

Becoming an Embodied Soul

*Stories for Living Authentically
in Uncertain Times*

THE THRESHOLD

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BECOMING AN EMBODIED SOUL

Stories for Living Authentically in Uncertain Times

The Threshold

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CONTENTS

Welcome

Story One: The Adventure

Story Two: Guides

Story Three: Death

Story Four: When Things Fall Apart

Story Five: Freedom

Story Six: Homecoming

Gathering the Gifts

Story Seven: The Heart Sharing Circle

Welcome

You may already sense that something in your life is shifting.

Perhaps the ways you once understood yourself no longer quite fit. Perhaps the world feels louder, harsher, or more fragile than it used to — and you are longing for a way of living that feels truer, steadier, more aligned with who you really are.

This book is not here to give you answers in the usual sense. It is here to offer companionship — a place to pause, to remember, and to listen more deeply to what is already stirring within you.

Through story, reflection, and gentle inquiry, it invites you into a different quality of attention: one that honours your lived experience, and trusts that meaning arises from within, rather than being imposed from outside.

This book grew out of questions that guide my own daily life — questions that tend to arise at moments of transition:

What am I experiencing now?

How, and where, is my soul guiding me? Am I listening?

How might paying attention to this help me live more truthfully?

It was mid-December when these questions came into sharper focus. As soon as I named them, stories arose from memory — stories of pivotal moments from earlier Decembers, times when something essential shifted in me. They called me into discovery and carried a quiet promise: that by returning to them, I would find what I was seeking.

I followed that invitation willingly.

I'm sharing these stories with you as an invitation into a lived inquiry of your own.

The seven stories that follow — of quest, inspiration, freedom, homecoming, alongside death and crisis — are not meant to instruct or persuade. They are offered to stir memory, touch the heart, and lead you inward, toward whatever your own life is asking of you now.

They open into a spacious terrain. And they invite you into an inner journey shaped by your own unfolding.

Running through the book is the theme of *homecoming* — what home is, and where it can be found. Memories are often bittersweet. They stir what is missing as much as they remind us of who we are and where we are headed. Yet beneath those longings, there is another truth: that our deepest home is always here, within us.

This book calls you to practice connecting with your inner home whenever you choose.
This is a vital practice for living an authentic life within a world coming apart at the seams.

Wherever you are on your Soul Journey – whether you’re at a threshold, feeling lost and tired, sensing change or longing to live more truthfully – this gentle guidebook will accompany you...

If you’d like, begin with this meditation, as a way to arrive — to gather your attention, your body, and your breath. Or come back to it at any time to bring yourself present.

Meditation

[You can listen to the meditation here](#)

Or read it here:

Before you start, make sure you are in a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed for the next ten or fifteen minutes. Find a way to sit so that your feet are making contact with the ground and your back is supported.

Close your eyes and drop into your inner being.

Connect gently with your breath, following the breath with your awareness all the way in and all the way out. Don’t attempt to change the breath, simply be with the rise and fall, the expansion and contraction. And notice without judgment what is here.

Let your awareness flow around your body noticing where you feel warm and energized and where you feel tense or contracted. Just keep breathing gently, without judgement, simply noticing what is here, sending love and acceptance to any aches and pains.

Now bring your awareness into your feet. Feel where your foot contacts the floor, feel the energy moving in one foot and then another. Imagine that you have little roots growing from your feet into the earth, grounding you and making you feel held and secure.

Then slowly move your awareness up your legs, your thighs, into your pelvis, your buttocks, the small of your back. Breathe into your belly and feel the space at your centre expanding and becoming more alive as you bring your attention to it.

Then move your awareness gently into your heart and again feel the energy there. Breathe gently into your heart and pay attention to your out-breath – as you breathe out release any

tension, any holding, any fear.

Simply relax. There is nowhere to go, nothing to do.

Your heart is a beautiful organ of connection and courage. As you breathe in feel the energy, life force, love and inspiration flowing into you. As you breathe out, let go of anything you no longer need. Remember that your heart is always here, supporting you, connecting you with life. Send it some gratitude.

Remember, you are not alone.

Now, gently raise your awareness up through your throat and your face, to the top of your head to your crown chakra. Imagine a beautiful lotus flower slowly opening its petals to the sky, to the stars and the vast intelligence of the cosmos. Breathe in life force and inspiration, breathe out anything you no longer need. Let go whatever is stale and used up.

Slowly, gently bring your awareness back to the breath, feel the rise and fall of your belly, the expansion and contraction of your chest. Connect with your feet and feel them on the floor, feel your connection with the Earth.

Your body, your being, is an exquisitely tuned and receptive vehicle connecting your inner world with the outer, supporting you, guiding you, keeping you safe.

Stay as long as you like in this meditative space and when you are ready bring yourself back into your room.

You may like to write any insights or reflections in your journal.

Entering the book

In the same way I have approached the creation of this book, I encourage you to enter these pages. As a calling from Soul. A contemplative practice. A listening. A dreaming.

Follow your intuition and guidance. There is no right way to do this — only your way.

I recommend though, that you take your time – perhaps take one story each day for a week – and let it sit quietly in the background of your being, percolating.

If you can, create a sanctuary for yourself. Bring your journal. Light a candle. Allow yourself to slow down.

Pause with me for a moment

Before we begin the stories, I invite you to pause with me for a moment— and feel the threshold we are living through.

We are standing at a doorway between old ways of being and the possibility of something new.

Across the world, many of us sense this turning point — personally and collectively. Familiar structures no longer seem to support life. Old ways of being and thinking no longer hold us as they once did, and what is emerging is not yet fully formed.

This can be unsettling, confusing, and at times overwhelming — and still, beneath the turbulence and fear, there's something else: a quiet, persistent knowing that another way of living together is emerging, one aligned with the Soul values of love, wisdom, and compassion.

Perhaps like me, you have been standing at this threshold for decades: waiting, preparing, sometimes despairing, sometimes forgetting — and then remembering again. Amidst the growing hysteria of a dominant death culture with its narratives of war, separation, and control, we can choose to stand for something else. I am staking a claim that it is possible to loosen the weight of the past and live differently.

This may sound like wishful thinking. And yet I know I am not alone. You and I are small drops in a vast and growing ocean of consciousness — a global movement of people who sense that the time has come to rise together in love, responsibility, and care for life.

What I feel now is not a sudden awakening, but a deepening — a shift away from purely rational, linear ways of knowing, and toward the lived experience of the multidimensional heart and soul. I hope my stories help you remember this place in you.

Each story reflects a stage many of us will recognise — moments of rupture, awakening, loss, freedom, and return — experiences that shape the Soul Journey in different ways for each of us.

The inquiry questions will encourage curiosity about your creative process, help clarify your next steps and motivate conscious action. There is no right answer here, the important thing is to enjoy the exploration and let it carry you.

Begin the inquiry

When you think about having an inner home that you can connect with whenever you choose, what feelings and thoughts arise? Perhaps there are symbols, or colours, or you sense a movement in your body?

In relation to this, open yourself to receive one vital question that can lead you where you need to go.

Take your time. When you've received your question, write it down. And then leave it to do its work.

