherapy gains with my creative guidance and fresh ideas.

This will help you to access higher level thinking, consciousness, and guidance that will transition you into the best version of yourself as smoothly as possible.

How do you stretch when already stretched to the max?

I truly get that most of us are stretched thinner than ever before. Without any prior warning, Covid-19 plopped an unprecedented magnitude of economic, social, health, academic, and emotional challenges, losses, and upheaval at each of our door steps. If that wasn't enough, the malignant incompetence and deliberate deception by the Trump administration about the severity and the precautions to contain the harm made matters much worse for many.

Like it or not, they were forced to pile this enormous load of emotional labor on top of an already demanding and oppressive grind that characterizes daily modern life for all and dire issues of survival for BIPOC and blue collar workers, service providers and small business owners in the US and across the world. ICU nurses and health care providers

have been carrying the worst load of all even though unemployment is the least of their concerns.

You may be thinking, a spiritual overhaul and realignment in support of socially just causes sounds wonderful, but who has the time, desire and bandwidth these days to learn and practice a ton of new skills and tools?

It's not the same as a quick visit to the chiropractor's office where you, after a few snaps, crackles and pops, feel like new.

I have exciting news for you. It can be that easy to touch base and reconnect to your truth because you're essentially coming home to yourself.

No matter how far you've strayed, a part of you will always recognize your true self and will feel as comfortable in your skin as your feet feel in your most favorite pair of broken-in shoes.

After experiencing the deepest, quickest and most natural reset of your life (as many clients, some jittery or shaking from PTSD when they first come in, have experienced and told me), your sacred heart compass and sense of True North rise to the forefront of your awareness and don't back down as easily as before.

You'll experience your soul's home as a welcome refuge and healing inner sanctuary that's filled with gentle soothing energy and fiercely protected by your protective guides.

This is what naturally happens when your mind, body, heart, and soul are aligned, and your immune system functions without mental and emotional interference that disrupts your harmonious ego-ecosystem. It's such a powerful reconnection that every part of you will crave experiencing it over and over again.

Implosion - explosion patterns fueled by denial

The walls that we, in the modern, industrial world, have built for protection from our own conscience and others (and the awful truths they could remind us of) have only made us sicker — in mind, body, heart and soul. Our lower selves and inner critics have convinced us to twist and mold ourselves to avoid feeling vulnerable, messy, and out of control but in doing so, we've become strangers to ourselves.

Because of our hardened posturing and avoidant dirty pain patterns, we don't have much fertile, moist, composted soil and lack a vibrant, strong and courageous root system for healthy growth.

This impoverished and fragile disposition has made it all too easy to get seduced into an implosion-explosion energy cycle, where (collapsing, imploding) triggers of denied past wounding and unacceptable feelings —of shame, guilt, despair, hopelessness, low self-worth, and not being good enough— immediately trigger explosive, overpowering

reactions to inflate the deflated state. Our knee-jerk explosiveness includes blame, anger, hypervigilance, workaholism, overwhelm, scapegoating, attacks, exploitation and attempts to control others and the situation.

We've learned to consider this explosiveness as the most viable and desirable remedy to our "bad feelings" and confuse it with healthy self-assertiveness, speaking up, vitality, power, confidence, and success.

How could we not? We don't have a lot of ancestors and elders left who can teach us how to do this the right and aligned way because the majority of them and their legacies have been killed.

Can you imagine how damaging, disempowering and confusing the adamant denial and deceptions about our collective past wounding must be for disenfranchised American BIPOC who don't have the education, cross-national and professional experiences, and abundant access to core truths and soul healing that I've been blessed with and could use to shine light on my personal experiences and ground me (and still struggled through numerous challenges)?

Can you imagine how damaging, disempowering and confusing the adamant denial and distortions about our past wounding must be for privileged white American people who don't have the education, cross-national and professional experiences, and abundant access to core truths and soul healing that I've been blessed with and could use to shine light on my personal experiences and ground me (and still struggled through numerous challenges)?

Courage to face the truth

The truth hurts but it also deeply resets us and helps us to make decisions that are best for us, our human family and the planet. Would you want your lover to tell you a painful truth or lie to you?

I'd choose the truth over and over again. Choosing the truth is like choosing to become caterpillar goop and trusting the process of transitioning from an egocentric self to a soulcentric and spiritually conscious self.

Mantras such as "what comes around goes around," "whatever we resist, persists," and "the truth prevails" exist to encourage us to seek the truth and welcome breakthroughs, not to shame or punish us.

We stunt our own growth through the avoidance of emotional surrender and fear of overwhelm. The more we run away from the truth, the more it will chase us wherever we go and the more frantic we get inside. Our stunted emotional growth and lack of maturity are what actually overwhelm us. Our egocentric self in our blindspot is largely responsible for this because of its proneness to overidentify with the emotional energy rather than watch how it all works.

Personal and professional crises and breakdowns occur during transitions and transformations to help us grow. It is similar to making missteps and falling when learning to balance our bodies and walk.

What do we do instead? We resist these lessons and the challenges, and become more adamant in using whatever means necessary to regain control and justify our misaligned ways because we can't handle how terrible it feels to be a fledgling and humbled by how little we don't know and how much we have yet to learn about nature's mysterious, balanced and wise ways.

Stuck in hamster wheels

Just look around. Many of us in the Western modern world are trapped in Samsaric hamster wheels and have mastered all kinds of techniques to keep going. We may not even be aware of this or how we got sucked in because of mass cultural conditioning.

Our whole lives, we've been rewarded with praise, grades, reviews, raises, money, promotions, privileges, compliments, belonging and promises by teachers, bosses, co-workers, politicians, partners, parents, friends, and even ourselves and our inner drill sergeant. We've gotten the most positive reinforcement for powering through our body's signals, our inner wisdom and our better judgment.

This sets us up for powering over others in the name of productivity, righteousness, or success, and makes us more likely to defend what we do even when it harms us and oppresses others. We can't tell our own personal truth apart from a larger truth, and have no idea how on or off target we are in terms of our alignment with the greater good.

It's hard to grasp that our own inner climate denial (of our emotions) and propensity to ignore personal warning signals (self-protective, aligned anger vs misaligned resentment) are perpetuating continuous and ever-expanding cycles of denial, defensiveness and oppression.

These are some of the common "pellets" that often entice us in the complex matrices and traps of modern life: achievement and success, retail therapy, false security blankets covering up fear and uncertainty, drama that gets confused with vitality, scapegoating and punching bags to release hurt, vulnerability and frustrations, endless social media feeds, long to-do lists and little checks next to each item that gave us a sense of control and accomplishment.

At the deepest soul levels, we implode our life energy and either 1) remain stuck in the role of victim by preferring to be helpless and overwhelmed, 2) remain stuck in the role of perpetrator by preferring to lash out and blame others and the situation, or 3) keep swinging between these extremes, unable to find equilibrium.

Understanding that these are common ways in which the ego-mind gets double-binded and tricked in latching onto a chauvinistic, overgrown or self-defeating caterpillar identity, can offer a promising way out of this trap — but only if the person is ready and willing to deflate an inflated ego-self and connect on a soulcentric level.

Permission to practice your superpowers

Soul authority supports consciousness pioneers from every community and industry to trailblaze a healthier, more honest way. It starts with examining our modern culture's relationship to power, productivity and external approval at the expense of inner wisdom, emotional intelligence, intuition and integrity — aka your superpowers.

Anyone who's been victimized, oppressed and has learned to implode life energy can become a perpetrator and oppressor — someone who explodes their life energy and exploits the life energy of other people, sentient beings or nature in harmful ways to displace the wounding onto a new target and feel inflated instead of deflated.

In the same vein, anyone who relies on pervasive implosion-explosion dirty pain patterns can rebalance themselves, their choices, and the systems that they are a part of with the harmonizing energy of nature.

I think of it as finding that sweet spot within yourself as you would with a guitar string, somewhere in between too loose and too tight. Consider it “the safe and just inner space for humanity” that you will learn to cultivate with the help of soul authority tools and a protective sanctuary.

None of us are immune to pervasive social pressures that lean too heavily toward the “too tight,” overworked and overstressed end. We collapse and feel deflated when we can't keep up or can't stop the madness. We can't escape these pressures even if we try hiding under a rock our whole lives. Believe me, I tried.

Each one of us needs to do our own transformational work to liberate ourselves from the clutches of “more is better” and “not good enough” outdated and harmful whirlwinds and hamster wheel environments.

It's not the quick fix solution that we'd prefer but since we are at this point all contributing to large-scale problems in small but significant ways, we all need to share the responsibility and do our part in contributing to large-scale solutions in small but significant ways.

Clearing overwhelm, fear and sabotaging patterns within your psyche and personal ecology will inevitably provide more mental space and emotional bandwidth to bring out and practice your superpowers. Especially when porous, sensitive, and prone to assuming too much responsibility, it is imperative to focus on your unmet potential and unique soul callings, not on all that still needs to get done.

Instead of getting side-tracked and paralyzed, you'll feel excited and motivated to apply what you're learning to your personal and professional life, and track the magic that you are attracting and manifesting in real time.

The more consistent your practice, the greater your success in realizing your goals, fulfilling your personal dreams and making a dent in your soul purpose endeavors, meaningful projects and trailblazing work.

You'll be amazed how much time, money, and energy you'll save every day when you no longer get lost in convoluted detours, fear, self-sabotage and self-doubt. The shifts that you'll be making will help you to feel lighter, more in your authority, and more effective each new day.

You will learn to alchemize all of the energy and weight that kept you down on your transformation trailblazing passions and endeavors and transform steadily into your beautiful and efficient butterfly self, but first things first: setting up and securing your leakproof chrysalis.

Setting Up a Soul Sanctuary within Mother Nature's Womb

- Because We Need a Chrysalis to Transform our Colorful Emotions into Wings

There is a secret place. A radiant sanctuary. This magnificent refuge is inside you. Be brave and walk through the country of your own wild heart. Be gentle and know that you know nothing. Be still. Listen. Keep walking. No one else controls access to this perfect place. Give yourself your own unconditional permission to go there. Waste no time. Enter the center of your soul.

- St. Teresa of Ávila

The wilderness is an untamed, unpredictable place of solitude and searching. It is a place as dangerous as it is breathtaking, a place as sought after as it is feared. But it turns out to be the place of true belonging, and it's the bravest and most sacred place you will ever stand . . . True belonging requires us to believe in and belong to ourselves so fully that we can find sacredness both in being a part of something and in standing alone when necessary.

- Brené Brown

Soul authority empowers you as the sole author, alchemist and agent of your life. This is both liberating and intimidating. Standing in our soul authority can be challenging for transformation trailblazers and sensitive wise souls like us. We tend to tune into the potential threat that our choices and needs could evoke in others before they've fully unfurled and formed in our mind.

Knowing this, we can feel flooded by mixed emotions within seconds and try to deliberate the pros and cons of each choice. Because there is no single choice that's all good or all bad (that won't hurt someone's feelings, however so slightly, or possibly trigger some kind of retaliatory, vicious response), our minds keep going and can't decide where to land. When your mind is unsettled, your body and energy also feel like their swirling around and ungrounded.

In search of bulletproof answers

The logical mind resists settling in and relaxing because there are no bulletproof places left in the world. We worry, overthink and get stuck in analysis paralysis, which causes us to doubt our reasoning and our sanity. Meanwhile, our cognitive mind functions just fine and emotional overwhelm, fear, and self-doubt most likely got the better of us. This frustrates us to no end because we can't control this unruly aspect of ourselves with our logical mind or strong will, which are used to running our lives in other areas.

The answers are buried in the spiritual and metaphysical realm — the most spooky and mysterious aspects of our existence that we've learned to fear and avoid like the plague. This has created the biggest conundrum and double-bind of all.

It explains why many Westernized societies are currently in a spiritual crisis and suffering from collective soul loss. We've become masters at rationalizing and justifying the psychological and physical toll that selling our soul (to either belong or succeed) has taken on us.

Some of my sensitive clients remember feeling pressured to sever their connection to their heart and soul as early as kindergarten and grade school. I was one of them.

I reluctantly molded myself to my mother's ways, who'd attributed her success and accomplishments to how well she'd molded to Western and Eurocentric ways while getting her education abroad. She often boasted that I barely weighed 6 lbs. when I was born. I slipped out with ease because she'd followed her doctor's advice to eat as little as possible, essentially starving herself and me.

This is my version of the story now. Many of us were already negatively impacted and disempowered by patriarchal oppressive forces while still in our mother's wombs. My mother learned to give her socially conditioned inner critic — her egocentric self and colonized mind — free rein to waltz all over her with logic and reason rather than pay attention to her heart and surrender to guidance from her inner mystic — her wise, soulcentric self and voice— and other wise women and men.

It's the reason many Westerners believe that they are born with this inner critic, not realizing that it's an inherited, culturally-constructed myth to keep us complacent and small.

Higher level thinking

As Einstein noted, higher-level thinking and consciousness need to be activated and sustained to transform our outdated mindsets. This is what I discovered. It's much easier to re-nature ourselves and our thinking from the ground-up than re-wire ourselves with top-down knowledge and practices.

It's really hard to pull up thought patterns by their roots because our minds are so weedy and entangled. To get all the wee bits and pieces, we need to dive under the mind and venture into the energetic and emotional realms of our existence. It sounds scary, but it isn't if done well.

Another reason why to work from the bottom up: we can get sidetracked trying to mentally grasp complexity and paradox. Our logical mind is wired to polarize and when it comes to grasping paradox, it more often ends up like a dog chasing its own tail.

Fortunately, we are able to grok paradox and holistic complexity with the help of concrete examples that our bodies—the aspect of ourselves most loyal to our true nature—are familiar with and have lived since birth.

Think of the cells and organs within your body as both separate entities and as part of you. Or think about being pregnant and aware of your growing baby in your womb while simultaneously aware of your separate needs as a mother. We, humans, are like distinct organs that are a part of a larger body and whole.

It may seem like our earlobe and pinky toe are worlds apart and don't really want to be bothered with whatever may be upsetting the other, but the blood that runs through both makes it foolish not to be concerned. What affects one will eventually affect the other. Similarly, the waterways and air that connect us all on earth make it foolish for us to keep thinking that we will be granted a clean divorce from humans we don't like due to irreconcilable differences.

Our boundaries are permeable to help us to commune and remain connected to a mysterious life force that is binding all of nature and life, including us, together into one. We react adversely when our porous boundaries are both too closed and too open, just like an organ would. If too many or too little particles pass through the barrier, or if the wrong particles or pathogens are passing through, we develop some kind of infection and fever in an attempt to expel the threat and regain balance and alignment.

This is what I mean with our natural genius. Our bodies operate with protective, self-healing and self-regulating ingenuity on all levels of our being, not just the physical, without our ego-minds directing this. As a matter of fact, all the doing that the ego-mind tries to do is redundant and backfires. It behooves us to trust this mysterious source of energy, love, and well-being that we tend to block and sabotage the more we try to do things our way.

Embodying the paradoxical nature of reality

Setting up a sanctuary helps us to discern where our energy and personal ecosystems begin and end and how to align them with a larger truth. We are better able to protect our energy field and become the master of our own domain when we honor rather than fight all the subtle sensations and nuances that we're used to perceiving.

A double-minded practice helps us to align with the cyclical relationship (the yin yang dynamic) between many polarities in life, which is the key antidote to implosion - explosion cycles.

Opposites begin to appear less mutually exclusive. You start to notice their interdependence and that they actually alchemize change and give birth to one another when they reach an extreme:

- Personal and global
- Us and them
- Human and nature
- Sacred and secular

- Small self and big self
- Self and no self
- Ego and soul
- Future and Past
- Rising and falling
- Good and bad
- Day and night
- Right and wrong
- Light and shadow
- Pain and pleasure
- Action and stillness
- Success and failure
- Life and death
- Wet and dry
- Expanding and contracting
- Exploding and imploding
- Wholeness and brokenness
- Truth and denial
- Material and spiritual
- Seen and unseen
- Masculine and feminine
- Now and later
- Thought and feeling
- . . . and many other polarities

Some examples of this are quarantining and masking ourselves to protect others, or setting firm boundaries around our optimal self-care to benefit the group. We may also live more authentically the closer we get to our deaths, and may discover our greatest strengths in the depths of our greatest despair.

You also hear of leaders who experienced their greatest downfall when at their peak or their greatest successes because of what they learned during their darkest days. You may discover that the most rational people are actually the most emotionally charged and stuck, and the most emotional tend to have the most rigid beliefs.

As Above – So Below and the elements

The hermetic maxim, As Above – So Below, refers to this paradoxical concept of the micro being the representation of the macro and vice versa. It reminds me of the idea of not being a drop in the ocean but the ocean in a drop, as Rumi once said. Or each of us being a mini-universe and as mysterious and unexplored as the vast universe that engulfs us.

Our Westernized and colonized ego-mind is severely threatened by this level of complexity, multidimensionality, mystery and intuitive insight. It challenges our ego-mind's main mission: to keep us physically safe and pain-free.

The soul is so all-encompassing and powerful, the ego fears that it will entice us to dismiss our alarm signals by either bypassing and transcending them — because we've had to do this to keep going and still do have a tendency to do this.

We tend to skip over the many shades of gray and nuances that our ego-mind and soul could consider besides these two psychological go-to's: denial and dissociation on one end of the extreme (shutting down emotional wisdom) and despair and desperation on the other (walking around with frayed nerves and awareness).

Most of us were not taught to reflect much on the different layers of ourselves — mental, energetic, physical and emotional — and how important it is to keep them distinct and paradoxically in balance and harmony, just like the elements in nature.

Many ancient mystics and astrologers around the world — Celtic, Chinese, African, Native American and Indigenous tribes — honored how these life-giving elements, Air, Fire, Earth and Water, corresponded with the sacred laws of nature, the seasons and planets and different aspects of ourselves, including our organs, virtues, dis-ease and psychological facilities.

Growing up, I was fascinated by Taoist teachings of the 5 elements, Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water, and their generative and constricting properties. I could intuitively discern what elements were out of balance when my parents were in conflict or when I budded heads with my mother.

My mother, a junior high school principal, had a strong propensity toward becoming raging fire and hardened earth and my father, an architect, responded by turning into easy-going and flowing water and diffuse air. I saw how they each needed what the other had in excess, but ended up triggering and polarizing each other instead.

What's in a name?

Apparently, my soul's mission has from birth been sealed by my given names, Loraine (Joan of Arc was from the "borders of Lorraine" and bore the cross of Lorraine on her freedom flag) and by my Chinese name, Gam Lan (Golden Flower).

My guides revealed the special significance of these names along my journey of awakening at the most opportune times. The cross of Lorraine is the hermetic symbol for As Above - So Below. It gave a name to the guiding power that drove Joan of Arc and what she had been preparing me for since childhood.

The Secret of the Golden Flower is an eighth-century Chinese book and Taoist-alchemical tract. Carl Jung, who'd taken a 15-year hiatus from conventional psychiatry, credited it for his mature thinking and return to the field. Both Jack Kornfield (in a seminar in 2009 with Daniel Siegel on Mindfulness and the Brain) and my Tai Chi teacher, Michael Mayer, casually mentioned it two weekends in a row, when I was particularly down and discouraged by how long it was taking me to write my memoir.

I felt frustrated that I couldn't just bust it out like I'd done with my dissertation, which was much more of a heady and structured project. I felt seen and encouraged by my ancestors when this book with my name, *Golden Flower*, came up twice. This is what I wrote about this magical moment in my memoir:

"I reminded myself that bridging Western psychology and holistic, indigenous, and non-dualistic worldviews was no easy task, not even for Carl Jung, and to be kind to myself . . . The alchemical symbolism of gold—the transmutation of base metals and matter into a precious metal—and the symbol of the flower or lotus—the uncontaminated truth-body rising out of mud —were beautiful and profound."

While researching the specifics of this ancient script for this book, I found a link to the whole book online, translated. It feels as if my Taoist ancestors invited me to play with them in the big leagues albeit in a "the joke's on you" slapstick comedic way. I was awestruck when I read that some of their key ideas, such as "*preserving in a transfigured form, the idea of the person,*" already contrasted with Buddhist thought many centuries ago — where "*this return to Nirvana is connected with a complete annihilation of the ego.*"

I'd assumed all along that this prominent and somewhat unconventional trailblazing component of *Soul Authority* had been influenced by my own indigo-ego hang-ups and scrutiny, by data I'd collected in sessions and by my training in Western psychological theory. Ha! An excerpt from the book:

Eternal is the Golden Flower only, which grows out of inner liberation from all bondage to things.

Through the union of Heaven (yang) and Earth (yin), and through the activity of the two primordial forces within this scene (an activity governed by the one primal law Tao), there develop "the ten thousand things," that is, the outer world.

A man who reaches this stage transposes his ego; he is no longer limited to the monad, but penetrates the magic circle of the polar duality of all phenomena and returns to the undivided One, Tao.

Herein lies a difference between Buddhism and Taoism. In Buddhism, this return to Nirvana is connected with a complete annihilation of the ego, which, like the world, is only illusion.

In Taoism, on the other hand, the goal is to preserve in a transfigured form, the idea of the person, the “traces” left by experience.

That is the Light, which with life returns to itself, symbolized in our text by the Golden Flower.

- Richard Wilhelm, translator of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*.

Rainbow Crystal Woman

In 2001, I had my very first, full-bodied, soul authority break-through during an intense ceremony in a womb-like sweatlodge (my very first) where I drummed so vigorously, I felt like I'd become the drum and was channeling Gaia's heartbeat.

Right before the ceremony, I'd balanced an amethyst egg, representing my spiritual rebirth, in the center of a medicine wheel that was sitting on a drawing of a kapemni, the Lakota symbol for As Above - So Below. Right after, I received the earth name Rainbow Crystal Woman from my guides but didn't understand yet how it related to this Soul Authority structure or my mission.

I learned later that Rainbow Crystal Woman was a modern incarnation of White Buffalo Calf Woman. I found a stone that had been naturally carved in the shape of a white buffalo on ceremonial grounds in 2004 during an intense vision-quest which led to a spontaneous near-death experience. I gave it to one of the leaders who didn't trust me because of the powerful energies that were coming through and braiding in with my usual energy. He scratched the totem and seemed more spooked and bewildered by it.

I felt very conflicted and didn't publicly commit to the soul authority teachings I'd received during these intense downloads about the 7-directional indigenous medicine wheel until I met Inuit medicine woman, Mary Attu, who blessed my calling. She had worked on a Lakota reservation, had felt strongly guided by fierce Lakota leader, Crazy Horse, and explained to me that Rainbow Crystal Woman was another As Above - So Below name.

The rainbow colors of light represented infinite earthly forms and reflected the spirit of Gaia that shines through her most ancient and pristine crystal body.

Mary quieted my fears of culturally appropriating (for strongly resonating with and wanting to use the 4 directions medicine wheel –Air, Fire, Earth, and Water – instead of the 5 elements model from my Chinese heritage, and my confusion why on earth my guides picked this framework out of all of my many ancestral and cultural lineages to choose from). She said that this one was right for me and that “the people” depended on me to guide them.

Because of my rich multicultural background and wise rolemodeling, I believed that cultural teachings were not meant to be forever preserved in a box nor to bid any

particular group of people into a static identity. Mutual acculturation benefits all involved parties and groups. Because of the huge and centuries long power disparities in the US, the playing field has never been level between Natives and non-Natives: sacred knowledge had been taken, distorted, shared and sold without permission, and unequal distribution of resources and opportunities had taken the “mutual” out of most exchanges from the get-go.

This long history of pillaging and cultural appropriation understandably have left deep wounds of mistrust and guardedness around outsiders claiming to be called to make good use of these teachings, but Mary believed that I had the right intentions and was being guided by the spirits to be of service and heal dis-ease that harms the well-being of racially and ethnically oppressed and disenfranchised people and the planet.

How do you say no to that?

The trap of righteous indignation

All the teachings needed to unfold this way so I could learn important lessons about the defensive methods that the trauma body and lower-self revert to when triggered. Memories of grave trauma and injustice can fuel (explosive) righteous indignation and solidify rigid ego-attachments and lower-self misaligned coping that worsen instead of better the situation.

The teachings around this kind of misalignment went as far as having to remove a curse that a bitter medicine woman set on me while undermining my authority with a snide remark at a book talk. She hated the term “shaman” and she hated “neo-shamans and had concluded that I was a fraud based on what she’d read in my memoir.

My heart instantly hurt and burned after her comments. I could feel the hatred shooting out of her heart into mine and worked on neutralizing and harmonizing it for months. I learned to stop contracting and bracing myself in defense and was able to stretch big and wide enough to dissolve her wrath and the curse with fierce compassion. From then on, I was no longer afraid of or controlled by anyone’s righteous indignation.

I discovered through the decades that our ancient soul structures are as similar as the color of our blood and the bones in our bodies. Very diverse clients from all over the world, some with no prior exposure to esoteric teachings or meditation, are more similar than different when we dig deep enough.

Their past-life bleed-throughs (and my own) crisscross the gamut and planet, as if mystery has a wicked sense of humor and is constantly cross-pollinating us to keep challenging our artificial walls and borders.

I’d integrated this lesson years ago and hadn’t given much thought to these inner struggles until writing this book and considering how to acknowledge the different streams that influenced this model.

Apparently, my Taoist ancestral guides were listening and seemed to think it was time to let me in on a secret. In skimming the Secret of the Golden Flower, I ran into this passage: “Man is spiritually reborn out of water and fire, to which must be added “thought-earth” (spirit - Air), as womb or tilled field (Earth).” No wonder it felt so natural and easy to work with these four elements: these elemental ideas were central to my own Taoist Chinese lineage.

My ancestors got a big wicked kick out of the joke they’d pulled off and winked at me for sticking with the four elemental model and trusting myself, even when things got heated and hard. It wasn’t funny at the time, but I can appreciate their trickster humor now and recently learned through a talk by Dr. Leslie Gray that highly respected and rigorously trained indigenous clowns apparently also practice this kind of wicked humor when ceremonies and the sacred are all getting a bit too serious.

The bottom line: if we deeply trust our natural genius, no amount of modern-day arguments and pressures is likely to derail it and the guides and universe do come through for us when it matters most.

Ego-ecosystem alignment

An ego-ecosystem alignment provides the antidote to our many variations of inner climate denial which makes us more susceptible to adopting and getting hooked on abusive implosion - explosion coping strategies.

The first step to get out of these patterns requires — with the help of Air - the wisdom element — setting a conscious intention to honor and support the harmonious connection between your mind, heart and soul. It allows you to nourish and protect the ingenious and cooperative relationship between these parts of yourself in service of your integral self and your soul’s grand design and mission.

Because of our aversion to conflict, our ego-mind tries to deny hard truths about the state of the world and avoid facing and grieving how this has impacted our life, our inner circles and loved ones. We can only lie to ourselves for so long. Our bodies and ego-systems will honor and uphold the truth by protesting. We can talk ourselves into doing something that gives us a temporary sense of relief, but if it’s out of alignment, our bodies will act up and reject this as a permanent solution and set-up.

For example, you may talk yourself into working 60 hours a week to pay off your student loans and that this hard work is good for your character building and worth your while. Your psyche and soul will protest with symptoms of dis-ease if this is a misaligned plan and you have, for example, already been struggling with insomnia, exhaustion and stress-related health issues for months.

Instant relief and freedom from pain

The good news is that it is possible to feel instant relief, calm, hope and excitement after setting up and entering your sanctuary — no matter where you are from, what's going on in your lives or how deep you may be steeped in personal or societal hamster wheels of helplessness, despair and anxiety. Entering your safe sanctuary activates your parasympathetic nervous system and insulates you in a protective womb-like chrysalis that's filled with soothing gentle energy and capable of harmonizing any kind of chaos.

It also offers you the swiftest way out of the lose-lose double-bind that's now mostly driven by your own mental programming and gaslighting. I'm able to help many of my clients shift and enjoy profound freedom and fresh possibilities often within their very first session. After getting a good sense of their dormant healing potential, they are eager to learn how to set up and enter this safe haven by themselves. I can't imagine any reason why this can't be the case for you.

Soul sanctuaries come in all shapes and sizes.

No matter where you are in your journey of spiritual awakening or self-discovery, a soul sanctuary can elevate your sense of well-being and functioning in ways that optimally benefit you. Here are some testimonials how a soul sanctuary enhanced the lives of a few of my students. The teachings, protection and support they received greatly varied. What was undeniable: they each got exactly what they needed.

After a series of inquiries and investigations, I came to this realization: I give other people their space and sanctuaries, understanding and forgiveness on a universal level, but I do not give that to myself.

I need to bring my sanctuary with me everywhere! And I need to expand it to the size that I need to feel safe because that's what I deserve, that's what everyone deserves, including me!

Looking over at my frozen self on the ranch with Dante (her horse), a purple ring and bubble surround me and Dante together. No matter where I walk, this purple ring surrounds me as if some magic shield.

I can hold on TIGHT to the tree in the center any time I need to.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D., Special Education Teacher and Artist

Cultivating a vibrant tree sanctuary with spirit guides and ancestors has helped me navigate some significant life changes with clarity, grace and peace, including a very tumultuous romantic relationship and difficult patterns with family members. I also got clearer on my soul authority, purpose and understanding of power, thanks to my tree and animal guides. I feel even more in my integrity and in greater service to myself and the global community. I'm able to compost what no longer serves me. My sacred oak tree has grounded and nurtured me in a way that I couldn't have imagined, impacting

how I see my connection to myself and others. I've been able to surrender to endings and open up to new relationship possibilities in delightful and surprising ways.

Alyssa Newman, Responsible Minerals and Community Program Manager, Film Producer and Director, Board Member to renewable energy and social justice non-profits

Connecting to my tree guide in my sanctuary has now become a daily practice. Not only does it help ground me, but it reminds me of who I am and what my purpose is here on Earth. I use it in moments of uncertainty, to tackle anxiety, and even to drift into sleep. Even in the depths of a panic attack, finding myself in this sanctuary—with my tree and my guides—allows for a reset. Going into this sanctuary always helps me plug my energy back into a universal source.

Mia De Luca, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology

A brief orientation

We will begin your soul authority journey with an orientation and a few important safety guidelines in regard to setting up your inner sanctuary. I want to make sure that your sanctuary is protected and solid enough to serve as a trusted safe haven, a grounding anchor, and eventually as a cauldron to alchemize karmic pain into your soul's purpose and dharmic path.

Your truth body and wholeness

The most important skill to get under your belt is learning to activate and amplify your parasympathetic nervous system and natural genius at will. Because your physical body naturally does all of this — heals and regulates your complex ecosystem — without your direct command, it's more a matter of clearing ego-mind preoccupations that interfere with and dilute the strength of your truth body.

Most of us take our bodies for granted until we get sick. It then slowly sinks in how little we know about the home and sanctuary of our soul, and how often we've blindly given our power away to experts, authority figures, mental health practitioners and doctors who tend to overpathologize and overmedicate our sane symptoms, medical mysteries and soul's efforts in trying to communicate to us.

On the flip side, holistic healers and well-meaning pioneers in alternative health and esoteric practices often tell us to trust our bodies, and that we know ourselves better than any expert or doctor. We are ultimately the authority of our bodies and lives, and embracing this is half the battle.

Trusting your authority

While this is definitely a step up from placing automatic blind faith in the experts, blindly trusting ourselves could also get us in trouble, just because there are so many complex dramas, epic battles, myths and narratives that are constantly unfolding inside of us. Especially if sensitive and empathic, all kinds of voices and energies can hijack our minds and occupy our bodies, and we don't even realize that this is the case.

It takes years of rigorous study to get a basic grasp of the physiological, biological, meridian and mechanical structures and workings of our miraculous bodies, let alone what constitutes a healthy vs unhealthy range of human variation in regard to dis-ease. To top this complexity, seemingly fixed physical components and symptoms are always in flux because of the energetic factors I mentioned above (unless doctors hex us and we overidentify with our dis-ease and set it in stone, as Lissa Rankin, MD, and author of *Mind over Medicine* points out).

Direct communication

Wouldn't it be amazing if you could be in direct communication with your natural genius to help navigate and orchestrate what's best for you? Well, you can with soul authority. I can't tell you how many medical mysteries have naturally dissolved after my clients decoded important messages with the help of their guides. Many had seen countless experts in allopathic medicine and holistic healing with less dramatic results.

Opening up hidden channels of communication with our pain body and symptoms can be very eye-opening and develops self-trust as well as trust in medical and healing experts in a systematic and organized way. The key step in insuring clear communication is by establishing energetic boundaries with the help of a soul sanctuary. Let's address the most common pitfalls to avoid before you set yours up.

Setting limits with the trauma body

It may feel strange to think of needing to set limits with parts of your trauma body that may constantly be sabotaging you (i.e. your imploding default inner critic and your exploding self-redeeming warrior) but as you learn to consciously protect what's at risk and make sure to align your sense of truth with a larger truth — with nature and the elements serving as the most reliable system of checks and balances for your sacred heart compass — you will eventually grow big and strong enough to quiet and heal the voices that fuel these powerful impulses and cycles.

Our bodies and hearts short-circuit when overwhelmed by trauma, intense pain and emotion. It causes our soul to leave the body and your ego-mind may get invested in keeping things this way. The ego-mind forms undermining narratives and core beliefs that justify and solidify these constricted patterns. The misaligned ways of holding, avoiding and exploding undigested emotions end up forming your trauma body. Remember that your ego-mind has been conditioned and colonized for centuries to operate in ways that are unnatural and contradict your body's wisdom.

Even if you have intentionally chosen to be on board with this misaligned program, convinced that it will get you ahead in life, your body knows the truth. It will create a full blown fake self — the trauma body — to appease your dominating ego-mind and manage the dissonance.

Many of us are not deliberately choosing misaligned ways of being, but have been deceived by a very convincing trick of the mind. It's very confusing when our powerful, felt experience of our truth body has been much more fleeting over the course of our lives compared to the constant, overbearing presence of our default trauma body (that has been occupied by inherited trauma — intergenerational patterns and misaligned ways in dealing with unresolved pain since birth).

If you are mind-boggled by the fact that your truest self is not the self you've known your whole life, you are on the right track. It will make more sense over time and eventually feel right.

Fear of intense emotion and rejection

Our trauma body ends up dominating and occupying our inner space with default fear for clean pain and other intense emotions when digesting it. Instead of purging these out — a process we can't stop on the physical level but can on the emotional one—, we hold the ick in to avoid looking gross or having to deal with the mess, wrongly assuming that we can metabolize it.

We can't because we can't reintegrate abs heal what isn't ours.

Some of the thwarted reasons for upholding these dirty pain patterns have been passed down from womb to womb and from broken heart to broken heart, making it really difficult to recognize the original trauma that generated the misalignment.

We confuse core beliefs and family values with absolute and universal truths, and disconnect from our own regulating emotions and energy, except for the overwhelming fear of rejection that we anticipate when challenging the family's status quo.

This makes intuitive sense. When empty and lacking soul authority, we feel extremely vulnerable and depend even more on our social groups for belonging and survival. At a certain point, we can lose complete sight of the truth and any sense of what could be off.

It's like inheriting a house with blown fuses, and not realizing that you have been operating at half power your whole life. Or that there is a fuse box where you could reset blown circuits. Even if you did sense that something's wrong, your family may have given you the evil eye and clear sense that it's not okay to challenge the status quo.

