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# Foundation for Gaian Studies

## CHURCH OF GAIA Summer 2024

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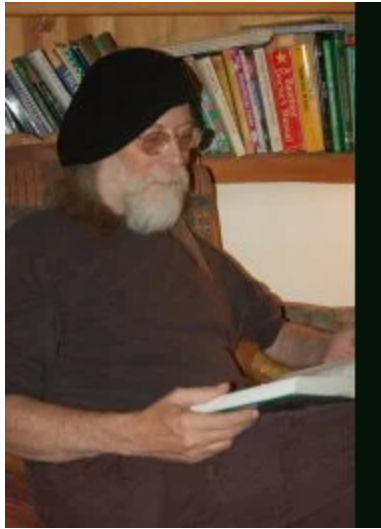
Foundation for Gaian  
Studies  
Church of Gaia  
The EarthCentered Path



*None of us are strangers on this Earth but emerge, as all life does, out of its mystery and wonder, a part of*

*the circle of life, kin to all that is.*

*For most of our lives, we in the Foundation for Gaian Studies have worked to deepen that kind of relationship with Earth, to once more live in the circle of life, to feel, in the depths of us, that we are kin to all that is. The journey has been a long one; it takes a long time to become Earth looking out of human eyes.*



In the [articles] that follow, you can find out more about the work we do at the Foundation for Gaian Studies, our writings, and our teaching. Should you feel something in it that touches you, we invite you to join us. But only if you are moved, for there are many like us now, speaking for the Earth, doing the work they have been given to do. And it makes the most sense to learn from those that move the depths of you and ignore the ones that do not. For a lot of this work is about trusting how you feel when something from the wildness of the world reaches out and lays its hand upon your shoulder. It is in the response of your heart to the touch of the world upon you that the path is found. As Walt Whitman once said: "Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop'd, I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell."

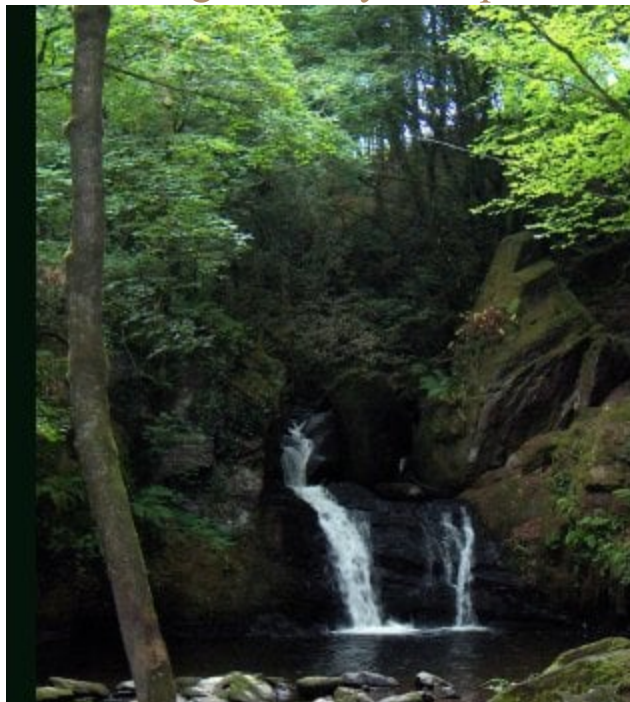
Through our many ways of teaching the past decades (ceremony, healing, writing, research, long contemplation with plants and ecosystems, public speaking, and workshops) we

have been sharing what we have learned about reinhabiting our interbeing with Earth.

Our understanding of Gaia has been essential to this, that is, that the Earth itself is a self-organized whole, a superorganism of which we are only a tiny part. Our experience of the Earth as alive, intelligent, and aware – what some call Deep Gaia -- is fundamental to our work. We firmly disavow shallow Gaia (the Earth as a living organism but not intelligent or aware) and Earth systems science, which denies all three attributes but still treats the Earth as if it were one interconnected whole.

