

# Spirit of the Horse

THE NEW MYTHS OF EQUUS



Carole Devereux



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## DEDICATION

I have devoted twenty years to raising awareness of the spiritual bond between humans and animals. I dedicate this book to those individuals, families, and animals I have met on my journey, who have helped me to find my way.

The Dignitary's Buddy  
Tri-Ellie  
Dutch  
Judy Hudspeth  
The Hunts Family  
Thomas Wanzer Long  
Jeri Ryan, Ph.D.  
Penelope Smith  
Dawn Baumann Brunke  
Kelly King  
Rosanne Bostonian, Ph.D.  
Nancy Bantz  
Christina Traunweiser  
Michael O'Hern  
Tristan Stark  
The Buckler Family

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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*Buddy on Unicorns*, printed with permission from the author.

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Praise for Carole Devereux  
and  
*Spirit of the Horse*

*“This book truly is an offering to the spirit of the horse, to the earth, to the imaginative mind, and to the deep psyche. It has the feeling of a deep excavation of old and forgotten things. Carole Devereux has written a text that is boundless and deeply informative. It takes the reader all over the map, and then off it! It is a work of interspecies cultural restoration, and as such it works as a hybrid text--for which there are no conventional rules.”*

~ Tristan Stark, Poet/Editor  
Graduate, Naropa University

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*“Carole Devereux's deep sensitivity and keen capacity convey to her students a clear path toward developing their animal communication skills. Carole provides support, knowledge and wisdom to create a setting of freedom and safety that allows her students to flourish. In her new book Carole and her horses provide myths that are in fact metaphors from which we can learn a great deal about combining spirituality with a right and compassionate way to take our Earth journey.”*

~ Dr. Jeri Ryan, Psychologist/Animal Communicator  
Founder, Assisi International Animal Institute

Praise for Carole Devereux  
and  
*Spirit of the Horse*

*“Carole Devereux brings us a book that bridges heart and mind, time and space to reunite us to our essential selves--longing for connection, longing to find our place in communion with horse and all the natural world. Both well-researched and well-inspired, this book is an invitation to another way of being with ourselves, our past, present, and our future, guided by the love and spirit of Horse.”*

Kate Solisti, author of *Conversations with Horse*  
Fellow Animal Communicator and educator since 1992.

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*“Carole Devereux, inspired by her deep connection with horses and her love of mythology, conveys a fascinating perspective about the spiritual nature of horses and communication with them. Absorbing her enlightened perspective will surely shift the old domineering way of relating to animals to a more sensitive, reverent, and loving treatment of them.”*

Penelope Smith, Founding Pioneer, Animal Communication Specialist and author, *When Animals Speak: Techniques for Bonding with Animal Companions*, *Animal Talk: Interspecies Communication*, and *Animals in Spirit: Our Faithful Companions' Transition to the Afterlife*.

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*“There are days when  
I hear your voice,  
But today,  
I hear your soul.”*

Darlene Terry

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have helped to light the flame within us again."*

~ Albert Schweitzer

Over the last fifteen years, there were often times when I thought this book was too overwhelming to finish. False starts, revisions, health care concerns, changes in residence and deaths in the family. These crises of growth seemed endless at the time. Yet, despite all of the trials, my friends, family, clients, students, teachers, and others I had met on the Internet encouraged me, rekindling my desire to serve the greater good with this project.

The best advice for sustaining writing over a long period I received from my horses—Buddy, Ellie, and Dutch. They are the true authors of this book, and I will always love them as my spiritual parents. Their advice was, "Always be in the present moment, and let the rest take care of itself."

My deepest gratitude goes to my dearest teachers, Dr. Jeri Ryan and Penelope Smith. They taught me how to be gentle with the power I hold in my heart when I am communicating with animals. They taught me that the moment I give my fullest attention to anything, even a blade of grass; it

becomes a mysterious, awesome, magnificent world in itself. Learning to communicate with animals has helped me to communicate more deeply, more effectively, and more compassionately.

I want to thank my friend Tom Long for listening to me read the book aloud in his living room. His ideas kept me grounded. And, behind every good writer is a good editor, one who is honest and kind at the same time. For me, my editors fit that description---Dawn Baumann Brunke and Tristan Stark.

I also want to thank my best friend, Judy Hudspeth for her advice and sensitive wisdom when I was falling apart at the seams. Judy, you are a once-in-a-lifetime friend.

I would like to thank my husband, Greg, for his technical help when the computer crashed, threatening to erase everything I had ever written, and for supporting me when writing this book meant more than earning a living.