It's better to learn to live with whatever is wrong than dig up problems that no one wants to confront. This is how a karmic, lower-self ancestral pattern of denial can end up running the show for generations.

Re-naturing ourselves from the ground up

Our physical body's harmonizing and healing mechanism operates in the same mysterious ways as nature and all living things. It naturally thrives and flourishes, and gets antsy when blocked. This is how I experience our true pristine nature, the aspect of ourselves that automatically gets activated and energized when we go camping, take a walk in the park, spend some time in the woods, go on a hike in nature or stare at trees, wild life or beautiful natural scapes.

Our true nature is in synch with our body wisdom, the physical aspect of ourselves that still functions like a mini earth and independent ecosystem. Within this system, air, fire, earth and water flow, regulate, harmonize and balance each other and are wired to optimally and holistically support our health and well-being.

Through my work with fellow sensitive souls and transformation trailblazers, I've found it relatively easy to evoke and reset our innate connection to life and the radiance of the sun even when our lights have been dimmed for generations.

Setting up the healing grid

When we reset and reconnect with the underlying healing grid that's integral to who we are, it will not only anchor us in the deep now and give us access to infinite possibilities, it will also backlight our day to day patterns. Anchoring in this grid will help us to feel safe enough to eventually fall apart and break down whatever we are holding onto too tightly. This gives us the chance to reintegrate at a higher level of spiritual order after we've cleared all the surfacy kinks in our ego-ecosystem alignment.

Another way to perceive the sanctuary set up is to think of your true nature as the metronome that keeps a constant unwavering beat (the heartbeat of Gaia) and the music, melodies and harmonies that we must express as free-flowing energy, the weather and climate, always in flux, always closely impacted by all that's happening around you.

In charge of the greenhouse gauges

True North guidance from your heart, body and mind is most trustworthy when it's grounded in your own personal and unique greenhouse that is as soothing and gentle as the stillness that calms us in nature. Within this greenhouse, you are in charge of all the gauges, controls, barometers, and thermostats for optimal wind, heat, moisture, pressure, condensation, and fertilizer so that delicate seeds and seedlings can sprout and grow. Harsh climate conditions caused by deprivation or excess of any one of the elements, i.e. extreme heat, frost, flooding, lack of water, even if just for a day, can cause the seedlings to die.

A harsh inner climate is akin to self-loathing, self-berating and lack of self-compassion. This is not a natural state and is the reason why it's difficult to grow new and healthier habits unless this form of self-destructiveness and criticism is no longer a knee jerk response when triggered.

Once these skills are mastered, your sanctuary will serve as a sterile triage ICU (inner critic uprooting) for deeper healing and psychic surgery that transforms pain into purpose. This will be guided by the harmonizing elements and a dreamteam of spirit animals and guides you will learn to summon after mastering round one of your sanctuary set-up.

You can imagine the potential risks and harm caused by self-defeating thoughts, assumptions, behaviors and world-views when attempting more sophisticated and intuitive interventions before setting up your sanctuary right.

Once your sanctuary is more robust, you will be able to harmonize and neutralize all kinds of weather and climate with ease, clearing dis-ease, in natural and cyclical ways.

Shifting from caterpillar to butterfly

Most transformation trailblazers have needed to do a good amount of stabs in the dark in dealing with life. If that's you, your ego-mind probably has gotten significantly attached to its ways. We want to honor how far your ego-mind has taken you, and also gently explain that unless you want to become a longer and stronger caterpillar, you now need to switch gears, access a whole new layer of body wisdom and embark on an adventure that may feel like the complete opposite of what was so effective in the past.

The step by step guidance that I will be offering you in the meditation section of each chapter follows an intentional and intuitive sequence to help ease you into an aligned set up that will soon feel like second nature.

This brief overview may help in getting a quick intuitive sense where your own inner fuse box and power grid may have gotten tripped up and which renewable energy source and element(s) needs to be reset to realign your ego-ecosystem.

SOUL AUTHORITY

RENEWABLE ENERGY POWER GRID

Tripped



BEFORE

Rigid, good-bad, black-white, either-or thinking, judgmental, linear, polarizing, concrete

Ego-Ecosystem Alignment Guide

TRUE NATURE



SACRED TREE

Reset



AFTER

Holistic, complex, nuanced, layered, paradoxical, mystical, seasonal, cyclical, spiral

BEFORE

Anxious, scattered, toxic thoughts, foggy, overwhelmed, venting, gaslit, smokescreen-ed

MENTAL



AIR ELEMENT

AFTER

Big picture clarity, long view, highest good, wise, spacious, inspirational, imaginative, fresh ideas

BEFORE

Burned out, workaholic, frustrated, controlling, destructive, blaming, resentful, domineering

ENERGETIC



FIRE ELEMENT

AFTER

Protective, passionate, courageous, boundaried, on fire, accept endings, transformational heat

BEFORE

Quick fix, pave over, cover up, superficial, facade, exploitative, manipulative, materialistic

PHYSICAL



EARTH ELEMENT

AFTER

Grounded, rooted, deep, foundational integrity, present, connected, aligned action, composting

BEFORE

Flooding, drowning, dumping, can't keep head above water, fragile, unmoored

EMOTIONAL



WATER ELEMENT

AFTER

In the flow, intuitive, creative, abundance, joy, cleansing, vulnerable, regenerative, vitality

BEFORE

Self-doubt, empty, despair, existential fear, runaround, meaningless, sleepwalking, directionless, vicious cycles

TRUE NORTH



HEART COMPASS

AFTER

Ego-mind - soul aligned, purposeful, fulfilled, impactful, mission-led, focused, empowered

Step 1. Sacred Ancestral Tree: Wondering why you feel overwhelmed and what “ancestral-deficit” and “nature-deficit” have to do with it?

As Above – So Below

How to detect and correct inner climate denial, ego-ecosystem misalignments, and rigid good-bad thinking that are slowly squashing your soul

No one comes from the earth like grass. We come like trees. We all have roots.

- Maya Angelou

*The power of the seed, like Heaven and Earth, is subject to mortality,
but the primordial spirit is beyond the polar differences.*

- Lao Tzu

[The Secret of the Golden Flower] is built on the premise that cosmos and man in the last analysis obey common laws; that man is a cosmos in miniature and is not divided from the great cosmos by any fixed limits. The same laws rule for the one as for the other, and from the one a way leads into the other. The psyche and the cosmos are related to each other like the inner and outer worlds. Therefore man participates by nature in all cosmic events.

- Translated by Richard Wilhelm

Imagine growing up in a rainforest village and from the moment you are born, gather around the sacred kankantri, a giant silk cotton tree that can have a base that's 40-50 feet wide and grow up to 150-200 feet tall. It's a living cathedral and altar that your parents and grandparents are paying their respects to, and that your ancestors revered long before you were born. It's intuitively clear that your descendants will gather by this same tree long after you die. Your mind is from the get-go supported and primed to think in expansive terms.

You are a small piece of a beautiful, intricate mosaic. You matter. You are sustained by magic. The sun feeds this immense tree through its leaves, and the soil feeds it through its roots. You somehow get that you're similarly kept alive by sun and soil. You are just one degree removed from your food which is an equal opportunity provider and couldn't care less what you look like, who you love or what language you speak.

You are viscerally and palpably invested in all there is to learn about these food sources — how to sustain them, how to catch them, how to plant and find them — to enhance your chances of survival. You can do this without language, as Kajë, one of the most skilled boats men and fishermen of a Saramaccan village deep in the rainforest of

Suriname demonstrated. He was deaf and mute, but extraordinarily astute and one of the most valued members of the village.

The logical mind and its place in the natural world

Cognitive and book learning have their place but they enhance your success in specific trades which do not matter as much in the rainforest as they do in industrialized societies. Practical skills, knowledge, and intuitive wisdom matter much more in a society where living in a cooperative and harmonious relationship with nature and one another is directly linked to your survival. While it's great to have language and words to foster these, it's not necessary. The mind, body heart and soul are able to hold a lot of energy and complex information that can be pointed out or practiced without words. There is so much more to learn and absorb from nature when our minds are not filled with data and existential anxiety about grades that far too many kids learn to link to their future success and chances of survival before the age of 10.

You learn in the forest that you are a sentient being, a nature spirit just like any of the other trillions of life forms on the planet. And that despite our unique blueprints, we're designed to live in harmony with one another and exist at the mercy of a mysterious system of checks and balances that favors complexity, beauty, spirals, cooperation and abundant life over homogeneity, dominance and destruction.

This fervor for life and diversity is apparent in the rainforest, the desert, the ocean and in many other climates and life forms. It is certainly present in our cells and genetic make-up as human beings, one of the most complex species alive on the planet. Sadly, we lost our ways and our minds have been reduced to a fraction of its size and potential.

Human domination of nature

Somewhere along the way, our frontal lobes resisted surrendering to this magnificent and mysterious life force that can also be brutal and overpowering. We improved our chances for physical survival through clever discoveries and fooled ourselves into thinking that we were beating nature and this ancient system. We gained an advantage over others by choosing competition over cooperation but did so at the expense of our collective well-being and souls. Since then, millions of present-day humans have bought into this myth.

Over the generations, we have almost completely split our minds from our bodies and souls, and are convinced that we can outsmart wisdom and mystery. Starting in kindergarten and grade-school, we learn to override signs and signals from our bodies, hearts and souls that indicate that something is awry. We keep molding ourselves, our energy and our emotions into some prepackaged form and imagine that shutting down or slicing off parts of our colorful complexity to fit into a neat box will improve our chances of success and survival.

Israeli historian and contemporary “phenomenon,” Yuval Noah Harari, has highlighted similar trends and concerns in his book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*:

He claims that human history has been shaped by three major revolutions: the Cognitive Revolution (70,000 years ago), the Agricultural Revolution (10,000 years ago), and the Scientific Revolution (500 years ago). These revolutions have empowered humans to do something no other form of life has done, which is to create and connect around ideas — religion, capitalism, politics — that do not physically exist. These shared “myths” have enabled humans to take over the globe in the past 1000 years.

We now are on the verge of overcoming natural selection and becoming gods. Yet, we still seem unhappy in many ways and we are unsure of what we want. He wonders if there is “anything more dangerous than dissatisfied and irresponsible gods who don’t know what they want.”

We are far off from living up to our species name, *Homo Sapiens*, meaning wise humans, because we have lost touch with what’s wise and have demoted our wise leaders, especially within the fast growing and technocratic sectors of the modern world. Instead of surrendering to and revering the cycles, rhythms and guiding wisdom of nature as we did before the Agricultural Revolution, we’re hell-bent on dominating it and from the looks of it, ruining its extraordinary and mysterious essence with more advanced biotechnology, tools and science to amass more wealth, control, invincibility and perhaps even immortality.

In his most recent book, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, which followed at the footsteps of “dark, dystopian and disturbing” *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*,” Harari provides 21 concrete lessons on how to deal with the biggest challenges we face today. Chapter 21 was on meditation and understanding that intelligence and consciousness are not the same. He made it the last chapter to end on the most important note. Consciousness is mysterious and natural, and reconnecting to it may very well be our best and only chance of becoming satisfied and responsible gods who know what we want.

“We’ve seen an amazing development in computer intelligence, but exactly zero development in computer consciousness,” he claims. “As technology improved, two things happened. First, as flint knives gradually evolved in nuclear missiles, destabilizing the social order became more dangerous. Second, as cave painting gradually evolved into television broadcasts, it became easier to delude people. In the near future, algorithms might bring this process to completion, making it well-nigh impossible for people to observe the reality about themselves. It will be algorithms that will decide for us who we are and what she should know about ourselves. For a few more years or decades, we still have a choice. If we make the effort, we can still investigate who we really are. But if we want to make use of this opportunity, we had better do it now.”

Harari explains that he doesn't meditate to escape from reality. He meditates two hours a day to get in touch with reality.

Sane symptoms that are serving Source

Even if we go about our days with our heads in the sand, our shortsighted and shallow mindsets luckily only take us so far. Our bodies can't help but protest with symptoms of dis-ease. Tension tends to break out into all kinds of stress-related physical ailments and interpersonal conflict. It also manifests into stubborn mental dis-orders, ranging from depression and anxiety—epidemics in their own right—to more severe issues, such as bipolar disorder, psychosis, delusions (conspiracies), schizophrenia, and personality disorders (PD), such as borderline PD, narcissism, paranoia and antisocial PD with psychopathic and sociopathic deviances.

Seeing our symptoms as sane and in service of Source can be an encouraging sign of hope and boost our confidence that our hearts, bodies, minds, and souls are still more devoted to the ways of mystery. Our innate drive for wholeness will always have the last word. It provides undeniable clues whether or not we're aligned with our higher self. Our symptoms provide evidence that no matter how well we talk ourselves into believing what we'd rather believe, our bodies won't cave in if in disagreement.

The question is: will we finally listen or look for more effective ways to hush the symptoms and dismiss the messages? Especially in the industrialized world, our ego defenses and personality ticks are so all-consuming that just the thought of loosening their grip can get us to spin into a self-destructive, imploding cycle.

We need to get okay with just observing this through our soulcentric lenses and not get pulled in.

Nature and the ancestors have our backs

According to Daniel Foor, author of *Ancestral Medicine: Rituals for Personal and Family Healing*, our exploitive disposition and disconnected sense of self is not only indicative of "nature deficit," but also of "ancestral deficit."

Overwhelm, fear and self-doubt are what we feel in our hearts and bodies when we forget that earth and our ancestors have our backs. These blocks are the byproduct of our isolated, colonized mindsets and our loss of connection to guidance that's bigger and far more mysterious than the concrete reality we abide by.

We've really made a mess of things the past few hundred to thousands of years. There are very few societies left on earth that still live as intimately with nature as my Maroon guides, consciously protecting their ancient, self-sufficient ways and villages from harmful energy with grass gates deep in the rainforests of Suriname. In the modern world, there are few intact social groups left (except for the ones formed by lone wolves,

courageous truth-seekers and marginalized consciousness pioneers creating a new center and world order) that feel truly safe to belong to.

It's important to connect to our ancient and well ancestors who once lived in close harmony with nature and the earth, even if this was hundreds or thousands of years ago. My sacred all-encompassing tree appeared first as a plant ancestor to connect us to the As Above-So Below embodied state.

During the first meeting with my advanced ancestral group several months ago, I pulled an ancestral tree card from a tarot deck after asking for a guide to oversee and protect the work we would be doing.

The guidance that came through in the next three months aimed to deepen our trust in ancestors and humans who lived in physical form and harmony until this trust was comparable to the trust we have in nature and the trees. According to Foor, the connection with an unbroken lineage can give us a great deal of strength even if we need to skip over a few generations that are unwell. We will eventually alleviate the weight and dis-ease of the unwell ancestors and broken ancestral lines by flushing these gaps with light coming both from our hearts and the older unbroken line of well ancestors.

Living in paradox

My cross-national dissertation, entitled *Ala Kondre, Na Fraga – All Countries But No Flag: A Multidimensional Analysis of the Experiences of Surinamese Multiracials in the Caribbean*, revealed how much my double-minded, paradoxical spiritual orientation had been influenced by my cultural upbringing and ancestral influences. The fifteen diverse Surinamese adults (17-30 years old) I'd interviewed (from different communities in the city) were proud of their authentic heritage and proud to belong to a nation that was greater than the sum of its parts.

My research findings helped me to feel less alone and able to forge forward on my unconventional path which resulted in the creation of Soul Authority's holistic and paradoxical framework later down the line. My Maroon guides and my great-grandmother ancestral guide told me not to take my rare experience of true belonging and authenticity for granted.

Even if clients didn't have this experience, I've witnessed time and again that some dig deeply ache for this and are able to digest and grieve this loss. It releases them of the burden of no longer carrying their ancestors' karma and pain of being denied this around. They are also greatly helped when able to access the guidance of well ancestors who are highly invested in the actualization of their dharma path.

If we don't go this deep, the unwell ghosts will keep on reliving their traumas and unresolved issues through us and through leaders who have much more power this day

and age to do grave harm to many. We are clearly getting crushed under the weight of their unfinished business and need to do something about this before it's too late.

Clearing ancestral lines relieves the next generation of all this heavy baggage, and helps them to connect to their guides and truth more readily so that they are less vulnerable to mind-control and future demagogues.

Daring to stand up for ourselves

Reconnecting to our true nature and healthy ancestors will help us to access more courage and inner strength to stand up for our flagrant selves. We will also receive reassurance from them that our bold soul authority is paying off and causing important shifts. Experiencing ourselves in a soothing protected soul sanctuary within the womb of Mother Nature and supported by ancient and wise ancestors from each bloodline is one of the most powerful ways to reset ourselves.

It heals collective shame about being human and connects us to ancestral lineages that we are proud of and want to rebirth back into existence. For claims that our descendants are our ancestors. This recycling of lives gives us multiple opportunities to revisit the past in the present and spiritually compost what we didn't get to into higher form.

Aligned ancestral connections can instantly backlight our stuck patterns and emotional hang-ups when we meditate, and inspire us to heal and transform what is ready to shift. It's like accessing a recovered social blueprint of a healthy and interconnected community that offers us much-needed wisdom and guidance to re-nature our de-natured minds, one person, one family, one community, and one ecosystem at the time.

You can kill me but I won't die

My ancestors offered me this mantra they may have said to themselves, "You can kill me but I won't die" to expand my imagination and boldness. It was a spin on "You can run, but you can't hide." It has the reverse message. I will only discover my true power and self when I stop running.

We need to anchor in the power, permanence and peace of the deep now and stay put, no matter what.

Present moment stillness and eternal love are the only constant and guarantee in life, and prevent us from energizing and materializing our worst fears. My ancestors conveyed that they are pleased that we were raising the bar around our self-care and body protection. None of this was an option in their lifetimes. That said, they want us to dig deeper, ground in our true nature, and continue to speak up against injustice, inequality, and civil rights violations because they got our backs and we will prevail.

Many shades of gray between the lose-lose double-bind—that places denial and dissociation on one end and despair and desperation on the other—become visible when we are no longer stuck in it. There is more space to ask ourselves hard and honest questions and envision solutions in this sacred space of stillness.

What do we need to do differently to remain conscious and real? How and what can we learn from our past mistakes?

How can we come together as one human family and orchestrate an effective solution in an organized and steady fashion?

Dual consciousness means greater empathy

Use your spiritual superpowers to be in the deep now and in the deep mess. Remember that being double-minded means being able to put yourself in other people's shoes and remain slightly more aware of yourself. You are practicing dual consciousness, something that members of minority and marginalized groups have done their whole lives.

This is how to fine tune this skill. Having one foot in the deep now — our connection to profound peace and limitless wisdom — and the other in the deep mess allows the truth of the pain to be buffered by your untouchable wholeness and sink in with less reactivity.

Those of us not subjected to daily racial violence, logistical obstructions and systemic oppression have far more bandwidth and power to expand our alchemizing cauldrons and make the changes we want to see in the world and in ourselves. We need to harness the resources and responsibility we have to empower ourselves and heal the social, climate and racial injustices that are harming everyone. We each need to speak up and make our vision count at home, at work, and in our communities.

This will require using our superpowers and soul authority to:

- assess what's really going on in a given situation.
- Realign and re-nature interpersonal processes and social systems in ways that support and liberate us as well as others and the planet.
- reduce carbon emissions through use of electric vehicles, solar and renewable energy and efficient appliances.
- vote with our wallets as much as with our ballots in choosing our leaders

Re-establishing trust in our human resilience

We've ignored a lot of personal and global warming signals over the generations to have gotten where we are now. We need to restore trust in our own immune systems, especially when it comes to our emotional and psychological defenses and patterns. They're a bit out of whack to say the least. We each need to repair our empathic and intuitive connections to ourselves and take inventory of how systemic oppression, exploitation, social injustices or perpetual imbalanced behavior have impacted our kneejerk perceptions, assumptions, and behaviors over the generations.

Practicing a win-win double-mind will also allow us, while deeply rooted in the present and insulated in our truth body, to transform harmful trauma imprints from the past into creative fuel. This practice and energetic set up will serve as a template when relating to others and will inspire them to reintegrate themselves before you've even said a word.

We help and heal ourselves by helping and healing others. We help and heal others by helping and healing ourselves.

It's not just our faith in leaders that's on the chopping block. Our faith in fellow citizens who do not share our priorities and basic sense of reality is also hanging on a thread, especially for sensitive people. Exercising boundaries was often our least preferred way of protecting ourselves, because it often led to punishment. When we were able to do it successfully it was often the most effective way to stand in our power and inspire change.

It will now be much easier to set boundaries when insulated in your protective sanctuary and not so emotionally charged, thanks to your grounding central tree. It allows us to lead others from a place of integrity as long as we believe in the importance of what we have to offer, stick to our missions and are present enough to make the most strategic and sound decisions based on today's dangers and demons. Soul authority strategies will support you all the way with this important objective.

Being present with all that is

It's time for our minds to connect to deep body wisdom and restore trust in our luminous and mysterious selves. A meditation or grounding practice improves our ability to be more present with clear, raw and colorful emotion without any kind of storyline or knee jerk tendency to squash or shut it down. It's important to stretch and strengthen your inner vessel enough so you can hold more energy and intensity without short-circuiting.

It not only stops the swinging between overwhelm (short-circuiting), on one end of the extreme, and fear (paralysis), on the other: it's also a powerful antidote to self-doubt, which is, ironically, a trustworthy signal telling us when we are not solid, expansive or clear enough to proceed.

The easiest way to drop back into our bodies without getting stuck in overwhelm or fear is through your double-minded practice where one part of your mind will remain attuned

to your private eco-system (in your safe and protected sanctuary) and another part of your mind will paradoxically attune to the whole (kind of like being attuned to your stomach — hunger— or our bladder —full — as well your body as a whole).

Entering your sacred garden

We'll enter your sacred garden and natural scape through the heart. According to Taoist teachings, the heart is the seat of emotional consciousness:

The Heavenly Heart is like the dwelling place, the Light in the master. Therefore when the Light circulates, the powers of the whole body arrange themselves before its throne, just as when a holy king has taken possession of the capital and has laid down the fundamental rules of order, all the states approach with tribute: or, just as when the master is quiet and calm, men servants and maids obey his orders of their own accord, and each does his work. Therefore you only have to make the Light circulate: that's the deepest and most wonderful secret.

Translated excerpt from *The Secret of the Golden Flower*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the objective is for it to feel like a safe and gentle womb-like inner space and predictable greenhouse, ideal for sowing and growing new seeds and seedlings. The reason why we are spending so much time soliciting cooperation from the ego-mind to set this is up right is because sensitive wise souls like us tend to drop right into very layered and complex trauma bodies (and may land into storms, blizzards, scorching deserts or blood baths instead of in a calm safe haven).

This can happen after closing our eyes for just a brief moment, and can be overwhelming. It can tragically cause a transformation trailblazer to decide that this is not the right path for them. They often have no idea that this is the reason why they are so easily triggered and flooded in some situations or by some people.

Their default is to do intuitive reads on generations of problems and unwittingly give in to strong pulls to do things they are not ready for: digest and alchemize boatloads of unresolved pain. This is not a good idea until you have tested and know your capacity limits. You need to stretch, grow and anchor deep enough to absorb the magnitude of these karmic patterns.

It's also important to understand that this work can be broken into more manageable, bite-size pieces with the help of boundaries. Lastly, the ego-ecosystem re-naturing alignment process will spark a genuine desire and discipline to share this work and responsibility with others — not as a burden, but as a special gift that requires careful unpacking. It is crucial for our spiritual transformation and transition into the Age of Aquarius that we release the impulse to hog all the work and be the savior of everyone.

Strengthening your mental focus

We will be entering your sanctuary in the same manner for now to help train and strengthen your mental focus until you feel confident that you can activate and anchor your truth body in the central throne of your being, at will. It may at first feel like learning a foreign language, but you will quickly realize that you're speaking your body's first language. You've been fluent in this language your whole life. We do not realize it because our bodies speak this intuitive, autonomic language outside of our awareness. It can fool the ego-mind into believing that it's primarily in charge and that it's ways and words have more weight when it's really just interfering.

If the mind-body split is a few generations old, your ego-mind may not realize that it's exerting constant assimilation pressure on your body and causing you to experience inner conflict, pain and dis-ease. It may be reassuring to know that your truth-body often experiences a sense of homecoming when it gets to sit under your sacred ancestral tree and is given permission to own the throne in the center of your soul sanctuary.

Suddenly everything starts to click into place internally. Your perspective on life also starts to shift and perceived problems feel less overwhelming, even before making any changes externally.

I still remember how apprehensive Tabbi Singh, an Ancient History professor, was at first to try something unfamiliar. She was brilliant and very articulate, and had been in conventional therapy for years. Giving this up scared her socks off because she had no idea who she was without her mind. I remember her vividly because of how much she ended up loving these meditations, almost instantly. This is what she said:

Soul authority sessions often left me feeling infused with strength – that my core elements were in equilibrium – something I never achieved easily with talk therapy alone, which seems to rely more heavily upon conscious recognition and effort to change one's behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. Through hypnotherapy, I was able to come to terms with some behavioral patterns in a more productive way. Most rewarding, however, was an acute feeling of emotional and physical wholeness which I began to experience right away upon entering the sanctuary.

Deep sense of validation

My students and clients most often note feeling validated for what they've known deep down all along. They also experience a profound sense of hope and relief when they learn how simple and intuitive it is to retroactively nourish and restore themselves with super soul foods. One of the key areas that these inner resources replenish are nature and ancestral deficit ruptures.

Contrary to popular assumption, just re-immersing ourselves back into nature isn't the cure for nature deficit if we are not aligned and able to receive the renewable energy that nature offers. On the flip side, living in a city and in the modern world doesn't automatically mean that we are doomed.

Our ego-ecosystem alignment is the deciding factor. Your body recognizes ego-ecosystem aligned ways of being and thinking as its true nature by instantly dropping and relaxing into it. You'll feel like a sponge when soaking this energy up, and if you'd been parched, the replenishing can cause you to cry. I love holding space for his sacred meeting and bask in the healing aura my clients and students radiate when they experience this.

Our truth bodies are often hovering and not fully planted in the body because other voices and energies are monopolizing our inner space. This is the reason why dropping in the body could evoke visceral sensations akin to grief (more about this when we get to Earth and Water) and intense gratitude as you get reacquainted with these neglected parts. Seeing this transformation as beautiful, powerful and necessary can help with the shame, helplessness, emotional blubbering and sense of inferiority that the trauma body and mind have often learned to hate and associate with this alchemical healing process.

You may have experienced your true nature in the past as radical self-acceptance and unconditional self-love, and may have referred to this powerful, wise and compassionate part of yourself as your core self and wholeness. This is your soul authority in action and the good news is that no one, no matter what they do, can destroy or take your natural genius — your body's built-in GPS — away from you. You may still feel lost at times, but with regular practice will develop confidence in your navigational skills and your ability to find your way home from anywhere.

Nature's checks and balances

If lost in the woods with a compass, you would not blindly follow this compass if your physical environment indicated that you were going in circles, right? You would check to see what kind of magnetic interference, perhaps, was messing with your True North needle. If someone in your group insisted that their compass was more right than the sun, the mountains and the current of the river, you would consider that person deluded or crazy. For sure not someone who you'd trust as a navigator and leader.

Unfortunately, our culture and modern Western society is saturated with people like this, especially at the top, causing us to second-guess our sense of truth and dismiss sources of guidance that have withstood the tests of the time. All of these voices have become faint whispers that are getting drowned out by an overbearing and louder dominant majority. A great number of them are taking these destructive patterns to the next level with conspiracy theories and mind control tactics that prey on isolated, lost, ungrounded and fragmented souls.

Energetic and magnetic interference

The energy of unhealed trauma is like an echo, keeping misaligned messages and unchallenged lessons and role modeling from parents, teachers, middle school friends and love interests, bosses, partners, friends, and ancestors alive within our bodies and minds.

They are like little magnets and mess with the True North needles of sensitive souls like us. Actually, they mess with everyone's True North needles. This is thankfully bothering us a lot more than most.

We can go along with mainstream trends or trust that the pain and suffering that this disharmony causes is an invitation for us to correct the imbalance and return to our true nature and health.

Reflections on working with a Tree guide

My sanctuary allows me to connect to my inner wisdom and trust my intuition. My sacred tree helps me to stay grounded and rooted while also connected to the ethereal and cosmos. This has helped me to take in lessons from nature about cycles, resilience and equanimity. Most importantly, it has given me the courage and conviction to change career paths and follow my calling. As a social justice advocate and mental health counselor, fighting against social inequities and supporting people in healing is incredibly meaningful, but it can be challenging at times. Loraine's Soul Authority model helps me stay grounded and centered with strong boundaries so I can be more effective and also take care of myself.

Jessica Vechakul, PhD, Mechanical Engineering, LMFT, Psychotherapist and Spiritual Counselor

I've always found myself gravitating toward the forestry and natural nooks that could be found in any given city. This has always been a solace endeavor, evoking a sort of flooding serenity and connectivity. Still, with every deep-rooted moment came a sense of imbalance when transitioning back into the busy life I lead. This is why for me, connecting with my tree guide has meant holding space for that balance and nourishment within myself wherever I may go. I see the rings within the tree that mark the different ways in which I've grown throughout my own life as well as within a greater ancient context of relationships. Now, I am better able to stay attuned with the wisdom and connectivity that has always allured me to the natural world as I navigate not-so-holistic environments.

Mirah Mirzazadeh, Child Welfare and Early Development major/minor

Using the body's 3-D structural support

The most ideal sitting position for setting up your soul sanctuary scaffold is on a chair with solid back support.

Have your feet on the ground and one hand on your heart and the other on your belly button to activate your power center and where an invisible umbilical cord is connecting you to Mother Earth's womb and constantly nourishing and detoxing your ecosystem. Just this meditation can extract imbalanced energies that were passed down from

womb to womb, and replenish parts of your energetic body you didn't even know existed.

We will enter your sanctuary through your heart center. You can start tapping on your heart center to wake it up and feel yourself dropping in your body and coming more alive with each tap. Notice the taps evenly distributing your energy, like a drop of food coloring in a glass that is dispersing into every direction almost instantly.

If you've been caught up in worry and ruminations, you'll feel top-heavy. Pull the energy into the lower parts of your body by focusing on your feet on the ground and feeling your bottom firmly on the chair. Let earth's gravity pull your energy down. Breathe into areas of tension and give out a big sigh of release with each exhale, dropping your shoulders and energy down with each exhale. You could imagine yourself feeling as heavy as a sack of rice or potatoes that's sitting comfortable in your pelvis between your hip bones.

If there are concentrated pain points or parts screaming for your attention, we are for now going to consciously dilute this energy. You could imagine ironing out all the wrinkles that you're noticing within your every field with a steaming iron that's not too hot or cool. We want your field to feel like a silky smooth sheet.

We will do the opposite later: bring pain points and constrictions closer to examine them under a microscope. For now, we are making sure that your psychic and sacred space is as sterile and sustained as it can be, at will. This will eliminate any chances of confusion or contamination when you are ready to do readings into the issues and needs of your trauma body with the help of your guides.

You are a compassionate nature spirit

Most shamanic journey teachers instruct students to start with the lower and upper worlds, not the middle world (where we'll be grounding with your sanctuary), because you can encounter a mixed bag of beings, entities, guides and spirits in the middle world, just like you do in real life, while the upper and lower worlds are inhabited by compassionate beings only.

Nature beings in the middle world are the most trusted and compassionate beings. Guess what? At our core, we are compassionate nature beings, and we are going to deal directly with whoever and whatever stands in our way or objects to this claim. I've found that starting with the end in mind and anchoring in your deepest truth reduces a lot of manipulative runaround and "fast-tracks" your transformation as one of my students claimed.

The ego-mind needs greater clarity and encouragement to surrender and choose this higher-self aligned path all over again (and again and again). Being engulfed in the womb of Mother Nature will provide us great structure and holding support to

accomplish this feat instead of dodge this scary step at every turn with another creative avoidance tactic.

Being given the rare opportunity to question and reflect with brazen honesty what the ego-mind truly wants and what hand it would play if it had access to a full deck of cards is super helpful in breaking this stubborn dirty pain pattern. For some, it's very freeing and exhilarating to learn to partner with allies and guides within an elementally-balanced sanctuary and discover powerful aspects of the self that were completely off-limits before.

Jenny Wong, a holistic educator and social entrepreneur, described herself as very creative and sensitive. She struggled with family-of-origin residual imprints and aggravations that would result in skin rashes at time. Entering her sanctuary was like entering a boundless playground for her soul. Many of my clients, like her, could not wait to dive in. Based on their inner journeys, you'd never guess that they were alchemizing pretty painful early trauma and interpersonal conflicts. The fact that this kind of "fun" also effectively healed the issues at hand was both remarkable and affirmation that we weren't engaged in child's play. This is what she had to say:

To experience such enriching voyages into myself and carrying it through in daily life has been one of the most unique, healing, and glorious dynamic practices that my spirit will hold onto through and through. This is just a fraction of the deep abyss filled with rich gleaming tokens that Loraine has equipped me with that sparkle throughout the day.

Recite and record

Now let's get to it! I'm so excited for you to explore your sanctuary and gather your own experiences. Remember, they will be as different as your fingerprints, all miraculous and all somewhat universal and recognizable as soul blueprints. All in divine time, as my guides like to say, so don't leap forward, trying to be somewhere else. Drop in deeper, and expand out to integrate more of you. This is what allows us to "move on," "clear blocks" and "get unstuck" if this happens to be your concern.

I recommend reciting and recording this script, word for word, to play back to yourself and listen to with your eyes closed in your seated position. This will allow your ego-mind to drop in your body and offer you exactly what you need to get the most of this guided meditation and first orientation into your sanctuary.

Some things to consider: Read at a slower than usual pace, breathe calmly and evenly, use inflection and imagine yourself in the scene taking in as much as you can through your five senses. Put your psychic and additional senses (6th, 7th, 8th, and so on) on hold for now until your trust in this underlying layer feels as unwavering as the sun rising each morning.

Meditation script for your Ancestral Tree

Imagine a place on the planet where you have actually been or that you know exists where each of the four elements are present. You sense, feel, hear or see a gentle, refreshing breeze, warm sun rays, strong grounding mountains, boulders and trees, and flowing soothing bodies of water that are nearby. Each of these elements are gently dancing with one another (Air - front, Fire - right, Earth - back and Water - left) and creating a mild and pleasant greenhouse climate all around you.

You are drawn to it because it's so easy for your parasympathetic nervous system to come alive and for your own true nature to resonate with the soothing and self-healing power of this place.

Feel this place vibrate in your heart center and as you step into it, notice how it expands out until these sensations engulf each and every cell of your body. Your breath is like that breeze, your heart and body's temperature like those sunrays, your bones and body like the mountains, and your blood, sweat and tears like those waterways.

Note and acknowledge the role of your elemental guides in strengthening your inner sense of harmony and your body's natural genius in calmly, but firmly re-establishing balance should any one of these elements feel a bit out of whack.

Side note (don't record): If you are for whatever reason not able to gain control of your greenhouse gauges and sustain a mild climate in your sanctuary, it would be completely fine to come out the meditation, especially if you feel unsafe, your symptoms and discomfort are getting more activated or you are getting bombarded by disturbing imagery or sensations. Our bodies are different every day. Lack of sleep, hang-overs, substances, illness, extreme worry, loss, recent crisis or trauma, big life transitions, and so on can make it difficult to ground and hold sacred space for yourself. No worries if this is where you are at. It's a normal human response. You may need to de-charge the intensity of this energy by talking to a loved one or therapist, or do some journaling, exercise or art, and attempt this again.