Story One: The Adventure

I am writing this book in December 2025 — the month for celebrating our movement through the darkness back into the light. A time for gathering, feasting, and exchanging gifts. We are part of Nature and Cosmos, and our inner turnings mirror the turning of the year and the larger cycles of evolution. We move together as one intelligent organism, evolving.

We all know December can be a stressful time, when we may experience lack, loss, and separation as much as love and abundance. I've had my share of lonely, painful Christmases. But today, I'm feeling into the energies of excitement, new beginnings, inspiration, hope for the future, and my heart is overflowing with gratitude. I'm gathering the gifts from Decembers past — times when I set off on new adventures, fell in love, found inspiring role models, or was shaken to the bone by death and crisis. Times of consciousness shift.

I encourage you to gather your gifts too. Even loss and lack can become pointers to what we are longing to create, when we embrace them with a courageous heart.

My first story is about trust and stepping into the unknown with courage.

December 4, 1994, was the day I first set foot on the soil of Aotearoa—New Zealand. I couldn't help but fall in love — the bright light astonished me, the unfamiliar scents of the earth and the bush intrigued my senses, the distinctive calls of tui and bellbird and the eerie keening of penguins beguiled me. Arriving from the UK was like stepping out from under a heavy grey cloud and being released from the weight of personal and collective history into a new world. This land was dynamic, the air was humming, the people were enthusiastic.

Here's how I wrote about it later, in my book *Migration to the Heartland*:

“Once, while sleeping on the multi-million-year rock of Scotland's Grampian mountains, I dreamed of crossing the water to a new country where I was educated into a new way of being. Aotearoa, the Land of the Awakening Dawn, was a world that had been waiting for me just beyond the borders of consciousness. I could discover it now in physical form because I already knew it in my imagination. For so long I had dreamed of a beautiful, friendly land, unspoiled by the ravages of twentieth-century materialism. Now I had arrived here and wherever I stood I could see the mountains. It was a land bathed in light, a tribal land with a mythic past and a mythic future. A dreaming place.

Many thousands of moons ago the ancestors pushed their waka into the seas of Europe, Polynesia and Africa and, guided by the stars, rode the currents until they reached the shores of a rugged and magnificent country. Here they founded a nation of peace which, the story goes, lasted one thousand years.

I too had launched my canoe into the currents of my intuition and, guided by my soul, found my way to these shores.”

When I arrived in Auckland on that December day, there were a handful of people who had invited me to visit, spread throughout the islands. Some were members of my meditation family, others from my gestalt therapy community, none of them I knew well or at all. But I passed from one to another with effortless ease and they greeted me like a long-lost family member returning to the fold. This was a lesson in trusting the magic of synchronicity and the innate generosity of the global family.

I'd left Scotland six weeks earlier with a full and overflowing heart. I was the Fool stepping off the edge of the cliff into trust and freedom. I owned no keys, and my only property was the bags I carried. I had just a beginning sketch of a plan and no agenda. I told myself I would see as much of New Zealand as I could in four months and then return to Scotland. But deep down I knew that wasn't what was going to happen. I was on my Soul Journey, my Vision Quest, and when I had the opportunity to join a Peace Walk around the South Island, I jumped at it. At the end of four months, I decided to stay, and I didn't leave until 2015.

I could tell you so many stories about my years living in New Zealand but let this be enough for today. I am holding a beautiful gift in my hands, lifting the wrapping paper to give you a peek. It's a story about new beginnings, about following our Soul's dream.

Learning to trust in Soul, living into the dream of a new world, letting go, being held and carried — these are skills for NOW.

I am drawn to the archetype of The Fool — the one who steps into the unknown with innocence and trust.

The Fool travels lightly, carrying little from the past. She walks in harmony with what surrounds her, guided more by intuition than by certainty. When she stands at the edge, she does not calculate every outcome — she listens, and she leaps.

In that moment of wholehearted trust, life meets her. The current of the river carries her forward. Adventure becomes the path.



Inquiry

Have you ever allowed yourself to have a dream in your heart of a beautiful, friendly, vibrant world?

Could you allow that now?

Have you ever followed your longing and stepped off the edge of your known world, like the Fool, and trusted you would be taken care of?

What happened? If you feel moved, write your story now.

What would it be like to live every day as an adventure?

What would one small act of trust look like for you right now?

Story Two: Guides

We are not alone, even in the darkest times. What I bring you today is a reminder of the gift of inspiration — and how one person, living their mission with integrity, can influence many.

Like me, when you look back through your life you may remember teachers who appeared at exactly the right moment. They may have brought companionship, awakening, challenge. They may have appeared in the form of a book, a conversation, a living presence — or these days, a podcast arriving just when you needed it.

My story today is about a teacher called Joanna Macy.

In December 1998 I was privileged to be among forty people who gathered for ten days with Joanna and her husband Fran to participate in her training, *The Work That Reconnects*.

I had been inspired by Joanna's work since the 1980s, when she called it *Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age*. Amid the many psychotherapies and experiential group processes emerging at the time, her voice spoke directly to a deep anxiety in me — anxiety born of witnessing the destruction of the natural world and indigenous cultures by the military-industrial complex. She encouraged us to find strength within the larger story of interconnected life.

When I first encountered her teachings, I was living in Scotland under the shadow of nuclear threat. There was the spectre of war with Soviet Russia, and the ongoing dangers posed by nuclear dumping and power plants. I vividly remember an October day in 1983 when Trident missiles were delivered to the Faslane submarine base on the Clyde, sixty miles from where I lived. I was physically shaking as I imagined the horrors that could be unleashed.

In that moment, when death felt close and real, I asked a simple but life-changing question:

If death were imminent, how would I want to be living?

The answer came clearly. I would choose to be engaged in creative work.

That realisation was an epiphany — one that has guided me ever since.

In April 1986, the Chernobyl nuclear reactor exploded. The consequences were catastrophic: deaths, mass evacuations, long-term health impacts, poisoned land. Radioactive clouds travelled across Europe. In the UK, contamination devastated sheep farms. A young friend of mine was a farmer, and not long after the disaster he took his own life, as many farmers did.

In 1992, Joanna and Fran travelled to Russia to offer emotional support to communities affected by Chernobyl. They helped people process the physical, emotional and cultural trauma of prolonged radiation exposure. One practice Joanna introduced was the Elm Dance — a simple folk dance that transcended language barriers and became a ritual of reconnection. Through

shared movement, people broke the enforced silence of the Soviet regime, shared their grief, and rediscovered resilience.

I remember Joanna speaking about her time in Belarus — forests reduced to toxic no-go zones, villagers continuing to live on ancestral land now marked by invisible danger.

When I met Joanna, she was in her early seventies — radiant with energy, passion and integrity. The lines in her face told the story of lived commitment. She held us with quiet authority — not seeking followers, but casting seeds. She gathered practitioners who would integrate her teachings into their own soul work and carry them forward in diverse and creative ways.

By weaving together Buddhist wisdom, systems theory and archetypal imagination, Joanna created deep-time practices that stirred the whole being and encouraged practical action. She guided us to face despair — not to suppress or bypass it — but to move through it, allowing it to become a source of connection and resilience.

What touched me most — even more than the depth of her teachings — was her devotion to legacy. She was motivated not by ego, but by service to the greater whole. She was willing to look directly at the horrors we humans are capable of — and then hold hands and dance.