My sincere gratitude also goes to Adele Zimmerman for helping to write the guided visualizations, "Growing Your Potential for Animal Communication."

## FOREWORD

By Penelope Smith

# K

The field of animal communication has been rapidly expanding for over twenty years. Books on how to telepathically communicate with animals are widely available. Countless stories, photos, and video productions featured in the media show animals' intelligent communication, as well as their open-heartedness and compassion for one another and for humans. Scientific research validates the myriad "languages" of animals. All species behave in complex, purposeful, and intelligent ways.

As an animal communication specialist who has counseled thousands of people and their animal friends, I have seen that domesticated horses are one of the most exploited and misunderstood. When horses are treated as slaves to fulfill performance goals, humans can fail to notice and respect the intelligence of equines, their exquisite sensitivity, and spiritual qualities.

Carole Devereux, inspired by her deep connection with horses and her love of mythology, conveys a fascinating perspective about the spiritual nature of horses and communication with them. Absorbing her enlightened perspective will surely shift the old domineering way of relating to animals to a more sensitive, reverent, and loving treatment of them. Devereux brings us myths as spiritual

treasures, leading us to be in the world with more compassion and awareness of the interconnectedness of all life. Myths communicated by humans and, in this book, horses, can help us find our way in the great energy interchange and drama of life.

Awareness of the depth of horse and all animal soul cannot be emphasized enough. It should be nurtured as vital for a true connection and understanding of both other species and our fellow humans, and as a path to discover our own true nature. When we feel and understand who animals really are, we feel and understand who we are. When we truly see other animals, looking into their eyes or otherwise feeling communion with them, we capture the essence of true relationship and oneness of all life. Animals' telepathic connection among themselves and with humans is then evident to us.

Be entranced by the poetic panorama the author unfolds, and feel renewed by the rolling breath of fresh air her book opens to us. Take the invitation offered here to revive within yourself the "Sacred Language of Spirit."

## PREFACE



**F**or all the words in our dictionaries, for all the dialects and languages we use to express our feelings and thoughts, for all the specialized jargon and poetic license we take, nothing is more powerful than mind-to-mind, telepathic communication.

Mind-to-mind telepathic communication is the experience of receiving the thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions and mental imagery of other beings without the use of words, speech or body language. It is the direct transference of thought.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines telepathy as “communication by scientifically unknown or inexplicable means, as by the exercise of mystical powers.” However, there is nothing mysterious or mystical about telepathic communication. It is much the same as invisible sound waves received by a radio, television, or telephone. The difference is that we are the sending and receiving mechanisms.

Just as a radio receives invisible sound waves, using a source, a medium, and a receiver, we can also receive and send messages using our minds and bodies. We often do it without being consciously aware of it. We receive telepathic messages from our spouses, children, friends, and even our animals. Some use the ability more than others, but we all have it at our disposal. Animals have the power to send and receive clear communication within their own species, called intraspecies

communication. When humans and animals telepathically communicate, we call it interspecies communication.

After finding my horses in 1991, I discovered a deep telepathic bond existed between us, which led me to realize they had an abundance of spiritual wisdom to share with me. Through this telepathic process, we came to know a direct experience of the Divine together, and that is how this book was born.



Carole, Buddy, and Ellie

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# K

**B**orn in the Hudson River Valley in 1951, and educated in New York, Carole Devereux (pronounced dev-er-o) started chronicling her life story at age eleven. Rediscovering those early diaries later in life revealed to her who she was as a young artist, author, and animal advocate.

As a teenager in 1969, Carole had a passion for the arts and pursued art history at Wagner College where she was also a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War. After two years at Wagner, Carole moved to Vermont to live on a commune before enrolling in the International Summer School at the University of Oslo, Norway where she studied interior architecture.

In the early 1970s, after traveling with friends through Norway and Western Europe, Carole settled in Paris to work as an Au Pair. She studied at Alliance Francaise and became fluent in French as she continued to write letters and short stories about her travels abroad.

After an extended stay in Paris, Carole picked up roots again and moved to Hollywood where she worked in the movie industry at Warner Bros, Paramount, and Columbia Studios as a script reader. It was there that she wrote her first script treatment, *Rainbow River*, about the adventures of a young Shaman and the legend of El Dorado in South America.

Thus, she began her writing career, circulating stories and scripts to major film studios.

In the mid 1980s, Carole attended the Healing Light Center in Los Angeles, directed by Rosalyn Bruyere. After rigorous testing, the school accepted Carole into their advanced healing program, affectionately called the “God Squad.” The training she acquired in energy awareness there eventually led to her love of telepathic animal communication.