Information about the true nature of this living scenario from which we have been expressed, of which we are an inextricable part, and to which we will return, is important simply because every one of us has been infected by bad software, stories told us from the moment of our birth that have little to do with how Earth truly is. The information we have absorbed as an accurate description of the world (but is not) acts like a lens covering our eyes so that in our time, nearly all of us see only what we have been trained to see. So, accurate information helps because it empowers each of us to respond (internally and externally) to that older way of thinking.

Still, if information alone could change the way our species interacts with the world, it would already have done so. For we have information by the bucketful. It has made little difference in altering the virtual reality in which the species now lives, truly believes *is* the world around it. The solution to the serious problems that face us is much more difficult than simply gathering more information for it entails the alteration of the experiential



roots of who we think ourselves to be, means altering the very fabric and behavior of our lives, our cultures, our nations.

As an elder of the Kalahari bushmen once said: those of us in the western world must awaken our hearts again to the touch of the Earth upon us; walk away from the dissociated mentation that rationalists have insisted is the only way to understand our Earth and lives; embrace what the rationalists inaccurately call anthropomorphism and come to understand rationalist mechanomorphism for what it is. It is, as Gregory Bateson once said, “an epistemological mistake, perhaps more serious than all the older epistemologies that insisted upon fundamental unity.” What is actually true is that we have a lot more in common with a plant than a car. Mechanomorphism alienates us from the world around us, from the response of our hearts to what is presented to the senses, to who and what we are. It denies what is most fundamentally human to us, makes it impossible to recognize the other intelligences of this planet (from the smallest bacteria to the larger self-organized entities that have been named ecosystems), and isolates us from the companionship and caring with which we are always surrounded.



There is another, much older, way for us to understand our world and our place in it, one far more sustainable than the path our species is now on. And it is that older way of being that those of us in the foundation for Gaian studies have been

relearning, speaking of, and writing about for most of our lives. The first step in the decolonizing of ourselves, and often the most difficult, is to reclaim our capacity to feel the touch of the world upon us. The first act of disobedience is contemplation of what has touched us. The most important act of ecological reclamation is to abandon the long loneliness of the human



species and once again reinhabit our interbeing with the world. All our work is about this act of reclamation, the steps necessary, and the difficulties that each of us will encounter on the way.

There is not a one of us who does not know we have reached a crisis point in our habitation of Earth. The solution does not lie in top down pronouncements of experts telling us how to reclaim our damaged ecosystems. It begins with the ecological reclamation of ourselves, a necessity that millions of us feel every day in the depths of us. For the Earth is speaking to each and every one of us, telling us it is time, insisting that we allow the old wisdom to come into the world once more. And to each and every one of us the Earth has given a work that only our unique genius can express, in our millions, in the ecosystems we each inhabit -- for it will take us in our millions to do the work that is needed. None of us know why we are called to do what we feel we must do, only that we must do it, that something deeper inside us is urging a particular path.

~Stephen Buhner

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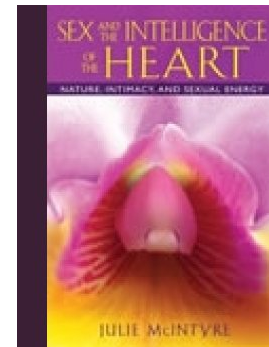


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## Sex and the Intelligence of the Heart



by Julie McIntyre

### Nature, Intimacy, and Sexual Energy

Exploring the territory of intimacy, sacred sex, and emotional healing as a journey to wholeness, Julie McIntyre examines the sacred relationship between sexuality and the Earth and reveals how to create deep, lasting intimacy with your lover by recapturing the wild, spontaneous, natural sexuality that is your birth

*"Man's task in life is to give birth to himself, to become what he potentially is, the most important product of his effort is his own personality."*

*~Erich Fromm, Man For Himself*

*Man For Himself*

*I don't want the cheese, I just want to get out of the trap.*

*Spanish Proverb*



Rigorous self-examination describes the process of interior work. You must be able to notice, account for, and be accountable to each part of you that lives within. The more you work with these parts, hear their voices, and understand each one's gifts and virtues and what each can bring to your life, the more whole and integrated you will become, the more alive you will feel, and the more mastery you will have over your life. When all of your inner council can make a decision together, in agreement with one another, the more ease and less drama you will have in your life.

