

Sensitivities. We all have them – it's just that some of us pave them over.



Ella was always a sensitive child. She could feel so much ‘beyond the physical’, that sometimes she wondered, ‘Why?’ . . . ♥ . . .

The first time she noticed that she was a little ‘different’ this way, was when other kids placed – in absolute glee – pennies on the railroad track where it crossed the road near the school. They would step back – safe enough to not be blown to smithereens by the intensity of the freight train as it rumbled by. And they would wait.

They would wait – until the train had passed, and the pennies had cooled (some brave boy would always step forward first – as if an initiation, a rite of passage – and test the pennies ‘sizzle’ – with his fingers or, if there was a girl about whom he liked, sometimes, even with his tongue) . . .

And then, giggling and bravado-filled (depending upon their gender), they would rollick away, their flattened pennies like prize possessions safely tucked away in pockets.

Ella never joined in this.

Being that, as the train and its incredible weight pressed relentlessly upon the prone pennies . . . she could hear them scream . . .

This was likely the first of a series of experiences that taught Ella – that *reminded* her ♥ – that everything is alive . . . That everything has ‘spirit’ in it . . . That someday, some glorious day – just like Pinocchio’s toys ♥ – someday everything . . . *everything will come to life* ♥ . . .



And hence Ella was gentle with everything.

She knew to respect *everything* ♥.

When other kids would trash their bikes, tossing them into a heap on the ground, as if discarding them . . . Ella would silently thank hers.

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86

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Day Eight

Just like she would Shiloh . . . Each and every time they would come in from a ride . . . and she had released his bridle, and hung it in its safe keeping place upon the barn wall . . . Ella would take moments, lingering, with Shiloh . . . just breathing with him . . . silently speaking with him . . . thanking him . . . for the ecstasy of their ride ♥ . . .

She would do this with her bicycle, too!

And she would do this with spaces – spaces that had held her, so that she could surrender, dropping gently into an inner world of sacred experience . . .

She always did this silently, discreetly . . .

She would simply turn ‘back’ . . . and face her bike, or the room, or the meadow, or . . .

And she would thank it . . .

She would thank it . . .

For what . . . they had ‘shared’ ♥ . . .



This is likely why she felt such affinity with the First Nations kids ♥.

She was ‘white’ . . . And the unspoken expectation in the society in which she grew up was that . . . well, white kids played with white kids.

That was the silent, undercurrent ‘rule’.

Maybe it was because she – like many of the First Nations kids – lived ‘out of town’. So there was more privacy – for them to connect with each other ‘outside of the rules’.

Or maybe it was because – just because – they ‘recognized’ each other somehow.

Years later – numerous times as Ella was growing into young and mid adulthood – people would say to her, “You just shape shifted! I just saw a First Nations wise woman! I saw her! In your face!”

They would be awestruck, spellbound, by what they ‘saw’ ♥.

Ella knew this. She could always ‘feel’ it – inside ♥. She knew, somehow, that she had ‘First Nations blood’ ♥.

So hanging out with the ‘Indian’ kids was just like bread and butter to her. It was the most obvious, natural thing to do ♥.

Not that she eschewed the ‘other’ kids. No. She equally related to them – mostly when at school.

For her ‘play’ time was very limited. As her passionate affair with dance emerged . . . there was less and less time available for ‘other’ things.

In fact – *so* many times that it began to mildly annoy her – people would *presume* that ‘her’ experience was like ‘their’ experience ♥.

She never, ever minded this – when what they were correlating ‘in them – to her’ was expansive, and positive, and hope-filled, and ‘light’ ♥.

It was whenever they would assume that ‘she felt what they felt’ that was *limiting*. That was when it bothered her.

Like when – over and over – people would state (rather than inquire), “Wow. You sacrifice so much to dance!”

And she would be absolutely mystified.

‘What . . . could they possibly . . . be thinking?’, she would wonder, truly perplexed.

