

*Reconnecting With
our Wild Souls*



What was your dream before you stopped dreaming?

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Schedule

Friday

- 5-6: Reception – Settle in. Make nametags. Browse books.
6-7: Dinner
7:30-9:30: Circle session (Ending time is approximate) Please bring your fabric and other items you have brought, including your gifts and music makers if you brought any.

Saturday

- 8:30-9: Breakfast
9:30-12:30: Morning Session: Truth-Telling
1-2: Lunch
2-2:30 Short meeting to give you direction for the afternoon of solitude
2:30-5:30: Solitude (Find a little nook or quiet place and be as silent and alone as you can be.)
5:30-6:30: Dinner
7-9: Evening circle session

Sunday

- 8:30-9: Breakfast
9-9:30: Meeting in dining room for instruction.
10-12: Alone time
12-2:30: Quick Lunch
1-5: Soul Declarations
6-7: Dinner
7-9: Celebration: We will begin with sharing of quotes, poetry, song, dance etc. Drumming and dance if so inclined.

Monday

- 8:30-9: Breakfast
10-1: Closing session
1-2: Farewell lunch



Intention



- To let our minds relax and the demands of our lives fall away, to let our hearts open and our souls speak.
- To love ourselves and each other—deliberately. Our blood and bones, our pain and our joys.
- To be ourselves: Poet Yevenshenko wrote that the most achingly beautiful work in the world is to be ourselves.
- To explore the “what is” of our essence. To imagine a clear loving space in front of us into which we can expand and live in that.
- To experience receptivity, patience, acceptance of self and others.
- To name our different selves that hold us back from our dreams – to invite them to join in and love them anyway. Witness their struggles as you invite them forward. Fears, traumas – give them credit and make warm bed for them to lie in.
- To practice surrender. As Steinbeck says: “We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip, the trip takes us.”
- To ask ourselves the hard questions. What soul discomfort are we not acting on? Where is the stagnation?
- To ask for what we need, to create visions, dreams and clear intentions. To give voice and energy to our prayers. To commit. through declaration.
- To call up in our hearts the things that feed us. Mountain streams, wood thrush, blue bird, sunsets.
- To call forth the wisdom of those who have passed before us, back and back and back.
- To honor ourselves as animal creatures with biological, genetic realities - creatures with blood memories, feelings and wisdom.
- To invoke Love and blessing while we are together, apply it to ourselves, each other and world. A river of love pouring from this circle out over the aching world, saying the loving prayers with every fiber, bringing in the flow of love. It matters.

What We Do...

Our time together will be made up of purposefully simple sessions. Our goal through the circle ritual is to create a sturdy and safe container for our explorations and truth telling where we do not have to struggle with what to do or how to do complicated tasks or rituals. This is so we can focus our loving energy towards the struggles and questions inside of us. Each weekend has a basic structure and similar components, but each weekend is completely unique.

Basic Structure of each Session:

☘ *Centering and Moving:* I will begin each session with music and movement. When you hear the music it is time to find your own space in the room and check in with yourself and your energy. Feel what you are feeling. It is a time of transition—to dance, stretch, or move in any way that your body feels like. Even if it is simply tapping your toes, I want you to move. Please do not talk to those next to you during this short period of time.

Notice the energy in your body but do not judge tension or nervousness. Just notice it and send loving energy to that place. Take your time to feel yourself in your body – settle down into your belly – deep and rich. Take some deep cleansing breaths. We are together for the entire weekend. We have nothing to accomplish, nothing to do but to respond to the loving invitation to be with ourselves in the company of kindred souls.

☘ *Orienting towards the Circle:* I will stop the music and to signify moving our attention to the circle. Eyes closed, I want our heart and minds to slowly and gently orient themselves towards the circle, holding the circle of kindred souls gathered here in light and Love and imagine the presence of your own pure and beautiful true nature.

☘ *Opening Prayer:* After a few minutes of group silence or guided meditation, we will hold hands and I will begin with an opening prayer to call in the spirits, energies guides we wish to have present during the circle. We each call out as we want to with no worries of taking turns.

☘ *Activity*

☘ *Closing Circle:* At the end of the activity we will gather in the circle, hold hands and stand in silence with eyes closed, allowing the energy of the group to move around the circle, connect us and allow us to feel the circles as a complete and whole. I will say a closing prayer. We will open our eyes and recognize ourselves as individuals, feel our own center, (bringing our hands to our heart or just below our bellybutton) When we feel back in ourselves we bow away from the group.

When you have finished, please leave the circle area quietly so that others may meditate or sit in silence until they are ready to move.