Next, look for a central tree in the middle of your sanctuary. If there's more than one, take a moment to decide which one is tugging the most at your heart strings. Look for a tree that's mature, sturdy, and ideally suited to serve as an ancient ancestral tree guide.

This could be a tree that's very familiar to you. Perhaps one that was in your backyard, in a park or a favorite vacation or retreat spot that you often noted, or loved and climbed as a child. Approach the tree and try to make a connection. This could be done telepathically, through touch or indirect signs of communication.

Ask the tree if it's your ancient ancestral tree guide to help ground, center and own your soul authority throne. Wait until you get a clear indication that this is the case before proceeding. If it's not your central tree, ask for guidance where you might be able to find this tree.

Sit at the base of your tree and lean your back against the trunk. Feel its sturdy support light up your spine, letting you know that the tree has your back and is strengthening your courage and backbone. Lean your head against the trunk of the tree. Open your crown chakra above your head to receive, instead of direct, and your base chakra ready to ground and root these gifts into your body and sanctuary.

Feel your upper body align with the upper part of the tree. Your arms, hands, fingers, fingertips, and the antenna above your crown, like the branches and leaves of your tree, reach upward and outward toward the warmth of sun, the star ancestors and beyond, soaking up and absorbing all the energy, light and wisdom you need without any reservations or inhibitions.

Pull all of this energy, light and wisdom into your body through your chakra channel and drop into the lower part of your body, your legs, feet, and toes. Feel your roots extend from the base of your spine and your feet, reaching downward and outward into the dark, cool soil toward the center of the earth, the heart of Gaia and beyond, holding steady and absorbing, without any inhibitions and reservations, all the nourishment, wisdom and guidance from the minerals, elements, plants, animals, and ancestors and all who came before us and enriched the earth with their presence and composted wisdom and secrets for healing and transformation.

Notice the powerful intermingling of these two opposite sources of energy in your body, representing the above and below, light and dark, seen and unseen, spirit and matter, masculine and feminine, future and past, pleasure and pain, good and bad, success and failure, day and night and so many opposites we tend to split and polarize in life.

Experience their harmonious and joyous coming together within your truth body in support of one singular agenda, sustaining your life and wholeness, connecting you to a larger infinite reality where they are relating and have always related to one another as nature designed, peacefully, respectfully, generously and cooperatively, like a dynamic yin-yang symbol that's constantly in kaleidoscopic motion.

Notice how this mysterious energy coming from these two life-giving giants has always been there and has never abandoned you, not even for a second. It manifests and fuels your tree, helping it to grow tall, in a line, and wide, in rings, circles and seasons of apparent decline and death only to rebirth and re-sprout back each year with more leaves and more vigor, vitality, inner strength and roots, appearing perfectly still on the outside, while very active on the inside, following an organic but predictable, spiral path of maturation and refinement from seed to sapling to mature mother tree, bearing flowers and fruit and many other perks that support a multitude of other forms of life season after season.

Have your ego-mind take in the magnificence of your soul and this part of yourself that has existed throughout time, not only in the bodies of your ancient tree ancestors but

also in a long line of pre-human and human ancestors who lived in close and symbiotic relationship with nature. Notice how recent disruptions and disconnection from nature within more recent generations have disoriented you and caused you to over-identify with external trauma that clearly hasn't broken or killed you.

You are still here, alive and kicking. It's therefore best to do what your tree does and shift all that doesn't belong inside of your pristine and fine energy field onto your bark and not let it obstruct the flow of life running through your tree trunk or your chakra channel. You will learn how to shed the bark in time or your tree will naturally do it as long as you stay focused on moving out what doesn't belong inside of you.

Hold this template of your truth-body in place and, with the help of your ancient and oldest unbroken lineage of well and wise ancestors, flush the unwell ancestors who are stuck in the gaps with light and love, and show them their personalized, realigned and re-natured sanctuary templates to step into and adopt.

Then lean against the trunk of your tree and enjoy the unbroken line of light and energy circulating from your heart to the hearts of your well ancestors and back, giving you the courage to rebirth this re-natured way of life back into modern society.

Allow each of these insights and teachings from your ancient ancestral tree to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room or setting that you're in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to the space you are in and open your eyes slowly.

Recommendation: precede each subsequent elemental meditation with this tree meditation until you are able to get and ground here with ease.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEPS - realign your ego-mind with your soul's ecosystem and grand design

Go on a hike in the natural world or take a stroll through a park. Go barefoot if you can. Pay very close attention to the elements and their role in sustaining all the plants and living beings around you, including you.

Visit with a tree. Notice its bark, its roots, and its branches and leaves. Lean against it, and listen to the tree meditation once more, and see if it makes a difference. Collect empirical evidence around some of the teachings and insights that you received from your sacred ancestral tree.

Set up an altar with a tree image, drawing or totem in the middle. Place each of the elements (actual or symbols) in this order around the tree: a feather (North), candle (East), dirt (South), and water (West). Feel free to place pictures of ancestors in need of healing or who've guided you on your altar as well.

Step 2. Air: Need clear direction, creative inspiration and fresh ideas, but unable to purify a thick smokescreen of mental fog and smog?

Wisdom

Why losing your mind could help you to find your soul
Accessing the spiritual order under mental dis-order

And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.

- John Muir

*The soul always knows what to do to heal itself.
The challenge is to silence the mind.*

- Caroline Myss

*We've been trying to outsmart mystery and nature and
force-fit it all into a tiny box that's under our total control.
What we need to do instead is re-nature our de-natured minds
And learn to control our controlling tendencies.*

- Loraine Van Tuyl

I vividly remember the very first shamanic journey I ever did. I was a first year student in grad school. A student from ITP (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology) right next door to us needed practice and led a group of us on a shamanic journey. Within seconds of drumming, I'd landed in the jungles of Suriname, and started my journey into the lower world, deep into the earth.

An adorable squirrel monkey showed up. They are very common in Suriname— I had one as a pet but he was stolen within two days. My monkey guide took me down a maze of tunnels into the earth.

There were human bones everywhere embedded within the layers of earth.

I instantly got the message. My monkey guide was one of the three wise monkeys representing the saying, "See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil." I'd gotten lost in the layers of denial — or was it willful dismissal? — about slavery, the millions of African lives that had been tortured and killed, and ongoing racism. I wasn't ready yet to make all the connections but was getting mentally prepared for the reunion with my great-grandmother two years later.

Human inner climate denial

Fast-forward 25 years. An eerie, Dune-like apocalyptic smoky sky hung over our house and cast a frightening, fiery orange glow of alarm all over San Francisco on September 9, 2020. Out of control wildfires along the entire west coast of the United States had turned our sunny, health-conscious state into a terrifying inferno and hazard zone for weeks on end.

The dread of increasingly more frequent and devastating climate disasters is looming larger and engulfing us more each day. This is nothing new in many areas around the world where climate injustices and crises — ranging from wildfires, floods, poor air, toxic water to more intense hurricanes, arctic winters and storms — have taken their toll on families and communities for years.

On this particular doom's day, it felt as if we, at the top level of the *Titanic*, were getting clear signs and alarm signals that our mother ship was sinking. I doubt that the gravity of the situation was really sinking in as much as is needed to motivate those of us privileged enough to make a difference to organize ourselves and do something about our situation. It felt like another memorable three wise monkeys moment. It caused me to question where we lost our wisdom along the way and how to get it back.

Spiritual order under the mental dis-order

Pain and dis-ease provide us the impetus to change our ways and restore our health and balance. Have we spun too far away from our center to retrace our steps? I knew I was experiencing lots of symptoms, both physical and emotional, and I felt buried under layers of mutated dirty pain that made it difficult to discern up from down and left from right, let alone identify the root cause of what led us to the highest levels of harm and purple ratings, both in regard to our air quality and our Covid-19 risk level during this perfect storm, the culmination of significant human contribution.

If I needed to describe my sane symptoms during this particularly insane time, I'd say that I felt anxiously suspended in time and space between George Floyd's murder and the November elections, surrounded by raging wildfires, stuck inside with air purifiers working 24/7 and deprived of my daily earthly anchors, feeling neither here nor there, but definitely aware of being smack in the middle of a global pandemic that was strangely both suffocating and causing me to hold my breath behind a mask that was simultaneously protecting me from the Covid-19 virus and harmful smoke particles.

Perhaps the truth of our dire straits is not sinking in because we are wasting precious time on deciphering our complicated syndromes, which could honestly keep us in analysis paralysis for lifetimes. We are invested in practical solutions that we hope will make our complex modern lives less complex and give us more breathing room.

As much as I loved meeting my clients in person, I, and I believe many others, have given up our physical spaces and offices because of the convenience of virtual meetings. We are grieving the transition from in-person to virtual meetings but are at the

same time getting accustomed to and enjoying the ease and minimal effort in getting to work.

Is this how we have gradually de-natured ourselves over the generations? I can imagine the next generation, not knowing any better, adapting to this more advanced but de-natured existence and we, humans, over an extended time becoming uber-efficient and productive, but also more sedentary, dystopic, unconscious and disconnected as portrayed in animated movies, like Disney's brilliant Wall-E, eventually unable to remember what we've lost.

How about we wise up and cut the chase by returning to the basics and trusting our soul's higher knowing and bottom line: our self-serving ways are killing us and countless forms of life on the planet.

How did we get so smart and stubborn for our own good? We are moving so fast and are so enthralled by the instant rewards of our fancy inventions that we don't have time or incentive to drop in and reflect on the long view and our highest good to check if we are still aligned. Our nearest relatives, primates, may shed light on what happened somewhere along our human evolution.

Some primate species have gotten so smart, they're starting to show exploitative and ruthless behaviors that we once thought were only characteristic of humans. Tool-wielding long-tailed macaques on a remote island in Thailand have learned to forage and crack shellfish open using a rock. They are the only other species, beside humans, who have learned to overharvest a food source to the point of near extinction.

This similar species of little rascals are using their smarts to bully and take advantage of squirrels in Southern India. The squirrels have a much better nose for detecting ripe jackfruit. Once they do, the monkeys shoo them away and steal their fruit. Even when their bellies are full, they continue to harass the squirrels and prevent them from eating other fruit hanging on trees in abundance.

There are many species on the planet — plants, insects, birds, fish, and mammals — who develop cooperative relationships with one another, within and across species. Do these primates have a sadistic gene that feels tickled when hogging all the food, food they can't even consume, and having others cater to their needs without any sign of recognition or reward?

The drill, a little studied Old World monkey looks like a baboon, and lives in a small area in West Africa. They are highly social, live in a multi-male, multi-female groups of about 20 individuals with one male who dominates breeding choices. At least on one occasion, this alpha male ousted an elderly toothless male out of the group to live and struggle on his own. The only way he was able to eat was by scavenging for food because of his missing canines.

What burden or threat does he pose to the alpha male? None that I can think of other than looking like a loser. The extreme ostracization of this vulnerable group member — making him fend for himself, alone — seems even more ruthlessness because these primates have a keen understanding of the survival and emotional benefits of a social group. Apparently, knowing this doesn't necessarily translate into empathizing or caring one iota about the fate of the ousted member.

How can we divert our self-destructive tendencies?

Does survival of the fittest mean that nature will always favor the most selfish and the strongest and bossiest alpha members of a group? When I look at the behavior of our primate relatives, it appears that pro-social urges and consciousness can't keep up with our smarts and don't stand a chance compared to hunger and greed.

I mean, if the macaques were made conscious that their over-indulgence on oysters would mean no more one day, would they stop eating them in excess? Trust that the other guy or gal wasn't secretly harvesting more than their allotted share? What benefit would this restraint offer them? I doubt that this foresight would be enough to change their behaviors.

I wish I could ask a silverback gorilla, who could probably kill a youngster with just one slap, what he gets out of self-restraint. Silverbacks, the single alpha males in gorilla social groups, have the patience and gentleness of a saint even when they are relentlessly used as jungle gyms and trampolines by their tireless offspring. Is it just instinct or do we have the potential to consider the needs of others and balance these with our own in a double-minded manner, as silverbacks, baboons (i.e. bravely risking their lives to protect a hurt member from a leopard) and many primate mothers are able to do?

Natural consequences honored

Growing up in a teeming-with-life tropical climate — mosquitos, grass lice, sand lice, flesh-eating bacteria, rats, snakes, etc. — taught me that nature was not to be messed with and dished out natural consequences if need be without blinking an eye. She was generous, fierce and ruthless, unwavering in upholding a system of checks and balances that especially helps derailing ego-minds get back in line.

For instance, the long-tailed macaques on the remote island in Thailand will soon need to find a new food source. Their oyster foraging technology may get forgotten entirely, and oysters may get the chance to recover, or not. The fact that they are confined to a limited space, and still have not figured out to scale and spread their exploitative tendencies with more sophisticated discoveries and modern technology — a boat, an airplane, a computer and the internet — is for the greater good.

They will be forced to change their ways or may even become extinct themselves if they don't learn the importance of sustainable foraging. Our human advancements in

technology are deluding us to think that we are a few steps ahead of mystery and nature, while we are tragically depriving ourselves of the greatest gift of life by continuously chasing shiny metal objects and stringing them together in sophisticated arrangements that will never come close to the wonders and restorative life-giving powers of nature and the reverence this invokes both for Mother Earth and our bodies.

The Biggest Little Farm

John and Molly Chester are bold dreamers and one day, nudged by their pooch, decided to upend their lives and purchase a 200-acre, abandoned farm in Moorpark, California, to restore it into an organic farm. Their vision seemed ludicrous to many.

Perseverance and trust in the innate wisdom and harmony of nature are what pulled this hardy couple through when they reached their edge, only to discover and stretch into a further edge, over and over again, in terms of their tolerance level for hardship, setbacks, and natural disasters.

At first, just getting a shovel through the parched, barren dirt seemed impossible, but with the help of worms and organic matter they were able to revive the soil and start planting, bit by bit. They were often just inches away from throwing in the towel when, just in the nick of time, a new animal or insect species made a natural solution possible. Pest problems or major issues that seemed insurmountable just days before — ranging from snails, swarms of bugs, snakes, and coyotes eating fruit, eggs, and chicken — were resolved time and again when practicing equanimity. This created spaciousness and solid emotional grounding to make aligned interventions inspired by nature — geese, owls, and other creatures coming to the rescue — instead of stepping in with premature solutions and misaligned fix-its — shooting the coyotes — that their frustrated ego-minds were tempting them with.

In what may have seemed like a grueling eight years of extreme ups and downs, a pendulum that was given permission to swing as far left and as far right as needed amidst the threat of wildfires and flash floods, eventually settled down and is now a gorgeous and luscious, fully-functional organic farm with a biodiverse habitat and a wide variety of flora and fauna.

The many animals and plants (now more than 100 vegetable and 75 fruit varieties) at *the Biggest Little Farm* — Apricot Lane Farms — have restored its equilibrium and delicate balance with indisputable, well-documented data, and prove that it's not too late to harmonize our arid human nature and ecosystems as long as we practice similar perseverance and trust in the process. The mysterious and powerful interconnections between all forms of life is not a fairy tale and feel-good fantasy. It's well and alive, and provides inspiring evidence that we can re-nature our minds and lives in similar ways as long as we surrender to nature and act upon the guidance we are receiving.

Making mental space for this disintegrating and re-harmonizing process is the best way to prime the mind for soul authority.

Embracing “ego-death” and soul integrity

Self-soothing and self-medicating habits, distractions, consumerism, pervasive fear, rigid indignation and crisis management have become all-consuming in keeping the pain and turmoil that widespread intergenerational denial causes under wraps.

Because nature is far more omnipotent than we are, we’re bound to come face to face with ourselves one way or another, unfortunately, in increasingly more dramatic and painful ways to shake us awake.

I’ve seen a trend in my practice where the youngest generations of transformation trailblazers, Gen Y and Z, have diametrically gone against all that their parents have taught them about getting ahead in life.

If you as the parent have slacked a bit in your own trailblazing, they will certainly get you back on your toes and prioritize all the issues and overwhelming pain on the backburner, regardless whether or not it’s a good time or not.

They are least deterred by dirty pain patterns, and strongly motivated by multicultural ideals, social equity, spirituality, civic responsibilities, and authenticity. They are tech-savvy, globally aware, and will dive in head first into all the complex and emotionally-charged topics and unjust situations that their parents have spent a lifetime avoiding.

Their love for the truth is refreshing, and they seem more readily willing to go through an “ego death” to protect their integrity than the trailblazers ahead of them.

They are technically not killing their ego selves— they are less willing to stray and build it up into something it isn’t, only to have to break it down again.

Steven Taylor, author of *The Fall: The Insanity of the Ego in Human History*, explains how an awakened self differs from our usual self:

“You could say that awakening doesn’t mean no-self so much as new self. Awakening means the emergence of a new self-system.”

“Our normal self-system is like a city with thick walls around it; it seems to exist as an entity in itself, in separation from the rest of the landscape. But in the wakeful state, our self-system is like a small unobtrusive settlement—an eco-village, perhaps—that is so well-integrated that you can hardly tell it apart from the landscape as a whole. It has clearly emerged from the landscape; it’s made of the same materials as the landscape and merges into it without any sense of separation. The important point, again, is that there has to be some kind of self-system within our being. There has to be some kind of organizational or administrative center within the landscape, even if it only plays a minimal, unobtrusive role. And a self-system implies some degree of identity, a sense of being someone who inhabits the landscape of our being.”

The ego-mind is not getting demoted or killed, as some traditions describe this transformational shift. I see it as a lateral move, absolving the ego-mind of visionary responsibilities that are over its head.

As Taylor said, its optimal position is that of a central operator and administrator that takes aligned and alchemical action based on input from all key players: mind, body, heart and soul and their corresponding guides, Air, Earth, Water and Fire. The ego-mind actually experiences considerable relief when entrusting the overarching higher self with the final say and authority to offer guidance once the right conditions are met.

A soulcentric life: more free than you'll ever be

As a child, the truth helped me to feel awake, strong and protected. I searched high and low until I found it. I vividly remember reading about a slave who taunted his master while being tortured to death in a history book by Andre Loor, a Dutch historian who drew and wrote about the atrocities that were occurring on the plantations in Suriname. One of the last things the slave said to his master was, "I'm more free than you will ever be."

I wouldn't be able to tell you how I knew the difference between what was real and what was fake, what was true and what was untrue. I just knew in my bones that what the slave said sounded true and powerful, and that he'd checkmated his master who was so sure that he had the upper hand.

All I wanted was someone to validate that a soulcentric life was the better choice and when considering the two horrific human conditions I was reading about—one of the many hypothetical mental games I liked to play—I decided that I'd rather be the slave than the slave master.

I must have been around eight and was already interested in death and very intense and dark books, like Elie Wiesel's *Night*. They stretched my mind and spiritual muscles to an expanded size that my body must have lived in before because the spiritual epiphanies in them made me feel at peace and powerful.

I intuitively got that those who didn't live a soulcentric life were taking their misery out on others, and I needed to understand how they'd contracted this terrible sickness of the soul to protect myself and my family from it.

While the slave was more free than his master, the ones who were truly free were the Maroons in the jungle, living according to the laws of nature.

I didn't get why living in peace like this was so difficult to honor and how humans in most of the world got sucked into doing such inhumane things, believing that it made them superior.

Healing white privilege and supremacy at the root

It's been heartening to work with young unstoppable trailblazers who were just as relentless as I was in getting to the bottom of the truth by confronting soul pain passed down the generations. Many BIPOC have traced trauma in their lineage to colonization, slavery, white supremacy and patriarchy.

White clients have helped me to gain more clarity what's driving white power, privilege and supremacy: fear and pain of losing their (false but only known) "white cultural identity," terror and utter helplessness in grieving older and deeper cultural losses, difficulty accessing social, political and economic oppression and religiously sanctioned torture that occurred centuries ago in Europe. It explains why "higher taxes" (even when exempt from them) and certain buzzwords trigger immediate associations of political oppression, leading to the rejection of government sanctioned public goods that they themselves need and would benefit from, such as education, health care, retirement, and so on.

Many would rather forego these if it empowers their scapegoat. Their misguided attempts to escape and exorcise the demons (through white supremacy scapegoating: hate speech, bigotry, and violence) that are still plaguing them may feel effective but much of the unresolved pain, violence, misery and internalized oppression within these groups has actually devolved into a white power "culture" that functions more like a social pact, fraught with dirty pain and denial of one's true nature, ethnic heritage and feelings of inferiority.

The lower self dominates over others and any sense of integrity to temporarily "feel better," but this prevents the person from ever "getting better" and repairing soul splits at the root levels.

Most white people don't realize that their ancestors left the Old World because they were treated like slaves within the oppressive feudal system of the Middle Ages. As peasants, they owned nothing and were pledged to their local lord. They worked long days, 6 days a week, and often barely had enough food to survive. Most were dead before they reached 30 - 40 years of age.

The dirty pain patterns, the vicious implosion-explosion cycles and the kind of self system that were passed down the generations resemble the structural layout of the Medieval castles, manors and fiefs of the Middle Ages, a set up designed to protect the grave inequities and the power of the royal monarchs supposedly granted through divine right. Those who inherited this self system, regardless of actual ranks, likely feel under constant threat, eager to defend unearned and religiously endorsed entitlements and privileges, and intolerant of self-reflection and vulnerability. Challenging what influenced their thinking and intergenerational trauma is often complete off-limits.

Because the "perks" of white privilege and supremacy are not paying off as much as they used to — and are causing increasingly more negative social repercussions—

bursts of extinction energy and more desperate and violent attempts to cling onto these destructive and deluded ideologies are released and being employed.

Consciousness, financial security, psychological and professional growth and upward mobility are confused with elitism and seen as the enemy, spiking the walls with more impenetrable defensiveness.

This is how we remain stuck in caterpillarhood. Try to let go of the familiar stories and dig deeper until you get to a level within yourself that feels a bit mushy and foreign.

This is the part of yourself to examine within your safe sanctuary. A sanctuary chrysalis that's fully occupied with your primal energy and guided by your truth body will naturally reveal cracks, blind spots, imbalances, ego-ecosystem misalignments, energy leaks and porous boundaries.

Each of the elements will fill in and harmonize these imbalances in our ecosystem just like earth naturally does. All that the ego-mind needs to do with clear intention is make space, back up and surrender to this re-naturing transformation and metamorphosis into a higher form— your butterfly self.

Reflections on working with the Air element

Air bestows license to explore ideas that would otherwise be deemed outlandish. When channeling the air element, my thoughts are carefree and whimsical, yet steadily guided by some unknown force—just like the wind as we know it. It transports and encourages me to conduct an investigation from every possible angle without fear of retribution.

Without fear of arriving at a “wrong” conclusion, air imbues wisdom and experience. I can enact countless scenarios with Air until I find a solution. I can navigate stressors at work with grace, wisdom, and professionalism. Similarly, family predicaments become a mere quandary worth dissecting. With every tangled, convoluted problem I am given, Air displays new doors and opportunities that I otherwise would have missed. Imaginative solutions are only limited by fictitious rules that forbid exploration. Air has no understanding of “forbidden” and thus encourages and supports any concept I care to study.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D., Special Education Teacher and Artist

Soul Authority sessions allowed me to access a deeper truth within myself that I have known all along but have had difficulty bringing to my conscious awareness. With this awareness, I am opening up to different parts of myself that have needed love and attention for a long, long time.

Grace Mitchell, MFT, Psychotherapist

Meditation script for Air

(ground yourself first with the Tree meditation)

Notice your deep and intimate relationship with air, the invisible, and most mysterious of the four elements. Each one of the elements has a constructive and destructive aspect to humans: Air - respiration and storms; Fire - heat and wildfires; Earth - food and earthquakes; Water – hydration and floods.

Air is the most critical of these four in keeping us alive. Most living things perish within minutes without oxygen. Still, it's the easiest one to take for granted because it requires us opening our 3rd eye, our 6th chakra, to "see" its important role and impact.

Air connects us to all living things through our interdependence on this sacred life-force: the breath of life.

Your lungs and respiration are like the atmosphere and air streams, capturing, recycling and exchanging gases, oxygen and carbon-monoxide within your body's ecosystem. Just like earth circulates wind, clouds, rain, and water that regulate its temperature, harmonize imbalances and maintain equilibrium within its closed ecosystem so are you when breathing air

Breathe together with your tree, inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide, and imagine your tree inhaling carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen. Reflect for a moment how beautiful your symbiotic relationship is, each providing this essential breath of life to the other.

Recognize that you have been breathing together for less than a minute on earth's 12 hour clock that started ticking 4 1/2 billion years ago, and that the tree is one of your oldest, earth-bound ancestors, alchemizing and embodying the magical energies of the above and below and the life-giving support of each of the elements, sun-fire, earth, air and water, turning it into food and shelter for all living things.

Take a moment to notice the flow of air in your sanctuary and that gentle breeze of air softly caressing the skin on your face. What does it smell like? What does it sound like? Perhaps you're able to smell the scent of plant allies such as peppermint, lavender, rosemary, sage or Palo Santos wood. Or hear the rustling of leaves above your head.

Allow this fresh air to clear your mind and help you face your highest truth, the big picture and the long view. Open your mind to new visions and ideas, and breathe in more spaciousness into the familiar, but most likely false and limited narratives and stories about yourself and the world.

See them unwind and realign into a self-concept and worldview that your heart longs for and recognizes as true. Enjoy this spaciousness to unfold your cramped brain and invite even more creative solutions, inspiration and innovative ways of looking at reality and current-day problems to circulate through your mind and thoughts.

Allow the ego-mind to take note of this data gathering process that is less driven by logical thought, empirical data and hard facts, as is predominantly taught in school, but instead prioritizes wisdom, big picture clarity and knowing, gathered and tagged as true through direct, felt experience, which is more than enough to serve as the guiding principles to navigate life.

Allow the ego-mind to take stock that your soul is better suited in the role of visionary. The ego-mind provides concrete and often dichotomous information to keep you physically safe and healthy, and together, they are in the best position to decide on an optimal course of action.

Give your ego-mind an expanded view how long your ancestors have been forced to focus more on physical survival and all of its modern-day mutations. Has this focus undermined your ability to hold space for a larger and deeper truth that is better aligned with your greatest potential and well-being, both on the physical and spiritual levels?

Allow the ego-mind to entertain paradoxical, cyclical and spiral thought, instead of just linear thought, when reconsidering challenges and fears.

What once seemed guaranteed safe may now seem suffocating, stifling and foregoing important opportunities for growth and adventure, and what once seemed too risky and dangerous may now seem like an enticing opportunity that's ready to be re-examined, digested, re-purposed and transformed into something better.

Give your go-getter tendencies the opportunity to sit back and relax by resting your head against the tree trunk and giving life a chance to meet you halfway instead of chasing it so much. Notice what happens when your ego-mind trusts your inner experience of being safe, whole, and abundantly full, purely based on felt sensations, rather than roaming through life hungry, empty and constantly needing to acquire proof and permission that it's safe to trust, relax, and enjoy life, only to discover that these feelings are shallow and short-lived.

Reflect on the unwavering presence of your ethereal and earthly ancestors and parents, sun and earth, and the fact that they have never abandoned you, not even for a second. Recognize that they are two living beings that are deserving of your total surrender and trust.

Notice what it feels like in your body when considering running your most important decisions and challenges by them from now on and allowing them to cradle you in their warm womb. Remember that you are a beloved child of nature and a nature spirit. All that you need to do to re-nature yourself is re-member your true nature.

Allow each of these insights and teachings from your ancient ancestral tree and Air guide to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will

notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room that you're in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to back to the room you are in and open your eyes slowly.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEPS - set daily intentions with clarity

We are used to being gaslit and lied to, mined for our attention and buying power and manipulated into spinning our hamster wheels as quickly as we can with false promises that this will actually get us somewhere over the rainbow faster.

In reality, this mindless activity is preventing us from ever being still and conscious enough to realize that we will never really get ahead of ourselves or the pack within this capitalistic matrix and grind.

We may know this but the allure of sexy objects and distracting facades continue to make this pursuit of the promised land irresistible. As you walk through life this week, drastically change your perspective around having no choice about going through the motions of life, and explore what actual choices you do have, even if it is for now, just in how you perceive (your) reality.

See where you are able to pause, question, and pivot. Gather data and note what it's like to trailblaze into a brand-new direction.

Step 3. Fire: Tired of putting out fires and emitting toxic fumes of resentment but ignoring blown fuses and burn-out?

Protection

Boundaries are your best friend: how to be kind and wild, soft and strong
The root cause of our love-hate relationship with healthy anger: what it is and isn't

*We are mirrors whose brightness is wholly derived from
the sun that shines upon us.*

- C.S. Lewis

We cannot steal the fire. We must enter it.

- Rumi

From the perspective of Chinese medicine, modern life generates excess heat. In Western terms, this is a result of sympathetic overdrive—too much cortisol and adrenalin—that sets the stage for inflammation. The solution is to restore the inner terrain, supporting host resilience. By nourishing the yin (moisture, blood), the overstimulation that produces excess yang (heat) is tempered.

- Chinese Medicine Works

As peace and harmony loving creatures, we split intense emotions into good and bad categories, and peg anger and rage with negativity and hate. Our knee jerk response, when mistreated, is to fight hate with compassion and love, not more hate, just as MLK Jr advised.

But what happens when you're subjected to hatred and inequalities that don't ease up and take the form of relentless psychological, emotional and life-threatening physical harm and trauma?

Your anger will naturally start to intensify based on the severity of the threat.

Do we honor or squash this energy? Turn it inward?

How do we embrace it to strengthen our immunity, just like a fever, without imploding or exploding — i.e. punishing ourselves or lashing out on others?

Healthy self-defense and anger arise out of love, not hate

There is far more to love and hate than meets the eye. Similarly, there is far more to anger than imploding and exploding.

These unstable patterns are usually due to a lack of energetic boundaries and a tendency to split life experiences, people and emotions into good and bad buckets.

We can't continue to polarize positive and negative emotions in the same way we have pegged black and white, light and dark, good and bad into opposites.

We'll miss a lot of nuanced lessons and the multidimensional nature of reality that trauma, fear, isolation, pain and disconnection are attempting to teach us. More importantly, we will continue to miss the healing glue that can mend our fragmented self.

When emotions are running high

A good number of modern-day corporations, organizations and systems are run by leaders and supporters who are highly invested in exploiting and dominating us through abuse of political, military, police, and economic power.

We, sensitive souls, will have big reactions to these imbalances in an attempt to realign the whole (and help ourselves).

These misaligned systems, situations, and individuals evoke outrage, fear, and helplessness and the most intense objections. It's important to remember that these emotions are totally appropriate to feel and shouldn't be shut down or squashed in any way. As a matter of fact, it's necessary to feel the intensity of these emotions to alchemize the imbalances with energy that matches it.

The trick is being able to do so without going haywire, short-circuiting or spontaneously combusting in the process, which many of us feel like doing more and more these days.

These reactions make us very susceptible to manipulation and mind control.

Fighting hate with tough love

While it's true that we can't fight hate and divisiveness with more hate and divisiveness, we won't be able to reform these systems with just a soft glow of love and light either.

Double-minded strategies and practices entail getting ourselves into optimal shape, clarity, and health to meet today's astronomical challenges — the ongoing threat of powerful leaders in every industry who will do all that they can to manipulate and dominate us to maintain status quo power and privileges by sabotaging the rights, power and privileges of those they deem less than. We are able to focus on our wholeness first by fiercely protecting ourselves and our energy in our respective sanctuaries until we feel safe.

The origins of the name Soul Authority

While working on this book, I wondered what had inspired the name “Soul Authority.”. I remembered this painful altercation.

“I see what’s going on. You got authority issues,” my clinical supervisor said under her breath not even a month after I’d been at my predoctoral internship site.

She had a tendency to twist and overpathologize my insights, objections and resistance to pathologizing my clients with demeaning interpretations and analyses. And in my eyes, she was abusing her authority by gaslighting me with false accusations about having authority issues whenever I challenged her imbalances.

Yeah, it was a total mindfuck at times but it gave me increasingly more clarity, that nope, I ain’t doing what she wants me to do — as much as she was mocking me for having “social hours” with my clients instead of diving into their pathology and problems.

I was seeing my clients in their wholeness and had faith in their natural resilience and healing authority, and they were responding positively to my intuitive interventions. But not seeing eye to eye with my supervisor led to me having to prematurely end our annual arrangement.

Expect to be tested

The year was 1999 and it was the first time in ten years that a drastic intervention (ending a supervisory relationship because of irreconcilable differences) was necessary at the training site I was at.

Needless to say, every dagger of blame thrown at me - a lowly rookie intern - had the potential to crush me with its weight.

I wouldn’t say it was confidence and faith in my clinical methods that saved me during this time (there were no experts who I knew of who could vouch for or legitimize my unconventional ideas).

Unwavering trust in my soul's authority

It was knowing who I was at my core (thanks to all the data points I’d collected growing up in the rainforest) and knowing that living in alignment with this body wisdom was a non-negotiable baseline requirement.

Despite having invested a good 5 years already in my clinical training (and on the academic front being one of the top students in my class), I told myself - let’s see if this is where you truly belong.

I’m willing to give this career up if I can’t be my true self.

So I told myself, show your true colors, and in my mind said, “Go ahead, bring it on, lady (and program). Let’s hash it out here and now and if I need to get a divorce from this field, better to know this sooner than later.”

I haven’t needed to and my relationship with that one supervisor—a relational pattern of fierce limit-setting that you could say started with my mother—was a pivotal test in paving the way. It forced me to get straight to the root solution and foundation for future tests by being crystal clear that I won’t sell my soul to anyone, anything and any profession.

I had unwavering and total faith that the universe would lead me to where I belonged even if that meant that everything I’d worked so hard for and valued would be taken from me (again). I’d already gone through that experience and I knew that staying true to myself was the only way.

I can see that some of the future tests were on some level even harder than this one, but each new one felt easier because of the soul authority foundational skills that I learned in trusting myself (my embodied sense of harmony) and trusting that this energetic wholeness catalyzed the wholeness in others.

Our amygdala – more than the brain’s fear center

Even though my behavior (the risky impulses and choices that I thought would result in my professional suicide) was unusual for someone of my standing within this training site, there are scientific studies that explain my actions and brain activity, in particular, in my amygdala.

The amygdala is commonly known as the brain’s fear center but this may be more of a cultural myth than a universal truth. “Scientific facts” often take on a life of their own. Scientists make legitimate and exciting new discoveries, with the best tools available to them in their time, and these findings get verified, modified, cited and, eventually, repeated without question.

Over time, insights get simplified for non-scientists, and translated into the plain language of introductory textbooks. If they get repeated often enough, for long enough, some of these facts even seep into the popular culture.

So it is with the amygdala, often held responsible for our primitive and reptilian impulses.

This common notion of the amygdala is not entirely wrong. But two psychological scientists are now arguing that it is rather simplistic and incomplete.

The amygdala responsive to positive and fearful stimuli

A more accurate view, say William Cunningham of Ohio State and Tobias Brosch of NYU, is that the amygdala appraises the world much more broadly, looking not just for threats but for anything that might be important to furthering one's goals and motivations.