In 1993, Carole's interest in communicating with her horses, Buddy, Ellie, and Dutch, inspired her to study with Penelope Smith and Dr. Jeri Ryan, the leading pioneers in the field of interspecies communication. After years of training, Carole began to sponsor Dr. Ryan's Basic and Advanced Animal Communication Workshops in Portland, Oregon. These workshops helped to raise funds for the Assisi International Animal Institute, founded by Dr. Ryan in 1995. Carole also produced a three-hour audio lecture titled *Telepathic Communication: A Compassionate Journey* featuring Dr. Jeri Ryan.

In 1994, Carole traveled again to southern France, this time to study the cave paintings at Lascaux, Niaux, Font-de-Gaume, and others near Les Eyzies in the Dordogne Valley. It was there that she discovered the important purpose that Paleolithic cave art, animal communication, and Shamanism would play in her spiritual journey, and in writing this book.

During 1997, Carole started her own animal communication consulting practice, Animal Insights. She continues to teach, consult, and mentor students nationwide. She wrote and self-published her first book, a regional best seller, *The NW Oregon Stable Guide: 100 Boarding, Breeding, and Training Stables for Horses*, to help horse owners locate the perfect home for their horses in the Pacific Northwest.

Carole lives with her husband, Gregory Hunts, an Information Center Manager at a Portland law firm. They live in rural Washington on a 10-acre property with their horses, cats, and dogs. To reach Carole Devereux please visit her website at [www.animalinsights.com](http://www.animalinsights.com).



Ellie and Buddy at home in Washington

## DANCING WITH A PRINCE

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**W**hen I was seven years old and living with my parents in New York, my brother and I begged our mother to let us have a puppy. We were so happy when we found a little mutt that looked like a German Shepherd. We thought he was adorable and we named him Prince.

I felt I understood what Prince needed, and I knew he understood me too. One day, our mother decided she did not want Prince anymore, and she told us that Prince was going away. Then, while we were at school, she called the local shelter. They came, picked him up, and took him to the shelter, some 20 miles away.

Later that week, maybe exactly one week, we were sitting in the living room when we heard something scratching at the back door. When we went to see who was there, we were amazed to find it was Prince. He was thin, but he seemed okay. We were so happy he was home with us again. A child's heart is so deeply bonded to animals at that age.

I still remember the look on my mother's face. She marched into the living room and called the shelter. "How is our dog Prince doing?" she asked. I recall her laughter when they told her, "Prince is doing just fine." She replied, "Yes, he is doing so fine that he is on our back porch." After what I assume were profuse apologies, they said someone would be right over to get him.

The truth is that Prince, who was only one or two years old at the time, had jumped over the fence at the shelter and found his way back to our house. It had taken him a week traveling on dangerous highways without food or water. When we realized what he had done, we pleaded with our mother to let us keep him. But she returned Prince to the shelter that day, and we never saw him again.

This is one of many animal stories that have stayed in my mind and heart over the years. These are the deeper memories that motivate us, as adults, to continue to advocate for animals, even against the most difficult odds.



Carole and Prince ~ 1958

# Introduction: My Spiritual Journey

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*"It is important for modern people to find their mythic roots and regain their lost sense of spiritual connectedness to the universe."*

*The Mythic Imagination:*

*Your Quest for Meaning Through Personal Mythology*

~ Stephen Larsen, Ph.D.

**T**his book is the joyful unfolding of a collective effort between humans and animals. The aim? To establish greater compassion and awareness of the spiritual connection that humanity shares with all of nature—plants, animals, rocks, and a myriad of spiritual beings.

It is written with the view that nature and animals can enlighten, guide, and help humans to restore a lost chord of sacred truth and meaning in our lives. This work is a meditation on a deep, very old dream that I have been nurturing for many lifetimes. It is the fulfillment of a promise that I made to myself to work to alleviate animal suffering, especially for horses, all over the world.

I made this promise after seeing how humans have exploited horses as beasts-of-burden for so many centuries. I wanted to help horses experience a sense of spiritual freedom,

to balance the suffering they have endured. Only since the rediscovery of telepathic, interspecies communication in the last two decades, have horses been able to proclaim their truths as living symbols of spiritual freedom to the world.

In the early 1990s, I began to realize my long-held dream when I married my husband, Greg, and we moved to a 16-acre hilltop property in Portland, Oregon. At the time, my dream for horses was still embedded in my unconscious mind. Looking back, I realize it has taken more than a decade to excavate this dream from the depths of my soul. After what seems like many lifetimes (in this lifetime it has been fifteen years) working toward this end, I am just now beginning to realize fully the meaning of my spiritual journey with animals.