I met her twenty-eight years ago. She died in 2025. I do not know how many lives she touched — tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands across the world. I continue to meet people who speak of her with deep gratitude.

Her work did not give me answers. It strengthened my capacity to stay present with unanswerable questions. She offered hope in a world that often appears hopeless. She encouraged us to fully experience our grief for the world and breathe it through us. She reminded us to stay active and engaged — not frozen in despair. She gave us practices to connect with ancestors and future beings. She showed us that as we liberate ourselves, we participate in the liberation of the larger wholes to which we belong — the community of all beings, the interwoven web of life itself.

For me, Joanna Macy has been a role model who inspired me to develop my own original approaches to personal and professional development — and to trust that resilience is found by turning toward grief rather than away from it.

The programme I developed during lockdown, *Sitting with Death and Choosing Life*, carries some of her influence. At times when I have felt close to giving up, her example has reminded me of the fulfilment to be found by staying. Knowing I am one among many who have been similarly inspired is a deep comfort.

For me, inspiring way-showers matter because, like you perhaps, I find myself in a long unfolding discovery of my unique individuality while also deepening into shared humanity.

Venturing inward can feel daunting and lonely. We are each called to be the heroine of our own myth — to step beyond what feels familiar.

Individuation gives rise to authentic voice and creative expression. Shared humanity leads us into healing. Both require courage. Both are self-motivated. And they are inseparable.

And yet, we are never truly alone.

The Soul Journey is an archetypal story etched deep in collective consciousness. A collective movement, rooted deep in history, in Earth, in Cosmos. A living lineage of teachings remains available — and continues to light the way.

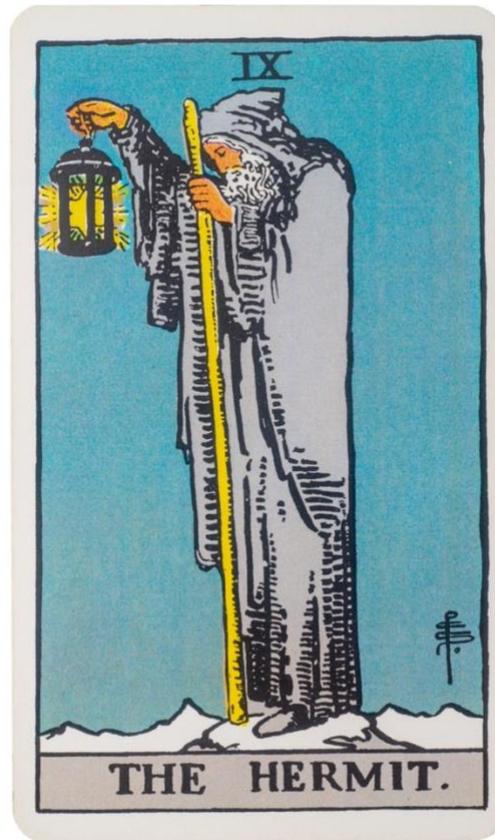
Joanna Macy often reminded us of the Three Jewels of Buddhism:

- the Buddha — the possibility of awakening
- the Dharma — the teachings that guide us
- the Sangha — the community of practice that supports and challenges us

His Holiness the Dalai Lama once said, “The next Buddha may be a Sangha.” In other words, in these times wisdom may arise through community.

To accompany this story, I am drawn to the archetype of the Hermit. What Joanna modelled for me was not withdrawal from the world, but the Hermit’s deeper task: carrying light through dark terrain and offering it freely.

The Hermit is the lantern-bearer — the way-shower, the wise guide who draws upon inner wisdom and lived experience to assist others through life’s passages.



Inquiry

Take time to remember the teachers who have touched and inspired you.

Choose one. Reflect on the gifts they brought you — and how those gifts changed the course of your life.

Story Three: Death

September 11, 2001

The world was never the same after September 11th, 2001.

I awoke to a spring morning of clear, clean sunlight that cut through lethargy and stirred hope and excitement in me. I rarely listened to the news and was oblivious to what had happened in New York a few hours earlier. I put on music and danced — a dance of thanksgiving and promise — before hurrying off to work.

I was teaching that morning with my co-worker, Simon. When I met him at the door of our office his face was ashen.

“Hey, what’s up?” I asked.

“Haven’t you heard?” he replied incredulously.

And then he told me about the Twin Towers.

Instantly terror struck my solar plexus and travelled the length of my spine. I joined the shock wave sweeping the world. At some level of my being, I had been waiting for this moment ever since I first became conscious of the knife-edge we humans walk between life and death, light and dark. My first thought was that this could be the beginning of World War Three — the end of the world as we knew it.

This flagrant act of violent aggression against the World Trade Centre — an icon of western privilege and wealth — brought long-ignored grievances and raw hatred into global awareness. The murder of thousands of innocent civilians felt like a threat to our entire way of life. If the symbol of the world economy in the most powerful nation on earth could be annihilated, then anything was possible.

Shaken, Simon and I entered the classroom to find our students in similar shock and grief. There was no question of following the lesson plan. We moved the chairs into a circle, placed a candle on the floor between us, and sat together in silence.

Over the next hours, as we shared feelings and responses, something subtle shifted. We were no longer teachers and students with a shared curriculum. We were human beings joined at the heart.

For me, the tragedy carried a revelation. I had been emerging from a long winter’s vigil in which I was confronting painful personal limitations that prevented me from connecting deeply and intimately with others. I felt trapped behind a thick membrane, unable to reach through it.

That membrane was breached now.

As we shared our horror and compassion for the dead and dying — and for those who loved them — we were brought face to face with the fragility and impermanence of human life. We were reminded that someone can walk out the door in the morning and never return. If this is so, then every interaction matters. This moment is the only one in which we can let others know we care.

In trying to understand what could drive such extreme violence, we extended compassion even to the terrorists — an uncomfortable and counter-cultural stance. Only profound frustration, powerlessness, despair, and a breakdown in communication could give rise to such acts. It was no longer clear who was perpetrator and who was victim, and this opened the possibility of holding a bigger picture — one that embraced many perspectives.

The need for deep listening became unmistakable - for spaces where despair could be expressed safely. Perhaps this moment could herald not a world war but a world peace.

Sadly, the wider world moved in another direction. Yet in our small classroom that day, something real began.

Everyone responded differently. Some turned to denial. Others to anger. Some blamed governments; others blamed fundamentalism. Still others saw it as an expression of collective consciousness.

“Nothing has changed,” one woman said. “It was all here before. Fifty countries are at war right now. This just helps us see.”

But something had changed for me.