“Fearsome stimuli might indeed be relevant—almost certainly are—but so too might unusual, interesting, ambiguous and even positive stimuli, depending on the person and the situation. In short, uncertainty is more arousing than what's familiar. Some subjects respond more to positive and negative stimuli than to neutral stimuli; others mostly to negative stimuli; and still others to positive information. In other words, amygdala activation may not have the same meaning for everyone; it may instead reflect the psychological state of the individual.”

I would add that it could reflect the psychological state of a cultural and social group, as we are still so much like monkeys: monkey see, monkey do.

Dorobo Kenyans stealing meat from hungry lions

It's illuminating to compare our behaviors and attitudes with those of people from entirely different parts of the world. It's the fastest way to be a fish out of the water for a moment and gain self-awareness, something my rich multicultural environment allowed me to do on a daily basis growing up.

When I first watched this short video clip by the Human Planet, my mind was completely blown by the ultimate face-off and bluff orchestrated by three unarmed, scrawny Dorobo Kenyan men who daringly and calmly walked in a single file into a feasting pile of 15 ferocious lions, startling them long enough to cut off a caribou leg and safely walk away. This thousands-year old tradition is nothing like the testosterone-laden face-off we would imagine is needed to ward off a group of animals that could easily have added them to their chow.

Dorobo Kenyans most certainly dispel the myth that our existential angst and modern-day fears and anxiety stem from past encounters with lions and tigers and are hard-wired in our amygdala. The argument is that our skittish behaviors and hypervigilance helped us to survive and are the reason why we are now stuck with a fight-flight-freeze response that we can't do anything about.

Confirmation bias

This kind of thinking creates a closed feedback loop of confirmation bias. Those using imbalanced power, aggression, and domination out of fear interpreted and created their life experiences and environment in a similar skewed fashion, reinforcing the need to rely on their imbalanced methods to survive.

Those with an unwavering conviction to remain in balance and tap the depths of their soul authority, also did so. They remained in balance with nature and their surroundings and interestingly, also felt reinforced.

These men show that it is possible to be powerful and feel on top of the world while at the same time remaining grounded and walking the planet with the lightest of footprints.

They felt equally convinced that their experience confirmed that they made the right decision in using the methods they chose.

And this is the thing. We are always "right" and will succeed in justifying whatever our trauma-body or our truth-body wants us to do. The key is in discerning what part of us is in charge. Our heart or our hurt.

Ancestral human pride and hope

Let yourself feel pride for your human potential and most ancient and courageous ancestry—there is so much collective shame that's been stuck in our psyches and bones because of the cowardice, greed, disconnection, and so on of our more recent and recorded past.

Anyone of us who goes further back will encounter ancestors who lived this bravely and harmoniously with nature and other animals.

Against all odds, our planet is still blessed by a handful of tribes and living traditions similar to these. These tribes and cultures have survived this long and would continue to do so if it weren't for their modern-day brothers and sisters, us, slowly killing them off by encroaching on their sacred lands and ways of life.

Rare courage and soul authority

I feel blessed to have had a taste of a similar fierce presence and mindset belonging to the distant relatives and descendants of my West African great-grandmother, the Maroons. They live with similar rare courage, audacity and authority as the Dorobo Kenyans deep in the jungles of Suriname.

It was bone chilling and at the same time extraordinary to hear (first-hand while standing at the exact site) how a gonini—a massive harpy eagle with a wingspan as wide as 7 feet and looking like a dinosaur raptor—had snatched up a small toddler a few years ago from a patch of cleared communal farmland while her parents were busy farming. These goninis prey on small monkeys, sloths and small animals and tragically lased in on a child that day to feed itself and its young.

Their 7 inch spread of talons, larger than a grown man's hand, found somewhere in the wild were lying around, perhaps as a reminder of their presence and the danger they posed.

The grief about this event was real, but there was also a palpable deep acceptance of mystery's ways, including death. I understood for the first time how immense our speciesism was when I stood there face to face with people where it was completely absent.

There was no hatred or anger toward this gonini, no expressed desire to hunt or kill it or a sense of terror living in such close proximity with them. It wouldn't be that hard to get or have a gun with them for protection but there were very little signs of fear or death anxiety to warrant such action, even after such a traumatic event.

In their presence, there was a deep knowing how futile this would be. Danger and the risk of dying were ever-present leading to more alert, and ironically, more relaxed living.

Your ego feels put in its rightful, proportional and aligned place.

Low death anxiety leads to full throttle living

After this horrific incident, all that the villagers did was build a cover for small children to hide under when their parents were too busy to protect them.

They weren't being stupid or spiritually bypassing the terrible pain this incident caused. Their response was merely one of the extraordinary and rare examples of what living in harmony with nature for centuries looked like in this particular Maroon village near Kayana.

There seemed to be very little opportunity, benefit or space to fester in good vs bad ego-judgments and neuroses within this community. Life was too much in flux and too full of surprises, requiring your full-bodied and sober presence and responsiveness.

Feedback whether or not you made an aligned or misaligned move came almost instantly from your environment and demanded swift and continuous adjustments.

The Maroons' low death anxiety was paradoxically connected to their refined 6th sense and skills in carefully balancing life and death on a continuous basis. From birth on, they learned to notice subtle signs and clues of animal tracks for food and to avoid danger lurking everywhere.

In this excerpt in my memoir, I recounted how their very conscious attitudes about death impacted the fifteen of us: ten Surinamese eco-tourists who were visiting from Holland and Curaçao: a gynecologist, a musician, a homemaker, a construction worker, a police chief, two lawyers, and three university students. Five of us were from the US: the son of the American ambassador, a couple of American adventure seekers, Robert (my husband), and me.

Two local children, Demoi and Takiman—probably around three and four years old—ran around naked. I discovered that they started their day dressed but took their clothes off to feel the earth and warm boulders close to their bare skin. I wished I could join them when we made our way down to the river.

They didn't know how to swim. They crawled and climbed the boulders around the river like agile lizards, occasionally bathing and wading in the shallow water. No one seemed concerned about their safety or worried about piranhas or the small crocodile that we detected on the other side of the riverbed.

“They won’t bother you if you don’t bother them. You just need to be careful and respect their territory,” Boikie said. The rest of the locals felt the same way about the pet tarantulas, hiding in the corners of some of the cabins and in the communal area, and about the tiny, brightly colored poisonous frogs—capable of killing up to ten humans with their venom, making them the deadliest amphibians in the world—that peeked out from under leaves off the main trails. The group’s questions and fearful concerns seemed to be the highlight of Boitie’s week.

“When it’s your time to go, it’s your time to go. How are you going to change that?” he said, laughing. The theory that modern anxiety was the residue of our less evolved, reptilian brain and indigenous ways of life didn’t quite measure up. Boikie and friends didn’t seem to think that fear of life-threatening danger and predators enhanced survival. There was something much more complex going on here.

After spending just one afternoon at Awarradam, life felt simpler, less pretentious, and unburdened, something to treasure, not control. There were no clocks, no watches, just the sun rising and setting. I felt more present, alive, carefree, and powerful than I’d ever felt in my entire life. All of the other city folks were similarly unwinding, talking and moving more slowly as the day progressed.

We looked like fumbling kindergartners compared to the village captains, guides, and navigators, walking and talking encyclopedias who kept us under their protective wings during our entire visit.

Without them, we’d for sure get lost, unable to remember or identify landmarks— all looking the same to us—that could lead us back home or prevent our dugout canoe from hitting underwater boulders and getting stuck, damaged or capsizing.

While it may not be possible, realistic or necessary for us in the Western world to live that in tune with nature, we need to do a bit better than barely opening one eye when alarms are screeching all around us.

It’s essential for us to hear and receive the guidance that matches our dire circumstances with courage, spiritual maturity and alert calmness, which may on the surface feel similar to denial and avoidance, but is far from this inner state.

This evolved inner state involves shrinking ourselves to our humble size so that we can more accurately discern how to navigate our environment and be fully present instead of shut down amidst ongoing stimulation and daily life-threatening situations.

Behind the armor and facade

Right now, default self-blame and self-loathing cause us to hold up a facade and hard protective armor around our heart, vulnerability and 6th sense. We “defend” ourselves from hearing hard truths and don't take more responsibility where we can and must.

This is not the formula for fierce boundaries or how to stand in your soul authority when the going gets rough.

I firmly believe that if we use our wits, natural human genius, and fill up with our own energy and collective strength, we can win a face-off with modern-day lions in a similar manner as the Dorobo Kenyans.

Tough love and fierce compassion funneled into firm limits —i.e. strategic interventions, decisive leadership, and laser-focused policies—have proven to be most effective in dismantling rigid systems invested in upholding their privileges and pecking order. We are most equipped to do this when our own soul authority and natural genius are operating at full throttle.

No one will ever truly get ahead by using divide and conquer scare tactics and the quicker this reality sinks in, the better off we will be in liberating ourselves from oppressive, fragmenting systems and transforming and repairing them from the inside out, starting with ourselves.

Reflections on working with the Fire element

I'm constantly confronted with tricky family binds, but instead of indulging in circular conversations (usually about politics), I let Fire guide me.

This results in a peaceful flexibility opposed to rigidity, stubbornness, and ultimately tears. With Fire, I'm permitted to create space within myself for the full effect of triggers, emotions, and fears. They simply just run their course.

I allow my fire to heat up, burning foreign and toxic narratives or imbalances—like a fever eradicating some virus. Consequently, any lingering pain from my childhood or potential bitterness and disappointment is alchemized and re-birthing as something vital: boundaries. In a sort of spiritual chemical reaction, creative solutions begin to sprout from ashes where my fire has burned. The boundaries that guide and protect me are modeled by the healthy, comforting warmth that is Fire.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D., Special Education Teacher and Artist

I went into trance attempting to meet my four elemental guides . . . instead I was greeted (repeatedly) by dragons. Though my experience went “off-script”, I was, in the end guided to where I needed to be, both in regard to the elements and in regard to key elements of myself. Later on, I came to encounter more dragons, as well as other guides to aid me in my alchemical dance with the fire of PTSD. With the help of Loraine, my dragons, the phoenix, and Kali Ma, I was able to transform the trauma — threatening at times to burn through the forest of my heart — into a kind of hearth; a place of warmth and solace. I was able to transform my pain — my sacred inner ‘fire’— into a source of life rather than a threat to my own.

Michelle Present, Artist, Writer and Peer Specialist

Meditation script for Fire

(ground yourself first with the Tree meditation)

Feel the sun on your body, warming you all over, keeping the temperature of your ecosystem within a soothing, stable and ideal range, both within our human body and within earth's ecosystem.

Fire and magma are the heart and blood vessels of Gaia, which has an inner core of about the same temperature of the sun. It has created mountains and ridges on earth's surface and has spewed out — over millions of years — water vapor, mineral rich land mass and fertile soil, thereby turning what once was a water world into the beautiful life-giving planet we get to enjoy and cherish today.

Connect with your earliest pre-human ancestors who were transformation trailblazers in their own right. Around 2 1/2 million years ago, they learned to harvest fire from lava streams in Africa and greatly accelerated their brains by cooking food and freeing up time to enhance their survival strategies. Fire not only protected them from wild animals, it also protected them from cold, from dangers lurking in the dark, and poisonous and disease-carrying insects, pests and bacteria.

A strong inner fire is synonymous to a strong immune system, and just like an outer fire needs to be tended to with constant care, a strong inner fire needs similar tending to, making sure that there is a steady flow of air (inspiration) and enough wood to feed the fire (earth and water, not too wet or dry, representing structure and action) without the risk of it getting blown out (stormy winds). We also want to make sure that we no longer ignore personal warming signals (resentments and frustrations) and have plenty of water nearby to contain the fire should it get out of hand (soothing).

Feel the fire in your heart center getting tended to by each of your elements and through your support of their efforts. Notice the connection between your Air element, inspiration, boosting the vitality of your inner Fire, your passion, and vice versa.

Notice how your body naturally defends itself from pathogens and harmful attacks, especially when you don't meddle with this process. Your body responds by heating up and concentrating its defenses through an army of orchestrated killer T-cells and white blood cells producing pain, inflammation and fevers that have only one objective — to expel the foreign particles and restore your ecosystem's health, equilibrium and homeostasis.

As you lean against your tree and soak up the sun, see if you can tell where your body begins and ends, and where to draw this boundary that gives your parasympathetic nervous system the most peace. Especially those of us who have thin skin, this is easier said than done. Feel your energy field expand and contract and imagine your energetic boundaries around your entire sanctuary protecting you from harm and unseen

energetic imbalances and attacks. Be as bold as you need to be. Most of us are living in too cramped of a space.

Notice how often these boundaries and our protective inner fire —our frustrations, anger and rage in response to social mistreatment and injustices —were ignored and dismissed, or used to justify violence and punishment throughout history. How did this play out in your ancestry and culture whenever you or someone challenged oppressive customs and harmful privileges?

An implosive and explosive pattern that looks like a wave probably developed and replaced the sturdy and stable boundary that your fire element prefers. In the imploded state, you may feel depleted, helpless, depressed, anxious, ashamed, inferior and guilty. It's the result of internalizing the blame, rejected emotions and anger that were projected on us, or often, the result of inheriting this imploded state that our ancestors passed down to us. In the exploded state, we project unacceptable and hard feelings onto others or funnel them into workaholic or frenzied activity so that we don't need to digest and metabolize them, passing the pattern along to the next generation.

With the help of your fire guide, serving as an emotional and energetic fever of sorts, push this harmful, imbalanced pattern out of your energy field and give yourself as much space as needed until you feel reset, spacious, and at peace. You may need to expand further out and take up more inner space than any of your ancestors have ever done. Keep going until you are able to rest the implosion - explosion pattern on your bark and seal your field and sanctuary with the energetic boundary that first appeared when asking Fire to set your aligned boundary.

Remember that it's heat, not light, that transforms. This is how you set a true boundary without bypassing unresolved issues. If a part of you is still attached to this pattern — which many of us are in more ways than we realize — go back to step 1 and 2, work some more with your tree and air guides to unpack and unravel the false control that this implosion - explosion pattern promises you. When you feel clear about the samsaric runaround and double-bind that this pattern is trapping you in, work again with fire to reset new energetic boundaries with this misaligned core belief.

You may need to use this fire and heat to alchemize old and limiting beliefs (the mental order of the past) into a higher form and spiritual order. Do this as often as you need to until you feel realigned and rooted in the throne of your truth-body.

Allow each of these insights and teachings from your ancient ancestral tree and Fire guide to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room or setting that you're in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention

fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to the space you are in and open your eyes slowly.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEPS - say yes or no with courage

The time has come for us to upgrade and become energy-efficient on all levels of our existence. We cannot neglect our inner appliances. *Are yours energy-efficient?* The ultimate goal of my soul authority system is to help you to become as energy-efficient, balanced and integrated as possible in the quickest, most organic, authentic and sustainable way that is humanly possible.

What does being energy efficient have to do with soul authority?

How often do you give your power away, and remain in a tug-of-war with someone or some system who are unwilling to give it back?

Are you perhaps still stuck in one of these dynamics, not realizing that it's your birthright to fully own your power and your authority? That you don't owe anyone any explanation or apology to protect what's yours? That you can walk away from any situation where your authority and wholeness are not honored and celebrated?

Wouldn't you be much more efficient in getting your soul purpose and true work done if you weren't busy all day in managing these repetitive spin cycles that did nothing other than waste energy and damage your inner appliances?

Confusion around this is the weed, and every piece of root of this confusion that is still scattered around will grow into another power struggle at some point.

How can you pull weedy patterns out at the root level by setting clear and no-nonsense energetic boundaries?

Step 4. Earth: Paving over unresolved problems with quick fixes instead of pulling them out at the root?

Grounding

How to heal and compost pain and trauma into new growth and beginnings
Earth has your back: the magical and magnetic powers of your assertions and actions

This beautiful, bounteous, life-giving planet we call Earth has given birth to each one of us, and each one of us carries the Earth within every cell of our body . . . We need to realize that the Earth is not just our environment. The Earth is not something outside of us. Breathing with mindfulness and contemplating your body, you realize that you are the Earth. You realize that your consciousness is also the consciousness of the Earth. Look around you—what you see is not your environment, it is you.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

You are not your body nor your mind. Every experience you have happens in your consciousness. Your body and your mind are the metabolism of experience in consciousness.

- Deepak Chopra

The ultimate goal of grounding is not static peace and calm but greater inner strength to compost pain and more space to support your dynamic growth.

- Loraine Van Tuyl

Welcome to the earth element. Put on your seatbelt. Here is where the rubber hits the road and you get to practice integrating what you have learned into physical, tangible form and action. This is your chance to walk your talk, and remember, your actions — or lack of them — speak louder than words.

If you're shaking a bit in your boots, you're not alone. Someone probably came up with these sayings because we all have trouble keeping our word and living up to our ideals.

Many of our convictions don't align with our actions because of common, baseline splits between our mind, heart, body and soul. Instead of these parts of ourselves working together, it seems as if they each have their own agenda and are trying to outdo one another.

As we became more settled, advanced, industrialized, and "civilized" hundreds to

thousands of years ago, so became the need of leaders to divide and conquer us, turning us into good and manageable subjects, serfs, peasants, slaves and pawns to make them richer and more powerful.

Our ancestors were more often than not manipulated into adopting a particular version of reality that was created for egocentric, patriarchal, and exploitative reasons, and had no other choice but to play by the rules of the game. Questioning or stepping out of the social matrix of the times was not an option and severely punished through torture, exile, public shaming, discrimination and so on. The only way that those at the bottom of the ranks could escape these oppressive repercussions was by competing for higher ranks, or starting over somewhere else far away.

Unfortunately, their past trauma followed them when crossing the ocean and settling into the New World. Creating a just and fair society may have sounded nice to our pioneering and trailblazing ancestors, but they didn't possess the know-how, life experience, opportunities and skills to make this happen. Most were more drawn to overcompensate for lingering feelings of inferiority by taking advantage of the many ways they felt superior by oppressing more vulnerable "others" and could establish a more socially secure position at the top of the ranks.

The American Dream

Over the generations, the American Dream of being free and everything we could be in the New World got conflated with a competitive, dominating spirit that is as much about winning and filling an inherited void as it is about true equality, fairness and freedom.

When stuck in our individual silos and working on ourselves and our professional development, it's easy to lose sight of the many inconspicuous ways that society has influenced us and we, in turn, have influenced others. Today's methods of social conditioning are so sophisticated and smooth that we don't realize that our limited, egocentric beliefs and stunted potential were spread around by an unnamed, social pandemic and that we've caught the bug, like so many others, without even realizing it.

We tend to 100% blame ourselves when we feel ungrounded, overwhelmed, foggy, insecure, and confused. Deep down, we know better but don't dare to trust our truth and power.

We've unwittingly become the foot soldiers and marketers for organizations, companies, churches and businesses, some well-intended with quality products and ideas, some not so much. A whole lot of them are just contributing to superfluous consumerism and finding ways to make a living the best way they know within industrialized, modern societies.

Harboring self-doubt and a fragmented, not good-enough inner state makes it easier to manipulate and sell us all kinds of feel-good ideas, products, pills, entertainment, ads,

news, food, substances, tips and programs to distract, numb, and soothe our suffering and supposedly better ourselves, our businesses and our lives.

Sadly, we can't tell any more if we are paving over deeper problems and short-changing root solutions that are trying to emerge or creating problems where there are none and imagining a nagging voice that doesn't really exist.

Our culture of instant relief and gratification has heightened this challenge. Because of the fortification of our egocentric self, we confuse our trauma body with our true self, and haven't used our wise and expansive mind and muscles enough to get more clear.

As a result, we are not able to confidently differentiate healthy growing pains from prejudice, fear of change, and unmetabolized dirty pain. We don't know if it's wise to "trust our gut" and "follow our heart" or when not.

We wonder if undigested, old hurt is running the show and causing us to overreact in an explosive, prejudicial manner or if we are afraid of facing hard truths because we have a limited bandwidth and intolerance for growing pains.

A constricted, false self further sets us up for more serious pain and alluring solutions, leading to substance abuse, gambling, chronic blaming, overworking, rationalizing, and many more misaligned modern-day addictions. The cathartic high and release that these habits provide can easily steamroll over the negative repercussions, natural consequences and dis-ease caused by these behaviors — relational conflicts, financial problems, health concerns, and emotional instability.

How do we navigate through this complicated maze to get to the authentic self?

The mystical allure of the rainforest

Our childhood memories and buried raw emotions hold a lot of answers that can simplify our quest for the truth. Accessing clarity and the truth was much easier back then because our wisdom wasn't yet colored by egocentric, unidimensional views and rigid rules for living and surviving in the modern world.

As a young child, I yearned to be near the ancient people and the monkeys, sloths, macaws, giant trees, exotic birds and insects, and gorgeous plants and flowers of the forest because my unhampered, natural self system — my aligned ego-ecosystem — felt energized, seen and soul-nourished around them.

The colorful homes, wood-carved doors, cultural symbols, and the energetic dancing and drumming of the Maroons, who'd started to venture closer to the city as I got older, captivated me in equally profound ways.

At the time, I didn't have the words to describe what was tugging so hard on my

heart strings. It was an irresistible, magnetic pull to go toward that which made my soul feel the most real, safe and whole.

The aching and longing were so intense, I once wailed for an hour when I heard of my older cousins going on a jungle adventure that was too dangerous for younger kids like me. Back then, it wasn't safe for us to receive a malaria vaccination, which was required when going deeper in the rainforest.

I needed to wait until I was an adult to visit some of the places I'd dreamt of since I was a child. My husband and children accompanied me on these eco-tours, organized by Saramaccan Maroons from Kayana and Awarradam and Natives from Galibi and Christiaankondre.

They were everything I'd imagined them to be and more. I was finally able to articulate and make sense of what my inner wild child had tried to tell me decades ago, and I was delighted that they deeply impacted my children in similar lifechanging ways. To this day, I'm able to experience a profound reset by visiting these places and ancient guides in my meditations.

The intimate relationship that Maroons at Kayana have with Mother Earth and their unobstructed true nature was very moving. They have utmost appreciation and respect for even the dark soil of the tropical rainforest. Because this soil is surprisingly not as fertile as it looks, they plant for only three years on one of five patches of land designated for farming and rotate from patch to patch using slash and burn methods. The soil has fifteen years to rest and recuperate back to its original jungle vitality before it gets used again. Their symbiotic and reciprocal relationship was as intimate and palpable as an unbreakable parent-child bond.

When the Saramaccans harvest plump and aromatic fruit and vegetables, they lay it all out on the ground along with braided palm leaves, herbs and vines as a sacred tribute to their Earth Mother. These succulent and nutritious gifts are not only visually stunning, they burst with delectable flavors that have no name. I can only describe them as the seasoned climax of ancient human reverence for air, fire, earth and water, generously fattened by the soil and patiently ripened and sweetened by the sun.

After a tour of their *kostgrondje*, their communal farmlands, we were taken to a bend in the river where we had lunch. I described what happened next in my memoir:

We used the flat rocks and boulders as tables to hold our food, plates, calabasses, and belongings. A few yards away, there was a narrow and raging current, cutting through two huge boulders. We all sat on the edge of the boulder and admired the water gushing between the stones, feeling and fearing its deadly power and force."

24-year old Boikie, our tour guide, who was fluent in at least four languages, Dutch, English, Surinamese Creole, and Saramaccan, and the assistant to Basia, the

village captain, pointed to the bottleneck and said:

“There is a boat that once belonged to white men stuck in between the boulders underneath these rapids. A few centuries ago, our ancestors tricked the white men who were following them down these river rapids and jumped out of their boats just in time. The men who were following them didn’t and ended up drowning in the strong currents.”

I gulped. Plantation owners chasing runaway slaves this far into the jungle? (It would have taken a grueling 8-hours by boat to get there). Unbelievable. Hearing about the atrocities that slaves had endured was nothing new, but those stories had never felt this palpable before. My maternal ancestor(s) who’d been dragged here from Africa on a slave ship had been more like a distant, almost fictional character out of a movie or a book. He or she suddenly became real to me, as real as Boikie sitting next to me. It could have been him or her, running and swimming for dear life, begging and praying that the jungle and wise, sacred trees would provide enough protection.

Not even these remarkable Maroons—who lacked formal schooling for generations until recently—got to skip important history lessons. As a matter of fact, these lessons seemed to be some of the most central lessons that were passed down to the next generation to orient and ground them in time and place.

Protected within the truth vs from the truth

The Maroon elders could have argued, why pick at old, healed wounds and needlessly frighten the younger generations? We’ve lived in peace and harmony with our neighbors, fellow Maroon and indigenous tribes, and have been left alone by the white colonial army and Redi Moesoes for centuries.

Redi Moesoes—Red Berets, also known as the Corps of Black Hunters—were freed slaves who’d been recruited to support the white colonial army. They were assigned to accompany white soldiers to “hunt down” escaped slaves and destroy Maroon villages and their farmlands, most of them tucked far away and only reachable by boat after traveling for hours on the river.

The Redi Moesoes, who made up about a third of the colonial military force, often betrayed their commanders, tipped off Maroons, and engaged in mutiny.

Because of other advantages that the Maroons had over white colonizers, plantation owners and soldiers in this humid climate—i.e. greater immunity to tropical disease, greater tolerance for the heat, more experience and endurance to navigate this demanding terrain that reminded some of Africa, and greater skills in invoking protection from nature spirits with drums, magical amulets, and trance states, which spooked the soldiers—they eventually got the upper hand.

After more than half a century of brutal guerrilla warfare against colonial and European troops, the Maroons' independence was recognized by the signing of a peace treaty with the Dutch in the 1760s. This was unheard of in all of the America's. The Maroons' end of the bargain: not attacking existing plantations and freeing more slaves.

Soulcentricity and the devotion to mystery, connection and equality

The moral of the stories that were passed down from generation to generation aimed to teach youngsters how important it is to care about nature, each other, and the greater good. These teachings weren't attempting to pit "good people" from one's own in-group against the "bad people" from the out-group, based on racist, superficial or bigoted reasons.

Members of their own in-group didn't automatically get a free pass. They were expected to honor a higher truth and the mysterious forces of nature that were bigger than themselves.

These teachings preserved sacred interconnectedness and guided everyone's actions. Younger generations were taught to be soulcentric and ego-ecosystem aligned vs egocentric and entitled. No one was exempt from or above natural and social checks and balances.

This account shared by the indigenous elders from Galibi and Christiaankondre in 2011 provides a great example of how teachings were passed down through everyday, living traditions to promote fair treatment of all, not a privileged few.

This 500 year old story was told in the neutral, matter-of-fact and nonjudgmental manner that you would expect from a firm and loving parent who was about to correct the misaligned behavior of a child with natural consequences. The women and men present seemed equally invested in sharing the wisdom of this extraordinary ancestral story with their descendants and guests in the manner recounted in my memoir:

"Welcome everyone!" the village leader said. "I hope you'll enjoy our traditional dances and the beautiful yellow dresses of the dancers, symbolizing life-giving warmth and light from the sun." A small group of female dancers and male drummers began to sing, drum, and move in staccato patterns, all the while paying homage to the sun and the moon, the sea and the animals, the smallest flower and the biggest tree.

Through a play-dance ritual, a circle of grandmothers, mothers, and daughters reenacted an important legend passed down from generation to generation. Centuries ago, the female ancestors of these women abandoned the tribal men—their husbands, fathers, brothers, cousins, and uncles—who were feasting in secret on some game that they had caught after days of hunting. The incensed women fled with their daughters and sons and as many possessions as they

could fit in boats, shooting arrows at the men who were chasing them. They resettled in a different area along the northern coast of Suriname.

“Spanish explorers from long ago who encountered these women-run tribes named them, and later this entire region, the Amazon after the fierce female warriors from Greek mythology,” the announcer said.

Truth and wholeness oozed out of their every pore and flowed back and forth between them and nature as effortlessly as the air.

Each tribe, a library of rare wisdom and ancient knowledge in and of itself, is now on the brink of extinction because of the ethnocide, genocide and colonization that they endured throughout the Americas and Africa.

I could sense as a child that these adults lived with utmost integrity and my soul wanted to emulate their wise ways. My inklings were more than confirmed as an adult.

It's our moral obligation to support and revive these ancient people and their indigenous and harmonious ways as best as we can by deeply reflecting on their teachings and on our historical and present-day patriarchal and zero-sum, either-or, your-loss-is-my-gain survivalist thinking going forward.

Our continuous neglect and disregard of them is telling of our own self-loathing and sabotage of our own indigenous souls and sacred connection to nature and all of life.

Humility and being of humus - Earth

It takes great respect, surrender, and humility (being of humus - earth) to clearly hear and receive guidance that comes through from mystery and nature, especially around situations that involve a lot of pain and cause us to feel ashamed, powerless, lost and vulnerable.

This is the precise reason we keep falling for the fat juicy carrot of empty promises that causes us to keep going —instead of dropping in the body — whenever it's dangled in front of us. Our rational ego-mind has difficulty grasping paradox, holistic harmony and the dynamic forces that orchestrate ego-ecosystem alignment.

Because we can't decipher the ambiguous feelings and mixed sensations that we feel when we are getting closer to our true self, we default to logical thought and reason. If alignment doesn't feel 100% good, it must be bad.

The ego-mind is also adamant about staying in control and terrified about giving up power — vulnerability being one of the misleading “bad” feelings. The only way to get out of this vicious cycle is by hacking it: stop playing by the usual rules and not blindly trusting all that we are used to doing to feel better as necessarily being in our highest interest.

It is very challenging in modern-day societies to recognize when we are dangerously spinning further and further away from our core. Peeling the layers back can help to reveal and strengthen the magnetic and, eventually, irresistible pull of the truth.

Truth transcends feeling good or bad

Discovering the truth doesn't "feel good" in every moment, but on a deeper level of our being we feel honored, redeemed and re-established into our central thrones of our being when aligned with our truth.

Unfortunately, our stubborn ego-minds are capable of pulling an endless number of denial tricks and blinders over our eyes to avoid taking responsibility for ourselves, our past and our future potential.

It's difficult for our minds to fully absorb the potent truth of who we are and cultivate the tremendous response-ability and sacred co-creative powers we possess. We tragically either resist, fight or take the wondrous forces of nature that energize our bodies for granted.

Sadly, our disconnected and fear-driven efforts to keep up with and control modern life cause us to objectify, pave over and reduce life, earth and ourselves into concrete and flat versions of reality.

Once stuck in this rut, it's easy to miss the spiritual boat, the reason why we are here now and why we were granted this incredible gift of life in such a close relationship with Mother Earth, herself a miracle child of the cosmos that's generously offering us a glimpse into the light, sparkly star dust, and elemental magic that's buried in each of our own souls.

Fortunately, this boat keeps coming around each time with renewed hopes that we hop in. Each break-down, crisis, and illness offers us a new opportunity to disintegrate and compost our outdated and disconnected ways.

The spiritual composting process can be a turn off because it's messy, icky and out of our control. All composting processes involve some rotten, smelly, creepy and crawly aspects, but once it's all done, the beautiful rich fertile dark soil that will feed new life and new possibilities, makes it worthwhile.

The more we concentrate and intensify our assertions and alchemy action steps with conscious intention, the more we will crystallize them in more solid form and attract synchronistic guidance toward us. It's a process that is as natural and magical as our bones healing and sealing a fracture once it's reset.

Serendipitous signs provide us reassurance, validation, guidance, and purpose related opportunities that similarly seal fractures within our disconnected self and fragmented soul.

Mother Earth and the universe have our backs. Their primary function is to help us expand and grow by materializing an ego-eco reality that is increasingly more aligned with our true nature, wholeness and well-being.

Reflections on working with the Earth element

I used to feel like a balloon with a long string, tied to a rock. Should a strong gust of wind come by, I feared it would easily seize me up and uproot my only tether to this world. I feared that one day I might float away from this place. Now, I find I am more like the rock—or rather, I am a distant cousin to the rock. I am a boulder. I cannot be pushed, moved, rocked, or blown away by a gust of wind. I have cracks, crevices, and imperfections exactly as a boulder should. Where my boulder-self ends and Earth begins is difficult to discern. The Earth element brazenly demonstrates the right to take up space on this planet. The right to be imperfect and tenacious, substantial and rooted. I'm no longer fearful of being so easily blown away. I'm grounded, present, and don't see that wavering.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D., Special Education Teacher and Artist

I listened to this meditation while falling asleep one night, and another evening while I was doing qigong. I really resonated with needing that grounding in self and feeling of the "earth" as tender and strong, and especially to enjoy all of the senses in a beautiful way. I think I got really distant from just enjoying the feeling of being alive at some point last week due to emotional overwhelm and dissociation, and this meditation really helped pull me back to that moment to moment enjoyment of life. I will have to continue listening to it to continue learning more!

When I came to see Loraine, I was often really exhausted all the time. I had headaches, sometimes migraines, dizziness, stomach and digestive pain and food sensitivities (irritable bowel syndrome), chronic bacterial vaginosis or yeast infections, and chronic pelvic pain. I kept having medical tests done and nothing physical was showing up that Western doctors could figure out how to treat. I actually saw an acupuncturist the spring before I started meeting with Loraine and she expressed surprise that I and other relatively healthy young women would come in and appear energetically and physically as though they were going chemo.

It was really painful to be in my body. I couldn't do breathing meditations because even my breath felt painful, but no medical cause or relationship. Now I would say almost all of those things are gone. Occasional dizziness or headaches when I overdo it, but now I know it's my body telling me so. My breath is relaxing to focus on and I'm just tired because I have a baby that wakes me up at night. I would say symptoms sometimes emerge more as red flags or indicators that something is imbalanced, but also my

feeling about them is so different. I now am like, oops, I'm off balance, body, thank you for the reminder to ground, rest, relax and reconnect with myself.

Audrey Cohen, LSW, Social Worker

Meditation script for Earth

(Ground yourself with the tree meditation first)

While in your healing sacred garden — your personal sanctuary and greenhouse— notice how intimately your five senses are linked to the elements within your inner world. They help you to perceive the energy of the elements and experiences outside of you and match these with the elements and sensations inside of you.

As you explore your sanctuary, smell the fresh scent in the air, hear the gentle rustling of leaves and feel the soft breeze on your skin. Notice the warmth of the sun on your cheeks and how beautiful it is when it rises up and illuminates the world each morning. Imagine taking a bite into the plump berries and flavorful vegetables from your luscious garden while admiring the stunning scenery around you. Hear the nearby brook babbling as you get nearer, and splash some refreshing cool water on your face.

These are the kinds of things that we don't only enjoy seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling and smelling, but that actually enhance many aspects of our physical health. Forest and nature bathing are practices that are highly valued in Japanese culture precisely because of these health benefits.

We underestimate our body's self-healing potential and forget that it's a powerful self-adjusting ecosystem and microcosm that's constantly in flux.

As you drop in your body, notice the striking parallels between you and your Earth Mother, which is as alive as you are and fueled by a similar self-regulating life force.

Your skeleton, skull, and bones are solid, strong, and dense, like the layered canyons, mountain ranges, granite formations, and crystal caves of Earth. These structures are protecting your most vulnerable organs, fluids and marrow and give your body its stability, immunity, and vitality.

Feel Earth's gravitational forces and your corresponding weight and physical density pulling you down, as if weighing you down by rocks.

This is not to hold you back and hinder your progress, but to make it easier for you to slow down and anchor in space and time so you can be present, connect with and metabolize your life experiences and emotions with the help of your body's heat, passion, clarity and protective boundaries. They are all working together non-stop to reveal what you need for optimal health.