I found my first horse, Buddy, in 1990. He reignited my passion for helping horses. We agreed that Buddy would be my guardian spirit, teacher, ally, and protector. He would act as a support for my spiritual healing. Buddy had already been broken to ride, yet still had a fair amount of wildness left in him. In return, I promised to help him realize his ambition to improve life on Earth for all beings, which then became our combined destiny: To write books about the secret, spiritual life of horses.

One day, Buddy told me that he had come to the Earth to establish an organization from the ground up, a sort of “grass roots,” (yes, pun intended) organization. He wanted to write books about interspecies communication. Buddy wanted humans to expand their views of communication, and to inspire us to open our minds and hearts to understanding and learning from nature. Buddy said, “Every breath we take is a communication with the air. What would the air want us to know about our bodies? Where is the air stuck inside of us? Where does it sense we need more of it? What does the air

want us to know about its relationship with us? If we follow the path of air into our bodies, personify it and give it a voice, we will find the information it has to share.”

I got to know Buddy while taking lessons and training him on the trails around our house. But when he was injured by another horse at his boarding stable, I asked my husband to build a barn on our property so I could bring Buddy home.



After a year with us, I felt Buddy was lonely for another horse. So I asked him if he would like a same-species partner. He pictured a beautiful, wild-spirited, white Arabian mare with flowing mane and tail. At the time, I was too new to the horse world to think of taming such a wild thing. So I asked again. “Do you have anyone else in mind?” Instantly, he projected an image of a dark bay Thoroughbred. Within a few weeks I had found Ellie who then became his lifetime mate.

Immediately upon seeing each other they were both impassioned. It took some time for them to sort out their differences---Ellie wanted nothing less than the role of alpha mare, which Buddy finally allowed. And when they began to trust each other completely, they never parted again.

I began to write this book with their help and the guidance of my mentors and invisible teachers in the supernatural realms. We wrote it with the wish that others will enjoy the secret, intimate view of what Buddy calls, “The Spiritual Life of Horses.”

Although it was Buddy's idea to write a book, over the years I became more committed to discovering and exploring animal spirituality. It became my passion to join other voices

around the world in a chorus of celebration for the combined, evolving consciousness of humanity and the species Equus.

For thousands of years, the horse has been an inspiring and persuasive mythological icon. When exalted, their indomitable spirits rise from the depths of an untold dream, perhaps conjured by a fantasy to fly, spiraling up from the ashes, like the Phoenix, soaring into the light of new millenniums. The mythology of the horse is, therefore, the dream of the horse. As such, these myths are made from the same mind-stuff.

Another calling I began to recognize was to bring out of the undifferentiated mind stream of divine consciousness, the birthplace of all dreams and myths, an enlightened mythical narrative for horses so that they could realize a mystical and mythological Renaissance. Freeing their consciousness in this way is a breakthrough no captive beast would hesitate to embrace.

Therefore, this book weaves many different voices and threads throughout its pages. At first it may appear linear, but look again. The book is deeply, multi-layered. You can pick it up and open it at random to find new meaning, depending on your state of mind. There are many levels in each section. Each chapter is a reflection of the whole, similar to a hologram.

My wish is that the book will inspire other artists and writers to explore the myriad of myths that nonhuman species wish to tell. This process will unleash creative minds and unify the collective wisdom inside the matrix of life.

# Section 1

## Understanding Spiritual Power



# CHAPTER ONE

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## Spirit Primer: Definition of Terms

*Man's laws change with his understanding of man. Only the laws of the spirit remain always the same.*

~ Crow Proverb

**W**hat can humans learn about spirit from a horse? That is what this book is about. So that readers may understand what Buddy meant by the term “spirit” in the title of the book, I have written a Spirit Primer to provide a basic understanding of the subject.

Many readers will likely be familiar enough with the subject of spirituality to know how I have used the word. But for those who would like clarification, you will find a Judeo-Christian description of the word, as well as various indigenous views on the subject.

All in all, it is my wish that readers from all walks of life will find the Spirit Primer enlightening, and that you will continue to discover your own experience of what spirit means to you.

## What's in a Word?

Every word has a story behind it. In English we call the study of the derivation of words etymology. Etymology teaches us how and when a word first came into expression. According to the online *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the word, "etymology" was introduced in the 14th century from two Greek words: *etymon*, meaning "truth" and *logia*, meaning "the study of." Thus, etymology refers to the study of the "true origins of words."

