

The Storyteller



THE STORYTELLER

My father was a Chippewa Indian. The Chippewas have a saying, "You must know where you have been, in order to know who you are and where you are going."

This belief is not original to the Chippewas. Storytelling has been around as long as mankind has existed—in art, writing and speaking.

The world has always maintained an interest in storytelling; we call it history. And for the most part, the emphasis in history has been focused on men.

The Storyteller is a two-dimensional piece of art that attempts to tell Her Story in both art and writing.

The Storyteller in this piece is a female shaman. The nine circles, each encapsulating a figure, describes eight phases in a woman's life and one direction the shaman believes the world must adapt if the Earth and we are to survive.

Female shamanic figures have been unearthed that have proven to be tens of thousands of years old. The same is true for pictorial drawings that have been painted and discovered on cave walls.

Invocation is the first phase in a woman's life where she realizes there is a source, presence, being, (call it what you like) that is bigger than herself. It is also a phase where she realizes a personal relationship to that source can be comforting as well as rewarding. It does not matter the path she chooses to find that source—there are a thousand and they all lead to same center.

Divination is learning how to listen to that source. Some call the source the still small voice, others call it the Holy Spirit, and some see visions or hear messages from that source. In ancient times divination was a more formal process. Divination is a skill every woman needs to cultivate. Prayer is talking to God. Divination is listening.

Descent is a time that seems necessary to the human condition. The Christian Bible refers to it as the "dark night of the soul." It can come following a loss, a failure or seeing a part of what psychologists call "our shadow" and the havoc it has caused in our life. Whatever the cause, descent is a time of aloneness, darkness and despair. It is a time when nothing a person does to seek relief works. It is a time of deep sorrow and grief. There is always an end to descent—however, we can't push it to end or demand it to stop. We can only endure it. In its own time, not ours, it will end. Much faith is needed during these dark nights. The encouragement of friends and family can also help. At the end of the darkness, our long wait is rewarded. We will uncover new strengths and new parts of ourselves. We will come to peace with our mistakes and the mistakes of others. A new and better person emerges from the darkness into the light.

Protection is something we need to give ourselves and receive from others in moderation. Too much of it from either source will cause us to feel victimized



and weak. Too little of it will cause harm to others or ourselves. Protection is an important part of love when administered in the proper dosages.

Healing is the process of moving towards wholeness within our society and us. It is about developing the flexibility and wisdom to understand that the things that worked well for us today may need to be nudged outward or forward to work well tomorrow. It is also about growing in our minds, bodies and souls. In short, it is about recognizing something is no longer working, and then doing something about it.

The Divine Feminine is the side of the Divine that has been diminished by religion for too long. It's not only in women, for it exists in every woman and man. It is the part of our divinity that needs to mature if we are to become whole as human beings. It is about discerning, listening, and being. The masculine side of the Divine is about putting into action what we have discerned and heard. The feminine side of the Divine is love, grace and empowerment. Without the feminine side as its partner, the masculine side develops rules, rigidity, and seeks power. Without the masculine as its partner, the feminine accomplishes little.

Flying is that special time when we've done the hard work, conquered all difficulties, and then, without warning, everything comes together in way much better and greater than we could have hoped for or dreamed of. Sometimes it means our work has built the runway for others to take off and fly.

Dancing is a special way of moving through life's journey. It is about listening to the silent pulse directing the ebb and flow of all that is, and then finding the trust and courage to move with it.

Science and spirituality must become friends—this is the only path to a future where Earth and its inhabitants continue. Spirituality isn't religion. It's a passion for and personal relationship with the Divine. Science validates the order, rules, and principles with which the Divine moves. Neither path is easy to follow as and both move and grow. Both can be abused and misused for personal aggrandizement, power, or greed. In the negative, the goals and decisions of both are short sighted. If they finally become friends; truth, honesty and consideration for the generations to come will result.

The eighty-one women presented in the storybook represent one of each of the nine phases. There is much to be learned from these women's lives. They've lived with courage, love and trust to the best of their ability. As with The Storyteller, I hope you will join me in saluting them.

I leave you with one final thought. It comes from the Chippewa tradition:
"When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced;
May you live such a life that when you die, you rejoice and the world cries."

Che Megwetch (Thank you very much)



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