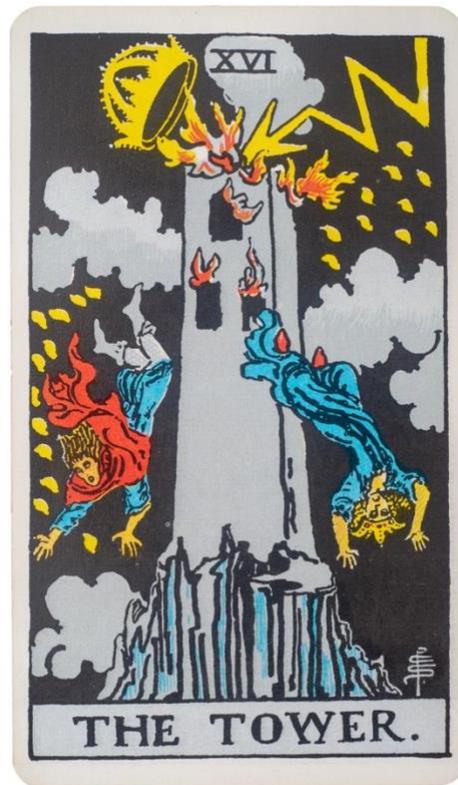
I saw that in any group there is no single truth. Truth is the sum of all perspectives present. We are fragments of a broken mirror. Through listening with unconditional attention and respect, the mirror becomes whole again.

If there is ever to be world peace, it must begin here — with me. What matters is the quality of attention I bring into my relationships. There are values greater than being right: truth, compassion, care.

After class I stepped back into the radiant spring day. The natural world was in riotous celebration. Trees fringed with vivid green. White blossoms drifting like snow. Magnolias lifting pink cups toward heaven. Butterflies sashaying above lavender and geranium.

The present moment revealed itself as refuge.

For a time after September 11th, people were more present. We listened more deeply, hugged more often, saw each other more clearly. Facing mortality shook us from complacency. In the midst of chaos, the smallest pleasures became luminous.



The archetypal image that draws me here is The Tower — the dismantling of old forms so that something truer may emerge. Change breaks what is rigid and inauthentic. After fire, the earth is replenished. After storm, the air is clear.

Inquiry

Remember a global event that shook you awake.

How did it change you and the course of your life?

If death were imminent, how would you want to be living?

December 19, 2001

I awoke that morning to the sweet, soulful song of a blackbird in a tree outside my bedroom window. The melody melted my heart and, without warning, a profound grief and desolation surged through me. I began to sob. I didn't know why — until that evening, when my brother called to tell me Mum had died.

She lived in England; I lived in New Zealand. I had last spoken to her two weeks earlier. Now she had gone without saying goodbye.

Only then did I realise how deeply entwined we had been — feeling for each other, suffering for each other, carrying burdens of grief for each other, as mothers and daughters often do. And yet my lived experience of her was captured by John Lennon's line: "*Mother, you had me, but I never had you.*" She was a good mother and took care of me in practical ways, but I longed for warmth and softness, and she was distant and cool, like the moon.

My father was a divide-and-rule man who took up a lot of emotional space. Mum's efforts to keep the peace with him left little energy for being emotionally available to me. Her authenticity had little room to emerge.

The greatest gifts my mother gave me were life — and a passion for liberation. From childhood, I had longed to rescue her from my father's tyranny so she could blossom into her true self. When that proved impossible, I channelled my longing into liberating myself. I joined the Women's Liberation Movement and devoted my life to freeing myself, the Feminine, and supporting other women to do the same.

Her death was my first significant experience of grief, and I was shocked by its intensity. There was no room for anything else. From day to day my mood swung wildly. One day I was heavy and numb with loss; the next I felt unexpectedly light and joyful — liberated, loved, flying on the outstretched wings of elation.

I lit a candle for Dorothy and remembered her life. I read in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* about a meditation to help clear negative thought and karma, and I began the practice. I listened for her and sent her love.

For many years there had been an innate reserve between us. We no longer confided in each other, yet she remained the person I loved most in the world. My longing for her happiness was sometimes as fierce as that of a mother for her child, yet we moved around each other like awkward strangers.

The last time I had seen her, fifteen months earlier, we spoke about death.

"We don't know what's going to happen, do we?" she'd said. "There's no point in being afraid."

I imagined death would be a relief for her — a release from physical pain, from the indignities of ageing, from the daily labour of keeping hearth and home functioning, and from the long-held disappointments and loneliness of her life.

In my grieving, I took comfort in the belief that the inner work I had been doing to liberate myself had also freed her. On a soul level, as I released centuries of conditioned limitation, I liberated her too. And as she surrendered, she released me. These were the best gifts we could give each other.

Near the end of her life, she seemed to discover her authentic self. She dropped the bottled anger and frustration that had crippled her and came to peace with her lot. Bitterness drained away, leaving sweetness and grace born of surrender. She was a mature fruit ready to fall.

Grief stripped away my skin and made space for love to pour in from friends and colleagues. As if, in some strange way, now my mother was gone, I could finally feel the love that was there for me. I was hugged, held, fed, comforted. My house filled with flowers. The shell of introversion that had once protected me — and later imprisoned me — had already been cracked open by September 11th and was now shattered by my mother's death. I stepped more fully into my place in the community and appreciated the life I had created. This was my inheritance.

I knew I had to let her go. She had done her job as my mother for fifty-two years. Now she was detaching from her roles and responsibilities, shedding the mantle she had worn, beginning her journey into the unknown. Perhaps she was already wrapped in a love vast enough to compensate for what she had lacked.

We remember so little of the mystery of death and the far journeys of the soul. Her body would return to the elements, but that was not all she was. Something essential and enduring would continue — making new choices, perhaps taking new forms, finding fresh opportunities to learn and be fulfilled.

For four months I continued to swing between grief and elation. Alongside my aliveness came terror. I had known loneliness before and learned to live with it. This was different. It culminated one evening as I stood beneath a vast night sky, right on the edge of the cosmic void, gazing into the darkness — an encounter with freedom as terrifying as it was exhilarating.

After that, I could no longer sense her presence. I sensed she had flown into other dimensions, free at last.

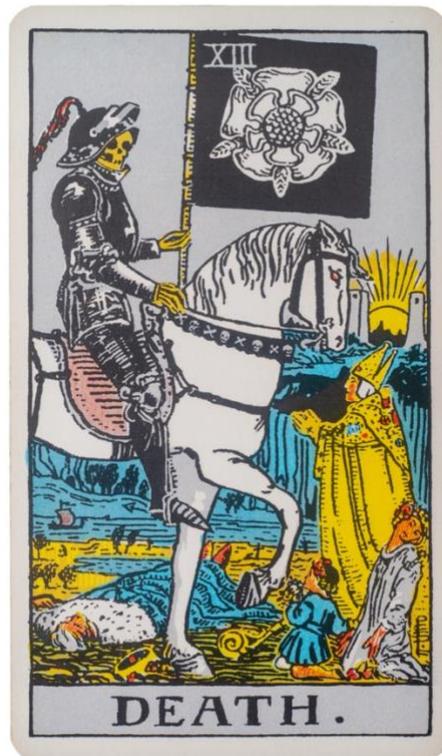
Go now, Dorothy. Go into the light and love. Go free.

My mother's death changed me in unexpected ways. I emerged from my cave into an enchanted world. Feeling fully alive, love bubbled through me and flowed outward effortlessly. My

priorities shifted. What had once felt urgent no longer held me. I no longer wanted to be engaged in activism or workshops, however valuable they were. What mattered now was sunlight filtering through leaves, patterns of light on the ground. I wanted to sit in the warm circle of friends under the laden plum tree, pick ripe fruit and taste its sweetness. I wanted less time in the harness and more time grazing in the meadow where there were no rules and boundaries. I wanted to be held, to be loved tenderly — and, above all, to float in amniotic bliss with my mother.