For yes – she *did* have to make very, very clear choices – in order to dance.

And yes – this *did* mean that some ‘other’ things that she also truly loved – would have to ‘wait’, until ‘later’, perhaps ‘very later’! . . . when there was time ♥ . . .

Yet . . . there was nothing . . . absolutely nothing . . . about her life . . . that was . . . ‘sacrifice’ ♥ . . .

It was a *privilege* . . . to be shown her passion . . . and at such . . . a young time . . .

When she graduated from high school – with honors, like her classmates – so many of them were the ones who were perplexed this time . . . Some of them literally spoke aloud to her, puzzlement in their eyes . . . “Why aren’t you in University?” For instead she was, by then, full-time in training, at L’École Supérieure de Danse du Québec . . .

And she knew . . . she quietly knew inside . . . that they didn’t . . . quite yet ‘understand’ . . .

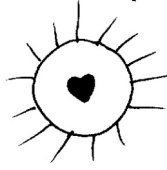
A few years later . . . once she was ‘up, onstage, in lights’ . . . then . . . yes it was then . . . that they could comprehend . . .

And it was then, too . . . that they admitted, to her . . . that they were by then, several years in . . . to their university, ‘degrees’ . . . and even then, to their chagrin . . . they still, had no clue . . . what it was that they, ‘wanted to be’ . . . and for Ella . . . this was already . . . crystal, clear ♥ . . .



There was also the ‘assumption’ . . . that so many people made ♥ . . .
Enough people voiced it . . . that she began to wonder, ‘How many people didn’t?’ . . .
They would say to her – in absolute certainty – that, “You will be a teacher” . . .
And silently, so as to not ‘dispute’ them . . . for she truly respected them . . . for simply ‘being’ ♥ . . .
She would be bemused inside herself, rather puzzled . . .
For Ella *knew* . . . she would not be a ‘teacher’ – in the classical, teaching sense ♥
. . .

Of either a schoolteacher . . . in a classroom . . .
Or a teacher of dance . . .
No, not these . . .
It was decades later . . . that it dawned in her . . .
When finally . . . she understood . . .
That it was ‘spirit . . . she would be teaching’ . . .
She . . .
Would be a ‘bridge’ ♥ . . .



‘The Voice’ said to her – at a young age ♥ . . .
Several things . . . she would hold dear . . .
Like, “It is possible . . . to attain altered states of consciousness . . . without . . .
the use of drugs” . . .
She was – what – about ten by then?
And she had zero . . . exposure to ‘drugs’.
So there wasn’t any . . . ‘context’ . . . yet . . .
For what . . . was soon to come . . .
For in all . . . her ‘growing up years’ . . .
When she was invited . . . to ‘share a toke’ . . .
She would graciously . . . decline the offer . . .
Though she wouldn’t be the person . . . at all ‘revoke’ . . .
For she had no issue . . . with what ‘they’ chose . . .
To do . . . in their ‘spare’ time . . .
Yet she . . . would heed ‘the voice’ . . . in . . . her . . .
For it . . . was true . . . sublime . . .
This ‘no need to use drugs’ premonition would become so elemental – so primary
– in her future years ♥.
It would become a foundation, of how she ‘served the world’.
It would be a ballast, to dispel potential fear.
For years later, when colleagues ‘shared with her’.
In discreet, and holy trust ♥.
That in ‘their’ young years, when they ‘played with drugs’.
Something . . . had crept ‘in’ . . .
And they had spent years and years, trying to ‘dispel it’ . . .
That . . . ‘something . . . not quite right’.

And so ‘across the tracks . . . out of town’ . . . they would tell her, as they walked home from school . . . what was transpiring . . . in ‘their’ culture . . . what was evolving . . . in their ‘spirit world’ ♥ . . .

She was a rapt audience – and they knew it!

She would quietly listen to them – like a sponge ☺

For ‘they’ were teaching ‘her’ . . .