☘ *Exploring our Intention:* Some of us don't know why we were compelled to come, while others have a very specific purpose. It might be to find the courage to make a big change, process a transition, recover from loss. Setting a clear intention for the weekend is helpful. We use a set of cards called OSHO cards to help us explore who we are and why we've come. We also use these cards at the end of the workshop to meditate on what we might be bringing away from the weekend that could help us on our journey.

Important Elements in Every Weekend:

- ☼ *Sharing:* A lot of what we hope to do is clear the way for soul to speak. Soul is just waiting for a stillness and opening inside—a time when our mind is quiet and our ego is napping. This time seems to come after a period of simple nonjudgmental being. Being with our nervousness about attending a Wild Soul Workshop, being with our fears, worries, and leftover stress from the journey. Being with our judgment of others and what should or shouldn't happen. What I bring as a leader is an ability to hold a big space for all those things, to love the process and to be completely present. As we share our journey at meals, in the circle and throughout the weekend we create space for soul to speak.
- ☼ *Ritual:* Ritual means a lot of different things to people. There are Native American rituals, religious rituals and simple family rituals. Rituals help with transitions, celebrations, prayers and relations. I used to feel so awkward doing any rituals, but would force myself and discover, to my surprise, that they had a big impact on me. Now... when I get nervous, I imagine myself as a wide-eyed curious child, willing to try anything. I do not follow the rules of any one tradition when I do a ritual. For me, ritual needs to be organic – coming straight from the heart of what is happening, what needs to be honored and who is honoring. Heron Dancers are a mixed group so I try to keep the rituals of this weekend as simple as possible. Participants are welcomed and encouraged to add their own interpretations. Together we create a rich mix of influences.
- ☼ *Building of the Altar:* The first night we build an altar with the things we have brought. Great care is taken in arranging and placing each item. We drape fabric and place flowers and rocks and photos. When we enter the circle it is good to be with its beauty and appreciate it anew. Adding more things throughout the weekend is encouraged
- ☼ *Truth Telling:* The circle will be the container for our truth. At times, our truth is our silence. Sometimes there are words. It is important to honor your experience by courageously being where you are at. I also want you to consider that nervousness and discomfort can be viewed as an invitation. We are trained to contract and withdraw at the first sign of discomfort. But often it is signal that something is moving in you, something is happening, you are approaching deep things you usually protect. Approach these fears if they come with love. The feelings of fear or anxiousness mean you are stepping down into something deep. Honor that. This group of loving souls may be a good place to look at the deep places.
A words about tears: Your tears are a gift to others. The heart does not care how it is broken open and moved outside its protected rigid place. It could be the beauty of a sunset, a baby's smile, or it could be someone's grief. Tears are a release for you and others. Please allow yourself to follow where the tears lead.
- ☼ *Celebration and Soul Expression:* I am not as wild a soul as I would like to be. I don't mean wild as in crazy, but wild as in completely and utterly myself. So.. these weekends give me the opportunity to stretch my wild self. I am not a drummer, but I drum. I am not a singer, but I sing. I am not a dancer, but I dance. I encourage you to let loose of inhibitions. We're all in this together!
- ☼ *Body Movement and Awareness* In general, we are a species disconnected from our bodies, just as we are disconnected from nature. We think of ourselves as far removed from the cave man, who used many different types of intelligence to survive. But those intelligences and instincts are only rusty from disuse. Over the weekend we work to become more aware of our senses, our subtle energies and the intelligence some call our sixth sense.

🌀 *The Human Dowsing Rod:* A dowsing rod is a piece of wood that leads a dowser to water. To be a human dowsing rod is to imagine ourselves as having the ability to be attracted to that which will nourish us. Follow your own vibration with open expectancy. See where it leads you.

🌀 *Solitude:* I will ask you to spend some time alone this weekend, resisting the urge to speak with others. John O'Donohue writes that there are voices within us that we have never ever heard. There is a welcome for us in the heart of solitude. Alone does not mean lonely. It means sitting with silence and seeing what's there.

There is a poem by Rumi that speaks to the need for retreating in and then opening up, retreating inward and then opening up.

Birdwings

Your grief for what you've lost lifts a mirror
up to where you're bravely working.

Expecting the worst, you look, and instead,
here's the joyful face you've been wanting to see.

Your hand opens and closes and opens and closes.
If it were always a fist or always stretched open,
you would be paralyzed.