Your heart must be in this—a deep desire and dedication to knowing yourself, to awakening your latent powers of intuition, motive force and creativity. You have a right to do this work, to be whole and happy in yourself and your relationships. And if there is to be any salvation for the human species, each of us must do this work. Now, without delay. Gaining facility with interior ego states takes time, devotion, and practice. But it won't cost you hundreds of dollars and time in therapy sessions, and the effects are immediate, the rewards innumerable

*~Julie McIntyre, Sex and the Intelligence of the Heart*

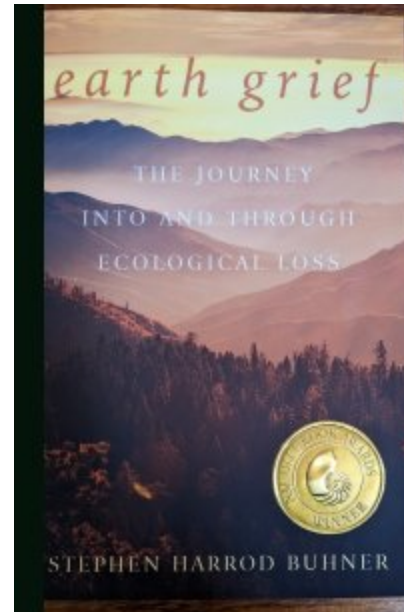
**CLICK TO ORDER: [Sex and the Intelligence of the Heart](#)**



## Stephen Harrod Buhner

Books click here:  
[Stephen's Books](#)

"Plants are the most adept chemist on Earth. As David Hoffman once said, "They have the ability to produce an almost endless number of chemical variations of a single chemical structure." They create both old and totally-new-to-this-planet chemical compounds throughout their lives, every day in fact. And they are far better at it, and far smarter about it, than we are. They are Earth's living, and highly adaptable, and intelligent chemist, endlessly reclaiming Earth's molecular structures in response to trillions of subtle ecological signals. It is an integral part of their function to do so. And they have been doing this for a very, very long time."



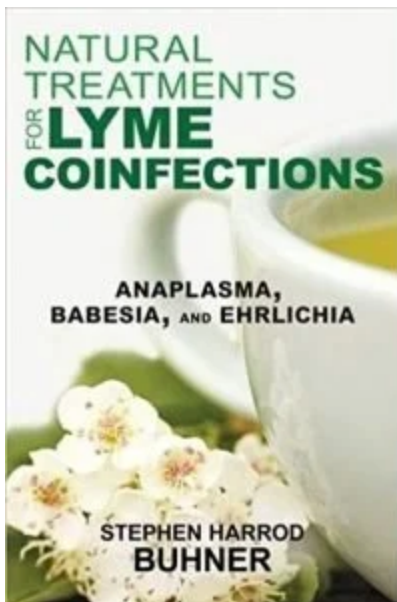
~ Stephen Buhner, *Earth Grief*

*'I don't know how Stephen has managed to awaken the feeling wisdom on me with just 'mere' words, but boy - it works - and with such poise, grace, humility and insight. I will revisit this treasure of a book again and again to imbibe its medicine and to remember how to feel most inwardly and how to respond more appropriately to my own life to the catastrophic realities of our times.'*

~ Stephen Harding PhD. Senior Lecturer and Deep Ecologist,  
Schumacher College

***Tiny Rant***  
***People Get Sick, Not Stupid***



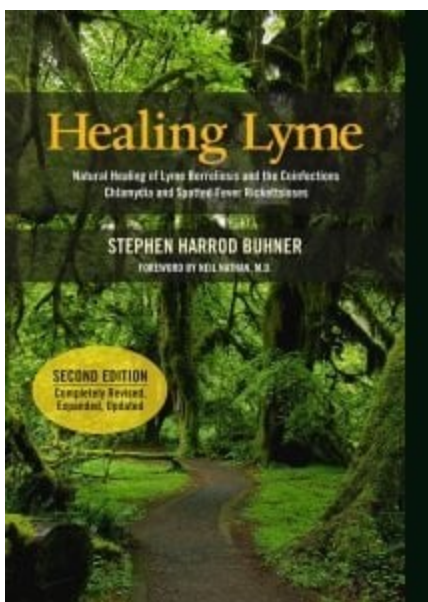


I have been told by a number of clinicians, both herbal and medical, that the majority of people with Lyme and/or its coinfections are to uneducated to understand this series of books, that they are not intelligent enough to determine which herbs should be. used (and, infact, that many herbs should be discussed by or dispensed *only* by properly trained and credentialed herbalist - and yes, they mean most community herbalists. - and yes, and those that are ill should not), that people with this group of diseases cannot in fact be trusted to be in charge of their own journey to wellness."