They were reminding her . . . sacred ‘songs’ . . .

This was something else, that Ella realized, at a very, young age in school ♥ . . .

That an ideal teacher, is a man or a woman, who finds *as many ways, as are required, to describe something until everyone, does comprehend* ♥ . . .

Ella was a quick learner. She would typically get things, in ‘one go’.

Though she recognized, and she respected, that this was not the case, with everyone.

She inherently could ‘see’ . . . that everyone bears ‘a special gift’ ♥.

It’s just that – not everyone, has been ‘nurtured’, yet . . .

Nourished to remember . . . what their gift ‘is’ ♥ . . .

So as the First Nations kids, would share their stories . . . she would listen, with rapt care . . .

For she realized, it was like ‘gold’, these, things . . .

And so she listened, with great care . . .

The first of these things was the ‘naming ceremonies’ ✿

She was intrigued when her ‘Indian’ kid friends would disclose to her their ‘actual’ names . . . Not their ‘Christian’ names – like Joseph, or Jacob, or Marie, or Noelle . . . No, their ‘real’ names . . . White Bird’s Wings, Stands Tall Tree, Moon Rays, Kicking Horse . . .

What she was mesmerized by was *how accurate each of these names were*. They truly, truly described the ‘spirit’, of the individual person ♥.

They weren’t ‘plastered on, by the adults’. They weren’t simply names that ‘they’, wanted their children to be called.

And so, as her friends disclosed their ‘real’ names to her . . . Ella began to call them, by these ♥.



Then there was the ‘walking out ceremony’!

Ella had never heard of anything even *remotely* like this in ‘white culture’.

It was around the time of a child’s first steps, that the community that would be directly supporting this young soul – as it grew and it matured – would come together ♥.

And in honor of this child . . . and in assurance of its growing ‘strong’ – spiritually, emotionally, physically, and beyond . . . they would each place something of significance . . . inside a pouch – a bag . . . that would become a part, of this child’s sacred ‘bundle’ . . .

And this ‘bag’ . . . it would be carried by them . . . for the rest . . . of their living days ♥ . . .

If only, Ella breathed a deep sigh every time she pondered this . . .

If only, white people weren’t so numb . . .



And then there’d be puberty!

Ah, yes . . .

A time, in her Indian friends’ growing up, that was reverentially ‘steered’ ♥ . . .

The boys, at a time of ‘turning’ – for ‘rites of passage’, were revered – would make the transition, sometimes the ‘hurdle’, over the threshold, to become ‘men’ ♥ . . .

They would be invited, for the ‘first’ time, to join the men, in the ‘men’s camps’ ♥ . . .

Wherein they would begin to hear, the elders’ stories . . . the stories which were the teachings, for the *men* ♥ . . .

And for the girls, it was the ‘moon lodges’ . . . and the oral teachings, from their women elders, of the grace, of ‘how to love’ ♥ . . .

How to traditionally parent . . . how to enrich a child’s soul . . .

How . . . to lift them ‘up’ ♥ . . .
Plus the teachings, of menstruation . . . of the *power, of the blood* ♥ . . .
This was not ‘avoided’ . . .
This was not ‘scoffed at’ . . .
There was implicit recognition . . .
Of the sacred power . . .
Of their *blood* . . .



All of these teachings and rites of passage and ceremonies were to endure – to transmit, the sacred knowledge . . . the culture, to ensure ♥ . . .
Yet ‘the interruption’, as Ella learned later . . .
For at this ‘young age’, no one spoke . . .
Of the horrors, of residential schools . . .
And of the great toll, these ‘schools’ took . . .
For when the settlers, came to this ‘native’ land . . .
They stole more, than humans’ lives . . .
They tore deep, into their spirits . . .
They took more, than squaws as wives . . .
They took children, to destroy a culture . . .
And they placed, them in remote ‘schools’ . . .
Where they refused, these young ones access . . .
To their language . . .
To their customs . . .
To their elders . . .
To what they ‘knew’ . . .
So that over time . . .
The decay was rampant . . .
Drink drugs and smokes . . .
Became their ‘food’ . . .