Your deepest presence is in every small contracting
and expanding,
the two as beautifully balanced and coordinated
as birdwings.
- Rumi

🌀 *Soul Declarations:* The weekend's work leads to a very important opportunity for you to make a soul declaration or manifestation. I will describe this at the right time. I do not want you to think about it now. It comes naturally as the result of this gathering.

🌀 *Giftng:* We end the weekend by offering and taking gifts.

I thank You, my God, for having in a thousand different ways led my eyes to discover the immense simplicity of things. Little by little, through the irresistible development of those yearnings You implanted in me as a child, through the influence of gifted friends who entered my life at certain moments to bring light and strength to my mind, and through the awakening of spirit I owe to successive initiations, gentle and terrible, which you caused me to undergo: through all these, I have been brought to the point where I can no longer see anything, nor any longer breathe, outside the milieu in which all is made One.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, from the Hymn of the Universe

What to expect...

The idea is to enter the weekend with no expectations! To let go of cherished outcomes. But... I will share a few things to expect:

- ☛ *Food, drink, snacks and physical comfort:* Please bring whatever chairs, blankies, pillows clothes that will make you feel comfortable and at ease.
Please do not wear perfume or cologne. Many people are sensitive. Light essential oils are fine. We often sit for quite a while. Please stretch and move when you want to. A large part of this weekend, for those of us not practiced at it, is acting on what moves us inside.
- ☛ *Managing the Details:* Often, during the course of a workshop I have a difficult time being in the space I need to be and also take good care of the organizational details. Do not hesitate to help out by pointing out forgotten details etc. I will not take offense. I depend on it!
I usually arrange with a participant to help me as part of barter. This weekend we have Soul Flare Juliet Seaver to help us. Please go to her with any problems you have concerning the weekend, facilities, accommodations, or food etc.
- ☛ *My Leadership Style:* I have been told that my leadership style is unique. Some people find my apparent lack of "organization" or "linear progression" initially unsettling. Sometimes I need a moment of silence to re-orient myself towards hearing what should happen next. The challenge for us is to relax into not knowing. Our soul's journey is often unclear and circuitous and so can the journey we take on this weekend. Know that I am prepared and my intention powerfully clear. This allows me to hold a large space for all of us to do the soul work we are meant to do, not the soul work prescribed to us.
You may feel all sorts of things come up inside you about what should or shouldn't happen - judgments, fears, anxiety, boredom etc. Part of this weekend is really allowing yourself to sit back and watch what the ego says and does, say hello to those voices and then refocus towards the open heart and open mind without judging yourself.
Often participants will approach me outside of the circle with an idea they have for the group or something they would like to have happen for themselves. I welcome your thoughts.
- ☛ *Cameras:* I encourage picture taking. (with the person's or group's permission) One difficult aspect of these weekends is leaving. Having pictures of the weekend helps kept it "real" – gives testament to an important time. I only ask that you ask permission of those you are taking pictures of and limit use of a flash.
- ☛ *Sharing:* I often forget to ask for sharing, but I love when people bring their favorite poems and excerpts to read – during meals, before a session, at the closing of a session. These sharings are gifts to all of us!

We can copy others, we can live to please others, or we can discover that which is unique and precious to us, and paint that, become that. It is a task which takes a lifetime.

Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn for the 80's

Sitting in the Circle



- *Gathering the Circle:* When we gather in the circle we make the conscious shift to leave behind the person who is scared, worries what people think, who thinks they know the outcome, who fills empty space with words and small talk, who finds their worth in trying to help or fix others, or who critically examines what other people say or do. As we step into the circle we let all that go and enter a new dimension where we are Love, where our divine nature has sway, where we believe in magic and miracles. We open and hearts and minds.

 - *Speaking your Truth:* Everyone in the circle is also sitting in his or her own circle of power. It is a safe and secure place from which to speak your truth. When you receive the stone or talking stick, pause with your eyes closed and take as much time as you want to listen inside you for what you need to say. Do not rehearse what you are going to say when others are talking. Trust your heart in the moment. Sometimes, you listen and there is nothing there. Before you pass the stick, enjoy the silent moment in your circle of power. It is your time to feel the presence of the circle holding you and your own truth. If you speak, speak with your eyes closed in order to remain in your own truth. Speaking is not about “trying to be understood” it is about mouthing the words, giving breath and life to the words that are in your heart and soul. It matters that you say them out loud not that they are heard as you intended. But, no one is obliged to speak at any point during the weekend. Sometimes it is just about soaking everything in.