~Stephen Buhner, *NATURAL TREATMENTS for LYME COINFECTIONS*

*'Stephen Harrod Buhner's new book, is a brilliant follow up of his previous groundbreaking books, Healing Lyme and Healing Lyme disease Coinfections. This is a must read for medical practitioners and patients.'*

~ Neil Nathan, M.D., board certified family physician and author of *Healing is Possible*.



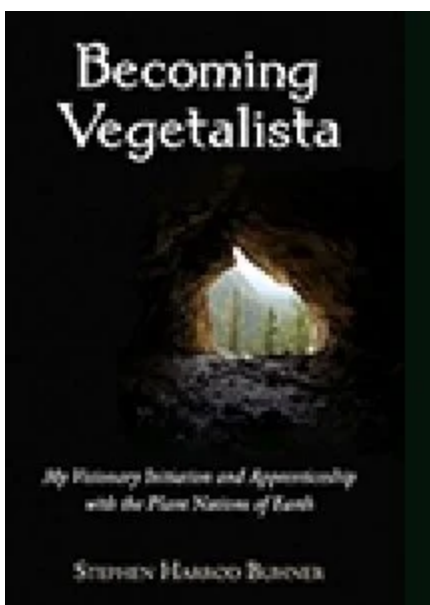
"The important thing to remember, to gain a sense of (this is a feeling thing, not a thinking thing), is that the herbal protocol you develop is similar to a bouquet of flowers. When combined it becomes a unique entity processing specific effects. Slight modulation of the herbs produces an entirely different entity, with, sometimes, substantially different effects. The only way to get there is to *feel* your way to it. You may begin with an analytical understanding of what is

happening. and what you are creating, but once the protocol is generated for a particular person, it is mostly feeling that gets you where you want to go, not thinking. The same is true for the disease complex itself. Each person has a slightly different form of infection, comprised usually of multiple coinfectious agents. you begin, again, with an analytical understanding, but your access to the reality of the disease in that person is the feeling sense, not the thinking mind."

~ Stephen Buhner, *Healing Lyme*

*'Brilliant as ever, Buhner once again brings us cutting-edge research about one of the more invasive and misdiagnosed epidemics of our time. Healing Lyme Disease Coinfections is not only a resounding wakeup call for all health care practitioners but also offers an elegant and potent paradigm that is synergistic, broad and deeply caring.'*

~Rosemary Gladstar, herbalist, teacher, author



"It is a tiny step, but a significant one, from the place where we first feel the world's grace and beauty to the place where the long loneliness of the human species ends. For that single, tiny step crosses a boundary between the isolated intelligence of the human world and the intelligence of Earth and, plants themselves. . . .

It is only through the feelings of the heart that the things I speak of here can be experienced in their fullness. And one of the great truths our western world does not want us to hear is that our hearts have been asleep for far too long, and they must awaken again to the touch of the world upon us. . . . This is the point in time where we, as *vegetalista*, must begin to move outward even further. . . . Ultimately, the *vegetalista* is a messenger, someone who travels deep into the wild landscapes and brings back knowledge of the plants and

their medicines and the healing that community and culture in our time need."

~ Stephen Buhner, *BECOMING VEGETALISTA*, My Visionary Initiation and Apprenticeship with the Plant Nations of Earth

*'One of America's preeminent herbalists, Buhner articulates the sacred underpinnings of the herbal world and deep ecology as only a real 'green man' can.'*

~David Hoffman, herbal elder and author of *Medical Herbalism*

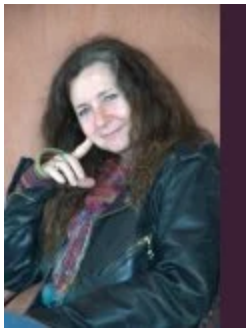
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*Stephen Buhner's blog,*  
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## Our Innate Navigation System

by Julie McIntyre

### Our Innate Navigation System

I had made a series of dental appointments late last fall. When I began to have doubts about keeping them, when I began questioning the need or not-need for them I knew these doubts were communications to pay attention to.