Etymology explores the history and development of a linguistic form from its earliest recorded occurrences. By tracking its distribution from one language to another and by identifying related words in other languages, we can find a common ancestral form in an ancestral language.

Anyone who finds language interesting may enjoy the study of words. Nearly one-third of all English words are descended from Latin or Greek roots, or from Old English and Germanic roots. Words may be borrowed from other languages too, such as the word "alligator." It entered the English language because of a contact between English and Spanish speakers in Florida. In Spanish, "alligator" is el *ligarto*--the lizard. As the English borrowed this Spanish word, they changed it into its modern English form.

Each of us knows that personal experiences color and define the way we use words. As a teacher of interspecies communication, I emphasize the importance of experiencing feelings more fully to appreciate the deeper truths of the soul. I often ask my students to hold their verbalization to a minimum during an animal communication workshop. The reason is that many students are overwhelmed when they try to put their deeper emotions into words. Words often fall short

of true meaning and real exchange. We may also use words to justify or distance ourselves or to disguise our true feelings.

Over the years, I have found that animals use fewer words in their communications with humans than humans use with each other. Animals communicate with humans using pictures, feelings, and behaviors as much as, or more than, they use words. In this way, animals help us to reach into our deepest, most vital emotions and bring them to the surface.

In his book, *Soulcraft*, Bill Plotkin identifies sacred speech as “a conversation that deepens relationships and enhances the fullness of our presence wherever we are and whomever we are with.” He further advises that, “an effective strategy for tuning awareness to the frequency of soul is to minimize everyday conversation that separates us from here and now and from what is truly meaningful.”

In order to understand human language, we need to organize patterns of words into a cohesive whole for meaning. Animals often use pictures to communicate their thoughts and feelings to humans. These pictures contain symbols that the brain recognizes instantly. Symbols bypass the analytical brain and go straight to the intuitive, right brain hemisphere.

Words often do not address our inner conflicts at the deepest levels of consciousness. Talking can be therapeutic, but genuine feelings must accompany conversation. Words that do not point to real experience do not lead to understanding. Excessive talk only reinforces anxiety and obliterates the authentic self, the self that teaches and heals at the unconscious level.

According to Buddhist philosophy, ‘Right Speech’ is sacred speech that occurs when we say the right thing at the right time and when what we say is useful and truthful. Speech is like a treasure when uttered in the perfect moment. It can

take a poet, writer or lyricist years to hone the craft of expressing these deeper emotions artfully.

Buddy once advised a student, "Shut up and listen to your Self." Now that may not have been artfully spoken, but it was intended as therapeutic advice, and characteristic of Buddy. What he meant was, "get out of your head and into your heart." This is how we experience the sacred, pre-verbal world of the inner child. When we listen at this profound level, we can hear what is going on 'at the heart' of things. Buddy says, "It is only when we are aware of what is really going on inside (underneath the words) that we can alter the outside world." When we do not listen at this level, Buddy calls it, "talking over your Self." Listening at this level helps us to access the emotional body that was laid in place before we acquired language skills as children. In psychology, this is sometimes called the "unthought known." It is the core of the self that is nonverbal and unconscious and is the basis of the developing self in childhood.

Often my students ask if human communication is not contradictory to the ways nonhumans think and communicate (because humans have such complex patterns of speech). The answer is yes. Yet, it is also true that humans share the same ground of deeper awareness with nonhumans. It is during this profound communication with the core self, that co-creative spiritual expression really flourishes between species. This kind of communication comes from the heart, not the intellect. We will go deeper into the pre-verbal world of our ancestors as they communicated with each other and nature telepathically in the following chapters.

In Chapter Fifteen, we explore the meaning of co-creative spiritual expression and how to awaken creativity by following simple, guided exercises designed to help readers

achieve greater spiritual clarity. The purpose is to experience spirituality and creativity as inseparable.

Through another series of visualizations, we delve into the inner self to unearth our soul myths. This method of self discovery helps us to understand the importance of soul-to-soul contact when learning how to communicate with nonhuman nature.

### Is Spirit Synonymous with Religion?

The two words, spirit and religion, are often considered equivalent. But are they? *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* traces the word religion back to an old Latin word, *religio*, meaning "taboo or restraint." A deeper study reveals the word comes from two words, *re* and *ligare*. *Re* is a prefix that means, "to return" and *ligare* means, "to bind." In other words, religion means, "to return to bondage." I find it interesting that Buddy did not title his book, *Religion of the Horse*. When I asked him about the word spirit he simply said, "You can replace the word spirit with the word love." When I asked him about the word religion he said, "Humans have invented religion to house their collective soul, but the spirit is free and cannot be contained inside a religion."