Enjoy this slow growth and trust that your flowers will blossom and the fruit of your labor will sun-ripen in their own time.

We often want to grow and develop faster but take a moment to reflect on how much you have grown throughout your lifetime and hardly registered. Has it really sunk in that the body that encases you is not the same body that encapsulated your life energy when you were an infant, a toddler, a child, an adolescent and a young adult?

Those may seem like changes too slow to notice, but our nails, skin, and stomach lining have much shorter life spans ranging from days to weeks. It's still easy to take them for granted. Our fat cells and bones live ten years on average, while some of our cells — our brain, tooth enamel and lenses — are with us for life. When we tally the amount of clothes and shoes we've gone through, it's easier to conceive of the trillions of cells that have been replaced and recycled into new cells and forms of ourselves throughout our lives.

Being fixated on a false or distorted sense of self causes us to underappreciate the brilliance and natural genius of our ecosystem.

A neglected sacred garden is much less hardy and immune to invasive weeds and discarded seeds blown over by the wind than a mature, fully-grown garden is. This creates a vicious cycle where our false self ends up inviting in exactly what we fear.

The more we consciously tend to and embody the totality of our powerful energy field and true nature, the more grounded, resilient and robust we will feel and be, not leaving space for harmful thoughts or self-doubt..

To get a fuller sense of this, reflect for a moment on all living matter — all plant and animal species, including ourselves — that are nourished by and nourishing the planet. Our bodies are 100% organic and miraculous physical expressions and extensions of Mother Earth, the result of billions of years of evolution of the simplest of single cell organisms into one of the most brilliant, advanced, and conscious biological organisms alive today — provided that our ego-minds don't interfere and harmoniously align with life.

This is difficult to do and sustain but these grounding and rooting practices have worked wonders for many people and will offer you new inroads and short-cuts to your core self and soul's home base.

Most of us feel a bit overwhelmed and vulnerable when attempting to re-member neglected parts of ourselves and trying to occupy more of ourselves and wholeness. Being more dense causes sensations to get more intense.

Remind yourself not to identify with a fleeting state, like today's weather, when your energy and emotions get more intense. Nothing about you is permanent; your energy is in constant flux attempting to re-establish homeostasis. Your ancestral sacred tree will

help you hold and ground all parts and bleed throughs of your powerful energy field for you—the seen and unseen, your past, present and future selves, your newly emerging leaves and the ones dropping or already on the ground, composting, your neglected cries and the neglected cries of your ancestors passed down the generations.

Knowing who we truly are at the core — as we shift from an egocentric self understanding to a soulcentric self — and grounding their clarity with the help of the Earth element offers us the spaciousness, protection and physical support to correct imbalances with greater ease and fewer chances of short-circuiting in the process.

Allow each of these insights and teachings from your ancient ancestral tree and Earth guide to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room or setting that you're in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to the space you are in and open your eyes slowly.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEP: take aligned action with conviction

Do you know when your ego-mind is in charge when you go about your day? When you are expanding in soul consciousness or constricting in fear, imploding or exploding to manage unhealed and unresolved wounding?

Are you growing in a spiral shape, feeling more in your element and soul authority everytime you come around full circle, or are you more like a broken record, confined by the perimeters and arc of the same storyline when triggered ?

If you notice your ego-mind feeling threatened or overwhelmed in your interactions with others, wanting to crunch data or shut down instead of take a risk, ask it to sit back and relax, as if watching a movie. Practice being aware that you are safe in your seat.

This mental trick — imagining that you are observing your life from a distance — has helped many strengthen their double-minded practice and muscles. Notice how this distance makes it easier for you to become an observer and de-charge the intensity of painful and challenging situations while remaining submerged in life.

Invite your highly developed brain to trust your natural genius and settle into your expanded, soulcentric self. Notice that your usual egocentric self—your identity, professional roles, your way of relating to others, your story and mindset— matter but are a smaller subset of your soulcentric self.

Allow both experiences of yourself to co-exist. You may notice that they are contradicting one another and in conflict in some areas of your life and aligned and in partnership with one another in other areas.

Notice the strength of conviction within yourself when your soul and ego take aligned action. Hold back on actions that are not aligned, and work with your Air and Fire guides when you get a chance to gain more clarity and courage how to get realigned. You'll feel your sense of integrity become more solid as you deliberately lay each new building block.

Step 5. Water: Unable to keep your head above water or compulsively rescuing others downstream instead of stopping the dumping upstream?

Clearing

How to clear emotional dams and transform fear of flooding and drowning into creative flow

How to identify and nurture subtle and intense emotions without overidentifying with them

Grief is an uncompromising teacher but it can take you to depths within yourself and teach you things nothing else can.

- Isa Gucciardi

Be wild; that is how to clear the river. The river does not flow in polluted, we manage that. The river does not dry up, we block it. If we want to allow it its freedom, we have to allow our ideational lives to be let loose, to stream, letting anything come, initially censoring nothing.

That is creative life. It is made up of divine paradox. To create, one must be willing to be stone stupid, to sit upon a throne on top of a jackass and spill rubies from one's mouth. Then the river will flow, then we can stand in the stream of it raining down.

- Clarissa Pinkola Estés

It is said that Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth. We see this in her regulating of the tides. Grandmother Moon controls all female life. Much of water life spawns according to the cycles of the moon. It is said that Grandmother Moon is especially close to women because she governs the woman's cleansing cycle of menstruation known as moontime. Just as Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth, it is said that women watch over the waters of the people.

- Northern College, Indigenous Council on Education

Since ancient times, explorers have “followed the water.” Where there is water, there is life. For pioneers, finding a dependable source of drinkable water meant the difference between life and death.

The hunt for water continues to drive exploration today, even beyond Earth. In October 2020, NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) detected water in Clavius Crater, one of the largest craters visible from Earth, located in the Moon's southern hemisphere. SOFIA confirmed that the molecules on the sunlit surface of the Moon are H₂O. This discovery indicated that water is distributed across the lunar surface, and not limited to cold, shadowed places. Still, the amount of water is still very sparse. Just to give you an idea how sparse, the Sahara Desert has 100 times the amount of water than what the SOFIA mission detected in the lunar soil.

All eyes have been on Mars ever since NASA's Perseverance rover touched down at the Jezero Crater on Feb. 18, 2021.

Before this expedition, planetary scientists had already confirmed the existence of a large saltwater lake under the icy surface of Mars, and they discovered three more lakes beneath the red planet's south pole based on radar data obtained from the European Space Agency's Mars Express spacecraft.

According to the European Space Agency, Mars used to be "warmer and wetter with water flowing across the surface, much like early Earth. While it is not possible for water to remain stable on the surface today, the new result opens the possibility that an entire system of ancient lakes might exist underground, perhaps millions or even billions of years old. They would be ideal locations to search for evidence of life on Mars, albeit very difficult to reach."

Interestingly, these arid cosmic bodies and exciting space voyages are providing us, earthlings, a "fish out of water" experience. By imagining life on the moon or on Mars, we come to realize just how much we depend on water to survive and how much the abundant presence of water has blessed and enriched our existence on Earth, both in terms of our complex inner lives and the diversity of life all around us.

It's incredible that about 70 percent of the human body is made up of water and, coincidentally, about 70 percent of Earth, our beautiful blue and green planet, is also covered by water.

Some scientists believe that Earth was born "wet". They claim that billions of years ago, water vapor was released out of volcanoes and minerals in ancient rocks in the Earth's mantle and at one point, turned our planet into a water world. Fire and magma caused tectonic plates to shift and rise into protruding land mass, continents and distinct oceans. Evaporation, condensation and rain created fresh-water ponds, lakes, and waterways and an oxygen-rich and ozone-protected environment that has sustained and nourished plants, animals, and ecosystems that we, humans, are a part of today.

Water, oxygen, and cloud cover continue to play a large role in regulating the weather, temperature, rain, air streams and sun rays to make life on earth as optimal, moist, fertile and sustainable as possible for millions of life forms around the globe.

Water: the weirdest liquid on the planet

According to Alok Jha, author of *The Water Book*, water possesses the most impressive and mind blowing qualities of all liquids. The more scientists examine the properties of water, the stranger it seems.

We keep studying it because we're made of it and, likely, feel unsettled that this innate part of us is still such a mystery.

Apparently, water breaks all the rules of a framework that chemists developed in the 19th century to describe the behavior and qualities of liquids.

Here are just a few of water's incredible properties. By association, they also describe our mysterious core elemental make-up:

“Ice floats because water expands when it freezes. This seems like a small and inconsequential curiosity, but this anomaly – one of water's plethora of strange and unique behaviours – has shaped our planet and the life that exists on it. Because bodies of water freeze from the top down, fish, plants and other organisms will almost always have somewhere to survive during seasons of bitter cold, and be able to grow in size and number. Over geological time, this oddity has allowed complex life to survive and evolve despite the Earth's successive ice ages, periods when fragile life forms would have otherwise been wiped out on the desiccated, frozen ground and – if water behaved like a normal liquid – in solidified seas, too.”

Another very unusual and much appreciated characteristic of water is this:

“All of the water on Earth should exist as only vapour: part of a thick, muggy atmosphere sitting above an inhospitable, bone-dry surface. A water molecule is made from two very light atoms – hydrogen and oxygen – and, at the ambient conditions on the surface of the Earth, it should be a gas.”

This incredible trait has significantly benefited us and our bodies. “Water is not only attracted to itself but will stick to almost anything else it comes across. It is the closest thing we have to a universal solvent, able to tear apart other compounds.”

Because of this bizarre property, water cleanses and detoxes us on all levels of our being — physical, biochemical and energetic. It is able to interact with different substances and favors structures that support nature's delicate and complex forms: “water can dissolve a wide variety of nutrients and other ingredients and move them around our bodies. The basic molecules of life — DNA, proteins, molecules that make up cell membranes, etc. — wouldn't work without water. The billions of protein molecules inside your body only fold into the right shapes to do their jobs because their interaction with water nudges them into the correct three-dimensional formats.”

Proper circulation throughout our body not only enhances our physical health, but also our overall sense of well-being, mental clarity, and wholeness.

Water and human consciousness

We have barely scratched the surface of this miraculous and weird element when it comes to human consciousness. Consider the fact that water and tears roll down our cheeks when we feel most connected to our true vulnerable self, our wisdom, our hurts and our unmet needs. How strange is that?

Masaru Emoto, NYT bestselling author of *The Hidden Messages of Water*, showed with his famous crystal experiments that human consciousness was mysteriously reflected in the physical appearance of water. His research claims sparked much debate in regard to the power of our mind and how much it shaped matter and our watery bodies.

Emoto said that "Water is the mirror that has the ability to show us what we cannot see. It is a blueprint for our reality, one which can change with a single, positive thought."

Visible distinctions in frozen samples of water provided strong evidence that positive vs negative thoughts, vibrations and messages impacted the molecular structure of water in significant ways.

He claimed that emotional "energies" and "vibrations" are what changed the molecular structure of water. His experiments consisted of exposing water in glasses to words, pictures, or music considered to be either positive and loving vs negative and hateful. The treated water was frozen and its ice crystals' aesthetic properties were examined with microscopic photography.

The differences were striking. Water exposed to loving vibrations looked like gorgeous, intricate snowflakes when frozen. Water subjected to hateful or harsh vibrations looked like deformed bacteria. The theory is that the negative energy caused the water molecules to latch onto the interference to dissolve it, breaking down its own pristine structure.

Earth's loving consciousness captured in water

Emoto asserted that untouched, pristine nature emanates a vibration that creates a similar kind of crystal you get when treating water with loving human consciousness. Water from a mountain stream, when frozen, contained structures of beautifully shaped geometric designs similar to the ones formed when water was treated with love and positive emotion, while frozen water from polluted sources contained distorted, randomly formed ice structures similar to the ones formed when water was subjected to hateful messages and negative emotion.

When we experience strong visceral sensations when meditating and feel like we are entering a higher level of consciousness, we may be experiencing an actual physical shift and greater crystalline symmetry and intricacy in the molecular make-up of our watery bodies. This probably results in finer and more electrical pulses throughout our body which may lead to a higher frequency and more pleasant sensations.

Emoto showed in one of his famous experiments that prayer and positive thought could purify polluted water and possibly reverse a negative state of consciousness in humans. On July 25, 1999, Emoto held a gathering of around 350 Japanese citizens interested in offering their prayers to Lake Biwa – the largest freshwater lake in Japan. At the time of the gathering, Lake Biwa was polluted and smelled putrid. Citizens often complained of the horrendous smell – the by-product of a genus of algae called 'kokanada' which had covered the once-beautiful lake.

The Japanese gathered on the shores of Lake Biwa with the full intention to use the power of Hado and Kotodama (the spirit of words) to help purify the lake. The prayers offered included the “Great Declaration,” which “(utilizes) the limitless energy filling the universe...a powerful statement to actualize world peace.” In Japanese culture, these words are thought to penetrate the surrounding elements with fulfillment and happiness.

About a month after the prayers were said, a major newspaper in Japan – The Kyoto Shinbun – declared that complaints about the lake had drastically decreased. There was notable improvement in the water’s condition and the foul odor was disappearing. Unfortunately, the gains were not sustained for long because polluted streams from many other parts of Japan converged in the lake.

If you are having some trouble believing that your thoughts could impact water (and essentially your own body chemistry), try this easy-to-replicate experiment. All it requires is some steamed rice, split into two different sealed jars and a bit of water in each jar to cover the rice. Label one jar “Love” and the other “Hate”. A dramatic difference in mold and discoloration in the jar labeled “Hate” compared to the jar labeled “Love” will be apparent in just a month.

This experiment works, regardless of the language you speak or write on the jar, and continues to blow the minds of children and adults alike who’ve attempted it as a school project or for fun.

The mysterious results explain why some cultural groups worship and sing to the rain and water, and why it may be worth our while to bless the food and water we eat and drink.

Water is life

Long before we had advanced instruments for scientific study, our ancient ancestors and wise elders already understood how powerful, magical and essential water was to our well-being. Some of their teachings have survived the ethnocide of the last few centuries but are holding on by a thin thread.

The Lakota phrase “Mní wičhóni” (“Water is life”) was the rally cry that united millions of Native and non-Native protestors around the world. They wanted to put an end to the controversial construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) on sacred lands and were outraged and concerned because a potential oil spill would threaten the water supply and cultural resources of Natives at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

For Native Americans, water not only sustains life, it is sacred. It cannot be separated from our environment. It’s an integral part of our make-up and Earth’s physical structure.

For water to remain clear and safe for all life, it needs structural support and protection that allows it to flow and circulate freely. As a matter of fact, water’s main role in our body is to recycle and circulate particles, oxygen, nutrients and toxins.

Water is integral to all inner processes, from the breakdown of the food that we eat, to the shedding of the lining of our stomach and uterus, to the elimination of waste and what we no longer need through our urine, sweat, and blood. All of these cycles are vital to our functioning and wellbeing, and will shut down within days if not provided water.

The parallel cycles between menstruating cis women and non-binary genders, Grandmother Moon, Mother Earth and her oceans perhaps tops all in terms of mystery and the wonders of human life. It's beyond uncanny that the average length of a human's menstrual cycle is the same length of the moon's 29.5-day waxing and waning cycle.

The Moon's gravitational pull generates the ocean's tides, which affect the reproductive cycles of fish and ocean plants and their migration patterns during ebb and flow, making it easier for animals, including humans, to fish for food.

Floating plants and animals ride the tidal currents between the breeding areas and deeper waters, which enhances their survival. The tides circulate phytoplankton and nutrients from greater ocean depths to the surface. This aids photosynthesis, provides food for fish and marine animals and clears pollutants from the water and carbon from the atmosphere.

These deep cleansing, pro-creative and transformational cycles mirror what happens in our wombs every month. A series of even more complex processes happen when humans conceive.

The amniotic fluid of all mammals, including that of humans, is remarkably similar to seawater. Both fluids contain the same salts in almost exactly the same proportions, suggesting that amniotic fluid quite likely resembles the ancient homes, the seas, of our earliest marine ancestors.

We are water babies and to this day, are protected by it, develop and swim in it, and practice all organ functions in water for nine months before we're born.

Rocking us through the ups and downs of life

Over the course of millions and billions years of evolution, Earth's powerful harmonizing principle has favored the dynamic ebb and flow of life over an ideal, fixed state. It's not difficult to see that life would lose its vitality and feel stale and static without the contrasts. Ironically, making space for opposites and contrasts is what creates inner harmony.

The Moon's gravity on the Earth plays an important role in holding our planet in place and regulating its variations in climate and weather. Without the Moon stabilizing our tilt, it is possible that the Earth's tilt could vary wildly. There would either be no tilt (which means no seasons) or a large tilt (which means extreme weather and even ice ages).

The planet is more resilient, diverse and fascinating because of the ups and downs of water and life in general.

Tides produce the biggest waves on the planet and cause the sea to approach and retreat along shores around the world. It seems to be Mother Earth's way of rocking and comforting us. Imagine sitting on a beach and looking at an ocean that didn't have any waves. It could probably cause us to feel emotionally stunted. We love watching and listening to the rise and fall of crashing waves because they normalize and soothe the ups and downs in our life.

Life force circulates through our veins as it circulates through Mother Earth's water and air ways. When we trust and rest in our true nature, we feel at peace when our hearts expand and contract, and our lungs inhale and exhale in alignment with the forces, seasons and cycles of nature.

Moontime and sacred feminine cycles

Ancient and indigenous cultures have honored the cycles of the moon throughout time and have considered it to be a divine honor to intimately experience these powerful balancing forces and life-death-rebirth cycles in their bodies.

According to the Indigenous Council on Education at Northern College, a young person's first menstrual period was a big deal and ceremonialized in meaningful ways: "when a young woman had her first moontime, her aunties or grandmothers would take her to a small lodge where she could be close to the natural world. The young woman is sacred at this time. She is now able to give life. Her mother, grandmothers or aunties would give her the teachings about her new life. She would be taught about her role as a woman in the community.

They believed that the moon cycle was a reminder of the gift of being able to bear life, something that the Maroons in Suriname also believe. Both cultures treat it as a time for menstruating members to cleanse themselves mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

"The moontime is considered a time of power, second only to the ability of the Great Spirit to give life. Some teachings say that when women are on their moontime the Creator comes closer to them. The moontime is a ceremony of life for women and a time for renewal. The moontime is a time for women to relax and take it easy. All the chores are done by other family members. It is a time for women to think about themselves, their family, their relatives or anyone they think needs help. It is a time of reflection."

The loss of intuitive guidance and rites of passage

Studies by Hartman, Swanson and Foulkes about dreaming and the menstrual cycle indicated that their participants dreamed more frequently and had more vivid dreams during the premenstrual and menstrual phases of their cycles. It supports ancient claims that we are more intuitive during our moontime, and that the "veil" between the worlds of the seen and unseen, and the conscious and the unconscious, is much thinner,

enabling us to serve as a sacred channel to divine guidance for our tribes and communities during our moontime, if we wanted to.

Tragically, these rites of passage and cultural teachings have in some Western European regions been chastised for centuries. Many modern-day cultures emulated these worldviews and no longer celebrate or honor this sacred time.

How has loathing and despising a process so integral to our powerful creative essence, regardless of physical sex and gender identity, affected our core essence and gifts over the generations?

Most menstruating girls and women are not troubled by these internal cycles because of gender dysphoria and the painful reminder of being misgendered when they have their period. Even those who identify as girls and women were taught to view this time as a nuisance for interfering with their path in life and success, as defined by patriarchal values and egocentric norms.

Perhaps it's a "true nature" dysphoria and disconnection that hurts all people, just like racism hurts all of us at the deepest soul levels, regardless of the very diverse personal experiences we each have in terms of violence, oppression, discrimination, denigration, privilege, and so on based on racial identity and appearance.

From the get-go, preteens learn to associate their periods with feeling inferior, abnormal, embarrassed, vulnerable and bloated, and with messy inconveniences, moodiness, PMS, bitchiness and body aches.

Because so many of us lack the support, knowledge and skills to translate our emotions and inner experiences — subtle or intense— into meaningful messages, we may not even realize the range of loss that we are grieving for ourselves and humanity when we feel sad, pained, distressed, angry and empty during their periods.

Instead, we feel particularly on edge and vulnerable about slipping up and appearing overly emotional at work and at home right before and when menstruating. We may fear being perceived as inadequate, unprofessional or a problem rather than an oracle of sorts, more attuned than usual to the imbalances all around us during this special time.

Those who don't identify as women may have even greater difficulty appreciating their sacred feminine essence and the mysterious waters that also cycle throughout their ecosystem, whether menstruating or not.

There is a reason for this. Important messages were once passed on by sensitive and wise souls like us — visionaries, two-spined tricksters, healers, elders, witches, wizards, shamans, and chiefs — within all cultures. Because of their highly developed boundary - and shapeshifting water gifts, they were both admired and feared. Oppressive patriarchal, political and religious leaders used indoctrination, terror and persecution to undermine their powers and kill them.

Being publicly shamed, punished and ostracized eventually caused us to shun and mistrust our innate sacred wisdom. In the last few centuries, exploiting human bodies for profit, power and pleasure has become more of the norm than the exception. Women's bodies, BIPOC's bodies, trans bodies, children's bodies — not even our own bodies are off limits to this abuse.

These days, we're not only exploiting and mistreating other animals and the Earth; we also mine and mistreat our own minds and bodies for information, resources, control and energy in exchange for money, status, respect, achievement and success, even if it makes us feel sick and exhausted.

Overtime pay is in many industries often enough compensation in exchange for disease and justification for working ourselves to the bone. Sometimes, respect and admiration for "sucking it up" and being a tough cookie is enough of an incentive to disrespect our boundaries and feelings.

The world is struggling as a whole because we, as a species, have lost our sacred intuitive connection to water. By overidentifying with and favoring good over bad emotion, we are obstructing its healthy circulation through our bodies, especially our emotional bodies. This blocks the natural metabolism of loss and grief causing us to lose out on the wise messages and creative gifts embedded in them.

Dead people's goals and dodging emotional overwhelm

Susan David, author of the book, *Emotional Agility*, says in her powerful Ted Talk, *The Gift and Power Emotional Courage*:

"I've had hundreds of people tell me what they don't want to feel. They say things like, 'I don't want to try because I don't want to feel disappointed.' Or, 'I just want this feeling to go away.'

'I understand,' I say to them. 'But you have dead people's goals.' Only dead people never get unwanted or inconvenienced by their feelings. Only dead people never get stressed, never get broken hearts, never experience the disappointment that comes with failure. Discomfort is the price of admission to a meaningful life.'"

It's apparently not that simple to just "think positive" thoughts to realign in an authentic way with our true nature. This is because we are not glasses of water. We are complex open systems and part of a larger social body that's a bit more challenging to harmonize and neutralize, because our small self is in an close interdependent relationship with an imbalanced and polluted, bigger Self.

David claims that not being true to our complex nature puts us at risk for practicing "false positivity," the result of toxic rigidity and splitting of good and bad feelings.

“The conventional view of emotions as good or bad, positive or negative, is rigid. And rigidity in the face of complexity is toxic. We need greater levels of emotional agility for true resilience and thriving.”

After her father died, David succumbed to strong cultural messages and biases not to burden the self or others with bad feelings, afraid of the pervasive rejection that is often associated with these intense but often very appropriate feelings.

At 15, David had become a master at seeming and sounding “okay,” convinced that this was the best way to deal with her grief and the financial burdens and emotional pain that her mother had inherited. Her English teacher didn’t fall for her denial and said to her, “Write what you’re feeling. Tell the truth. Write like nobody’s reading.”

It was “nothing short of a revolution” for her as a young teen — as it was for me — to discover that she could have “a secret, silent correspondence with herself.” These early life experiences ended up informing her future work and appreciation for exercising emotional agility, the key to protecting and voicing her inner most truths.

In an unparalleled survey that she conducted with over 70,000 people, she discovered that a third of us either judge ourselves for having so-called “bad emotions,” like sadness, anger or even grief, or on the flip side, actively try to push these feelings aside. This kind of rigid splitting causes us to overidentify with our emotions and doesn’t leave enough space for alchemical transformations.

David explains that we “do this not only to ourselves, but also to people we love, like our children — we may inadvertently shame them out of emotions seen as negative, jump to a solution, and fail to help them to see these emotions as inherently valuable.”

This is concerning because whatever we resist tends to persist. David states that “research on emotional suppression shows that when emotions are pushed aside or ignored, they get stronger. Radical acceptance of all of our emotions — even the messy, difficult ones — is the cornerstone to resilience, thriving, and true, authentic happiness. When people are allowed to feel their emotional truth, engagement, creativity and innovation flourish in the organization. Diversity isn’t just people, it’s also what’s inside people. Including diversity of emotion. The most agile, resilient individuals, teams, organizations, families, communities are built on an openness to the normal human emotions.”

Aligning upstream vs rescuing downstream

As sponges and hollow bones, one of the greatest gifts and challenges that highly sensitive souls and trailblazers like us struggle with is our nuanced and complex relationship with our powerful energy-in-motion—our emotions.

- We fear that we’ll drown if we open the flood gates or cry us a river if we give them free rein.

- We cringe when others get emotional and try to rescue them as soon as they hint at pain.
- We dam and control our emotional life force at every corner and at the same time wonder why our creative well is so dry and our flow so clogged up and weak.

Meditation and grounding guidance are very helpful for emotional regulation but can be confusing. We are often taught to watch thoughts go by like sailboats and clouds. This shuts off our mind chatter and helps us to feel calm and relaxed.

Shutting off the monopolizing egocentric voice of the trauma body is an excellent start to reconnect and realign with our true nature. Unfortunately, we prematurely abort the process if we keep neglecting or rejecting the emotional imprints and trauma patterns that resurface.

After consciously creating more space and structural and institutional support for our full range of feelings, we need to invite old, stuck trauma and short-circuited patterns back into the streams of our expansive truth body.

Embracing and integrating these feelings with compassion and curiosity, and thoroughly excavating their messages is often what discharges ruminating thoughts. The mind naturally returns to an inner state of peace and homeostasis and unravels misaligned patterns for good with unconditional internal and external support to be our authentic selves.

Reflections on working with the Water element

It's not just rejuvenation, revitalization, or healing that occurs when my parched lips find relief among fresh water—it is a far more complicated orchestration of love. I didn't initially understand how this type of love worked, though water surely taught me with the same determination, pace, and manner it uses to shape a rock over time. Water soothes the sharp edges of my diffidence, washes through crevices, and fills any empty vessels it finds. Through this, I learn forgiveness, healing, and wholeness. In my most challenging moments, I am suspended and cradled by the water beneath my feet underground, above my head in the atmosphere, and inside my own body. Like steady waves, I'm rocked and soothed by the movement of this omnipresent element. Cleansed, forgiven, and soul quenched, I breach the surface of my own pain to continue my healing journey.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D, Special Education Teacher and Artist

With the help of the elements, and in particular water, I can cry again without getting splitting headaches. Before, I was so emotionally backed up that every time I emoted

with tears, I got a migraine. Now, I can cry freely! And this month, the hormonal wave broke so gently upon me, it was like a quiet song being hummed to me from far away and getting closer and closer with each day. No flu-like symptoms, no crashing depression. I am in total awe that such powerful body changes can occur alongside such deep internal healing work!

Sarah Ginnan, Writer, Content Marketer

When I feel the ego-mind's conditioned me to avoid writing, I simply wave my magic elemental intention and move water to a flowing brook around my sanctuary that I "hear" and feel as me, as I sit in my cave entrance, my fire gentle and strong behind me, my tree is strong and leafy just outside where I sit, and my dragons circling above. And it's the water, the flowing and inviting babbling that causes the whole scene to harmoniously dissolve into my writing space. I actually sense the water still flowing, a kind of sweet, refreshing boundary. And the resistance is gone. And I'm so happy and balanced as I start writing, which has a real impact on the authenticity and fluidity of my characters and plot.

J.R. Schumaker, Author of Diana's Dragons: The Awaited

Meditation script for Water

(ground yourself first with the Tree meditation)

Explore how water runs through your sanctuary. Are you near a brook, stream, or river? Can you hear the crashing sounds of a waterfall or ocean waves in the distance? Or are you near a quiet lake that's fed by clear streams and melted runoff from snow capped mountains?

Notice the drifting clouds above. Reflect on their formation and the interplay of heat evaporating moisture and water from trees, vegetation, lakes and oceans into vapor and clouds, cooler temperatures and wind circulating these clouds, and land and mountains aiding with the buildup up and their precipitation once they've turned heavy and dark, eventually releasing tension and cleansing rain that soaks into the ground.

While hydrating the earth, water also bonds with and redistributes minerals to enhance the growth, transformation, recycling, and composting of all organic matter and organisms. It enriches our ecosystems with nourishment, delight, ease, and comfort, and regulates us and each of our cycles on its way back to the ocean.

Changing a key aspect within any of these ecosystems can create a trophic cascade, a complex, ecological process that starts at the top of the food chain and *cascades* down the trophic levels to affect all life.

Recent examples of trophic cascades are reminding us how harmful our limited, reductionistic ego minds can be when we disregard and try to override the mysterious cycles of life on the planet with our human logic and affinity for polarizations.

Take this example involving whales. Whales eat massive amounts of fish and krill. At one point, Japanese politicians encouraged the killing of whales, drawing a logical inference that less whales would mean more fish and krill.

The opposite happened. As the great whales declined, so did the krill and fish populations. And when the whales re-emerged, the population of fish and krill bounced back.

Whales feed in the dark depths of the ocean, then return to the photic zone at the surface, where there is enough sunlight for photosynthesis to occur. They release fecal plumes that are rich in nutrients and iron, minerals that are scarce in surface waters. These poop plumes fertilize microscopic, one-celled phytoplankton, which, in turn, are food for krill, fish, and marine mammals, including whales. The diving also stirs the waters, vertically mixing and redistributing plankton and nutrients where they are needed.

Phytoplankton photosynthesize and produce the majority of oxygen in the air that we breathe. They also sequester huge amounts of carbon which eventually gets stored at the bottom of the ocean. The oceans, not the forests, are by far the largest heat and carbon sinks, oxygen producers, and climate regulators.

Whales play a vital role in keeping them healthy through regular mixing and circulation of its undertow, layers and currents of various depths.

We similarly need to dive far beneath the shallow waters to access sustainable root solutions of depth and substance.

Many wondrous cycles of transformation happen within our bodies and go unnoticed. Some of these cycles are biologically wired by ultradian, circadian and infradian rhythms, such as our breathing, eating, sleep, rest, hormonal, libido and menstrual cycles, and affect energy levels, moods, physical and cognitive functioning.

All are aided by water, and would collapse within days of dehydration.

Other patterns are emotionally driven and triggered by memorable and painful situations from the past.

They may be related to special events, such as birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries or may be idiosyncratic to you and activated by significant losses of meaningful people in your life.

Supporting these cycles of transformation, healing and grieving requires emotional agility and balancing, which can't happen when we have rigid attachments or aversions to certain emotions or story lines.

Limber joints, strong vitals, and the absence of obstructions, constrictions and stagnations in Qi circulation promote our health, resilience and wellness, not just on a physical level but on all levels of our being.

How can you become more present and supportive of all of your moving, metabolizing and alchemizing parts?

Holding sacred space for your complete unfolding, and refraining from prematurely shutting the process down, especially when feeling vulnerable and powerless, is super important.

While disintegrating and composting our old forms, it's easy to freak out and disrupt the dissolution process. We tend to short-circuit and shoot out of our bodies when our emotions get intense, our hearts begin to soften, a knot forms in our throat, our eyes moisten, and we're getting closer to decoding the messages held within our feelings.

When we prematurely release steam out of this pressure cooker or cauldron — right when it's getting hotter and better able to breakdown and alchemize raw emotion—, it's as if we're poking holes in our chrysalis. The cracks and energy leaks that result abort the process and allow harmful and parasitic energy to come in.

Aligning your mind, heart, body and soul will help you to make contact with your deep inner well and kickstart the flow of water and fluids in your body — your tears, sweat, saliva, fluids and blood.

They will attempt to seal these leaks and cracks with your consciousness and energy. When you're crying and viscerally emoting, you are in essence applying energetic glue to severed parts of yourself to restore your brilliant interconnectedness and wholeness.

Just reflect for a moment how many different types of messages tears can hold. They can signal frustration, sadness, despair, being moved, appreciating beauty, feeling loved, connecting to deep mystery and feeling scared and overwhelmed. Our ability to interpret the energy that flows through the intricate web of emotions within our bodies and ecosystem is nothing short of genius and provides us boatloads of information and guidance on how to align our egos with our true nature.

This enhances your unfolding potential so that the love and healing energy from the immortal Source of your wellbeing can continue to flow freely throughout your body.

Allow each of these insights and teachings from your ancient ancestral tree and Water guide to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room or setting that you're

in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to the space you are in and open your eyes slowly.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEPS: soothe your heart and soul with compassion

Explore your relationship to your feelings, your flow, your intuitive interpretation of your energy, and your ability to surrender and viscerally emote in your everyday life.

How has your trust in your body's wisdom, intuition and emotions been compromised?

How can the elements of air, fire, and earth help support your truth, reclaim the power of your Water element, and cultivate greater trust in mystery, your vulnerability and deepest self? How can they help you to reach groundwater, your sacred inner well, with greater ease and openness? Make it okay again to choke up in public or even let your tears flow freely if need be?

Our tendency is to shut down and diminish our moment-to-moment perceptual and intuitive awareness so we can function more effectively, but superficially, in our fast-paced, concrete world.

How can you reclaim the flow of water (your e-motion) as soothing, cleansing, and healing, rather than a painful, shameful or negative emotion and element?

It will require trusting and surrendering to a mysterious, wondrous process that we can't control. We may not feel better during this composting and purging process but this is how we ground in our deepest truths and get better at the root level.

Explore your relationship with water outside of you and all the ways it helps ease and soothe your inner water cycles. Do you enjoy listening to rain drops or ocean waves? Enjoy sipping herbal, calming tea? Do you like getting all loosey goosey in a warm bubble bath or jacuzzi, or prefer a massage therapist or lover to get your body and muscles supple, vigorous and juicy?

When did you last have a good, cleansing cry, grieving the many losses of recent months and years that you may have powered through?

When was the last time you allowed yourself to be moved by a beautiful and inspiring story, sunsets, or gesture of affection, really giving yourself the space and time to fully take it in?

Make that time now, and sense how much more alive you feel when blood, sweat, tears, saliva, and sexual fluids start to move more freely through your ecosystem.

Step 6. Heart Compass: Is your inner compass giving you the runaround instead of guiding you to True North?

Soul Authority

How to dethrone your trauma-body with your truth-body and ground in self-love
Fierce compassion vs compassion fatigue: guerilla self-care and serving others from the inside out

Self-trust is the first secret to success.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

*If braving relationships with other people is braving connection,
self-trust is braving self-love.*

- Brené Brown

Within you, as within each one of us, there is an unbroken tie to the universe, an unending tap that flows with love. But it is as though most of us are standing on the cosmic hose that is sending love our way, while we scratch our heads bewildered, wondering where all the love has gone. When we are developing self-love, we need to look within at the ways in which we are blocking the flow to feel love, to feel loved.

- Parvati

Navigating life and personal relationships is harder than ever in the 21st century. Especially highly sensitive trailblazers can feel overwhelmed and get misguided by the many unnamed imbalances and shiny objects that are woven into every aspect of society today.