The critical parent's voice was making noises: "You need to get your teeth looked at, you should repair that cavity and avoid a root canal..." Should... is a red flag, it's not my voice; it's an internalized critical parent voice. "You need to," is an

internalized other voice, not my voice. My voice sounds like, “I want, I need, I feel, I will.”

Then the “what-ifs” in all their manifestations started talking. That is a voice of future fear, and decisions made from this orientation hardly ever work out well. Those are diminished decisions, decisions reduced to a default system.

In the midst of making a decision whether to keep the appointments or cancel or reschedule an image appeared. The image was me, as a parent taking a small girl by the arm and dragging her kicking and screaming, to the dentist. It felt wrong to keep the appointments; I wasn’t going to be that kind of parent to my inner child.



The feeling of the image was the decision. The image-feeling was the communication. I didn’t analyze it, or interpret it or explain it. I understood what it was saying so I dialed the dental office and canceled all four appointments.

When I made follow-up appointments six months later I didn’t assume I would keep them. As the dates grew closer to the appointments, they felt right, the timing felt right. When I could see-feel the image of me going to them without doubt or internalized other voices then I could feel deeper. I could see-feel myself going to them in detail: walking in the door, checking in at the front desk, sitting in the chair I knew I would use in the waiting room. I saw-felt myself sitting in the dental chair and suffering the inane chatter between the dentist and his assistant above my head and then I was walking out the door and driving home.

I don’t always have an image but I always have a feeling. If you are unable to see an image, if you are not visually oriented, following the feeling is primary. How does it feel, what is the feeling telling you, where is the feeling leading you?

**This is a navigation system we all have innately. In these destabilizing times depth decision making, holistic decision-**



making is increasingly crucial. It avoids decision- making from internalized voices, it avoids decisions from fear, and it empowers and vitalizes. Importantly, it builds trust in you. Using your internal navigation system creates authenticity.



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## Scott Harshman

### Founding Member of the Church of Gaia

Many people do not know what to do or how to go about it when faced with a debilitating, chronic or terminal illness.

I bridge the gap between being told what to do by providing alternatives to what you may be hearing from family, friends, doctors, etc.

Maybe it is a path less traveled than what people expect. I do provide emotional and spiritual support for your decisions. I provide alternative information that your doctor or hospital may not have thought of or have access to.

We meet one on one either by phone or in person to talk about

your individual situation. Each person and each situation is unique and deserving of a plan of action that reflects your values and desires.

### My Mission and The Church of Gaia

To bring Earth centered ceremony and teachings to anyone who wants to learn. Making available the information necessary for one to achieve balance of heart, mind and spirit..



### **Medicine Wheel:**

Realizing we are all related and sit in the circle of all life, neither above our relations or beneath them. We sit together.

### **CORE VALUES:**

**Everyone has the potential to be in deep relations with all around them.**

- All life speaks to us
- All want to be in relations with us
- Spirit brings those teachings that are needed in the moment

[Learn More Here](#)

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Medicine wheel

**Vision Quest April 15 to 24, 2024**

## Busqueda De Vision Memories

### San Pablo Mountain

/

This marks the third vision quest guided and sponsored here in Oaxaca. The Spirits of place on San Pablo Mountain received us with the same care as before. Interesting that each time I ask the spirits of place to be gentle with the people coming to quest and each time they say no, but they will provide the support needed to do the work there.

This time we had a total of 10 out of a maximum of 12 questors that the land there can support. Each time feeling into the space it is clear that the spirits of place prefer to work with smaller groups.

Every time I guide quest it is a unique experience for me. And when you repeat a ceremony in the same place the spirits of place work more strongly with you. And, that was the case once again.



The spirits of place brought in the importance of building community, bringing in the old ceremonies the land here wants, working with guides such as jaguar and serpent that are the old guides of this land. In addition the urgency of doing this work keeps increasing (this urgency is increasing for many spiritual leaders that I talk with).