Thousands of years ago, humans were more intuitively and spiritually based. Today, we have shifted toward economically and politically based societies. Religious temples, once at the center of our villages, have been replaced by monolithic financial towers. Perhaps this movement toward materialism explains why so many have so much difficulty maintaining a spiritual focus. Do we find it hard to find time for a spiritual path because we have too many possessions to maintain?

## Family Values: A Spiritual Imperative

*“When a family declines, ancient traditions are destroyed. With them the spiritual foundations for life are forfeited, and the family loses its sense of unity. Where there is no sense of unity, the women of the family can become corrupted. With the corruption of women, society plunges into chaos.” ~ Bhagavad Gita: 1:40*

Many people feel alienated today because they are not emotionally or spiritually bonded to family and community. Our technological and industrial societies, although advanced, have produced generations of children and adults who are skilled in finance and politics but uninitiated into the spiritual side of life. Instead of family rituals, initiations, and ceremonies, adolescents risk everything while taking drugs and facing their own death or causing harm to others. Perhaps these extreme measures are tantamount to the risks their souls would have asked them to experience in more meaningful ways, i.e., rituals or rites of passage. Since we do not generally venerate our elders in American society today, these rites of passage are not being passed down to younger generations.

Everyone needs to feel a part of something bigger than themselves. We need to feel valued for our spiritual legacies, our monetary worth, and our technological skills. But this requires that we know and experience ourselves as sacred beings. Organized religion tried to accomplish this goal in the past, but we are not following the dictates of the church as much as we once did. One way to experience our lives as sacred is through pure insight and through our myths and stories of origin. In this book, we address the finer aspects of spirit through the process of creation mythology.

## Naming the Unnameable

Now, let us look at a few definitions of spirit from an American dictionary, and then consider it from the Old Testament. I included several indigenous or Native American perspectives on this subject as well. I like the Native North American approach because over the years Native American spirituality has helped me to align my own spiritual beliefs with the study of animal communication.

The etymology of the word spirit leads back to the ancient word for 'breath' or 'wind' or 'air.' It stems from the Latin *spirare*, meaning to breathe. The *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary defines spirit as the vital principle or animating force within living beings, as incorporeal consciousness. Spirit can mean Holy Spirit, "Holy" meaning pure. The word spirit can also mean a supernatural being, such as an angel or demon, and it can refer to a being that inhabits or embodies a particular place, object, or natural phenomenon, such as a fairy or a sprite. Spirit can also mean the essential nature of a person, place, group, or thing.

For the purposes of this book, I support the definition of spirit as "the essential divine nature of a person, place or thing." I include animals in this definition because I know animals also have souls.

Therefore, the word spirit means essence. It is the essence of a living being, person, place or thing. Spirit is the essential invisible animating principle that goes beyond physical manifestation in the microcosmic world.

## The Meaning of Spirit in the Old Testament

All cultures hold their own beliefs about spirit. The Hebrew term for spirit is *ruah*. The Latin word is *spiritus*, both meaning breath. Breath is the most intangible reality anyone can know. Our hands cannot grasp it; yet we understand it is vitally important. Those who do not breathe do not live.

The Hebrew *ruah*, just as the Latin *spiritus*, designates the movement of the wind. We do not see the wind and yet we feel its presence. From observing the invisible, powerful wind, the ancients came to regard it as the “spirit of God.” In both the Old and New Testaments the word passes easily from one meaning to the other. To help Nicodemus understand the way the Holy Spirit performed, Jesus used the comparison of the wind, and employed the same term in both cases: “The wind blows wherever it pleases . . . That is how it is with all who are born of the Wind (i.e., of the Holy Spirit).” John 3:8. Psalm 33:6: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”

The main idea expressed in the biblical word spirit is not of an intellectual power, but that of a dynamic impulse, similar to the force of the wind. In the Bible, the primary function of spirit is not to give understanding, but to give *movement*, not to shed light, but to impart dynamism. This can also be applied to the horse born to run free. So the *Spirit of the Horse* can refer to the movement of the horse, or the freedom of movement that horses enjoy, or the action of the horse in a spiritual sense.

## Native American Views of Spirit

To explore Native American spirituality as a single entity for understanding the meaning of the word 'spirit' would be misleading. More than one thousand Native tribes lived in North America when the first Europeans arrived. Each tribe had its own set of festivals, rituals, ceremonies, spiritual beliefs, and practices. Yet many common features existed between tribal traditions.