 - *Witnessing:* When you sit in your circle of power, no one can enter it unless bidden. This means if someone is crying we must let him cry. Crying is an important tool for cleansing. When you say “It’s Ok” or pat someone on the back, you are introducing the idea that something may have been “wrong” when actually it is all “right.” When you are crying and hear sounds or feel touch, you immediately become aware that your tears are being witnessed and you may become self-conscious – the cleansing process is stopped.

 - *Presence:* It is difficult to listen to someone speak without giving feedback, but we all must try so that the speaker’s energy is not pulled out of their circle and into ours. Try to refrain from “hm hm’s and yes’s. Our only job as they speak is to hold the speaker and the circle in the light. Being present is not about understanding what is being said nor about carefully listening to every word while maintaining eye contact. It is different from being a good listener. Do not judge your wandering mind. Just nudge it back to witnessing. Your mind takes breaks and scenic vistas when it needs to. There is a beautiful healing energy when people are present.
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- Respect everyone’s circle of power.
 - Try not to interject affirmations, encouragement or comfort. Listen in silence.
 - When you have the talking stick let your heart and soul inform your words.
 - Try not to practice what you will say as the others are talking.
 - When it is your turn, take the time you need to meditate and listen inside you.
 - If no words come enjoy the power of the talking stick in silence and then pass it on when you are ready.
 - Witness as best you can, but do not judge your wandering mind.

Truth Telling



My Favorite part of the circle was truth telling. I think that this was a real shifting point for me about being real with the circle. I wanted to be seen, to be heard, to speak my truth, so that I could hear it, a voice which sounded unfamiliar. As I heard each person speak their truth, I felt the web of connection grow until it contained us all. One truth, one struggle all to be answered by love. This truth telling allowed me to open enough to hear my inner voice who knew why I was there, I was there to ask to be born into love. So my re-birthing experience was profound and beautiful and remains a part of me forever. (I still can't find words to describe this).

Gabi White, Wild Soul May 2005

Speaking ones' truth on a regular basis is an amazing tool. Ann Linnea from PeerCircles spoke of this and how we must create a container for our story to be heard. In other words, when your friend asks you "How are you doin'?" that does not necessarily mean it is the time to speak your truth. Respond by saying, "Actually, I was wondering if you had time to meet. I'd like to share something with you?" Once you meet you need to ask for witnessing. This can be hard and awkward – be brave and clear and say: "I want to speak my truth and for you to witness it. You do not need to respond to my words in any way. It is a gift to me to have you listen with your loving heart." Most people are relieved and relaxed to know they have no obligation to try and fix or solve your problems. It feels to them like an honor to listen and indeed it is. This Wild Soul weekend is that container. It is our job to create the most receptive and non-judgmental space we can.

When our hearts are open, magic happens. Intuitive wisdom comes calling, creativity flows, our presence becomes a force for healing, and the very air in the room becomes charged with possibility. -Belleruth Naparstak

Truth: Some words on Truth as excerpted from A Pause for Beauty #99

I think the "seeker's path" is about arriving at a place, a bottom, where will and ego aren't big enough to serve the thing that you are after, which is truth. So you have to give up trying to control things. You attend to them. The difference is major. The path is about a larger, more mysterious context, which makes things scarier and more confusing, but it also makes beauty possible. Truth, like beauty, is not ultimately in your power, it is larger. - Tom Jay, sculptor, as quoted in our new 2006 Heron Dance Day Book and Planner

Some thoughts on the word truth...

When I first came upon *Heron Dance* I had a hard time with the word "truth," which seemed to come up in every issue. I associated it with dogma, hard firm lines, and exclusion based on a rigid belief system.

For most of my life I have felt wildly amorphous—changing and moving too fast to ever find my own solid center to anchor me. And then there was *Heron Dance*, asking me to live my truth. With tense discomfort I wondered, "How can I live it if I don't even know what it is?"

As I read all the back issues of *Heron Dance* and listened more with my heart than my mind to the people Rod interviewed, I slowly relaxed my resistance and fear and began to quietly watch for signs of my own truth. I recalled Frederick Franck's words in Issue 20, "It can't be discovered, but perhaps it can be intuited."

And when I surrendered just a bit to the possibility that I did have a truth, and that it was worth following, I began to feel my own truth's gentle tugs on my sleeve. Every day there was a choice: I could listen and follow that call from within, or I could strain and agitate for things like direction, enlightenment and motivation from the outside.

I finally began to trust that my own little voice, my truth, was worth following, regardless of where it led me. It is better to sing your own song poorly than to sing someone else's song well.

In celebration of life,

*Search for your innermost song
The one that no one can sing but you.
Your song is your source of power.
Your own song, however poorly sung,
is better than someone else's song,
Sung well.
Roderick MacIver*