And one questor writes: As I listened to everyone's stories I wrote down what felt potent and what resonated. This is a poem made of all of our stories. Thank you, thank you, thank you teachers and friends.

*I have never heard the sound of the hummingbird,*

*until now*

*a poem by US.*

*Sometimes I don't want to be seen*

*Sometimes I don't want to speak in public*

*Sometimes I work to distract myself from life*

*Sometimes I project my resentments and hurt people*

*Sometimes I give more than I am able*

*Hold and Carry*

*More than I can*

*I know I can build my own refuge*

*I can build fences of black metal to keep the neighbours out*

*And I lose my heart, lose my rhythm, lose my drum*

*I am afraid*

*I am angry*

*I am tired*

*exhausted*

*My body aches*

*And it is my mind that tells me I'm not enough*

*Why didn't I see this before?*

*My refuge doesn't serve*

*Why did I come here?*

*Why am I here?*

*I feel overwhelmed listening to myself*

*I want peace*

*Permission to lie down, to do nothing*

*To feel my body*

*To enjoy my body*

*My body is important*

*Just sit down and feel*

*Listen*

*See*

*Smell*

*Taste*

*Being is enough*

*More and more I am feeling home*

*The pines will protect and take care of me*



*Come little ones  
Come the 7 parts of me of my descent  
Come death  
Come sadness, grief, fear, anger, uncertainty, spirit keepers, ancestors  
Show me your face  
Maybe it's not magic  
But this is what it's going to be about today  
And I decide to trust  
Wherever I stand there is East, South, West, North  
And nothing is more important than watching the sunrise  
Than sitting on this earth  
And with the sunset, life lights up  
A majestic bird, cow, spider, or storm is a yes  
It can be whatever I want it to be as the currents of the earth lay under  
me  
Are me  
Every being is here to help me – imagine that  
I wish I had made this sooner  
I look at my hands and they look new to me  
I honor my bones, my skin, my heart  
I learn how to sing my song  
To bang my drum to the trees  
I have everything I need  
The healing is always there  
Now, I want to be gentle with myself  
Let go, let go, let go  
Surrender  
Trust  
To love deeper, I have to open to life  
With no refuge or cover to separate me  
From all of life, precious life  
Speak from poetry  
Softness  
The story is already there and I am a part of it  
Just joy  
Everything is in you*

It was an honor to sit with each of the questors and witness there

willingness to surrender to what spirit is calling on them to do.

~Scott Harshman for next vision quest dates: [bamagryphon@protonmail.com](mailto:bamagryphon@protonmail.com)

~

## My First Medicine Wheel

### The Grape Arbor

### Sacred Earth Space



Dorothy had cultivated a beautiful grape arbor. It grew big, luscious, sweet, purple grapes and I spent many hours surrounded by the green vines with sustenance just fingertips away. On one side of the arbor was mowed grass and the other had fruit trees and two large cottonwoods. The natural shade provided a feeling of seclusion, and the green magic was augmented by purple orbs for a brief time each year.

On very hot days I took refuge in the grape arbor pretending to be unseen and impossible to find. My family and the other people that passed by pretended with me although on many occasions I did hear mom saying that Patty was in the grape arbor and didn't want anyone to know where she was. I knew that my refuge being secret was pretending, a kind that children engage in, and it seemed to please the adults to support my fantasy.

*This was my first experience of creating sacred space.*

*I was four years old.*

*This practice or prayer has been with me for over seventy years.*

Sacred space that links body, soul and heart as one; loved physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I would take my special rocks placed in old handbag mother had discarded, my first medicine bag. One by one I would place them around me in a circle basking in their beauty. I would speak to them and introduce them to the arbor and some of the trees that branched



out over us. Each stone had a special story, where it was found, how long it had been with me, where it lived when not in the arbor or in the handbag.

Sometimes they lived in my room or outside around the borders of the sandbox or the cottonwood trees along the fence. I would talk to the rocks loving them and telling them how beautiful they were. All my stones would fit in my hand. I could close my fingers

sometimes hiding the whole stone while others peeked through. Each stone had a unique essence. It was much more than personality which some of the grownups said I gave to the stones laughing at my innocent naiveté about the nature of inanimate objects. Their beauty, shape and the colors that swirled through them went from white to black and all the colors in between.