Spirituality played a central role in the lives of these people, as author Angie Debo writes in her book, *A History of the Indians of the United States*: "He [the Indian] was deeply religious. The familiar shapes of Earth, the changing sky, the wild animals he knew, were joined with his own spirit in mystical communion. The powers of nature, the personal quest of the soul, the acts of daily life, the solidarity of the tribe--all were religious, and were sustained by dance and ritual."

### A Mysterious Presence

Vine Deloria, Jr., scholar and winner of the 2003 American Indian Festival of Words Author Award for his book, *Spirit and Reason*, writes about the mysterious energy that affects all living things. "Native and tribal peoples experience and intuit, underneath the multitude of physical entities in the natural world, the presence of a mysterious, personal energy. One tribe may call it Orenda, another Puha, a third Manitou. All imply the same energy, but with a hint of personality."

Native peoples may describe this energetic presence in words but, unlike western religions, they do not define its substance or meaning. In fact, they resist pronouncing the

sacred name of the mysterious energy, and use only the language of allusion and indirect speech to refer to it.

### Manifestations

According to Deloria, the mysterious, personal energy is confined to a single physical form for a limited or more or less finite period on Earth. Since the physical life of beings includes suffering, the person's spirit helps the person find his/her way back home to the Great Mystery. This process suggests that suffering may increase or decrease in direct proportion to one's awareness and connection to the mysterious energy or to what we call God.

Deloria notes that during the historical journey that Native Americans have made upon the Earth, various personalities have emerged to represent the dominant expressions of this mysterious universal power. These personalities are not "gods" in the traditional Judeo-Christian sense. Instead, the personalities are endowed with a sacredness that contrasts with the material world. Native Americans describe these personalities as spirits who have roles in the creation and continuation of the universe.

Each entity helps to make up the natural world and takes a part in the mysterious energy. All the entities are equal in the sense that all share custody of the Earth together. No one alone has more or less value. Native Americans put less emphasis on worshipping, and more on petitioning spirits for help. Their ceremonies focus on petitions and thanksgivings for support from the spiritual world.

## Consensual Spiritual Intention

Deloria tells us that there are some basic requirements for Native American rituals. One is that all creatures are allowed to attend all ceremonies, and that they cannot transform natural objects without the specific instructions or permission from the spirit of that object. To do anything else would violate the integrity of the entity. The use of any natural object must conform to the original purpose of the object. An example is their treatment of peyote for religious purposes. Native Americans do not alter peyote, for example, since it is a violation of the spirit of the plant. Native Americans are cautious with the essence of the plant. They regard the processing of plants for their chemical derivatives an act of disrespect. Everything in the physical world has its own integrity and that the task of spiritual practitioners is to create a minimum of disruption while performing ceremonial functions.

## Immanence – To Remain Within

Native American spirituality centers on the idea that everything is naturally endowed with a spirit and that a constant social and spiritual exchange occurs among all of creation. To function with integrity, we need to appreciate and be cautious with the spirits of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water. Everything has its own divine purpose. Consciousness is not only the province of human beings in the Native American worldview, but that of all life. Winona La Duke, a member of the Green Party who ran with Ralph Nader in 2000, and a well-known advocate for Native American and women's issues,

explains in her book, *The Winona LaDuke Reader: A Collection of Essential Writings*:

“According to our way of looking at things, the world is animate. We reflect this in our language, in that most nouns are animate . . . Natural things are alive and they have a spirit. Therefore, when we harvest wild rice on our reservations we offer tobacco to the Earth because, when you take something, you must give thanks to its spirit for giving itself to you.”

John Mohawk, who died in 2006, was a leading scholar and representative for the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy. He was an advocate for the rights of the Iroquois people. Mohawk eloquently expressed the indigenous relationship to creation when he wrote in his book, *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution*:

“The natural world is our bible. We do not have chapters and verses; we have trees and fish and animals. The creation is the manifestation of energy through matter. Because the universe is made up of manifestations of energy, the options for that manifestation are infinite. But we have to admit that the way it has manifested itself is organized. In fact, it is the most intricate organization. We cannot know how we impact its laws; we can only talk about how its laws affect us. We make no judgments about nature. The Indian sense of natural law is that nature informs us and it is our obligation to read nature as we would a book, to feel nature as we would a poem, to touch nature as we would ourselves, and to be a part of it, and step into its cycles as much as possible.”