They near forgot . . .

About their *culture* . . .

They near forgot . . .

Just who they ‘were’ . . .

And so when Ella, and her young playmates, would impart stories, as they walked from school . . .

There was no mention, of the ‘residential schools’, then . . .

For these children, did not yet know . . .

That they were descendents, of destruction . . .

Of moral conquest, of stolen lands . . .

Of rape and pillage, of soulful slaughter . . .

They were innocent, still, back then ♥ . . .



‘Apprenticeship’ was key, too!

As each child’s natural tendencies and gifts became noticed – by their ‘elders’¹⁶ – pairings would begin to happen – to teach, these children things ☺

Kicking Horse was taught the ways of hunting, traditionally, with a bow ♥ . . .

He was taught the reverence, towards each animal – asking permission, to strike it dead . . .

Then the rule, of sacred honor, it was to use, sinew as thread, bone as tool, hide as cloth and shelter, organs and flesh as food . . .

Nothing was wasted.

Ever.

All was used ♥.

Stands Tall Tree learned the ways of trapping – real time, while in the bush . . .

He would go out, among his elders . . .

¹⁶ Elders are not chosen and decreed due to their ‘age’ . . . It is a recognition, of sacred *merit*, to carry the title of ‘elder’ ♥ . . .

And he would learn to hunt, with ‘lesser stealth’!
Moon Rays learned the ways of beading – which is more, than just an ‘art’ ♥,
For the placement of the beads – and the choice of colors – tells a ‘story’, right
from the start ♥.

White Bird’s Wings learned the ‘medicine’ – of how, to heal the sick ♥.
For she showed signs, from a very early age . . . that she recognized the energy,
within the ‘plants’ ♥.

Each and every child, would be paired with elders’ teachings, to ‘awaken, their
sacred gifts’ ♥.

What a beautiful way, Ella thought, to raise a culture . . .

What an exquisite way . . . to nurture *the heart* ♥ . . .



As these children grew older, they would begin their ‘fasting’ ♥ . . .

Sometimes in the context of ‘vision quests’, or ‘sweat lodges’ – and sometimes
‘on their own’ – fasts typically took place in springtime.

Preparation would begin months before – at winter solstice – when they would
begin to ‘set their intensions – for their cleanse’ ♥ . . .

And when they ‘went out’ – upon their fasting . . . it was never, for ‘just
themselves’ ♥ . . .

They would fast, for their *community* . . . They would fast, for their ‘greater
family’ ♥ . . .

The benefits, that ‘they’ would gain through this . . . These would be shared,
beyond themselves ♥ . . .

Community – sacred community – is such a seminal part, of all they are ♥ . . .



In the ‘sweat lodges’, the teachings would always vary – depending upon who
was leading it ♥ . . .

When someone, among the community, sensed it was time, for a ‘sweat lodge’ ♥ .

..

They would offer tobacco, to an elder . . .

That elder . . . would ‘check in’ ♥ . . . to know ‘from within, if it was them’ ♥ . . .

If not, they would ‘refer’ them on . . . to another elder . . . who would too, ‘check in’ ♥ . . .

And so when the lodge was built, it would be in accordance . . .

With the teachings, of he or she who led ♥ . . .

‘How many ribs to use’ . . . of young fresh willow . . . to bend the contours . . . above their heads ♥ . . .

‘How many grandfathers to collect’ . . . the perfect stones . . . that would not split . . . when heated, to a white hot light . . . to create the steam . . . to make them sweat ♥ . . .

And what ‘medicine’ . . . was taught . . . by the elder . . . through song and ‘stories’ ♥ . . . as those within the lodge . . . purged their toxins . . . via heat . . . thus via sweat ♥ . . .