I remember having a much less complicated connection to Source, my sacred heart compass and old soul as a wise young child.

I enjoyed the vast uncluttered space in my mind and felt free to be spontaneous, authentic and curious. I could also tell that my free spiritedness was getting more encroached upon by external forces and powerful influences the older I got.

Growing up, I was considered to be a tomboy and a daredevil because I often ventured into domains that were usually monopolized by boys and for no good reason off limits to girls.

My mother and some of my aunts and cousins worried that my many cuts, scrapes, and insect bites would toughen and permanently scar my legs, but I was having too much fun, climbing to the top of trees, crawling into dugouts, flying on (and sometimes off) my

bike, chasing my brother, and exploring bugs, animals, plants, trees, and the natural world around me to care.

Why would anyone give up what was most exciting about being alive just to have soft, smooth legs? What for? To attract a boyfriend? You might as well saw them off, preserve them in a glass case, and lock me up, I thought.

I don't know how I knew, but I could immediately tell — thanks to my sacred heart compass — the difference between a concern that was truly for my own good and one that was the result of biased social expectations, conformity, and appearances. How come no one worried about the legs of boys? If their chances of finding true love later in life weren't ruined because of some scars on their legs, why would they for girls?

I concluded after some deliberation that if something like that could scare away a boy then so be it. Being coupled with a partner in some distant future was the least of my concerns. Who would want to be tied up with someone who'd treat you like a porcelain doll and expect you to act like one anyway?

I wasn't only fascinated with nature and the creatures around me. I was curious about my own body and even more so about the cuts, bruises, scrapes, and bites that people thought of as ugly. They were far more interesting to me than oppressive social norms because they were like a portal of mysteries that you could delve in and unfold layer upon layer.

For instance, have you ever asked yourself how wounds magically healed all by themselves? Or what caused bleeding to stop?

Why did cuts and scrapes hurt more for a while before they got better? Why did rubbing a bruise cause it to get lighter? How did my attitude and demeanor—panicky or calm—impact the sensations of pain and the sharp sting of iodine and alcohol? Was it better to clench your jaw or stay relaxed? Why did the wounds get so itchy after they scar? At what point could you pick at an itchy scab without causing it to bleed again? My well of curiosity was bottomless.

This is how my deep examination of emotional hurts and healing began. I discovered that it was just as layered as physical wounding and could be conveyed through as many different kinds of cries and expressions of pain. I also realized that for my emotional wounds to heal as quickly as possible, I needed to resist picking at the scabs and trust that my body knew what to do, just like it does with physical wounds.

Dirty pain as a compass guide

After watching a documentary on indigenous customs, my father told me that some indigenous tribes in the jungle required their adolescent daughters to go through an ant test (by placing their hand in a calabash of fire ants or other aggressive ants). This was a part of their initiation into adulthood right after their first menstrual bleeding.

I was beyond intrigued and intuitively picked up that there was more behind this ritual than learning to withstand physical pain. I had an inkling that learning to transcend the grip of the five senses was of the essence in this practice and grokked that the intention of this cultural ritual was not to hurt or punish them. It was to liberate them.

Even though I'd barely skimmed the surface of this deep well of wisdom, it awakened wise consciousness that had been asleep in my old soul. I vividly remember the life-changing insights that trickled in, such as realizing that pain was not the enemy. Pain was protective and useful. Without pain, we could hurt ourselves very badly (i.e. some people born with congenital analgesia even die in childhood because they are not able to feel pain and are unable to brace themselves from injuries and burns.)

I'd developed equanimity and spacious curiosity in regard to physical pain but I was a total wuss when it came to emotional pain and conflict. Like most children, I split people into the classic good guys vs bad guys categories whenever I experienced emotional conflict in my own life, and relied on this dualistic worldview to guide me my heart compass.

Unraveling my God-complex

I couldn't stand it if the bad guys were winning: i.e. a teacher spanking and humiliating "lost cases" in front of everyone; a bully teasing and picking on someone smaller; a relative with a sharp tongue calling my cousins names. I'd even gotten in a fight with a boy when I was in the first grade, taking it upon myself to punish those who weren't playing fair and were getting away with it.

They had a God-complex —thinking that they were entitled to more and better than the rest of us, breaking and bending rules, and bossing people around. I didn't have a God-complex. I was just trying to stop them from exercising theirs.

Thanks to my big breakthrough, I began to understand how these polarities and my sensitivity to pain (that reminded me of past hurt) was causing me to go in circles rather than toward my True North.

It clicked that the reason indigenous people taught their children high tolerance for physical pain was to teach them equanimity and curiosity toward emotional pain as well.

I realized that nonjudgmental spaciousness around emotional pain was providing my sacred heart compass information that felt the most trustworthy because I was grounded in my truth body. It felt very different when that happened. I didn't feel a need to control my feelings or felt victimized or manipulated by them. On the contrary, I was eager to hear what they had to say.

We would not be able to grok our True North path in Life if it weren't for polarities helping us to become aware of higher consciousness that transcend them. Loving or hating one extreme over another had been the problem because it caused me to operate from a place of unmetabolized pain that hardened the fracture, solidified lower consciousness, and heightened the inner drama abs conflict between split parts.

I didn't use any of these fancy terms to describe my insights, but my dad would always say, "the body is weak, the spirit is strong," which came closest to describing what I needed to do to tame my impatient God-complex and naive desire to eliminate all bad in the world.

I understood that quieting my screaming heart, just like I was able to quiet my body, made more room for my wise spirit to shine through, rolemodeled by the girls who were bravely passing the fire ant test.

This early exposure to the ways of the Surinamese indigenous rooted and fortified my commitment to clean pain. I learned to detect and enjoy my growing sense of fulfillment, wholeness, and inner strength each time I embraced and digested it without any convoluted and avoidant detours.

Trusting your heart compass

In an interview with author, teacher and Tarot muse, Tania Pryputniewicz asked me deliciously provocative questions pertaining to my memoir and self-trust. They nudged me to dig deep and describe how I developed and sustained trust in my sacred heart compass, and what helped me to access my truth as I got older and life got more complex.

She asked me pointblank, "Where and how did you find the strength to trust yourself?" This was my response:

Let me begin by saying that I love this question because trust is such a layered and complex process and skill that I think everyone, but especially healers, seers, seekers and psychics, grapple with as part of their initiation, training and ongoing growth, starting at really early ages. I believe that everything begins and ends with trust in ourselves, soul, and sacred guidance, which directly translates into trusting others, trusting love, trusting adversity in life, trusting nature and the nature of reality and the Universe. I started to experiment with trust as a child because it made me feel better and less distraught when I got warmer and closer to my truth — not because I'd consciously deliberated that self-trust was an important first stepping stone.

There are different kinds of self-trust to develop, depending on one's gifts, and there are also different domains to master. As an intuitive empath, my strengths and passion have always been in deciphering relational dynamics with souls in bodies using earth wisdom and my own body's natural wisdom and sense of

harmony as a template. I could make very subtle and clear distinctions as a young child decades before words like trust, self-awareness, and shamanism entered my vocabulary, usually while daydreaming and wandering in my neighborhood or in the rainforest by myself.

It was almost as if I could see a halo above certain events, traditions, people, information, and beliefs as a child that spoke to my soul yet tended not to be noticed or valued as much by others. I felt a calling to protect these experiences and the sacred by keeping them a secret and burying them in my mind like a treasure. I was drawn to freedom fighters and stories about rebel slaves, who planted opposing seeds and ideas in my soul—to liberate others with this info, despite the risks, instead of keeping it a secret. The self-doubt that developed over the years were several layers out, related to who to trust with this, what to do with it, and how to manage this gift that I knew was out of the ordinary and sacred.

Our self-love and True North

Aletheia Luna, spiritual teacher and author of *Awakened Empath: The Ultimate Guide to Emotional, Psychological and Spiritual Healing*, agrees that practicing self love gets trickier and riskier in adulthood because it goes against the self-preservation grain. She explains that, “The truth is that when you start practicing self-love, you become a social heretic. You stick out. You stop fitting in. And suddenly this puts you in a very uncomfortable position, a position where you have to choose between taking the narrow path, or the wide, easy path.”

It’s confusing and discombobulating when our devotion to our highest good is most threatening to many others. You start doubting their love for you, you start doubting your intuition and ability to take care of yourself and you may even start doubting your perception of reality.

Remember that people behave this way when their own highest good and clean pain cycles are also the most threatening to them. This is due to the double-bind we’ve been talking about all along.

They are still trapped in it because advocating for their own self-love often requires heading in a True North direction fraught with increasingly more obstacles and resistance to test our resolve and reveal unfinished business.

According to Aletheia, “We were raised in a society (and likely a family) that didn’t teach us about self-love. All throughout our early lives, we were taught how to read, write, calculate, build, theorize, study and analyze life. We were taught how to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you,’ as well as what was acceptable and unacceptable to others and society at large ... but most of us failed to be educated in one essential dimension of life: self-love.”

If we have undigested trauma about these painful betrayals and reactions from loved ones, our trauma triggers are most likely very vocal and adamant in protecting us. This can disorient our egocentric selves and spin us around in dirty pain cycles — involving self-doubt, denial, avoidance, self-blame, despair, scapegoating, etc. — instead of clean pain cycles toward our True North and higher integration.

To make matters worse, we've most likely received confusing messages from well-intended friends, counselors, and guides in regard to self-love. It often gets mixed up with related, but more egocentric ideas, such as self-esteem and self-confidence.

Parvati, author and founder of the Marine Arctic Peace Sanctuary, explains the difference between self-esteem, self-confidence and self-love really well. She says, "Self-love is different from self-confidence or having a strong self-esteem, though they can be related. We are self-confident when we feel certitude in our ability to discern or act. Self-esteem involves a quiet assurance in our place within the whole, a feeling of being a valuable and welcome part of the universe. Self-love involves the ability to treat ourselves with understanding, kindness, patience and gentle perseverance. Deeper still, self-love involves our ability to know that our true nature is love and that our human destiny is to embody that love and express it in all we do."

I see self-love as our inherent birthright that we are best able to unlock and liberate with the help of our natural genius and soul authority. It involves a devoted practice rooted in radical acceptance—unlearning the stifling ways of thinking about ourselves and others and no longer cutting off parts of ourselves to better fit into a social mold.

Spiritual composting is clean pain processing

Taking it to the next level requires embracing organic, spiritual composting cycles in our bodies and fully supporting and surrendering to the natural purification and harmonizing powers that our bodies possess.

It's trusting that we will always be connected to our Earth Mother through an invisible umbilical cord and not giving into the temptation to constrict circulation and fear all the potent sensations of being fully alive that accompany our connection with her.

Earth's cleansing and detoxing processes have parts that are not pretty, but this is the only way in which the rotten and painful aspects of ourselves and life get composted and transformed. It's imperative that we each learn to surrender to these healing processes without imploding in shame, guilt, self-loathing and not good-enoughness.

It is possible for us to get more comfortable with the worms and vultures that are cleaning up the mess and not to overidentify with them, the stench or grossness of the process. Decomposition is an integral part of our healing and growth cycles, and it's Earth's greatest "clean pain" secret in purifying dis-ease and folding the dead back into the cycle of life.

We cannot love or heal the Earth without loving and healing our bodies, true nature and mysterious essence in the same radical way. Our good intentions and lofty ideals will not ground and take root if we bypass these processes and remain rigid about our tendencies and gravitation toward splitting all of life, not just our emotions, into good vs bad buckets.

Consciousness will remain as surfacy as our judgmentalness if we do so and before we know it, we're back to sowing new seeds because nothing took hold. Therefore, slow down and observe your inner climate like a hawk. To have the seeds of self-love and clean pain patterns take root within yourself, you need to regulate your sanctuary like a greenhouse. Your inner climate needs to be infused with utmost gentleness and love until the delicate seedlings and saplings you're cultivating are hardy enough to withstand rougher weather and conditions.

True North leads to diversity, harmony and simplicity

Remember John and Molly Chester from the Biggest Little Farm, and how much care, patience, and energy it took to restore it into a fully functioning organic farm? Because of the extreme swings — from snails to ducks, ladybug swarms to ravenous coyotes, parched dry land to flash floods and raging wildfires — it was hard to trust their consultant Alan York, a traditional farming expert who encouraged them to be patient.

He insisted that natural ecosystems “regulate themselves through diversity” and that this “diversity would lead to simplicity.” This sounded ludicrous at the time. Things seemed to get more complicated each time a new factor was added to the equation. What Alan meant was that nature and wildlife were already in harmony and would balance the needs of the farm the more these two aligned and merged into one.

Molly and John indeed needed to do less —just carefully observe and make minor, creative adjustments — when nature began to take over in their ambitious re-naturing journey. Then the day arrived where nature did what it does best: maintain harmony and equilibrium on its own.

After a few years, signs that Alan had been right began to emerge. Each new species that wandered, slithered or flew in, or was purchased and introduced into the ecosystem of the farm helped to balance all other forms of life and establish a sturdier equilibrium.

Another trophic cascade: how wolves changed rivers

Fortunately, most of our ecosystems are not as arid and neglected as the Biggest Little Farm initially was. Based on what I've seen in my practice and courses, my guess is that most of us only need a single critical adjustment of the likes that occurred at Yellowstone Park.

Thirty-one wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone Park between 1995 and 1996 and have caused a massive trophic cascade that's still taking effect today.

Gray wolves were deliberately hunted by visitors, nearby residents and the federal government backed by Animal Damage Control programs supporting owners of livestock. After the last pack, two pups, had been killed in the 1920's, the elk population exploded and grazed their way across the landscape, killing young brush and trees.

As early as the 1930s, scientists were alarmed by the degradation and were worried about erosion and plants dying off. Yet again, an egocentric human intervention guided by superficial judgments of what's good (elk) or bad (wolves) for us were terribly off when considering the big picture and highest good of all involved.

Apparently, the re-emergence of wolves triggered a nonlinear, regenerative and reciprocal effect among animals and plants, one that will take decades of research to understand.

"It is like kicking a pebble down a mountain slope where conditions were just right that a falling pebble could trigger an avalanche of change," Doug Smith, a wildlife biologist in charge of the Yellowstone Wolf Project, mused.

The wolves have helped to reduce the elk population, but more importantly, they are keeping elk on the move. Circulating elk prevents them from gorging on the willow and stunting its growth.

With elk on the move during the winter, willow stands recovered and beavers rediscovered an abundant food source that hadn't been there earlier.

As the beavers spread and built new dams and ponds, the cascade effect continued.

Before the wolves were reintroduced, there was only one beaver colony in the park. Today, the park is home to nine beaver colonies, with the promise of more to come.

Beaver dams have multiple effects on stream hydrology. They even out the seasonal pulses of runoff; store water for recharging the water table; and provide cold, shaded water for fish, while the now robust willow stands provide habitat for songbirds.

Biologists and ecologists are enjoying a rare and very unique opportunity to study what happens when an ecosystem becomes whole again. By adding wolves back into the equation, they are discovering how incredibly complex nature's networks are. One change can ripple direct and indirect consequences throughout the ecosystem for decades.

Researchers have now determined that wolves are the primary reason for elk mortality. The wolves are not only regulating the elk population, they are showing how the overpowering, hegemonic presence of any one species can comprise the health, diversity and vitality of all.

A vast web of life that is linked to wolf kills — beetles, wolverine, lynx, eagles, magpies, coyotes and bears— are benefiting and thriving as a result. Especially bears that emerge hungry from hibernation appreciate this abundant food source.

"I call it food for the masses," said Ed Bangs, wolf recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Remarkably, the presence of wolves also indirectly changed the rivers. When deer stopped munching their way through the valleys and gorges where wolves could easily hunt them, the vegetation was able to re-establish and re-grow. This increased biodiversity by providing food and shelter to a larger variety of plants and animals.

Riverbank erosion and collapse decreased due to recovering vegetation, regenerating willow, forest and trees. When the rivers started to meander less and become more fixed in their course, the channels deepened and small pools formed.

Many of our personal ecosystems would similarly benefit by re-introducing one key element and wolf energy (i.e. fire guides, boundaries, vitality, immunity) would be my first choice. I believe that our ecosystems have been similarly depleted and robbed of our "bad" and wild nature by early settlers and colonizers through rampant wipe-outs and domestication of wild animals and indigenous people, backed by government institutions.

With the help of Air guides, we are gaining more clarity and consciousness how detrimental this has been to our well-being.

By realigning Air and Fire, wisdom, fierce boundaries and protection, Earth is able to regenerate. Restoring this solid grounding eventually supports the flow of Water — i.e. emotional cleansing and grieving — and resuscitates the magnificence of life and innate self-love that was ruptured and compromised.

Following your heart compass: a royal example

As mentioned earlier, practicing self-love and trusting your sacred heart compass can turn you into a social heretic. Just being truthful about your struggles and naming the depleting and degrading impact that status quo cultural rules and social control have had on you can trigger earth-shattering reactions. Protective fire energy is needed to buffer, alchemize and absorb this kind of backlash.

Take the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, for example. She discovered in a relative short span of time that the oppressive and racist environment that she married into wasn't all that different than what's portrayed in the popular Netflix series, *Bridgerton*, a period piece portraying an aristocratic family trying to remain authentic and ahead within stiff Regency London society in the early 19th century.

After being named the “diamond,” the star debutante by Queen Charlotte, who was biracial — a historically accurate detail within this fictional tale—, Daphne Bridgerton at first seems to have the best potential in finding the perfect husband as she enters the marriage market. To her dismay, her efforts are obstructed by her brother Anthony, her family’s patriarch, and a salacious gossip columnist named Lady Whistledown.

Meghan, an outspoken and independent American woman, was shocked when she found out that many of the suffocating, corset-tight high-society rules of the 1820’s — i.e. be seen, not heard and heed the scandals and drama created by the gossipers of the times because they have tremendous power — had not changed much two hundred years later.

The obstacles that Meghan faced in speaking her truth and practicing self-love within 21st century London were magnified by ruthless tabloids— the gossip column of the 1800’s on steroids, especially in England where they are even royally entertained at Buckingham Palace. They have spun themselves into an elaborate dirty pain web with the royals, who control and appease them as much as the tabloids control them. When they made Meghan their scapegoat and racistly branded her as the black sheep to boost sensationalist sales, it exposed just how deeply entrenched every royal was within this set-up. No one dared to challenge and overhaul this age-old, warped arrangement.

Fortunately, the newlywed couple took Meghan’s symptoms of self-harm seriously, and trusted the message (Air - wisdom) to take the necessary steps to set firm boundaries (Fire - protection) and take a step back from the royal family. They relocated somewhere else where they found happiness and peace (Earth - grounding) and are now able to grieve, heal, love, and be honest and vulnerable, even with those who’ve hurt them (Water - cleansing).

Self-trust and guerilla self-care

All of us, royal or not, are layered and complex. We are socially and culturally conditioned and influenced by what we inherited through the generations. The parts of ourselves we have confronted, metabolized, integrated, taken responsibility and are conscious of, we can be most trusted with.

In deciding who we can trust, it’s less about discerning who is a good person with good intentions vs bad person with bad intentions. Most of us get tempted by the illusion of a moral dichotomy.

I believe some intuitive street smarts and guerrilla tactics give us a far greater and more useful advantage when it comes to setting protective boundaries for ourselves.

Because we are multidimensional beings, our trust in others needs to be multidimensional. For example, I would step in a helicopter and trust Prince William with my life. I even believe that he would take great risks to save mine if put in that situation.

I trust that he is an excellent and caring father doing all within his power and consciousness to fulfill his understanding of that.

I believe that he loves his brother, Harry, and sister-in-law, Meghan. Do I trust that he is capable of personally or institutionally supporting their best interests and mental health? No.

A few days after Oprah's interview of Prince Harry and Meghan aired, Prince William defensively stated, "very much not a racist family" when a journalist asked him if the royal family was racist.

Ironically, he and his wife, Kate, were visiting a school in east London that had recently reopened following a national lockdown and was rolling out a mental health project that Kate launched three years ago.

Does he mean to hurt and destroy them? No. Is he capable of gaslighting them and harming their inner peace and happiness, given his power, lower self activation and denial? Yes. He therefore needs to be "mistrusted" and held as much at bay as needed until he has metabolized and faced some of his inherited and denied demons.

The people I work with are similarly layered. Every person in my direct family is similarly complex and I love them to pieces. Radical acceptance and self-trust entail knowing what parts of ourselves to set limits with and mistrust — i.e. making discernments between the multidimensional interplay of dirty pain vs clean pain processes, truth vs trauma, heart vs hurt, higher soulcentric self and lower egocentric self motivations.

Our untrustworthy parts are not fully processed yet and therefore protected by a defended, egocentric self that can act like a cornered animal. Space and fierce compassion can help with gently approaching and broaching touchy, off-limit topics with this wounded part of ourselves.

Our devotion to our deepest truth deepens trust in our relationships with others, provided that they do similar work, non-defensively, and have good self-awareness. Our commitment to re-naturing and grounding ourselves in our truth-body also develops self-trust, regardless of what others do or don't do, because it's so much easier to detect the islands within them that need work when we are intimately familiar with our own.

These disconnected, denied and undigested raw parts of ourselves and others need to be held with clarity and healing love until they are ready to be unfolded and the hurt that is still tightly wrapped up in them can be alchemized.

Connecting to our truth-body and self-love with the help of the elements provides us the best support to fall apart and unravel the egocentric wounds that are running the show and need to be transformed.

If you are feeling quite confident about the foundational set-up provided by your sanctuary, you are now ready to amplify it by expanding your dreamteam of spirit allies and nature guides by invoking more angelic, animal, archetypal, ancestral and ascended masters and teachers to boost your connection with each of the seven sacred directions and take in more of their magical healing powers.

Reflections on working with your Sacred Heart Compass

This is a totally unique set of practices, yet also universal. I really love the Soul Authority framework that Loraine has created. I've never seen anyone teach it in this way, but it's drawing on things anyone can tap into: nature, the elements, trees, animals. And each person brings their own understanding and wisdom to the practice, which is all celebrated and incorporated. In fact, each student is their own foundation for the practice, so it's a very creative process that comes from within, though guided by Loraine!

Dana Stewart, MSW, Social Worker and Online Course Instructor

Loraine reminds us that in our deepest moments of personal and spiritual rejection lie the seeds for self-love. We learn that by confronting our obstacles and trusting the process, we have the potential to awaken beautiful parts of ourselves otherwise left untested and dormant.

Tania Pryputniewicz

I was an avid collector of disorders and insecurities for nearly 20 years. Loraine knew that she, herself, could not find the secret locations of the pain that had become disunited within me – a different temper than I had previously experienced. It was through many sessions of guided hypnotherapy and aided self-discovery that I began to harness the tools in order to piece my shattered selves together again. I had not simply found an ailment then had Loraine heal it. Loraine has given me my own tools to fix any issue I might potentially confront. With Loraine's help, I was able to unite a majority of my fractured selves. It is amazing how complete and balanced I feel today and I still continue to grow and use the tools she provided. And though there are hundreds of differences I can discuss between myself a couple years ago and today, the result of Loraine's guidance is as follows: I am happy – finally – and have manifested a dream job that nourishes my soul and mission.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D., Special Education Teacher and Artist

I did a journey today. There were stars streaming out of my hands and roots growing out of my feet. I saw earth as just one tiny cell of trillions living within a giant organism that is space. Then, my phoenix guide took my heart out of my chest, pecked all the rotten bruised bits out, and healed the tissue with its tears before replacing it in my chest. We lit a fire of sage and fed it the rotten bits, with me breathing in the healing smoke. At the end of the journey, I was given a handful of rough precious stones. I

ground them up into a powder and dusted it all over my body, dancing and alchemizing the shame of self-hatred.

Sarah Ginnan, Writer, Content Marketer

Meditation script for your Sacred Heart Compass (Ground yourself first with the tree meditation)

While connected with your sacred ancestral tree, feel your inherent worth and wholeness. Notice that the size, length, thickness or thinness of your branches and trunk don't make you better, more beautiful or valuable than the tree next to you. The color and wrinkles of your bark, whether you're male, female or nonconforming, and how much fruit or how many flowers you bear don't make you superior over other trees or entitle you to more privileges, safety, acceptance or resources in life.

You engage in healthy competition for sun and soil, but this involves searching, absorbing, and fully occupying your space and your own vessel with the energy and nourishment they provide you.

You see no benefit in undermining and harming other trees. As a matter of fact, you like and need their company. You actually fare better as part of an intricate social network of diverse trees vs being by yourself or only surrounded by trees of your own kind.

As a tree, our human inclination to overexert and exploit yourself, others, and our Earth mother in ways that constrict our own true nature and deprive us of vital energy and nutrients to "get ahead" is and feels unnatural.

Your tree self and true nature don't have an egocentric desire to see or treat you and other sentient beings as objects or commodities to accumulate wealth, status, markers of success, achievement and power.

It's clear that this kind of ego separation makes you more vulnerable to dis-ease and mistreatment because you're intentionally obstructing the flow of life energy and self-love through your body.

This severely compromises your integrity and leaves empty spaces and cracks for pathogens, maladaptive patterns, unboundaries, blames and energetic parasites to occupy your body and sabotage your optimal health.

Connect with each of the elements — Air, Fire, Earth, and Water — and have them supplement your energy field with super soul food wherever you could use a bit of extra support and intuitive brilliance.

Deepen your embodied, felt-sense of your wholeness, as energized by your Sacred Ancestral Tree, to amplify feelings of self-love that are already flowing through your body.

Let your natural genius loose and see what kinds of guides and guidance are antsy to come through for you.

Remember, this is a marathon so pace yourself. Actually, it's more like showering and brushing your teeth. It really doesn't matter how well of a job you did on Sunday or yesterday. You will need to do it all over again today and tomorrow. Be present with the process and practice your spiritual hygiene rituals on a regular basis to reap the most benefits.

Allow each of these insights and teachings from your sacred heart compass to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room or setting that you're in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to the space you are in and open your eyes slowly.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEPS: transform self-doubt into confidence

How well are you able to hold on to the reality of your true nature when immersed back into the elaborate human dramas and oppressive social systems many of us are a part of?

Imagine having a terribly stressful day that sweeps you up like a whirlwind. The energy and sensations that your five senses pick up are most likely dramatically different than what you experienced when you were having a calm day in your protective sanctuary. Instead of everything feeling and looking peaceful, your day looks in total disarray with lots of loose pieces swirling around, making you feel scattered. The sound of tense voices all around you is creating a palpable feeling of doom and gloom that hangs heavy over your head and makes your mind foggy.

When dealing with the highs and lows of life, our ego-mind tends to overidentify with the fleeting weather in our inner sanctuary rather than remaining grounded and drawing strength and guidance from our true nature to re-establish homeostasis.

This causes us to adopt a rigid and a distorted egocentric self that undermines the harmonizing genius and dynamic wholeness of the body. This exercise will help you keep the distance and nonjudgmental nuetrakitu that's needed to better harmonize your inner space.

Reconnect to your truth-body and feel your sacred heart compass beat where each of the four directions and elements intersect. You are like a mini Earth, a microcosm and

ecosystem that can do incredibly complex balancing acts involving an intricate network of many converging and symbiotic dimensions.

Notice how essential each of the elements — air, fire, earth and water —are in sustaining your life and enhancing your well-being. They inspire, energize, ground and soothe your mind, heart, body and soul in the same way they dance with one another within the optimally balanced atmosphere of the Earth.

These elements are just as mysteriously aligned and attuned to another within your body, harmonizing disruptions that are mostly caused by misguided egocentric agendas and beliefs.

Try to feel and translate the harmonizing energy and guidance that's moving through you. Don't judge, question, scrutinize or doubt the creative answers and solutions that pop into your mind and emerge out of mysterious depths as you do so.

You can work with one element at the time and invite guides from each dimension to step up and offer you their teachings, if that feels right, or you could sit back and allow them to do their harmonious dance without directing it in any way.

The only thing to be concerned about is no longer feeling grounded and centered in your true nature and safe sanctuary. In that case, work with your tree and Earth guide and slow the process down until you do.

You may need to come out of the meditation and try these advanced techniques another day or you may just need to slow things down and digest a charged chunk in smaller bite size pieces. You have all the time in the world. All that matters is accessing the powerful healing powers of the present-moment deep now.

Remember that we often end up doubting ourselves and confused because the majority of us have been greatly outnumbered and pressured throughout our lives to live in a false reality created by people and social groups who operate from a de-natured, scarcity mindset and are highly invested and entrenched in the oppressive hierarchy and rules of this game.

It's healthy to be skeptical but give your natural healing powers and process a chance to unfold. Imagine yourself a chicken sitting as still as possible on eggs and waiting for them to crack open. Or a lotto machine filled with swirling lottery balls and waiting for one to drop.

The healing that awaits has far less to do with mental understanding than with deep self-trust and confidence in your visceral sensations when reharmonizing the imbalances.

Step 7. True North Living: Breathing, healing, loving, and leading with soul authority or taking yourself too lightly (or seriously)?

Visibility and Impact

Get out there and share your message because it is and isn't about you
Why re-naturing your de-natured mind heals our nation, humanity and the earth

I've come to believe that each of us has a personal calling that's as unique as a fingerprint — and that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you . . . Your life is not static. Every decision, every setback, or triumph is an opportunity to identify the seeds of truth that make you the wondrous human being that you are. I'm not talking just about what you do for a living. When you pay attention to what feeds your energy, you move in the direction of the life for which you were intended. Trust that the Universe has a bigger, wider, deeper dream for you than you could ever imagine for yourself.

- Oprah Winfrey

Resistance will unfailingly point to True North — meaning toward that calling or action it most wants to stop us from doing. We can use this as a compass. We can navigate by resistance, letting it guide us toward that calling or action that we must follow before all others. Rule of thumb: the more important a call or action is for our soul's evolution, the more resistance we will feel toward pursuing it.

- Steven Pressfield

The vision is True North for the soul. It is a permanent intuitive compass direction for a human being. Every person inevitably strays from the path. Life is an endless experiment and course correction. The vision brings one back to the true path.

- Thomas G. Bandy

Did your kids enjoy playing “opposite day” when they were younger? When my daughter was about 7 years old, she was really into it. She would claim that the grass was blue and the sky was green, and when I looked confused, she'd blurt out, “Got you! It's opposite day!”

Musings over the color of the sky and grass often led to more pointed questions such as, “How do you know that the blue your eye sees is the same blue my eye sees?” and after a few more questions that deviated us from this original topic, she would ask, “Why are we talking about this again?”

The questions that preoccupied her mind ventured beyond your usual “But why?” questions and explorations of children her age. As fun, educational and endearing as this was, it was not what got her most excited.

She got the biggest kicks out of getting an emotional rise out of me. She loved to drop a bomb like, “Mom, I hate you,” on me with a dead serious look. She’d wait to see the utter shock and pain on my face, then exclaim, “It’s opposite day!” and run toward me with outstretched arms and a big smile to comfort my broken heart.

It was her way of experimenting with her emotional range and transcending opposite feelings with agility. It seemed to loosen her attachment toward — and bias against — any one emotional state. She could embody, draw and play-act almost any emotion so well — even with just a fork and spoon or two sticks at her disposal to serve as puppets—that I’d run to her rescue multiple times, thinking she’d gotten in a bad fight with her brother or had gotten hurt.

Nope, she was just practicing her sad cry or mad bickering or scared scream, and really seemed to enjoy finessing her craft, both at home and during musical theater and dance practice and performances.

While I was one to avoid the limelight rather than crash stages starting at age one, my daughter’s knack for tracking conversation topics and comparing her inner states with that of others reminded me of myself when I was younger. I was similarly captivated by the depths of my consciousness and was constantly comparing notes with others for a reality check and True North guidance to see if I was headed in the right direction.

My daughter’s soul searching paid off. She’s now almost 18 now and it doesn’t surprise anyone that she is considering studying psychology, dance and performing arts in college. Interestingly enough, she can still spin-off in overwhelming self-doubt when she bumps into one of her “islands.”

Reconnecting our disconnected islands

We, social creatures, need to be able to cross-check our sense of integrity with more than one trustworthy mirror that can reflect our layered, complex selves and interconnected reality back to us. This is how to detect and heal the desolate “islands” within our inner self that I’d mentioned in the last chapter — referring to Prince William’s unmetabolized ego-defenses hindering the cultivation of interpersonal trust — which is needed to intimately connect with others as well as our true selves.

We turn our soul’s karma into dharma by radically accepting, alchemizing and re-integrating all parts of ourselves. Our pain and struggles become the fuel for our journey toward our True North, a path that is backed by Mother Earth and the Universe. Simply put, consciousness supports the physical manifestation of our ego-ecosystem alignment and will accelerate this embodiment with signs and opportunities that serve our dharma path — the path of our highest truth and the greater good.

As a child, I thought of my islands — my touchy trigger points and lost or confused soul parts — as puzzle pieces that had no place in the world, no social box in which they seemed to belong. Unbeknownst to me, this is the kind of aura that our soul purpose often emanates while orbiting around humanity's neglected islands in need of reclamation.

Our soul purpose is like a mysterious treasure trove that draws us in and sometimes whispers sweet nothings in our ear. It typically takes us a lifetime to excavate, decipher and retrieve all of our unclaimed soul parts but from the start of the journey, we experience moments of ecstatic bliss when tasting our wholeness and the inner peace that we savor when sitting by a warm, central hearth at home. And we can simultaneously also experience terror and fear of failure, alienation, persecution and humiliation at the thought of falling short or not completing our mission.

Fringe experiences and True North

When examining my deserted islands through a wide angle lens, I saw that they had to do with fringe experiences on the cutting edge of our collective (un)consciousness. I was curious about the exact topics that were considered improper, superstitious, scary or too something else.

If you had similar experiences in childhood, it's a sign that you are a bonafide consciousness pioneer and transformation trailblazer. We were born to make sense of these outlying, shadow experiences and interweave them back into our social fabric. Most of us know this before having any clarity how this will translate into a career or job. I, for instance, knew how to attract and work with spirit guides and who they were without anyone explaining this to me.

Stories about and by Anne Frank, Helen Keller and Joan of Arc offered me hope, comfort, and reassurance. Each one was an important lighthouse that guided me out of my dark silo. They helped me to feel less alone about my peculiar soul purpose inklings that had started to bleed through at a young age. Even without much (current) life experience, their struggles and solutions resonated and validated what was percolating inside of me. And as old souls, they showed me that it was perfectly human and normal to mysteriously know things that adults somehow didn't know or were afraid to admit to themselves.

Spirit guides: the keepers and wayshowers of True North

Spirit guides color outside of the lines and help us flesh out and materialize what we have trouble embodying. They are not concerned about our age or any other identity measure. They are here to remind us that consciousness is timeless and doesn't discriminate.

For instance, Anne Frank found her voice at age 13. She kept a diary in hiding and secrecy to help her deal with the horrendous mistreatment of Jews by the Nazi's. Her precocious insights were shared with the world thanks to her brave words and writing, something that I knew in my bones I'd also do one day.

The important lesson was that she never lived to see her impact but it didn't stop her from doing what she knew she came here to do. While her words were inspired by the world's collective (un)consciousness, she addressed her diary, Kitty, as her dear friend.

She first and foremost was motivated by a desire to heal her own heartache. Her first lines read, "I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support." When she heard a broadcast urging people to document their lives under Nazi rule, she was ready to heed the call and rewrote her diary.