It has now been twenty-four years since she died. Even as I write, grief and sadness stir within me. I have learned to move through grief more gracefully — to feel the full range of human emotion without fear or judgement, letting it move through me, touch and shape me. But the loss of a loved one never disappears. It becomes part of who we are.

I am grateful I wrote about my mother's death while the memories were still fresh. Like a photograph album, stories preserve what is precious. Writing is a powerful way of finding meaning and integrating experience. It is a gift that keeps giving.



I am drawn to the archetype of Death or Transformation, a reminder that death is a natural part of the cycle of life. Like transformation, death arrives in its own time and carries us into another dimension of consciousness.

Inquiry

What memories have these words stirred in you?

Choose one and write about it.

Whatever arises, wrap yourself in unconditional love and acceptance.

When you have finished, name one thing you have discovered.

Story Four: When Things Fall Apart

Catastrophe can shock us awake. The veil of habit that keeps us from seeing a larger reality is abruptly torn away. The shock of the new and the death of the old may happen simultaneously, in a moment. Yet it takes time to process trauma, to let go of what has been, and to step into what is emerging.

To live through crisis consciously, we must allow the disturbance to move through us and be integrated into our being. In this way, we become living manifestations of both dark and light — embodied souls.

This is a story of how disruption — whether caused by natural disaster or human tragedy — can catalyze shifts in consciousness and draw us deeper into Whole Mind–Whole World.

The Flood — December 2011

It had been raining for three days — vertical, relentless, unfriendly rain — the kind they call “weather bombs.”

My friend Maggie and I were anticipating a quiet evening. She was standing at the kitchen window washing dishes when suddenly she cried out:

“Rose, the earth’s moving!”

I ran to the window. Shrubs and trees that had moments earlier held up the steep bank at the back of the house were slip-sliding across the lawn in undulating waves, like a snake shedding its skin.

Immediately I clicked into another state of consciousness — alert, awake, practical.

We had to get out. Now.

I ran through the house gathering what seemed essential: computer, purse, spare knickers, chocolate, raincoat. Within minutes we were pounding down the stairs.

We drove across the street and parked in the driveway of an empty house. The road had become a river. We had no idea what lay beyond.

We were suddenly without a home, without shelter, without a plan.

Maggie began to hyperventilate. I sat with her, encouraging her to breathe. The panic passed, but for those few minutes the situation felt genuinely life-threatening.

Help Arrives

Our neighbour Barrie appeared through the rain and invited us to shelter in his house. His wife Annemarie welcomed us warmly. Another couple had just escaped their beachside cabin. Tea was brewed. Beds were made. Despite everything, hospitality — even hilarity — prevailed.

I leapt at the offer of a hot shower.

I had just stepped out of the shower when Maggie knocked urgently at the door.

“Rose, we’ve got to go. Now.”

A massive tree at the top of the bank was swaying dangerously — poised to fall where we would be sleeping.

Again, we gathered our things and headed back into the torrent.

A council official directed us to the village hall. We drove up Paradise Way — now a river — and onto Richmond Road, which looked like a bomb site. Huge craters. Boulders. Umbrellas moving through sheets of rain.

At the hall, only six of us had been evacuated.

Later we were billeted to a motor camp behind the beach. It was high tide and a full moon. I had reservations. Others were buoyant. So we went.

Choosing a Conscious Response

That night, in our narrow chalet beds, Maggie and I reflected.

The moment we recognised danger, we had both made a conscious choice: to step into Whole Mind — presence rather than panic, cooperation rather than resistance. We chose not to indulge hysteria or victimhood, but to meet whatever came — including the possibility of death — with open eyes.

As soon as we saw the earth moving, I recognised it as the wake-up call I had long anticipated. In my earlier writing I had imagined a civil emergency: one bag only, life changed forever.

Now it was happening.

Even as we attended to practical survival, part of our awareness knew we were in the hands of something far greater than us — Life itself.

Into the Unknown

In the early hours Maggie woke me.

“You’ve got to move your car.”

The campsite was flooded above knee level. My car sat with water lapping at the doorsill.

I climbed in. I couldn’t see clearly. I couldn’t hear over the rain. The only option seemed to be driving into deeper water. My body shook at the prospect of driving into the unknown.

In truth, I was safe. I turned, parked, and returned to bed. The worst that could have happened was losing the car.

What terrified me was not loss — it was making decisions in a situation where I had no control and no certainty.

For the second time that night, I looked death in the face.

Back in bed, I surrendered.

The Morning After

We woke to devastation.

The rain had softened to a fine grey drizzle, but the landscape was unrecognisable. The campsite was awash. Roads were thick with mud. Holidaymakers wandered about like dazed ghosts, clutching towels and phones that no longer worked.

I walked to the small village store in search of coffee and learned that electricity and running water had been cut off. The ordinary scaffolding of daily life — power, plumbing, routine — had vanished overnight.

Barrie arrived with news. A sixty-metre-wide slip had torn through the cliff face above our homes. Houses once considered secure were now perched precariously at the edge. Maggie’s house still stood but had been red-stickered — uninhabitable. Barrie and Annemarie’s exquisitely tended garden had been ravaged, and their home was also under threat.

Only the week before, I had stood in that garden marvelling at its beauty — ten years of patient devotion shaped into terraces, pathways, and flowering abundance. Now it was destroyed. I thought of the intricate sand mandalas created by Buddhist monks — painstakingly constructed, then ritually swept away. The lesson of impermanence could not have been clearer.

The flooding had been caused by saturated earth and compounded by log-jamming from unsustainable forestry upstream. Damage fell randomly. Only two houses were rendered uninhabitable — ours was one. Some neighbours lost the vegetable gardens that sustained them year-round. Miraculously, there was no loss of life. One elderly man had been swept out of his house in his armchair and broken a finger. That was all.

And yet everything had changed.

Surrender

By afternoon, Maggie and I were officially homeless.

With limited financial resources and no clear plan, we stood exposed — stripped of our outer protections and cast into the arms of community and the unknown.

I picked my way carefully through mud and rubble back to our house to retrieve food. The kitchen stood gutted and damp, thick with the stale scent of dereliction. I felt as if I were walking through the ruins of my own life.

Cupboards hung open. The fridge hummed faintly, still functioning for now.

I emptied what I could into a bag and slung it over my shoulder. As I trudged back through debris, I felt an unexpected kinship with displaced people everywhere. Images of refugees filled my mind — families leaving villages with only what they could carry, walking into uncertain futures.

In that moment, I was no longer someone reading about displacement in a newspaper. I was inside it.

Stripped of possessions, without a home or family nearby, I felt raw and vulnerable.

And yet — simultaneously — I was aware of my immense privilege. Even in this bedraggled paradise, I was part of a compassionate community. Offers of shelter had already been made. And I had the language and inner framework to say: I will use this as an opportunity to evolve consciously.

I held both truths at once: fragility and trust. This, I began to understand, is the essence of faith.

Seizing the Transformational Opportunity

From the first moment the land began to move, Maggie and I had known something larger was unfolding.