## All My Relations

*Mitakuye Oyasin: We are all Related*

~ Lakota Sioux Prayer

“All My Relations” is a phrase that many Native Indians use as an opening invocation and closing blessing for their spiritual ceremonies. This statement means “we are of one spirit” and that we need to respect the living spirit in other beings. It is through this common spirit that we are all joined. In other words, Indians have learned that by observing and communicating with animals and nature, and with the “living spirit” in nature, that the success of life on Earth is based on respect. Native Americans understand that ecological systems survive best as a single, unified whole. This includes plants, animals, humans, and elements. Joseph Epes Brown, author of *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions*, writes:

“Running through nearly all indigenous Native American traditions is the pervasive theme that the sacred mysteries of creation are communicated to humans through all forms and forces of the immediately experienced natural environment. Such openness of mind and being, toward manifestations of the sacred, has made it possible for Native Americans to adopt the Christian expression of values into the fabric of their own religious culture.”

## Extinction as Myth

*“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”*

~ John Muir

It is an old Indian medicine teaching that plants and animals do not become extinct, but their spirits go away and do not come back until the location or habitat is again treated with the proper spiritual respect. Land abused for generations, if treated with spiritual respect, will see a flowering again. Some may think they are extinct, but birds and animals related to those plants also return. It is worth noting that plants return first, then the animals, and then finally the birds. Thus, antelope have returned to some portions of the Dakota plains, but prairie chickens have still not made a complete return.

Because all life is connected to each other, we not only pass our knowledge to other humans, we also pass our knowledge to all of creation. In this way, insight and moral power pass freely between species on Earth.

## Spirit and Native American Creation Myths

Because this book highlights equine creation myths, as they relate to the spiritual life of horses, let us look for a moment at how the idea of the human spirit has been cultivated through creation myths from the ancient past.

In Native American mythology two features stand out in contrast to Judeo-Christian creation myths: First, the idea of original sin resulting in being cast out of the place to which one is born does not exist in Native American spirituality. Second,

in Native American mythology there is no “Kingdom of Heaven” awaiting us on the other side as our 'true' spiritual home. Native Americans do not believe they have been locked out of the Garden of Eden. Their myths confirm that (unless they have been displaced by European contact and settlement) Native Americans live in the place intended by the Great Spirit, either at the site of their own emergence or by creation, or in a 'Promised Land' attained through long migration.

Native Americans experience the Earth as their homeland. First, the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is happening right now, not in a mythical place in the future. The Earth is not a weigh station on the way to some heavenly home. Native American creation myths portray a different understanding about the place we occupy, vis-à-vis animal, plant and mineral co-inhabitants. Native Americans believe that rather than humans having 'supremacy' over these life forms, animals, plants, and minerals are their companions, from whom they learn the ways of the Great Mystery.

Native American myths and stories stress mutuality, interdependence, and esteem between people and other creatures. Mutual respect is needed when interacting with trees, birds, plants, and the natural forces--the four elements and the four directions.

Their myths inform Native Americans that creation is an ongoing process and that “All That Is” is a part of an ongoing creation story. For them, the spirit that infuses the world has not stopped existing and is simply experienced as 'immanence,' the spirit that imbues all things.

### Energy & Spirit Interchangeable

Deloria suggests that the word 'energy' can be substituted for

the word 'spirit.' Einstein's theory of energy/matter reveals that matter and energy are different forms of the same thing, and that matter can be turned into energy and energy into matter. The equation  $E = MC^2$ , in which energy is equal to mass, multiplied by the square of the velocity of light, shows that small amounts of mass can be converted into large amounts of energy and vice versa. The first tangible evidence of this was the atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico on July 16, 1945.

What if we exchanged the word spirit for the word energy, does it still relate to Einstein's discovery? A question to ponder is this: Did our collective lack of spiritual consciousness, or collective memory-loss regarding our divine energy (spirit) become the grounds for creating an atomic bomb that could destroy the world? What if we replace the word 'energy' with the word 'spirit' in Einstein's equation. How does the meaning change?

Albert Einstein understood that his formula might lead to destruction someday, and although he was a peaceful man, he urged the President to fund his research before Germany or Japan developed their bombs. The result was the Manhattan Project that produced the first evidence of Einstein's research. It was one of the greatest ironies that Einstein, a pacifist, helped to initiate the era of nuclear weapons.

One focus of this book is to help readers realize the forces of the human spirit and the forces in nature, including animals, are equal to the powerful forces of a nuclear bomb. So, can we conclude that whoever controls these forces, controls the world?

Using the connection we have to spirit, the powerful life force that animates all living things, can we create a force that goes against nature and becomes potentially lethal? Or, if

used soundly, can our conscious spiritual awareness, used with love and compassion, strengthen our collective integrity enough to heal the Earth, her creatures and humanity as a whole? It is our choice. But first, we must become informed.