This would be ‘bear medicine’ ♥ . . .

Or it would be ‘women’s medicine’ ♥ . . .

Or it would be ‘men’s medicine’ ♥ . . .

Or about ‘relationship’ ♥ . . .

And always, it was about ‘community’ ♥ . . .

For without community . . . they would be dead ♥ . . .



The ‘powwows’ were multi-cultural, in a sense!

For peoples of many First Nations would gather – all together – to share their dances, and their drumming . . . their songs and stories . . . their healing ‘gifts’ ♥ . . .

The powwows were the bigger gatherings . . . They were ‘multi clan’ . . .

They were the weaving together, into larger community . . .

The ribs, the heart beats . . . of many lands ♥ . . .

In harmony, and in diversity . . . They would gather, all as One ♥ . . .

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97

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Day Eight

Without martyr, without bloodshed . . . They would gather together, all, as, One ♥

. . .



The ‘sun dances’ were more serious . . .

Young women could make their outfits . . . and dance . . . yet ‘not while on their moon time’¹⁷ . . .

Young men and women would participate in sun dance . . . first as ‘helpers’ ♥ . . .

They would learn the ways, through ‘serving food’ . . . or ‘keeping fires’ . . . or in any of the many, sacred acts ♥ . . .

Where people sit . . . is also sacred . . . for it is known the power . . . of where one ‘sits’ ♥ . . .

It was the pipe carriers – and they were sometimes numerous – who would tether themselves, to ‘the pole’ ♥ . . .

The pole that stood erect, like a lightning bolt sentinel ♥ . . .

Like a great pathway . . .

Up to ‘home’ ♥ . . .

Piercing flesh . . . upon their chest bones . . .

These revered men . . . would tether on ♥ . . .

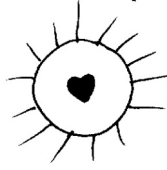
Dancing for four days . . . and through the nighttimes . . .

These men would dance . . . dance to ‘the songs’ ♥ . . .



These are some of the things . . . the very sacred things . . . that Ella learned . . . from her Indian friends ♥ . . .

¹⁷ During their menstrual cycle . . .



When Ella and Mary Beth were twelve, and Ted was fifteen, Roger and Heather made the bold move – of buying a ‘cabin’, at 1000 Islands ☺

It was a ‘bold’ move, in that this was the first time the family ‘took some distance’ from Le Couer du Roi. It had been their sole place of ‘solace’ – other than the farm – whenever the children were on holiday. Arthur and Souca had asked permission – years before – of the ‘community’ – the Board of Directors and the Volunteers – to build a small cabin in the ‘keepers’ quarters’. This is where the children, and their parents, would retreat, from time to time ♥.

As Roger’s research became more ‘non-religious’ . . . and as the children grew . . . it became evident that they needed more space . . . in which to stretch and move.

And so Roger and Heather invited the children to participate – in finding ‘the ideal location’, where they would begin to holiday ☺

Little did anyone know – even Ella – how much relief this would give her. For Ned was never asked here. This place, was free of Ned.

Ella reveled – as did her siblings, especially Ted – in the new adventures that ‘the islands’ gave.

While Ted learned to chop wood and lay fires, to warm his mother in the early mornings, as she woke up – Ella was out by the lakeside.

She would wake with the dawn, and take a boat out, upon the still, misty waters. Sometimes it was a rowboat – the first, of their self-propelled vessels. Later, it was a canoe. And finally, she found her love.

Paddling solo, in a kayak, was the best! For the gentle lilt, side to side, as she rolled her double paddle, left to right, rocked her oh so smoothly, like a soothing cradle, as she glided, atop the lake ♥ . . .

Deer, and eagles . . . bears, and thrushes . . . beavers, and owls . . . She saw them
all . . .

There was a serene peace, and a stillness . . . in being 'out' here, all alone . . .

She basked, in its tranquility . . .

She basked, in nature's *love* . . .