I never doubted that these stones had been around longer than people perhaps before there was an Earth, part of a larger universe that I felt when I gazed at the stars. I wondered where they had been before Earth came to be and would make up stories to answer my question telling these stories to the stones and feeling into their bodies for a response or another story. Sometimes stories did come, and I would add these tails to my next visit to the grape arbor and the circle of stones placed around me. For the most part I felt I had made up the stories although I tried to pretend the stories were true and that the stones told me. Yet, there were a few stories that transcended my youthful imagination and took on the shape of myth.

One small black stone told me it had come from the stars flying away from its mother until it landed on the Earth. It had been here before people, animals, plants, and water. I marveled at how such a small being could hold so much time and memory and would place it all over my body to absorb its knowledge, its memories.

When I placed the stones in a circle around me, it was a circle of protection and that nothing would or could come into the circle unless invited. Of course, the stones and I invited everything we could think of and asked their invisible spirits to come and be with us. I loved being with all the unseen life that came into that little circle. It was my first Medicine Wheel, my first creation of sacred space. Years later I was to learn about sacred circles and wheels made of stones, plants, shells, or trees that were a meeting place for spirits and a place of meditation, prayer and healing. Some of the circles came into being without the touch of human hands, others were created by humans and some were older than recorded time.



Sun Bear, the Ojibwa holy man, became a teacher of mine many years before he passed into spirit. He had a vision of The Medicine Wheel and carried this vision to all parts of the world.

*Still in my heart, the wheel in the grape arbor is the one that I most often think of, and return to its invisible circle for healing and love.*

## Shamanic Herbalism in Beautiful Oaxaca - Bilingual





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 Shamanic Herbalism: Dreaming with the world.  
 Autumn 2024  
 October 4-9th*

*San Jerónimo Tlacoahuaya, Oaxaca.*

*Next Vision Quest April 2026 San Pablo Mountain*

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*Click to Email: [Scott Harshman](#)*

# Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*



Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*



My home is now in the Gila National Forest of southwest New Mexico. Conjoined with the Gila National Forest and Wilderness is the Aldo Leopold wilderness named after the conservationist, Aldo Leopold, who in the 1920's lobbied the Forest Service to name the Gila a

wilderness. On June 3rd, 1924 the Gila Wilderness became the world's first recognized wilderness area and became a model for wilderness preservation to come—40 years before the Wilderness Act of 1964.

I have read the essay, *Thinking Like a Mountain* dozens of times. I read it because Leopold's legacy and spirit are part of the numen of the Gila. I read it because it reminds me that there are powers greater than me in the world. They are part of being in the world.

It is in this essay that Leopold describes the moment tha something from the world, from the mountain, from the wolf profoundly entered his inner world and as a result changed his orientation to wilderness, to the intelligence and livingness of the world. It was the moment the touch of wildness and the thought of the mountain uncolonized his thinking.

Excerpts from *Thinking Like a Mountain*.

"Only the ineducable tyro can fail to sense the presence or absence of wolves, or the fact that mountains have a secret opinion about them.

My own conviction on this score dates from the day I saw a wolf die."

At the edge of a canyon they saw something move and heard a splash in the river below. They saw what appeared to be deer fording the torrent but quickly realized it was one a wolf. A half dozen grown pups sprang from the brush and joined in play. Leopold and his friends took up their rifles and shot into the pack with little accuracy. Eventually an old wolf was hit; they scrambled down the rocks to see what they had done. One pup was crippled and trying to crawl away. The old mother wolf laid snapping and growling.

What he found there was something utterly unexpected, something strange and wild, and something he'd never experienced before. He writes:

"we reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes.

I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes something known only to her and the mountain."



Leopold, continues, "I was young then and full of trigger itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view."



As part of this story and his legacy, Aldo Leopold went on to develop the land ethic: "All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise; that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. A thing is right when

it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

“Perhaps this is behind Thoreau’s dictum: In wildness is the preservation of the world. “Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived by men.”

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