



Lynn Andrews **on *LadybugFlights***

A Shaman's Challenge for the New Year

As a twenty-first century shaman, I live an everyday life in the Western world but my world view is drawn from ancient roots. It is born of the teachings of Mother Earth as they have been understood, practiced and handed down through a line of shaman women that is many milleniums old.

It is a world view that is based on the wisdom of the ages, thousands of years of study and observation by shamanic peoples everywhere of the way energy moves throughout the universe, observation of the cycles of energy that move across Mother Earth and the great balance that exists in the natural world. Even today, in the crush of a modern world that has turned its back on Mother Earth in so many respects, shamanic peoples across the globe continue to study and practice her ancient wisdom, applying what she teaches them to the ever-changing stresses on their environment.

This earth is a great schoolhouse, and it has been my great privilege and honor to learn and work with a sisterhood of shaman women for nearly four decades.

It is the understanding of my teachers that we come onto the physical plane to learn lessons that can only be learned in the physical world. We come into this life seeking enlightenment, yet it is the one thing we seem to fear the most. Our beautiful Mother Earth is in a great muddle right now because of our fear. We are faced with more calamity today than at any other time in human existence, and our beautiful earth is suffering for it greatly because of the careless and reckless ways we live upon her.

It doesn't have to be this way. If we would but let her, Mother Earth can teach us everything we need to know to live well and in complete harmony with her, today and for thousands of years to come. Her rhythms are the rhythms of energy and power as they flow throughout the entire universe with timeless constancy. As shamans have always known, when we get ourselves right-sized on this earth, we are able to move into this flow. That is when the great blossoming and magical synchronicities of life actually begin to happen.

Our modern understanding and relationship with the cycles of Mother Earth and with life in general is a very mixed bag. We have moved from living in harmony and balance with this earth to harnessing some of her awesome power in truly wondrous ways, yet we often don't have any sense that we've gone too far until things we don't know how to fix begin to fall apart. We do the same thing to ourselves and to our societies. Through advances in our technology and the great flowering of human ingenuity and creativity,

we have all of possibility at our fingertips. Yet we fill our lives with so many distractions that we end up putting on headphones to drown everything out instead of allowing ourselves to be inspired by the wonders of life that are around us all the time. We are even surprised when it gets freezing cold in the winter and blazing hot in the summer, and we build on the floodplains only to wonder whose fault it is when our homes fill up with water?

We create wonderful metaphors for the ways that the seasons of this earth mirror the seasons of our souls, from the exuberant spring of youth through the winter of our transition into elderhood. But curiously, this is where our understanding of the cycles of Mother Earth seems to end. I would like to challenge and inspire you to break these old bad habits and grow wise and steady in the seasons of Mother Earth, beginning right now.

The natural world supports and sustains life with four very distinct seasons: Winter, when icy storms send plants and animals into hibernation as earth prepares herself for new growth; Spring, when the seeds of new life begin to unfurl their limbs; Summer, when that new life bursts into full bloom and thrives; and Fall, the time of harvesting and of letting go so that life can return to hibernation and preparation for the new cycle that is to come. There is a time for new beginnings, a time to nurture those new beginnings to fruition, a time for the fullness of life, and a time for death and the return of all things to their source, to the Great Mother, in preparation for the next cycle.

It is the same with human creativity and manifestation. Anything you will ever do well has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Know that. It is your blueprint for success.

Every act that you create begins with a dream. Never doubt this: if you can dream it, you can do it.

The season of winter which is upon us now is akin to spiritual hibernation, the time for going within to dream with Great Dreaming Bear and explore your inner landscape. It is the time to discover the next step on your great journey of life and dream your new life into existence. These are vital steps, ones that you do not want to miss: the time for discovering the great dream for your life and evaluating where you have been, where you are and where you are going next in furtherance of that dream.

What is it that you want to do? Make the time and take the time to take stock, evaluate your strengths and weaknesses, the resources you will need and what no longer serves you. Winter is the time for discovering the target in front of you and pulling back your bow. It is the first step of the rest of your great journey through life. Then, when you aim your arrow in spring, you aim truly into the central essence of your life and what it is you are trying to accomplish.

When you begin to flow into the seasons of the Great Mother, you suddenly discover that you are no longer fighting against life, that you have more energy and enthusiasm than you ever thought possible. This is my shaman challenge for you, that you discover the great flow of energy that Mother Earth teaches us every day of our lives, so that you can flow with the cycles of energy in the universe into a life of spiritual harmony, abundance and joy.