Why I’m Going On A Vision Quest

Description

desolation-wilderness Tomorrow morning I leave for Desolation Wilderness. Even though there are LOTS of wonderful wilderness areas to explore in Northern California, something about Desolation Wilderness keeps calling me back.

This time I’m going alone for 7-days with no distractions – no camera, no books, no music, no journal – nothing that could get in the way of my connection with myself, the wisdom of the Earth and the guidance of my Source. And from sundown on Friday night until sunup on Tuesday morning, I’ll be fasting and meditating and praying as I seek guidance and clarity.

Some of the reactions have been quite amusing as I explain that I’m going out into the wild world alone for 7-days with nothing to read, write, listen to, or take pictures with.

“Are you nuts?” seems to be the meaning behind the befuddled looks on their faces.

Perhaps I am nuts!

There is certainly a part of me that feels as if I”m nuts. The part of me that is scared sh-tless about heading out there alone for 7-full days. I’ve been out on my own for 4-days, and that was a long time. How will I survive on my own for 7-days? Well, I’m about to find out!

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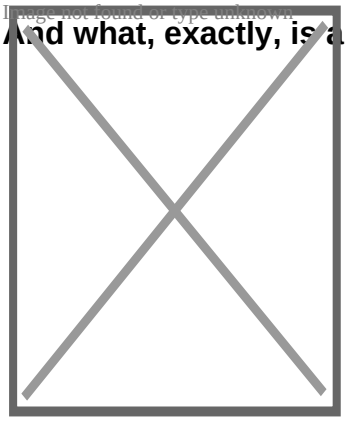
But why? Why am I taking a week out of my already quite full life to sit in silence with nothing around me other than the granite boulders, mountain water, marmots and ground squirrels and trees?

The easy answer is that I received clear guidance that it was time for me to do this. I was wondering how I could celebrate my 45th birthday in a way that would symbolize the transition from the very challenging period of my life that I am moving out of and into the new phase that feels expansive and peaceful. And it was clear that this was the perfect time for a Vision Quest.

And what, exactly, is a Vision Quest?



A Vision Quest is an initiatory experience or rite of passage. It is most often

associated with Native American traditions, though almost all indigenous cultures have some form of

vision quest. There are as many ways to quest as there are cultures. But, regardless of how one quests, the purpose is the same: To seek personal growth and spiritual guidance from the world of Spirit and the wisdom of the Earth.

Here is what Black Elk wrote about the Vision Quest:

> A Vision Quest is an experience of deeper understanding of Nature and Spirit. It is a ceremony practiced by American Indians. To prepare for this “insight” one must first cleanse the body and mind by going through an Inipi or sweat lodge. Then with the help of a Holy Man is told certain things and must go to a spot, usually on a holy mountain, and stay 2 or 3 days. During this time no food is eaten and one does not sleep but spends the time in deep prayer and observation. Many times, but not always, there is a vision. This vision is then shared with the Holy Man to help learn of its meaning. Sometimes the meaning is not shown for several years afterward.

I will quest in the Lakota tradition. On my second day out I will find a spot that calls to me, a space that feels sacred. I will prepare my questing space by smudging the circle, setting up my prayer ties for protection, placing my water and laying out my sleeping pad and bag. Everything else will stay outside of my questing circle.

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After a light dinner, at sundown on Friday night, I will enter the circle and I will not leave the circle until after the sun has come up on the morning of the 4th day.

While I am questing, I will meditate, pray, probably do some crying as I shed old beliefs and patterns and thoughts about who I am. And if I open myself enough I hope to receive guidance and perhaps a clear vision of my path. But, whether or not I receive a “vision” I know that this time will bring me into a deeper connection with my true self and my Source.

The Vision Quest is a powerful tool for personal growth because it integrates a deep connection to nature with solitude and silence.

If you have ever been on a silent meditation retreat, you understand the power of silence to catalyze great shifts in your awareness.

Likewise, if you have ever spent any extended time in nature, alone or with others, you understand the power of the Earth to awaken long dormant wisdom.

The wilderness has always been a place where humans can connect with spirit and seek answers to questions and solutions to problems of the physical realms.

But all of this still has not answered the question of why *I* am going on this Vision Quest.

Certainly the answer I gave earlier – that I received guidance to quest at this time – is not a clear answer. But unfortunately, that may be the best answer there is at this time.

Admittedly, this is a time of some inner turmoil and confusion for me. I have been questioning my path, my purpose, my meaning. I have been struggling to understand why I am here. Certainly, I would welcome clarity and a deeper understanding of my purpose and the next steps on my path.

I am also experienced enough to know that I could come down from that mountain as confused as I am now! As Black Elk said, “Sometimes the meaning is not shown for several years afterward.”

Will the meaning be clear to me when I return, or will I have to wait several years? I will let you know!

Category

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Date Created
2009/09/16
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