Helen Keller saw things that others with perfect sight were not able to see. I too saw the invisible with my intuitive sight and heart. She didn't need to have a word for water to trust that she knew its life-giving essence intimately. In her world, the tangible and concrete didn't override subtle reality and what she knew to be true in her heart. She gave me permission to do the same.

Joan of Arc disguised her true self and controversial source of divine guidance to help lead her country to freedom. She understood that anyone could become a freedom fighter and leader, regardless of gender and age, but not everyone, especially not those dependent on their patriarchal powers, would support these progressive notions. Joan understood that her soul authority was much more powerful than their pompous posturing. She was connected to a Source of life energy that transcended life and death and because of that she was perceived as a dangerous threat in need of execution.

Because of Joan's story, I felt steadfast in my unwavering devotion to my soul authority. I was able to allow this steadfast knowing to guide me until I discovered in a past life regression decades later that I had a near-death experience right before I was killed. I had the epiphany that I was made of eternal love and light and that there was nothing to fear. I would not die (I was a healer and herbalist accused of witchcraft in the Middle Ages in France).

Human trophic cascades

Each of these courageous young women caused a human trophic cascade by feeding our hungry souls superfoods that humanity had been deprived of. They helped me to grasp that my "eigenwijze" passions, dreams, caution and insights pertained to soul purpose calls that were already ringing in at a young age.

These pieces of information were the most challenging to integrate because they involved out-of-the-box and inexplicable processes, such as my past life gains, my premonitions about the future and pure awareness and objections about social

dynamics that most people preferred to keep in the closet, in their blindspot or in the dark shadows.

While the inexplicable aspects of our mysterious callings may very well be the hardest for us to wrap our minds around, I've come to understand, and still regularly observe, that our logical brains get tripped up the most by the concept of *paradox* — an integral part of all things soul purpose related.

Paradox and the Age of Aquarius

Western and Judeo-Christian moral influences have over the centuries reduced paradoxical and holistic worldviews into good-bad gospel truths and rigid polarities. Because of these historical and ongoing influences, an egocentric heart compass is now misguiding many of us without our awareness or informed consent in almost every major region of the world.

It makes total sense that a labyrinth path, guided by dynamic, circular wholeness and paradoxical wisdom, would be challenging to walk when everyone around us seems to be walking down a beautifully paved, straight path. Following our True North can feel like being trapped in a pinball machine, especially during this bumpy transition from the Age of Pisces — which is all about right-wrong, ego-soul polarities, portrayed by the fish in eternal struggle — into the Age of Aquarius, where the water powerfully aligns with life's flow along a more fluid, unpredictable path.

While our True North direction is not really changing course, the amount of agile shifting and resilience that's required to absorb and harmonize the bombardment of information and blows that we're receiving from all corners of the world during these times of 24/7 virtual connection can make us feel be-wild-ered, overwhelmed and filled with self-doubt and uncertainty about the life plans we thought we had.

I often share my "It's opposite day!" stories with my clients when they get thrown off by this kind of unraveling and don't know how to read, ride, and alchemize their resistance, emotions and life energy. The first thing I do is remind them of the guidance of their Sacred Tree. It's tempting to take surface impressions and feelings at face value, especially if they haven't done deeper self-exploration and soul integration that shifted their center of authority. They can also feel disillusioned if they unexpectedly got stranded on an "island" or in a trauma bubble that's popping up to help illuminate and fuel the journey ahead.

This is why we initially spend a good amount of time working with the Sacred Tree guide — learning about the spiral growth patterns that are facilitated by the seasons, embracing non-negotiable life-death-rebirth cycles, understanding that your unique egocentric self is a side dish and subset of your soulcentric self and a microcosm that works best when aligned with an overarching macrocosm —to dislodge the conceptual mind from predictable and confining tracks that block more complex forms of guidance.

Our True North is often not a linear direction that just straight-up feels good, and our pursuit of it is also not a heady, intellectual endeavor. It's more like feeling our way through the dark until our guides illuminate the way.

It's normal and common to trigger some old trauma and dirty pain resistance when we approach our soul purpose. Our potent potential initially causes us to shrink in fear. Our purpose feels big, raw and daunting because it often involves the death of a limiting belief or thought that we've grown quite attached to or a coping pattern that has kept us safe.

Boats docked at a harbor are safer than at sea, but there is a trade-off for this safety. The closer we get to understanding what we are here to do, the more likely that we'll light up, expand and feel antsy to embark in our mission. Our souls feel nourished by the deeper meaning of our purpose on earth and want to get going. It gives us the incentive to take risks, complete a stunted post-traumatic growth or grief cycle, and spiritually evolve into the next phase of our development.

Leaving safety for growth and purpose

Second-generation astrologer, Susan Miller, author of *Planets and Possibilities* and creator of Astrology Zone concurs how tricky our True North path can feel as we enter the Age of Aquarius, "On one hand, Aquarius can be quite intellectually and emotionally aloof at times. Aquarius needs distance, and marches to a different drummer. On the other hand, it is one of the most congenial, social and gregarious signs, and certainly one of the most humanitarian. Aquarius sees social wrongs and moves to right them, often through mobilizing groups into action. Unlike Pisces, a sign that works one-on-one, Aquarius likes to work in large groups, and is altruistic and democratic in spirit. Aquarius is 'one for all and all for one,' rather than elitist."

Following our True North callings gets easier the more we re-wild and re-nature our ego-minds. Our body wisdom intuitively guides us down an organic path quite well when unperturbed by thoughts and fears. We naturally round out, deepen and expand in all directions, like the rings of a tree and the branches and roots that are simultaneously growing in opposite directions.

Our goals in life become simpler and more focused. We begin to fully realize that we are just a drop in the ocean and at the same time, the ocean in a drop. This paradox is as incomprehensible and clear as the idea that our heart relies on a strong and healthy body to survive and thrive, and our body relies on a strong and healthy heart to survive and thrive.

It's not one or the other, as in winner-takes-all, all-or-nothing, my-way-or-the-highway. It's both, the Aquarius way: all for one, one for all. This kind of paradoxical mindset is not complicated as long as we allow our body wisdom to lead the way with soul authority and not let our ego mind confine us to a predetermined, set path.

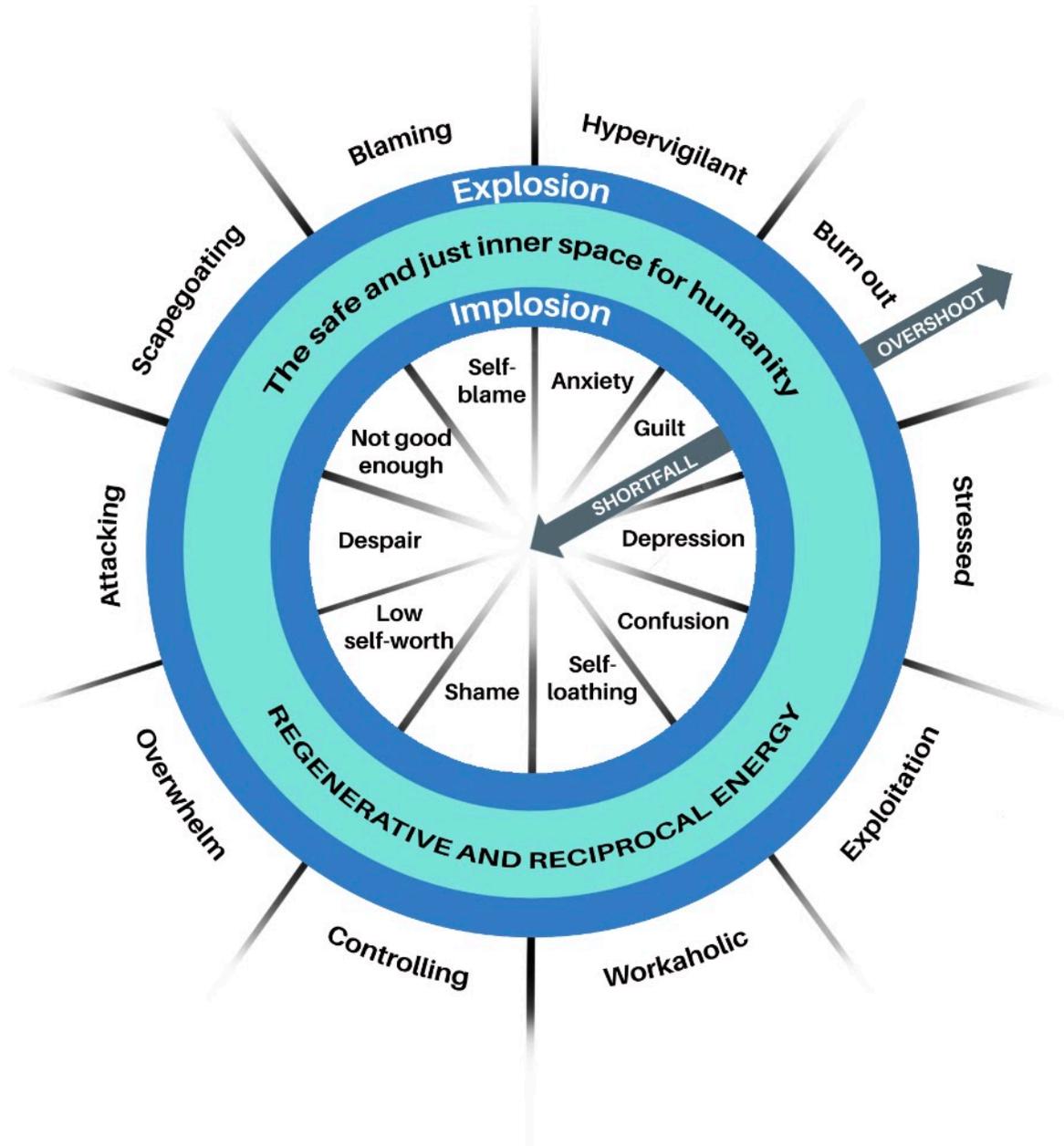
True North callings

Remember my earlier comment about our free floating inner islands often being related to our soul callings? Sometimes, they are soul parts only in need of healing and integration. Oftentimes, they are the portal into a deeper calling and point directly to our True North.

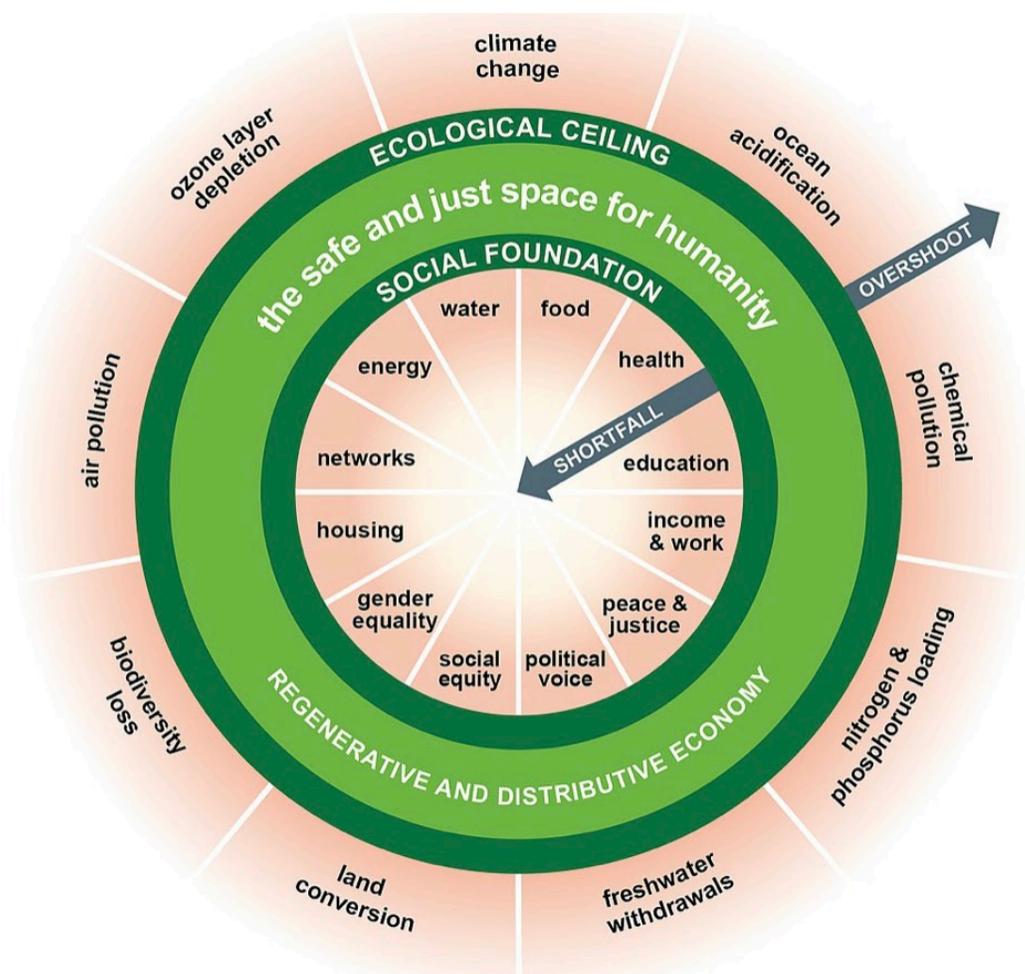
This is how I detect islands within myself. After connecting to my Sacred Heart Compass (make sure you're aligned with your Sacred Tree guide and each of the elements), I lean my back against the tree and have my compass needle scan my field by making sweeping rotations. You could also face North and ask your guides what's waiting for you beyond the horizon, but I usually have more success when the path trails inward like a labyrinth.

When you are embodying your truth-body and grounded your soul sanctuary, you are occupying "the safe and just inner space for humanity" inside of the ring, and neither imploding or exploding your energy beyond your boundaries. When you detect a bleep on your radar, you are most likely tuning into some imbalance or pain point within your trauma-body that is causing you to spin out of bounds.

See if the feeling associated with it feels more collapsed or more inflated, explosive and overextended. Check if it corresponds with one or more of the feelings in the diagram.



Then take a look at Kate Raworth's Doughnut economics compass, and see which of your feelings and implosion-explosion pattern is the result of a short-fall in social foundation or overshoot in ecological ceiling that you, your family, your ancestors, or community were hurt by, worried about or struggled with because of your identity, prejudice or other factors.



Notice if you feel passionately drawn to learning how your inner states may have been shaped by your external experiences in or out of “the safe and just space of humanity” in the doughnut. What have you learned or done to rebalance yourself and what groups of people, animals, ecosystems or problems pull on your heart strings for help? What would you like to teach or pass down to others as your legacy?

Reflections on working with your True North guide

I am at a crossroads, wondering which direction is True North, sit for a while and contemplate the following questions: “Which path will hurt less?” and also, “Why does it seem like the harder path is the one I am supposed to choose?” Lastly, I ponder, “Does it always have to hurt?”

I am eventually assured by a familiar sensation and unseen forces pushing me towards something that feels better than anything: Love. The answer to my questions unfold like fog clearing up with the sun—suddenly, drastically, and without boasting. The answer turns out harmless. The answer becomes easy.

In sitting with the tangled knots that are my fears, I discovered that the fears had more entangled stories within them. I was intimidated and daunted by the task and seemingly inevitable pain that came with the untangling of those feelings; however, that changed when I trusted in the guidance of my Sacred Heart Compass in alignment with my elemental guides.

I followed that compass, that guidance, and was led through the most peaceful path. This does not mean the path was without brambles and scratches. Rather, the path had those things and potentially even more. The fact is, if the right path has those things, then it becomes worth it.

The compass doesn't serve as a path without pain. The heart's compass tells you that it is worth it.

Valerie Vargas, Ed.D., Special Education Teacher and Artist

After creating a grounded, elementally-balanced inner sanctuary, I was pretty much like, 'How was I living without this?' I was able to invoke my muse, at will, to feed the flow of my fiction. I could then grasp the essence of my villain with much greater ease and clarity.

Then, I passed the ultimate test when the most challenging person from my past tried to push all the old buttons. I was so in my authority. I had that strong tree behind me, I had my own mentor voice in my head, I had my elements at my disposal. It was amazing.

Today, all of the wondrous inklings of what the sanctuary is — a microcosm of the Oneness — came together in a bodily experience.

As soon as I felt the predictable resistance to writing, I remembered my Soul Sanctuary, and as I put myself there, everything started to kind of tingle. My body felt lighter, but grounded at the same time. This state is my writing environment. My computer on the desk, my bulletin boards, my sticky notes, my characters and story, and my being aren't just IN the Sanctuary, we ARE the Sanctuary.

I can't believe how smoothly I just settled into my creative heart and mind. Resistance just disappeared like wet sand beneath a flowing stream. I mean, I believe it because I'm living it, but wow, I've been freed! Since working with Loraine, I live so much more from my center than I ever thought possible. Sometimes, I just stop and smile and marvel. I'm so grateful.

J.R. Schumaker, author of Diana's Dragons: The Awaited

I just started seeing a young woman in her twenties, Maria Pascal, who gave me permission to use her brilliant journeys as a teaching example. You can record her transformation like a guided orientation and visualization exercise to get your own

creative juices going if you like or just read it. It may inspire your guides to take you on a similar journey tailored to your unique needs.

Interestingly, Maria's guides didn't want her to "lower the temperature." They wanted her to raise it and learn to work more skillfully with Fire. I've seen many of my other clients desire to work with Fire in the same way. Shoveling snow like good neighbors is unfortunately not enough these days to alchemize the unmetabolized, deep-seated hurts in need of transformation. Only a hot cauldron will do.

As you will see, Maria is a bonafide trailblazer, a prodigy whose guides and younger selves found me online just in time to make it into my book. They were excited to share their wisdom and natural genius and show you how to tie all the piece-meal steps together into a seamless whole.

Her journeys ingeniously integrate and wrap up how to work with your sacred tree guide and each of the elements to disintegrate and update our old selves into new forms. She showcases how to trust your heart compass and embark, unhampered, toward True North and recruit a dreamteam of guides. She even did some advanced techniques when healing her relationship with her father.

Her journeys also turn our sense of reality and mental order on its head — in opposite day fashion. Societal twisting and contorting of her natural genius and creativity could have led to some of her gifts being misdiagnosed as a disability rather than a superpower, which may actually be a reflection of our deficits and unrealized potential that ended up stunting hers.

Maria took my Soul Authority teachings like a duck to water with minimal preparation or prompts from me. Her pilgrimage over the course of 4 sessions portrays the shift from her karmic pain into a dharmic path that's clear and that she's ready to commit to. This is the fastest any of my clients or students have been able to cover so much healing ground with these tools. I'm certain that this is no coincidence but a purposeful gift for all of us.

After gathering all the necessary information I needed from Maria during our first session, we set up and entered her sanctuary in the second session. The bleep she detected when scanning her field pertained to a 7-year-old self who'd felt shunned and misunderstood by her peers. She was able to escort this younger self, who was stuck in a trauma bubble scene as I call it, into her sanctuary (never force this - have them test out the waters if they are not sure if they like it. They can always return to their old set-up. Most often they're experiencing some Stockholm symptoms and feel guilty about leaving the troubled people who've kept them hostage). Her 7-year old self felt safe and comforted in the sanctuary and was met by a large black cat with green eyes that reminded her of her independent free spirit who was especially about mystery.

In between our second and third session, Maria said that a 5-year old abandoned younger self had popped up and nudged her to speak up to her partner during conflict, something she typically doesn't do.

When we entered her sanctuary, we learned that this younger self had retreated from the world and had been hiding in a dark, damp cave in her inner sanctuary all these years.

The 5-year old had felt small, scared and invisible, like she wasn't a person with needs and feelings. This was because her father threatened to leave her mother and take Maria with him whenever they were fighting.

Maria said that the cave represented safe, mother energy that she'd been holding onto out of fear that she'd suddenly lose her mother.

Her father, who was from a traditional and patriarchal culture, died a few years ago. Because of her unresolved feelings toward him after these fights, she was not been able to appropriately grieve him when he died almost two decades later.

Maria said that her younger self had remained hidden in the cave, afraid that others would also judge her as "deformed and abnormal." Another big hurt that she remembered was caused by a prejudiced comment that a guidance counselor once made. She bluntly said that she didn't think Maria was cut-out for Berkeley because of her autism diagnosis. Maria did get in and is currently doing well as a bright and dedicated student working on her honors thesis with plans to pursue her graduate studies in Sociology with a specialization in disability.

This painful and derogatory remark hexed Maria and gave her an "inferiority complex." To prevent being found out as an "impostor," she "overcompensates" by pressuring herself to "be perfect." No matter how well things go, they never go perfectly well, which causes her to still feel inadequate and insecure in spite of her accomplishments and being a leader in her community.

There was a sacred fire in front of the cave and Maria used it to light a torch to find and retrieve her younger self. She handed her 5-year old self the torch, which empowered and emboldened her. The fire made her feel warm, dried the dampness around her and offered her light and clarity.

It gave her the courage to get up and explore. She examined the contours of the cave and I couldn't help but think that in traditional talk therapy, one could spend years talking about and describing the inner contours of the cave.

Instead, Maria shifted her attention within minutes to her needs and recognized that she was famished, as if she'd just awakened from a long hibernation. She felt tantalized by the aroma of some food cooking over the fire, and ventured outside. Food, water, and sunshine nourished her body and soul, and she started to feel more energized and

stronger. She took a honest look at herself and concluded that she “wasn’t deformed or abnormal, neither on the inside or outside,” as others had insinuated.

She decided to burn all of the harmful experiences and patriarchal ancestral patterns that were passed down her father’s line and that hurt her in the fire. It cleared what had stood in the way of their emotional connection, and disentangled her energy from his. She was able to forgive and grieve him without the interfering blocks and sent his soul off in peace.

After completing these three advanced processes, directed by her natural genius and Sacred Heart compass, within a matter of minutes, she wondered what to do with the ashes. She didn’t want them to go to waste. She was very curious about ways in which she could take care of her corner of the world. She had the epiphany that taking care of what’s right in front of her will from now on will help her feel safe and nourished.

She felt more solid and robust after fertilizing her tree with the ashes then decided to plant and fertilize a vegetable and fruit garden in an open field nearby with the ashes too. She called her 7-year old self and had her and the cat join her.

She was encouraged to take all the time she needed in the sanctuary to make up for lost childhood years and nourish deficient, hungry parts with all the supersoul foods that she’d been deprived of.

Maria reported that these journeys had helped her “phenomenally.” She had horrible test anxiety right before we met. Her years of previous therapy had helped her to get through the week, but didn’t uproot the core issues. It felt “superficial” and “temporary” compared to the deep shifts and root soul remedies she was enjoying now. The level of anxiety that she felt during her recent exams for the first time felt “in the normal range” and it felt like a permanent shift to her.

She was in the last week tested by a roommate who’d disrespected, refused to communicate about issues and was mocking her. This made Maria feel small, invisible and unsafe in her own space. She decided to move out for a week as well as look for a permanent solution: a new place. She celebrated that there was a moment when she had a “flashing thought” wondering if she deserved this mistreatment, but right away realized that “no one deserves this mistreatment.”

She successfully healed her bruised ego and was able to factor it out, which is what freed her. This incident would have spun her in a tailspin in the past. The more we try to prove ourselves, avoid pain, or struggle to fulfill our purpose, the more trapped we end up feeling. By exercising her Soul Authority, her roommate’s assaults were “surprisingly not penetrating very deep” in her psyche.

She was also able to set and maintain firm mental and energetic boundaries, seek support, and receive reassurance from others that this had nothing to do with her. She

was happy that she and her partner were “supporting one another beautifully” through this ordeal.

She noted that she wasn’t able to detect any other younger selves in need of attention or help but felt that her 5-year old and 7-year old selves felt a bit vulnerable and exposed due to the recent altercations.

I sensed that they were eager to recruit their dreamteam of guides. When we entered her sanctuary, there was a ring of smooth stones around the circumference of her Sacred Ancestral tree. The 7-year old self had laid them there as well as some paints to mark off her sacred space. Apparently, they had already connected to a good number of guides and wanted to get her up to speed so they could become better partners.

Maria commented, “Oh, there’s a fox scurrying around the perimeter that I didn’t notice before. There are a lot of fox holes and the fox is closely connected to earth because of the burrowing. There’s a falcon at the top of the tree. Falcon has a lot of wisdom and sight, giving me a much larger view of my surroundings. Oh, and there’s a bear in the cave. It’s a she. The 5-year with the torch wanted a companion in the cave. In terms of a water guide, there is a stream nearby. Let’s follow it. It leads to a big lake that I didn’t even realize was here. This place is pretty amazing.”

“There are a lot of salmon in the river area of the lake. A big part of what they represent is change. They travel for their breeding cycles and it represents how they live and die and the cycle of life. The cat loves the salmon. Of course (laughs). Butterflies are a big part of the ecology. I saw them right away when the 5-year old with the torch came out of the cave. Freedom was the first thing that came to mind when I saw them. I definitely feel that they represent her journey. She was in a cocoon and she suddenly emerged.”

“Near the lake is a tortoise, earthy and secure in its shell. I feel better now knowing the guardians. They want me to know that this place is sacred and to keep it free of toxins. This is why the 5-year old still carries the torch even though she doesn’t need it. It cleanses the toxins. And why the 7-year old put the rocks around the tree. The 7-year old is bringing up the painting. I have historically been a very creative person — drawing and painting regularly — but all that stopped during the pandemic. I haven’t tapped into this side of myself and I haven’t made the space to do it. She is saying through creativity you nourish the place and help things grow because things naturally decay. You need creativity and being a Creator to keep the cycle going. Creativity is kind of like fungus. That’s why the paint is on the rocks on the ground. It’s making something that’s painful or dead and needs to be recycled into something beautiful.”

“I notice that the younger selves are so much more articulate. It was hard for them to speak and they are now able to convey information and their needs to me and I’m able to convey information to them so much easier. They were sort of lost before and now they have this whole team. They can communicate their needs which they weren’t able to before. The 5-year old wants to build a house. She said they had been meeting at the

front of the cave and they need a new home base. Hmm I think she wants one made of wood. I need to find her some wood.”

This upgrade parallels what’s going on in her concrete life, and is inspiring her to take appropriate practical action. It often takes a while for the younger selves and the adult self to get on the same frequency and form a well-oiled partnership. This journey could require lots of dialogue, soul and power guide retrievals, soul part exchanges and ancestral interference clearings to free the egocentric self from wounded mind control. Maria’s held into her truth so successfully that it feels like her guides have turbocharged us to this endgame — her soul’s mission— and are ready to rock and roll.

“How do your younger selves feel about sharing their wisdom in my Soul Authority book?” I asked her.

“They are all for it and excited about helping a lot of people. Hmm, they want to include other younger selves that want to contribute. I just wanted to put that out there.”

The younger selves in need of a retrieval don’t have painful, dense and karmic parts and patterns stuck in the shadows. That’s why none showed up when we did a scan earlier. These younger selves have high vibrational, dharmic wisdom stuck in the shadows and are ready to emerge out of the darkness and expose these to the light of day.

“These younger selves may want you to write your own book that’s been in you and is now ready to emerge,” I said. “Have you ever considered writing one?”

“I definitely have, based on my own research, and I might include some of my reflections in it to give my research a narrative. The self with the cat wants the book to be illustrated (chuckles). I think that would be fun and would reach a lot of people.”

Meditation script to activate your True North (ground yourself first with the Tree meditation)

Fully relax underneath your Sacred Ancestral Tree and ask all four of your elemental guides to harmonize your inner climate and balance your ecosystem, working together as one interconnected whole.

You’re now ready to string the ABC’s you’ve learned together and will experience the sum total being greater than its parts. You are not only going to create words with these letters, you are going to create sentences and eventually stories, poetry and songs. And with enough practice, you will develop the muscle memory to swiftly drop into this dimension where your creativity and natural genius are safely held thrive.

Don’t direct the process, just feel what’s happening in your body as the elements balance and counterbalance your energy, doing whatever is needed to move along stuck emotions and give the melodies inside of you an outlet of expression.

Take note how they guide, activate and temper one another and you. Air could mean that you need more mindful breathing and inspiration to inflate your depleted spirit. Fire could indicate that you need firmer boundaries around your sacred well and emotions. Earth could be slowing you down so you can gather scattered parts and give composting the time it needs, while Water could mean that you need more physical activity, sweat and flow to burn and digest constipated issues tension, heart or body aches, and stress.

Two of my clients, who are quite serious and dedicated to their soul purpose both received guidance to lighten up. The work of one involves transitioning incarcerated BIPOC back into society and the other one oversees biotech research that breaks down environmental pollution and explores ways to improve Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing.

They are carrying heavy loads and received guidance that in order to be more in their soul authority and ego-ecosystem alignment, they needed to become more carefree, have more fun and do more frivolous projects that excite them. It wasn't what they'd expected or were used to hearing from mentors.

One received the green light to follow her hunch and move to another country where life is simpler, and she would no longer feel trapped in traffic and the capitalistic grind. She needed to be more immersed in nature. The other one needed to regularly experience a sense of freedom and adventure by going on road trips and camping with her dog and cat.

When your soul and the elements, rather than your ego-mind, are in charge, any insight or sensation is fair game. Have you beaten yourself — your mind-body-heart-spirit system — into submission and need to ease up? Or do you need to take yourself more seriously by working through ego blocks, clearing resistance and finally embarking on your most important soul mission?

Don't be afraid of opening a can of worms as you peel back your layers. They will help you to compost what's in need of composting.

Breathe in your sacred heart center and let your compass needle scan your field. What imbalances does it detect? Are these associated with a younger self who needs to be escorted into your sanctuary?

Have your yin and yang elements been out of whack? Water and earth are traditionally associated with feminine energies while air and fire with masculine energies. Have rigid messages around gender appropriate behaviors or sexist pressures stunted the free flow and chemistry between your elements?

Have you concluded that you are not smart enough or lack the chops to be successful because the way you think, feel or process information doesn't fit the conventional mold or what's considered to be top-notch?

Do you need more courageous Fire to re-ignite your inhibited passions and creativity?

Or do you need to ground more and drop deeper in your body to touch your sacred inner well? To feel humbled by mystery and well up with tears?

What do you need to stay in your soul's sweet spot —in the inner ring of the implosion-explosion ego-ecosystem model — to stand your ground and remain centered while venturing into the imbalanced world?

Confronting short-fall and overshoot-related problems all around us can be taxing, challenging and scary. It can cause us to lose sight of our True North or not dare to look at it at all.

Has past trauma left parts of you paralyzed or frozen? Could a waterfall help thaw your heart and body, and help you to feel and grieve? Or would sitting by a crackling fire fill you with loving warmth and empower the daring rebel in you?

Remember that your inner core is like the inner ring and hollow bone of your Ancient Ancestral Tree. Traumatic experiences were always buffered and absorbed by your outer bark. As you grew and expanded, so did your bark, all the while remaining on the outside of you. What you feel inside of you are not current wounds, they are the energetic imprints and reminders of past harshness rubbing on your bark. These experiences have turned into your age lines and rings of wise life experience.

Let's give your inner channel a tune-up by energizing your chakras center with the power of the following words that correspond with each one:

- 1). Calm - base
- 2). Creativity - two fingers below navel
- 3). Confidence - two fingers above navel
- 4). Compassion - heart
- 5). Courage - throat
- 6). Clarity - third eye
- 7). Consciousness - crown

This lit-up inner channel represents our optimal well-being when we are in our element and fully occupy our safe and just inner space of humanity. Entering your sanctuary naturally evokes these feel-good balanced states and backlights imbalances — intense ego attachments and indignant aversions — in need of loosening and harmonizing.

Explore your sanctuary and see if any of your elemental guides or other guides — from the animal, ancestral, angelic, archetypal or ascended masters realms — have some lessons, information or healing ceremonies that they would like to share with you at this time. Repeat this pilgrimage and enjoy these discoveries as often as possible.

For now, allow each of these insights and teachings from your ancient ancestral tree and True North guide to sink in and take root into the depths of your consciousness and cells and bones of your body. Know that this is your most updated and upgraded self and that you will notice shifts within yourself and in all your relationships with others for the next days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Slowly retrace your steps and find your way back into the room that you're in. Notice the chair that you're sitting in, stretch a bit, and bring your mind and attention fully back into the here and now. Notice your surroundings, wiggle into your body, bring all of your energy and attention back to back to the room you are in and open your eyes slowly.

ALCHEMY ACTION STEPS: fulfilling your soul's mission with commitment

This last section is a bonus visualization that will work like a suggestion hypnosis script if you read it slowly. It will prepare your mind, heart and soul to fully embody your authority in an ego-ecosystem aligned way so you feel as confident and ready as possible when doing your transformation trailblazing work.

Start recording here:

When you embrace, embody, and exercise your soul authority, not only do you feel on top of the world but you can't help but bring out the best in others. You will attract guidance, mentors, and opportunities to you as well as students and clients who want to learn from you.

When your personal well is filled, it will overflow and automatically nourish others.

Everyone around you will notice and perk up because of the vitality and soothing energy you will radiate — the natural byproducts of soul authority. Their dormant soul authority will light up and spontaneously start to tingle because of your brilliance and infectious energy.

It will cause people to feel loved, at ease and realigned in your presence without even trying to.

Their higher self and soul will feel uplifted by your clarity, care, and confidence, and their neglected longings and desire to make a meaningful difference will start to stir or get stronger. Your powerful way of being and running energy through your system will clear debris and open channels of possibility in them.

All of this will get your and their juices flowing.

Without fully understanding why, they will want to bask in your energy, stay connected and tell people about you and your ideas. All of these soul authority benefits will help

you to become more clear and effective in executing your mission and influencing whoever you are meant to guide with your powerful message, vision and frameworks.

You will inspire other sensitive leaders, trailblazers and change agents with your fresh, sustainable and holistic perspectives and methods. Your courage, convictions, practical solutions and game changing visions, shared in your books, blogs, or in public speaking forums, will strike a universal chord and offer many people a place of community and belonging. These fans, supporters, clients and students will help you define each and every day what you are born to do with increasing clarity.

Your magnetic presence, compassion, strong convictions and ability to connect will keep on attracting your ideal people and tribe.

Harnessing your magnetic soul authority to serve others, whether your children, students, colleagues, clients, readers or listeners, will cause them to:

- Trust your leadership and seek out your guidance
- Appreciate your authentic and vulnerable sharing about life challenges and growth opportunities
- Feel safe and forthcoming about their struggles around you
- Visit your website and share your blog posts
- Feel hopeful and inspired by your story and role modeling
- Enroll in your programs and engage in the activities
- Purchase your books, services, trainings, and products
- Sign up for your email list and read your newsletters
- Refer others to you and become ambassadors of your work
- Seek you out to do keynote talks at their conventions, companies, online groups or organizations
- Invite you on podcasts and radio shows so you can guide their tribes and reach more people

Imagine mastering this level of soul authority as a transformation trailblazer, and naturally touching each person in your life with your essence and gifts just by being your most aligned and potent true self.

The sky will be the limit in terms of what you will be able to accomplish during this intense transformational age because of your exponential impact on others, inspiring them to guide those they are called to lead in similar ways.

The more effective and consistent you get in protecting, harmonizing and balancing your private ecosystem, the faster you will re-nature your mind in the process. And the better and more effective you will get in supporting symbiotic relationships and mysterious interconnections within your outer environment — within our nation, humanity and the Earth.