We were shaken, yes. But beneath the shock was a quiet recognition: this was a threshold.

We had spent years in spiritual study together. Now the teachings were no longer theoretical. We were being invited to embody them: to practise surrender in real time.

When we resisted — thinking this shouldn't be happening, that it was unfair, that we were victims — suffering intensified immediately. When we softened and accepted the reality before us, something steadier emerged. This did not remove difficulty but it removed unnecessary struggle.

We remained aware that we were in the hands of something much bigger than our individual wills — Life itself. And instead of tightening against it, we chose — again and again — to cooperate.

This shift dissolved old identities. Parts of us that had been reactive or subtly victimised began to fall away. In their place, something quieter and more spacious emerged.

We were too fragile to fully inhabit this new state yet. Integration would take years. But the door had opened.

Practising Radical Trust

Within twenty-four hours the campsite resumed business as usual, and we needed to find somewhere to live — without money, without a plan, and without knowing how long this new life would last.

Within half an hour we had two offers, and our nomadic existence began.

Outwardly, we moved from place to place — welcomed into spacious homes in beautiful settings, cared for with a generosity that often left me humbled.

Inwardly, something far more disorienting was happening. I felt unmoored and exposed, unsure where I belonged or how to find stable ground. Shock and trauma made connection difficult and in those early days I felt profoundly alone — held by kindness, yet inwardly dislocated.

Asking for help required a kind of nakedness. It dismantled long-held ideas about independence and self-sufficiency. I had always valued standing on my own feet. Now I was dependent on the generosity of others. At times I felt almost transparent — as if my usual social skin had been peeled away.

There were moments of deep gratitude — flashes of awe at the kindness flowing toward us — and then, just as suddenly, waves of vulnerability. I felt suspended between worlds: not the woman I had been before the landslide, not yet someone fully formed on the other side of it.

Time behaved strangely. Days blurred. Conversations felt both intimate and slightly unreal. “Normal life” continued for everyone else, yet I experienced it as if through thin glass. I was present but not anchored.

I began to understand that radical trust is not a triumphant state of certainty. It is a willingness to remain open when there is no ground. To continue showing up without knowing what shape your life will take. To surrender not once, but again and again, each time fear returns.

True wealth, I was discovering, is not security or ownership. It is relationship. It is the invisible current of giving and receiving that runs beneath appearances. The quiet strength that arises when we allow ourselves to be carried.

Finding True Wealth in Loss

Despite uncertainty, abundance continued to flow toward us. We were offered shelter in unexpected places, including eight days in a luxurious cliff-top home, free of charge. A government allowance enabled a generous Christmas feast. Gifts arrived precisely when they were needed.

And yet, beneath the practical solutions, the deeper shift continued. We were living in what felt like a liminal field — neither disaster nor stability, neither collapse nor restoration.

When we retreated to the Marlborough Sounds, something softened. The vastness of sea and sky began to steady me. The land did not demand anything. It simply held us. In that quiet beauty, awe gradually replaced disorientation. I could feel life reorganising itself around a larger centre.

The flood had dismantled the illusion that I was separate — from nature, from community, from the invisible intelligence moving through events. What had felt like catastrophe now revealed itself as initiation.

Not instantly. Not cleanly. But steadily.

I began to sense that the personal “I” and the unfolding universe were not opposed forces, but one movement. That the same current that erodes cliffs also sustains breath. That what we call loss is often a widening.

Integration would take years. But in those weeks, I caught my first stable glimpse of a larger identity — not as a solitary individual managing life, but as a being interwoven with it.

Finding Language for Emerging Experience

For months we lived in a kind of mid-air suspension. “Normal life” had been interrupted, and we did not yet know what shape the new life would take.

Reality felt thinner. As if a veil had lifted.

We were vulnerable, skinless, searching for language.

Gradually, metaphors began to form. Symbols surfaced in dreams. Maggie spoke of sensing a vast sea creature beneath the surface — an unseen intelligence moving slowly and powerfully below awareness.

Our time in the Marlborough Sounds became both refuge and incubation.

When Maggie returned to the mainland, I remained. A choice presented itself: retreat further into contemplation. Or step forward into new work.

I chose to initiate *A Whole New World* — a teleseminar series exploring true wealth and conscious culture.

From that remote cabin, running between unreliable internet connections, I re-entered the world — changed.

Cycles of Death and Rebirth

When the landslide broke through the walls of our home, it also broke through an inner wall.

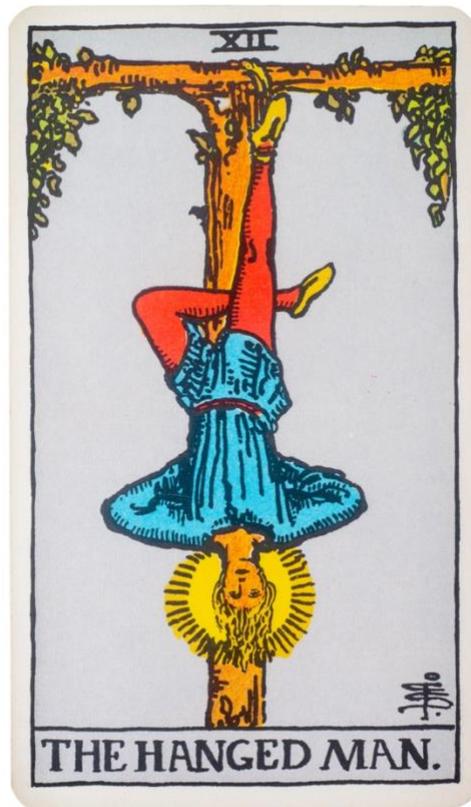
Catastrophe happens in a moment. Transformation unfolds over time. Integration takes years.

Comfort, security, identity — these are often sacrificed in the regenerative cycles of death and rebirth that mirror nature itself. The turning of the Earth. The phases of the moon. The shedding of leaves.

Crisis can deepen resilience. Each descent into loss becomes an entry into hidden reservoirs of faith, love, endurance, and trust.

This is not romanticising disaster. It is recognising that when we consciously meet disruption, we are reshaped by it.

This is the work of becoming whole.



I am drawn to the archetype of The Hanged Man — the one who is turned upside down so that a new way of seeing can emerge.

Shock can suspend us between worlds. In that suspended space we are invited to look at life from another angle — to recognise that darkness and difficulty are not mistakes, but part of the whole.

When we allow ourselves to see from this reversed perspective, what once felt like loss can become initiation.

Inquiry

- Has your life ever been disrupted by an event completely outside your control? What inner strengths did you discover? What new insights emerged?
 - Are there aspects of shock, trauma, surrender, or uncertainty in this story that resonate with your own experience?
 - Have you encountered spiritual truths through crisis that changed the way you live? How have they shaped you?
-

Story Five: Freedom

Being an embodied soul — and living from the authentic self — sometimes requires us to break society's rules.

Much of the journey of liberation is a process of discernment: noticing where and how we are kept captive, and then making choices that align with our soul values. It is often experimental and always evolving; a journey of becoming rather than a fixed goal or destination.