Restoring Trust in the Truth, Social Justice and One Another - The Power of the Human Element in Balance

We think we can do the work with policies and programs, but we never stopped to say, 'When are we going to come into community with one another?'" When people are looking at 2020 and saying, "When can we just go back to normal?"— those are the people pulling in the wrong direction. But the people saying 'This is an opportunity we were given to question things that weren't working, to bring things to the surface that we weren't willing to talk about before' — that's what's going to push us toward the upswing."

- Shaylyn Romney Garrett

People are the only element that can choose to restore balance.

- *The Human Element*

Sharing space at the top of the mountain is very challenging right now because we lack trust in one another, for good reason. Trust is earned, and we are only now figuring out how.

One of the main reasons our mutual trust is so fragile is because us vs them splitting and either-or thinking tend to kick back in full gear when we feel frustrated and threatened in social relationships, especially multicultural ones.

Professor Emeritus of Public Policy at Harvard University, Robert D. Putnam and social entrepreneur, Shaylyn Romney Garrett, are the authors of *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*. They identified as their book's central thesis the country's evolution in the early 20th century from an individually-oriented "I" society to a more inclusive "we" society before swinging back again after the Reagan years.

Both Putnam and Garrett claim that white backlash contributed to the shift away from shared responsibilities and egalitarian ideals toward a highly individualistic mindset and our current culture of narcissism. This led to a stagnation and even the reversal in social

justice progress after the 1960's due to the amplification of white privilege and individualism.

The back and forth swinging from I to We and back to an I mentality makes sense in light of the difficulty that especially our Western ego-minds have with considering the paradoxical dynamic and the harmonious coexistence of both.

Policy vs people: the true change agents

In an interview about their book, Garrett dispels the myth that our nation has experienced a great racial justice upswing since the Civil Rights movement. She says, "The 'we' decades that we are describing during the first two thirds of the 20th century - there is a very strong argument to be made here that those were fundamentally building a white male 'we.' There are really important ways in which things were getting better for African Americans and other excluded groups during that period. The watershed legislation of the civil rights era would not have been possible if it had not been for this slowly building 'we' ethos. Those civil rights would not have been able to pass if it weren't for us expanding our sense of "we" in America."

Here's the rub. BIPOC have been and are accused of making up what Putnam and Garrett claim in their book. While I appreciate their support, it's noteworthy that we still need a white Oxford-educated, Harvard professor and white social entrepreneur to validate our experiences as true and help us buffer the backlash, "it is very clear that support in principle for widening the 'we' is different than support in practice. That's very clear in the survey data you see. People in that era were very supportive of the civil rights acts as ideas but when they were asked to make some sacrifices to implement those, there was a very clear backlash. The 'I' period that came after the Civil Rights legislation has been much less hospitable to excluded groups and people of color than most people think."

Even the giants disagree. Author and historian Ibram X. Kendi has convincingly made the case in *How to Become an Anti-Racist* that much of the conventional thinking around racism misses the point. First and foremost, he argued, it is about power and policy, and not people, that keep racism firmly entrenched in society. Putnam and Garrett are claiming the exact opposite. The policies enforce social justice but people hold the ultimate veto power whether or not they get practiced or not. What's finally getting exposed is how two-faced some white folks can be, saying and doing what's "politically correct," acceptable and legal, but behind closed fuming with resentment about being controlled and overpowered by a "cancel culture."

The Upswing sheds light on the great divides in Congress and society that we still can't seem to agree on, let alone bridge. Those on the left side of the aisle consider those on the right to be toxically positive — in denial of their privileges, dismissive of the wide

racist chasms, burdened by complaints and determined to maintain their oppressive position of power (21st century white backlash). For that to happen, BIPOC need to put a smile on their face, stop being divisive and ungrateful for all the great things they have.

Those on the right side of the aisle consider those on the left side of the aisle to be toxically negative — whiny, demanding, trivial and dismissive of the great improvements and social freedoms in our country compared to many other places in the world. You could almost hear their inner critics calling them a sissy and other derogatory names should their own feelings ever get hurt.

Both-sides-ism gives truth and lies equal footage

While both sides may hold a part of the truth, it's important to be cautious of both-sides-ism, which is a false balance portrayed as fair when one side clearly isn't in integrity. It's akin to denying that an organ has cancer and treating it exactly the same as the other healthy organs, even though the denial puts the whole body at risk should the cancer metastasize.

Various gaslighting tactics are used, including mind control, repetition, false accusations, verbal attacks, vicious propaganda and fear-inducing conspiracy theories to elevate and substantiate these views that are clearly used to manipulate the masses for selfish and sick motives.

We watched in disbelief how, within a matter of months, a perfectly robust, legitimate, and trusted presidential election process morphed into a spectacle, then a serious debate warranting a Senate hearing on election fraud and lastly an insurrection in protest of the electoral college vote counts.

Almost half the country fell for the charades and repeated lies distributed by a gaslighter-in-chief who's been the poster child of ruthless individualism and cut-throat competition for decades. The mass manipulation that swept across our nation like a wildfire was aided by the ungrounding effects of both-sides-ism that gave equal footing to the premeditated, toxic cascade that Trump jumpstarted.

Throughout his presidency, he had no intention of ever creating or finding win-win solutions that benefited all parties in alignment with a higher truth. How could he, he has no clue what that would look like.

Journalists who didn't go along with the false allegations of fraud — and tried to point out the cancer in the organ — were shot down by conservative and right wing broadcasters and news stations for being biased liberals, trigger phrases that along with others, such as fake news, bring further dialogue and sincere reflection to a screeching halt (I'm giving them the benefit of the doubt that they are still capable of these activities in other contexts).

Free speech and dog whistles

Ironically, these knee jerk reactions are what shuts down the true intention and spirit of free speech. Being informed by many different perspectives aims to reduce the chances of mind control. The purpose for debating and considering different perspectives is to deeply listen, care, stretch, and eventually succeed in the difficult experiment of creating and sustaining a true democracy for all.

As shown by my dissertation data, a horizontal vs vertical disposition, both in regard to individualism and collectivism, is the key in making mental space for both I and We, in believing that it is possible to balance the needs of the self and the whole without compromising either.

Vertical collectivism undermines the needs of the individual while vertical individualism, most prominent in the US, undermines the needs of the group. What about almost half a nation of vertical individualists banding together and using whatever means to stay in power?

Free speech comebacks are getting more sophisticated by making it appear as if those who challenge vindictive speech and motivations are out there to control and undermine the integrity of their enemies rather than set limits with their lower self motivations to elevate all.

Make no mistake. Trump played a huge hand in showing eager pupils how to use offensive mind control tactics and get away with it. In the end, it doesn't even matter what is actually said. The phrases themselves could be completely coded, gilded, and totally appropriate on a technical level, but the implications and meaning around them, considering the timing and context in which they are used, tell a different story, one that aims to perk up the ears of those on the fringes — white supremacists and the people they terrorize.

Linguist and cognitive scientist George Lakoff has written a detailed essay on how Trump has used repetition and other linguistic strategies as intentional manipulation of his audience.

So have others, such as Casey Ryan Kelly, who explains in a 36-page essay how Trump “appeals to rage, malice, and revenge by sketching the rhetorical dimensions of an underlying emotional-moral framework in which victimization, resentment, and revenge are inverted civic virtues.”

Our garden variety lower selves are pains in the behind to deal with. Thanks to Trump, dirty pain patterns are now on steroids, celebrated by snickering lower selves running amok in every neighborhood, community, government agency and circle of high ranking leaders who are treating all of this as some kind of sport.

Instead of trusting the goodwill and spirit behind being challenged, comebacks about free speech are used to double down on one's inalienable right to have cancer, so to speak, deny its life threatening risks, and reject treatment or help because it's either too shameful, painful or hard to be vulnerable and take responsibility for wrongdoing.

Here lie the pitfalls of extreme individualism and being permanently puffed up with pride. It can turn a powerful person into a disconnected, desolate island in and of itself and convince others that being ruled by and ruling others using lower self, dirty pain tactics, instead of healing and integrating lost parts, is the most desirable way to get ahead in life.

Encouraged by Trump's mastery in using offensive rhetoric and slippery bothsidesism, extremists, Q-Anon conspiracy theorists, and conservative right broadcasters, news stations and politicians are following suit in pushing the envelope in regard to exercising their free speech rights. The one who can most brazenly say and get away with what used to be shared in politically incorrect and unpoliced spaces wins.

Anti-Asian racism

Anti-Asian hate and racism spiked during the pandemic because of racist mockery and comments by Trump, referring to Covid-19 as the Kung-Flu and a China virus.

During the first congressional hearing on Asian American discrimination in more than a decade, held by coincidence two days after the mass slayings of six Asian women in Atlanta, Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) said he was "deeply saddened" by what he characterized Democrats using the hearing to divide Americans and portray the United States as a racist country.

"If America was such a hate filled, discriminatory, racist society filled with animus against Asian Americans, how do you explain the remarkable success of Asian Americans in our country?" he asked, asserting that the community faces the fewest prejudice-driven attacks and makes the most income of any ethnic group.

"Any racist sentiments, speech or act needs to be vigorously condemned," he continued, "but to attack our society as systemically racist, a society that has produced the most prosperous and most harmonious racial society in human history, well that's an insult and it's flat out wrong."

According to Stop AAPI Hate, a record number of hate crimes, almost 3,800, were reported against Asian Americans in 2020, but to avoid insulting individuals, like McClintock, entire communities need to stay silent and distort their experiences, feelings and lived truth.

Rep. Chip Roy, (R-Tex.), outdid McClintock with this comment, "We shouldn't be worried about having committee members of Congress policing our rhetoric because some evildoers do engage in some evil activity as has occurred in Atlanta, Georgia . . .

Because when we start policing free speech, we're doing the very thing that we're condemning when you condemn what the Chinese Communist Party does to their country. Who decides what is hate? Who decides what kind of speech deserves policing?"

Having learned from the best and other pupils such as Piers Morgan —who “doubled down” after his offensive comments about not believing a word of what Meghan Markle said had sparked an avalanche of complaints in Britain, Roy similarly “doubled down” on his use of a phrase that according to Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) “glorified lynchings.” His unwillingness to budge or consider the timing of his comment, both in terms of the hearing and the recent shootings, felt particularly malicious, given that largest lynching in the nation’s history involved a mob of 500 men who killed 19 Chinese men in the Los Angeles area.

Too late to build social capital?

What these belligerent loud mouths don’t get is that their cancer is our cancer. If it hasn’t yet, it will not only end up hurting them but their relationships with their loved ones too. One only needs to look at Trump and his relationship with family members, friends (any?) and business and political associates to get the gravity and hollowness of this condition.

Putnam defines social capital as “networks and norms of civic engagement” that enhance interpersonal trust. He has observed that democracies flourish when community members trust one another, and vice versa. Democracies flourish when community members trust one another.

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to conclude that our social capital as a whole is in an impoverished state. In a comprehensive study of the relationship between trust within communities and their ethnic diversity, based on over 40 cases and 30,000 people within the United States, Putnam found that in the short term more diversity in a community is associated with less trust both among and within ethnic groups. Putnam describes people of all races, sex, socioeconomic statuses, and ages as “hunkering down”, avoiding engagement with their local community as diversity increases.

Although limited to American data, his findings run counter to the contact hypothesis, which proposes that distrust declines as members of different ethnic groups interact.

Putnam says, however, that “in the long run immigration and diversity are likely to have important cultural, economic, fiscal, and developmental benefits.”

Crisis as upswing momentum for transformational change

2020 was certainly a mega crisis year full of death but also rebirth. Here’s how the paradoxical nature of our soul purpose could take us on a tail-spin. Crisis creates

upswing momentum, but its trajectory may at first criss-cross all over the place before settling down.

According to Garrett, “The recent police killings have undoubtedly been sparks in the dry tinder boxes of over-policed Black communities. But those communities are also situated within a parched landscape of stagnant progress toward racial parity . . . It is against this backdrop of stillborn hopes and intergenerational reversals that Black Lives Matter protesters have taken to the streets.”

Garrett discourages us from returning to life as normal, to the status quo of the past. This would be pulling us in the wrong direction. Our egocentric self wants to re-establish homeostasis that feels familiar and doesn’t really care if it is outdated. Our soul cares and wants to keep evolving with the help of a calling, mission or purpose.

She emphasized, as I did in my preface, that, “Who is included in this ‘we’ is the central question in my mind and it’s the central question for today. It’s crystal clear both from the history and facts on the ground that any upswing we would aim to create in America today must absolutely be fully and completely inclusive or it will have in it the seeds of its own destruction as the first upswing certainly did. We have not reached any pinnacle of inclusion in America. We have reached a pinnacle but it was a summit that wasn’t nearly high enough and we have got a lot more work to do in order to create what Eric Liu has called the world’s first mass multicultural democracy.”

Kaleidoscopic multidimensional cascades

What may initially start out as a toxic cascade, can be transformed into a trophic cascade, or swing back and forth, implode and explode, chaotically, before taking on a more regular, kaleidoscopic pattern. Change can be initiated from the top down and seeded from the ground up. It can require the structural support of new policies approved by people and the support from engaged people abiding to the policies. Each one of us can be transformed by societal changes, and each of these changes can start a butterfly effect.

The BLM movement that was revitalized by the heinous murder of George Floyd inspired me to write this book. While doing so, I realized that I wrote it as much for me as for you. I too needed to heal and restore trust in myself, the truth and social justice that had been desecrated and trampled on.

Trust in social justice means trust in others doing the aligned and courageous thing. I’m pleased to inform you that I’ve discovered through this process that many private citizens, businesses and organizations are stepping up. There are too many to annotate but I will highlight a few major players who made significant contributions to help level the playing field and remedy social inequities. They each created thousands of opportunities for others who will get the chance to live out their purpose and pay their luck forward.

Throughout my writing journey, I was also accompanied by an abundance of ancestral and spirit guides as well as human allies in and out of bodies. They reassured me that I was well supported and offered me many of the ideas, serendipitous real-time examples, and resources mentioned in the book. They gracefully appeared with perfect timing as if volunteering to partner with me in this intricate and beautiful cosmic dance. They also validated my feelings of exasperation about the stagnation in social justice progress and have been very effective in showing me how much the tides have already turned since the start of the 2020 BLM marches.

The largest movement in US history, BLM's mission has rippled far and wide and is still inspiring overhauling change across the globe, even if some is a bit rocky at first. Not only have Oprah and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex shaken the British Monarchy to its core, all of Britain is in an uproar. Public and influential figures are resigning left and right and topics, such as anti-black racism, that were usually shoved under the rug are now front and center.

For instance, when Ian Murray, executive director of the Society of Editors, claimed that racism played no part in coverage of Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, more than 160 journalists of color rebuked his "willful ignorance" of the discriminatory treatment of Meghan by the British press.

They wrote, "We, the undersigned journalists of colour, working in UK media organisations, deplore and reject the statement issued by the Society of Editors, denying the existence of racism and bigotry in the UK press. The blanket refusal to accept there is any bigotry in the British press is laughable, does a disservice to journalists of colour and shows an institution and an industry in denial."

"The Society of Editors should have used the comments by the Sussexes to start an open and constructive discussion about the best way to prevent racist coverage in future, including through addressing lack of representation in the UK media, particularly at a senior level. At a time when many industries and companies are engaged in a reckoning with race in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests, we believe it would be a better use of the Society of Editors' time to reflect on the lack of diversity," the letter from journalists of color said.

Surge in philanthropy and donations

Black Lives Matter Global Network managing director, Kailee Scales, said that the national outrage over the death of George Floyd has become a watershed moment for all black-led organizing groups." Just one Black Lives Matter petition during the marches brought in millions, more than the group spent in one fiscal year.

Even though it didn't take long for them to be scrutinized by right-wing groups and being falsely accused of being a "shell company" and giving their money to Democratic candidates, public support for their mission continues to snowball.

The BLM marches inspired George Soros to dedicate \$220 million to funding Black-led racial justice groups, such as the Equal Justice Initiative, Black Voters Matter, and the Poor People's Campaign, to support criminal justice reform, civic engagement opportunities and professional training for young people.

Alexander Soros, who serves alongside his father as the deputy chair of Open Society, said in a statement that the new investment was in response to a time that called "for urgent and bold action."

"These investments will empower proven leaders in the Black community to reimagine policing, end mass incarceration and eliminate the barriers to opportunity that have been the source of inequity for too long."

Mackenzie Scott, ex-wife of Jeff Bezos, along with George Soros, named "most generous giver" by Forbes for having distributed 64% of his original \$32 billion fortune, have completely upended the philanthropic world with some of the biggest charitable gifts ever given by a single person.

Not long after her divorce, Scott signed the Giving Pledge, a commitment to give half of her \$35 billion in assets, or at least \$17 billion, to charity over her lifetime or in her will.

Scott wrote on Medium that she was determined "to give the majority of my wealth back to the society that helped generate it, to do it thoughtfully, to get started soon, and to keep at it until the safe is empty. This work is ongoing and will last for years."

"This pandemic has been a wrecking ball in the lives of Americans already struggling," she wrote, "Economic losses and health outcomes alike have been worse for women, for people of color, and for people living in poverty. Meanwhile, it has substantially increased the wealth of billionaires."

Scott also shared that she had donated \$4.1 billion to 384 recipients that she and her advisers had identified as "communities facing high projected food insecurity, high measures of racial inequity, high local poverty rates, and low access to philanthropic capital."

The New York Times took note and wrote, "These donations went to colleges and universities that many people have never heard of, and that tended to serve regional, minority, and lower-income students."

Chuck Collins, director of the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies, wrote that Scott, a relative newcomer on the billionaire-giving scene, has quickly made herself the role model for others to follow. "She's now made two bold moves, putting to shame the other 650 U.S. billionaires who haven't figured out comparable ways to boldly share," he wrote.

The Human Element: restoring balance

The creators of the documentary, *The Human Element*, asserts that we are both the problem and the solution to climate change. This is true for both social as well as natural ecosystems.

This is their plea and invitation to all of us, “The glaciers are melting, the coasts are flooding. The forests are burning, the air is changing. So where do we go from here?”

“For millennia, many civilizations thought that earth, air, fire, and water were the primary forces—the elements—of nature. Now, through new knowledge of how the world works, science has led us to realize that humanity itself has its own elemental power,” they say, referring to ability to destabilize each of the elements with our own imbalanced states.

Our conscious rebalancing of each of the elements within ourselves will allow us to bring Earth back into balance. The elements are neither good nor bad. They can be life-giving or deadly when out of balance. We humans are no different.

The Human Element reminds us that, “We humans are a force of nature. We are all part of the human element, and we have the ability and responsibility to be part of the climate protection movement. The combined power of our population, our technology, our survival needs, and our desire for affluence has reshaped the Earth as we know it. As much as we’ve shaped the planet for the worse, we can also build a better future. We are not destined to be only victims and villains, but also problem-solvers and change-makers.”

One of America’s leading environmental photographers and producer of *The Human Element*, James Balog, is ironically the grandson of a proud coal miner who died on the job when a tunnel collapsed. Balog attributes his True North callings to his grandfather, “I don’t think there is any question that my interest in Earth material and matter came out of this heritage.”

“The mine gave and it took away as well,” says James’ father, who was a freshman in college when his father died. “I knew those two things were related, and I knew that my father’s sacrifice was for me and for my siblings. We all drew strength and opportunity from that goddamn hole in the mountain.”

Coal sustained his family and ultimately provided otherwise unreachable opportunities for him and his siblings that Balog directly benefited from. It has given him the edge in capturing the lives of everyday Americans on the frontlines of climate change with great compassion.

A true canary who has outgrown the coal mine, he provides a stunning visual display of the detrimental impact of each of the elements when out of balance due to reckless human activity. He makes a case to move away from coal with deep understanding how this will impact people in coal mining country but also provides hopeful examples and

encouragement about the new, safer and healthier opportunities for growth and change that await them.

The parallels between short-fall and overshoot and implosion and explosion

If you examine these two models — the shortfall and overshooting aspects of Kate Raworth's Doughnut economics diagram and my implosion and explosion ego-ecosystem diagram — through a holistic lens and treat them each as a closed feedback loop, the parallels between them will make intuitive sense.

Overshooting, just like our tendency to explode when imploded, doesn't exist in a vacuum. We are most likely to lash out, exploit and overstep boundaries when we feel self-loathing, insecure, powerless, cheated, deprived, and soul impoverished. Even when material deficits or scarcity are no longer an issue, the psychic imprints that they leave behind can linger on for generations and cause our ego-minds to remain stuck in that trauma sensation.

Our not-enoughness and scarcity mindset can distort how we perceive our material or social foundation and what we really have and need. It's easy for us to tirelessly try to satiate insatiable wants. Just like emotional eating really doesn't hit the spot, neither do these tactics.

While hunting for more to fill our own pockets or impoverished souls, we don't make time or space to recognize the severe shortfall of people in our backyard or around the globe — both in terms of their material and social foundation — nor do we have enough bandwidth to care about them or the environment to ensure that they are treated well and justly. It created a vicious cycle of meaningless, shallow and purposeless existence that even when gilded with all the money, power, biotechnology to live forever, will feel flat and empty, rather than privileged, the moment we take true spiritual stock.

Sadly, turning a blind eye to what's happening in the social arena of the world is also one of the main reasons we are struggling with ecological imbalances and serious threats to our shared environment.

People suffering from a shortfall are easy prey for predators and more likely to:

1. Rely on overshooting work because they don't have any other options. They do this despite getting sick, abused, blamed, fined, punished and vilified for their choices.
2. Attract overshooting predators who are interested in making a quick buck and exploiting them and their resources for very little in return.

3. Not know or have the resources to take care of and protect themselves, their communities and environment from existing and new overshooting businesses who are harming them and the planet.

Take Farley from Nieuw Koffiekamp, a Maroon village of primarily small scale gold miners halfway between Kayana and the capital. He was just a middle schooler when he had already decided that getting schooled in the city wasn't going to work because he didn't have what it takes. His mother had accompanied him and tried to subsidize their living expenses, housing and transportation with a minimum wage job. Money didn't come by easy and Farley couldn't afford the bus fare at times. Farley couldn't handle being the brunt of his mother's unhappiness and felt powerless as a young child to remedy the situation.

When his grades weren't the greatest and he was already falling behind in the second grade— understandable, since the lessons were in Dutch, his third language — his mother got angry and decided to return to the village.

Farley started to work full time as an artisanal gold miner at age 16, hoping to make enough money to move his future family and children away from his ruined ancestral lands and find another area that would be safe to live in.

First-world investors circulating money, opportunities and resources equally

Farley's story illustrates how the short-fall that he, his mother and their small village are enduring in the poorest South American country can lead to an ecological ceiling overshoot and a toxic cascade of pollution within his own community and far down the rivers that nourish multiple species and life forms.

Miles Silman, cofounder of Wake Forest University's Center for Amazonian Scientific Innovation (CINICIA) the carbon emissions of this kind of mining can make the industry's environmental footprint between three to eight times as big as the surface acres lost to soybean farming or cattle raising. In addition to uprooting trees and other plants, miners dig 2 to 4 meters deep into the ground, where soil is rich in carbon and could be thousands of years old. Gold mining liberates that carbon back into the atmosphere, killing nutrients in the dirt that are vital to plants in the rainforest.

"If you think about an Amazonian forest, there's nothing you do that's worse to it than alluvial mining. You could drop a nuclear bomb on the forest and it would be better than mining it."

A recent study published in a "Frontiers in Forests and Global Change" journal article indicated that the Amazon rainforest now emitted more greenhouse gases than it absorbed because of rising temperatures, increasing drought and rampant deforestation. When a patch of land is cleared not only is the carbon dioxide absorbing power of the trees gone, the stored carbon in the soil is released and the newly barren

soil is likely to increase its emissions of greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide. Lost forest cover also changes patterns of rainfall and makes the rest of the forest hotter and drier, which also tends to increase greenhouse gas emissions.

On top of the environmental devastation, artisanal and small-scale gold mining is the leading source of mercury released into the environment. Researchers have found high levels of mercury, which has serious effects on the nervous, digestive, and immune systems, in people living along the Brazil–Venezuela border, in the Madre de Dios area of Peru, and in Suriname. Mercury has been found in fish all the way near the coast by the capital.

People in struggling third-world countries need outside investors and venture capitalists to help them make sustainable choices. Fortunately, ex-Vice President Al Gore brings promising news.

Gore, a self-described “recovering politician,” is the chair of Generation Investment Management, a \$20 billion equity firm focusing on environmentally sustainable companies.

He claims that, “The pandemic accelerated fundamental changes in consumer and social behavior, and this is matched by an acceleration and innovation by governments and businesses. Secondly, we have found a growing awareness that the world’s collective social and economic fate is inextricably linked to that of the natural world. There is now a widespread, shared understanding of what an existential threat might look like. The consequences of ignoring scientific advice from epidemiologists and virologists has been brought home to us. And it is not much of a leap to realize that the dire advice from a climate scientist must be taken into account as well.”

Gore explains how everyday people and the private sector have steered and turbocharged this ecological tidal wave in the right direction.

“There is now voluminous research showing that businesses that fully integrate Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) factors into their business plans are more profitable in almost every sector of the global economy. And the research also shows very clearly that investors that fully integrate ESG factors into their investment models perform better. So as this reality becomes more widely known and understood, asset managers who do not integrate ESG factors are definitely at high risk of violating their fiduciary responsibility to their clients.”

He’s pleased that “there’s some irony in that, because during an earlier period those who ignored ESG—including some that diminished the importance of ESG factors that used to often claim, ‘Well, you can’t use those factors because you might violate your fiduciary responsibility’—that’s been turned on its head now.”

On the cusp of a sustainability revolution

Who would have thought that prickly, nerdy, serious Gore was a radical revolutionary, a transformation trailblazer in disguise when he wrote *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* in 1992, and no one really paid much attention, and *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It* in 2006, which was better received as the evidence became more apparent.

He wasn't really a transformation trailblazer in disguise. We come in all shapes and sizes. I, for one, am so grateful for his work and trust his assessment and vision, "We believe that we're in the early stages of a sustainability revolution, one that will be larger than the Industrial Revolution with the speed of the digital revolution. We believe it's the biggest investing opportunity in the history of the world, and the biggest business opportunity in the history of the world."

If money could talk, it would agree with Gore that we are at the cusp of the sustainability revolution. Indeed, while writing these very last lines of this book on March 22, 2021, received the ecstatic and uplifting news that the Danish company Hybrid Power System Group (HPSG) invested \$1.2 billion in the construction of a large hydrogen power plant that will be powered by the abundance of renewable wind and solar energy in Suriname. It's a big enough deal to pull the country out of poverty.

Despite being one of poorest countries in South America and the world (70% live below the poverty line, yet overall crime stats are one of the lowest and mostly involve pickpocketing), the company sees Suriname par excellence as a country that can become a leader in the field of hydrogen. They are doing the courageous, right thing by not redlining or disinvesting in them like so many other first-world investors, subjecting them to the same discrimination and stereotype threats that create vicious cycles in minority and poor neighborhoods in the US.

Minister Albert Ramdin of International Business and International Cooperation (BIBIS) reported feeling very satisfied with this deal. It is the first agreement that Suriname concludes within the framework of the so-called Foreign Direct Invest policy.

Out with the old, in with the new

Just two months ago, Apache corporation, an American oil and gas exploration and production company, announced its biggest discovery on January 14, 2021: Suriname's coast is likely to become one of the world's hottest oil-drilling zones.

As you can imagine, it was bittersweet news. The country has been desperate for any source of foreign income and even becoming a supplier of crude oil would offer the people a much-needed solution to get their heads above the water, but not at the price Peru paid.

Peru's Amazon rainforest is extensively contaminated from decades of oil and gas drilling. For more than a decade, indigenous people have complained that they are

suffering health effects from the nearby polluted drilling and waste sites, and from eating plants and wildlife laced with heavy metals and petroleum compounds.

“Suriname could be big,” said David Goldwyn, a consultant who was the top State Department energy diplomat in the early years of the Obama administration. “Under almost any scenario the world is going to be using less oil over time. The winners in the race to share what remains of the oil pie will be those who can produce oil at low cost.”

It didn’t take long for the sharks to smell blood and think of this as a sport and a race that could make them even richer.

Within a lightning three weeks, Exxon Mobil, Royal Dutch Shell, Total, Apache and several other companies have entered this race to extract the world’s last oil reserves.

In several contracts, Suriname has agreed to accept royalties equivalent to 6.25 percent of oil companies’ revenue. That is more than in Guyana but less than half the average rate in the developing world, roughly 16 percent.

The world is shrinking. Such a significant gap strikes me as no different than the gender pay gap in the US. While most Americans would not tolerate oppressive and sexist rationalizations for severely underpaying women, such as, “Women don’t need all that money. They are not used to it. They will live like queens with this income,” “Don’t pay them more. They are so grateful for this money. You will drive the price up and ruin this for ‘everyone,’” “You don’t want to pay them more because it will cause strife and competition between them,” “Most of them are married anyway and their husbands are the main breadwinners. They just provide auxiliary income,” and of course, the “What do they need to buy anyway? Some dresses, make-up? Getting their hair and nails done?”

You’d be surprised how often I hear parallel racist reasoning for the ridiculously low wages we pay for overseas virtual and internet services provided by people in sweatshop-like environments and living in cramped apartments in Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa. It’s no surprise that these very same people most often scam us and commit identity and credit card and other online theft. Nowadays, it’s not just the big companies who are quick to jump on and exploit a good “deal.”

The truth is equal wages will pay for equal standards of living. More than 95% of Surinamese people (about 500,000) live near the coast, which is awfully close to sea level and already dealing with unsanitary floods, one that made my beloved cousin sick and killed her when I was a child. Some areas still need closed sewage systems and most of the capital and surrounding suburbs need better drainage. The capital’s inner city, a UNESCO World Heritage site and surroundings, creating the Mecca of the 2nd “most diverse nation in the world,” are at risk of being completely flooded in about thirty years if global warming and the seas continue to rise at the rate they have been.

On February 8, 2021, American Airlines became the only US carrier with non-stop service from Miami to Paramaribo. For a good forty years—ever since the exodus

following the military take-over by Bouterse— it had been a nightmare to get to Suriname. A 5-hour plane flight often took a day or two because of the many stops and delays, which could include an unplanned lay-over at night at a closed airport at one of the nearby Caribbean islands. No explanations provided.

I hope that all the wonderful ecotourism companies who couldn't attract enough American tourists to get their businesses to flourish are paying attention. Suriname is back on the world map. It had been before, when the Dutch traded Suriname for New York because of their interest in it as a slave colony. It did make them mega-money, but at what cost asks Suriname's best-selling author, Cynthia McLeod, in her book, *What Was the Price of Sugar?*

May the attention Suriname will get now lead to an interest in the people, the land, the infrastructure and the support in preventing major climate catastrophes to a group of people who absolutely had no hand in creating this fate yet would be the first in line in bearing the brunt of our irresponsible and egocentric behaviors.

The fact that this HPSG green deal happened tells me that we have really turned a page and that anything is possible. After all the ups and downs, the military coup, the decades of corrupt military control and ransacking of the national treasury, the Surinamese people could have imploded and exploded in much more detrimental ways with such a shaky social foundation. They've proven that it's not a given that a poor social foundation automatically results in a lack of soul authority and integrity. Because of their resilience, strength of spirit and good fortune, Surinamese people have been able to divert the miserable and inhumane conditions — i.e. mass murders, child soldiers, violence, slavery, mental illness, homelessness, hunger, drug abuse — that so many vulnerable and impoverished countries and communities, like The Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, and Skid Row, in our very own backyard, are not able to escape.

Every Suriname citizen contributed to the wonderful green deal by holding onto and practicing their vision and understanding of democracy, even when the government did not. Together, through mutual respect, trust, and support of their many differences, they made it to the top of a mountain that culminated in a legitimate presidential election, a significant change in leadership, and a stable government. It was a forty year climb full of chaos, uncertainty, poverty, and brazen corruption. Foreign investors are starting to notice and reward these hard-earned victories.

Imagine a world where these kinds of miracles become the norm. They are as badly needed in the third world as in the resistant first world. Imagine these deals happening in a re-generative, interconnected world that you, your dreamteam of guides and your legacy help to educate and co-create. A unified world where each one teaches one and all humans do their part in catalyzing an unstoppable consciousness and sustainability revolution that cascades across the globe.

Then thank yourself on behalf of me, Mother Earth and all of her children for being a transformation trailblazer and for walking the path of beauty, mystery and soul authority with a torch in hand, lighting up as many others as you can along the way.

This is how we will reach the top of the mountain together without pushing anyone down a ravine. We can make space for multiple perspectives and learn to co-exist in harmony with one another at the peak by aligning our soulcentric self with our highest truth and dynamic wholeness. Mother Earth will have our backs as long as we honor nature's laws and lessons and make paradox, complexity, balance and diversity our backbone.

The number of environmental and conservation agencies across the globe who are currently accredited by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is more than 630. Just by looking around me and online, I'd guess that the number of social services, charities, NGO's, publishers, schools, and private practices that are invested in social justice, peace, meditation, environmental conservation, education, spiritual transformation, mental health and healing is in the millions. There is something out there for everyone. And if not, your soul authority tools will help you to create and execute what you're meant to do.

We have our work cut out for us but we can do this.

Reflections on integrating Soul Authority with Doughnut economics

As I've been working with the elements in my sanctuary, I've learned to trust my sacred heart compass, ground myself, and stay aligned with my True North as much as possible. This means working in collaboration with people around the world to address the root cause issues pertaining to climate change.

I was presented with an opportunity to work on pushing European entities to accelerate their actions on climate change. I looked at the opportunity with potential interest as I've wanted to live in Europe, and it's a highly visible exciting role . . . but I had to consider if this was my highest purpose and calling.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our lifetime, my lifetime, many lifetimes, but my fear is that the latest focus on accelerating renewable energy and electric vehicles is just a shift to different types of exploitation of humans and resources. Is carbon the enemy or are humans and systems of inequality and oppression the problem? Yes, we can drive a clean energy revolution that puts solar on every rooftop, and we can build an EV fleet that runs efficiently on cobalt and lithium based batteries. It looks good on paper and in CO2 models, based on what most of us see and know, but it doesn't address the fundamental issues that are behind the curtain that most of us have no idea exist.

Working with air, I can focus on big picture clarity: shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy and EV simply shifts to different human rights and material exploitation. When I consider fire, I can consider anger, protection, and boundaries needed for the earth.

Water helps me consider the ecosystem and regenerative flow needed to find flow and balance. Earth made me think of the pressures to take short cuts, push a quick fix, pave over problems and look at appearances.

Climate change is just a symptom of many underlying problems that need to be fixed. It's the exploitation that's the root of so much suffering, and it's ultimately a human problem (not just a company problem). After all, some companies are made up of humans rationalizing bad behavior for the sake of short term profit motivations. There is so much hidden in the supply chains that makes our lives possible - we need to address the root issues of human slavery, oppressive systems of exploitation, irresponsible mining, etc.

We need to address the harm that is caused to people that share air, land, and water across country borders that comes from the linear mode of taking resources, making stuff, and throwing it away. Renewable energy and EVs are necessary, but we need to also address the issues at the start of supply chains that are intersectional to the issue.

We know better, and we need to do better. The quick fix that looks good on paper may simply accelerate our demise, and do more harm.

As enticing as the new role sounded, it made me appreciate my current role more because it allows me to come up with root solutions in alignment with my True North.

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