As spiritual beings having a human experience, we are — at heart — free spirits living within an interconnected, intelligent natural world and cosmos. Our understanding of freedom tends to change as we mature. The following story took place in December 2005. I might define freedom differently now, yet this remains a clear example of breaking through limitation, swimming against expectation, and creating an empowering experience that harmed no one and diminished no one else's freedom.

I've chosen Strength as the symbol for this story — our capacity to transform breakdown into breakthrough by shedding old patterns that restrict the flow of life energy. This card is also known as Lust for Life.



The Best Christmas Ever – 2005

It was a week before Christmas and, once again, due to unexpected events, I found myself without a home, with little money and nowhere to go.

Rather than hiding away and feeling sorry for myself, I chose adventure.

I turned my car into a moving sanctuary — joss sticks burning softly, a handwritten sign taped to the dashboard: *Stay open to the unexpected*. Then I drove off into the unknown.

I had no idea where I was going. I was completely free — a blank canvas, ground zero. I could turn left or right, guided only by intuition.

How precious these moments of freedom are. They arrive in the creative cycle like the pause between breaths — when the old has been fully exhaled and the new has not yet begun. In that gap, anything is possible.

So what did I choose?

First, I drove to the Buddhist Centre in the mountains where I had spent many days in retreat. It was empty except for the caretaker, who offered me my favourite hut, Skydancer, nestled high among the forest. The days were sun-drenched and peaceful, scented with earth, pollen, and warm pine needles. The nights were still and star-filled.

It was close to paradise — yet I couldn't settle. A restless current moved in me. I felt a burning desire to spend Christmas in the wilderness on the far west coast of Golden Bay.

So on Christmas morning, I packed up and set off on the three-hour drive across the mountains to the sea.

The sun that had smiled without ceasing for a week slipped behind clouds that gathered and broke into heavy rain. Neither the weather, nor the long drive, nor party invitations could deter me. The call of the wilderness was stronger than the comfort of human company.

As I flew on the wings of the authentic self through the rain, I heard my dead mother's voice admonishing: "You must be mad!"

I cackled like a delighted child, pounding the steering wheel with glee.

"I'm free, Mummy!"

I had escaped Christmas — and I was choosing happiness, exultantly and ecstatically.

There's a small township on the westward journey where you turn right across a stream and head toward the mountains. Downstream, the water widens into a majestic river, becomes an estuary,

and joins the sea. At this turning point there is always an updraft beneath the wings, and I felt ready to soar as I crossed the bridge.

A second turn takes you left, away from Farewell Spit, onto a narrow gravel road. Here civilisation falls away. There are no houses for miles — only the unfolding arc of Westhaven Inlet, pine plantations, pockets of native bush, and rainforest hanging in lush green curtains.

Mile after mile I drove deeper into virgin territory. No one else was on the road. The familiar world closed behind me. There was only this pair of eyes, this nose breathing the bush, this skin receiving damp air, these ears tuned to the engine and the crunch of stones beneath the tyres.

And beyond that — silence.

Just me and nature.

I felt safe, nurtured, endlessly invited to go deeper in.

Eventually, I passed the limits of where I had been before, and the road burst from the bush into the waiting arms of a vast west coast sky. I emerged from a long tunnel of green into limitless space, washed clean by rain. It was enticing, almost erotic, and every cell in my body tingled with anticipation.

By late afternoon the rain had softened to drizzle, and it was time to find somewhere to camp. I stopped at a small backpackers, roused the proprietor from his family Christmas, and asked if I could stay. He looked at me as though I were quite eccentric — but he said yes.

I drove up onto the mossy paddock with a satisfied sigh.

If anyone had been watching me attempt to pitch a tent in the howling gale, it would have been a comedy. Eventually I surrendered and retreated to the stone bothy. There was no one else there.

I rolled out my sleeping bag on the narrow bunk, as grateful as if I had arrived at a palace.

Christmas dinner was a fried egg sandwich.

No Christmas meal has ever tasted better.

I slept soundly beneath a feast of stars and woke to sunshine and the sound of surf pounding the shore.

Freedom has meant different things at different times in my life.

Sometimes it is escape from what has grown stale.

Sometimes it is a moment-by-moment choice to align with who I truly am — to listen inwardly

and respond.

Sometimes it is the longing to throw off limitation and stretch my wings.

Freedom is being moved by intuition, inspired by what carries heart and meaning, and finding the courage to act.

Adrienne Rich wrote:

“Freedom. it isn’t once, to walk out
under the Milky Way, feeling the rivers
of light, the fields of dark –
freedom is daily, prose-bound, routine
remembering. Putting together inch by inch
the starry worlds. From all the lost collections”

For Memory, from *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*, Adrienne Rich, Norton 1981

These days I would say freedom is the capacity to respond to experience rather than react and become caught in suffering. It includes an acknowledgement of privilege and an understanding that personal freedom cannot be separated from the wider web of life.

Freedom, as I experience it now, is a repeated choice to serve the greater whole of which I am part — and to gratefully receive the fulfilment that flows from that service.

What does freedom mean to you?

Story Six: Homecoming

There are several kinds of homecoming.

A house can be a home, and throughout my life I've enjoyed a few homes — sanctuaries where I've mostly lived alone, in solitude. Spaces that have held me as I've healed and created: Blebo, Royal Park Terrace, Atawhai, Llanbedrog. I can feel nostalgia spinning its web, pulling me back into memory, into that deep burrowing place. In total, those homes only occupy twenty-two of my seventy-seven years. The rest of the time I've been restless and nomadic — always on the move.

Lands and landscapes can be a homecoming too — I've had a few of those: big skies, mountains, the sea, green fields — Achiltibuie, Little Loch Broom, Farewell Spit, Tukurua, Cardigan Bay. The names stir my longing for expansion, movement, change.

And then, of course, there's coming home to the Self — that's what becoming an embodied soul is: a homecoming, bringing body and soul together as one, into a state of quiet fulfilment, confidence, and peace.

But the kind of homecoming I'll write about today is relationship — soul friendship, love bonds. I could get lost here too if I followed the tugging at my heart.

I met Woods when I was fifty-seven. I'd been flying solo for years and I was hungry for a beloved — a soul companion. We met online and connected immediately around our mutual love for Eckhart Tolle and *The Power of Now*. We met in presence — not always, but it was our preferred space, and we cultivated it consciously.

We'd sit for hours, cross-legged on the floor, face to face, exploring consciousness and creativity — how to co-create a whole new world. We were entering new territory, laying down the tracks as we went, diving into deep space.

Being with Woods was a homecoming. We were energetically, spiritually, creatively aligned — peas from the same pod. I was relaxed in his company, light, often bursting into spontaneous song. He called me goofy.

It wasn't always easy. There were sharp edges, raw to negotiate — places where the ground beneath us suddenly split and I was here, on one side of the abyss, and he over there, so distant, on the far side. And we were too pained to wave.

Out of that, we developed our conscious relationship practice. We learned to show up for difficult conversations, to witness unhealed wounds, egoic defences, and the no-go zones that have no words.

Woods came to visit me in New Zealand first, only weeks after we met online. We hoped he'd want to stay and that we'd live happily ever after. But that wasn't to be.

I was living in a cottage within a big, beautiful garden, close to the sea — what must have seemed to Woods like the last outpost on earth. The land and sky and air and light were alive and dynamic. I'd had time to attune to it, and I loved living on that wild edge of freedom. I experienced the emptiness as fullness.

Woods felt confronted by it.

On the first morning, as we explored the garden, he fell to his knees before the light, at the foot of a flowering cherry tree, and wept with awe. After that, he became quiet, withdrawn, moody. He didn't want to go out much. He was awakened by the energy of Aotearoa, but it was too much for him. After a few weeks he returned home to Williamsburg, Virginia, and a few months later I followed him there.

It was midnight when my plane landed — a frosty December night. He was waiting at the exit, rugged up in a big overcoat. As soon as I saw his face, the joy of homecoming rose through my whole being.

It was always like that, every time we met. We were two atoms that belonged together, feeling the relief of finding the missing piece.

I lived with Woods for three and a half years in Virginia, and then I returned to New Zealand — to the place where the land disappeared into the sea and the skies were huge. At night, when I looked up into the Milky Way, I could barely keep my balance beneath the awe of it all.

Then, on New Year's Day, 2015, I heard the call to return to my homeland in the UK, to be with my brother as he navigated a difficult transition. And on the way back, I'd stop over with Woods for five weeks.

And there it was still — the experience of homecoming.

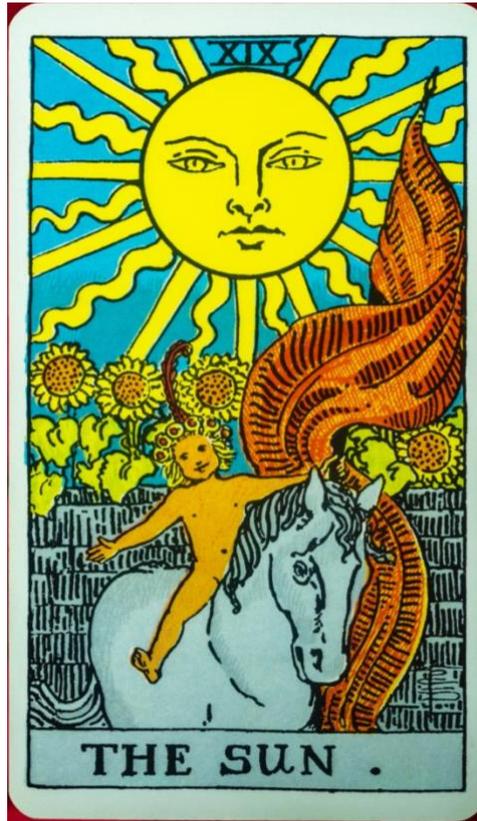
That was the last time I saw him. Three months later he was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and told he only had weeks to live. This was an opportunity to enter a conscious dying process — to sit with death and befriend it.

He made his transition on the Winter Solstice, 22nd December 2015.

Writing about him now stirs such a sweet sorrow. Ten years have passed, and I still miss him keenly. He's part of me and always will be. I hear people say that after a loved one dies, they are simply in another room, and you can talk to them just the same. That hasn't been my experience.

In the first few months after his death, I took myself off to a friend's cabin where I wrote through my grief — and I was writing from that Rose-Woods consciousness. Although my grief felt heavy, my sombre mood was interlaced with joy. The writing flowed easily, and it was such a precious gift to have nothing else to do but sit and remember him, and us.

But no — I can't talk to him in the way I used to. He's gone.



I have chosen the Sun as a symbol of the universal principle of partnership, collaboration, and shared creation. It speaks to the inner dance of feminine and masculine energies within each of us — and to the reservoirs of creative life-force this union can release.

Inquiry

Take some time to sit and feel into your own experiences of homecoming.

Have you had a beloved who felt like home?

Perhaps the thought of homecoming stirs feelings of loss — or of something vital you are missing.

Allow memories to arise spontaneously. Greet every feeling that is stirred in you as if it were a friend.

Gathering the Gifts

Before I tell my final story, let's pause and reflect.

An important part of any creative process is harvesting the gifts and integrating them into our being. This is how we become embodied souls.

I didn't set out to write this book. I began with questions — an inquiry. These are questions I have been living with in different forms for many years, but this time they arrived with urgency, at a turning point — the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026:

What is the experience of being an embodied soul?

And how can we encourage ourselves and each other in completing our transition into living as embodied souls?

These questions feel especially alive now because living as embodied souls represents a new stage of consciousness — one that has the potential to transform life on this planet.

In Chinese astrology, 2025 was the year of the Wood Snake — a time associated with shedding skins, endings and beginnings, death and rebirth, deep transformation and completion. I have been experiencing this in my own life, and I imagine you may have felt it too, in your own way.

With every ending there is a beginning, and every completion requires time for integration. Often endings and beginnings overlap.

On February 17, 2026, we move into the year of the Fire Horse — a cycle linked with bold action, adventure, leadership, reinvention, and new beginnings.

On a much larger timescale, some spiritual traditions suggest that humanity may be approaching the end of the cycle known in Hindu cosmology as the Kali Yuga — an age in which ignorance, conflict, selfishness, and spiritual disconnection have been widespread — and that we are preparing for a new era of renewal.

Whether or not these frameworks resonate with you, you may still sense something stirring in your being — a quickening of life force that arises from a place beyond words, accompanied by hope and inspiration. I feel this strongly. It is what is stimulating my inquiry.

My questions dropped in a few weeks before Christmas as a quiet wondering — and as the next unfolding step in my work with Tribe in Transition. Along with them came six memories — the stories I have shared with you so far:

- **Adventure** — setting off toward a new life and a new vision on the far side of the world
- **Inspiration** — the teachers and guides who lit the way
- **Death** — as a great awakener, through both collective shock and personal loss
- **Crisis** — as a source of wisdom, through flood and displacement
- **Freedom** — breaking free from conditioning into authentic joy
- **Homecoming** — found in love, relationship, and soul friendship

Out of all the memories I could have chosen, why these six?

I felt invited into an intuitive, Soul-led process — to revisit them not as recollections, but as experiences still alive in me — to discover how they are connected and what light they might shed on my questions.

By entering this collaboration with Soul, I became a kind of Soul-weaver — weaving strands of memory, intuition, and archetypal story. As I bring attention and awareness into memory, the body is stirred, being awakens, and experience arises to be reviewed, purified, integrated, and claimed by the sovereign self.

This is a form of alchemy — one that yields unexpected gifts and quiet abundance.

As I moved through this writing, certain recognitions arrived — not as conclusions, but as quiet knowing and rising joy. Only after I was well into this process did I realise I was undergoing an initiation — not marked by drama, but by quiet completion.

I discovered that experience itself is inexhaustibly generous.
I remembered how Soul has been guiding me all along.
I recognised how deeply I am woven into others, across time.

I undertook this creative play during the darkest time of the year, as the light was beginning its return. Traditionally, this is the season when we gather to feast and celebrate, to give and receive gifts, and to remember sacred stories — including the birth of the Christ child, born in a humble manger.

I have realised that story is the gift at the heart of Christmas.

We humans have always gathered around the fire, in families and tribes, to tell stories. When you stand to tell your story and relive memory from a place of presence, you enter the living stream of experience where past, present, and future meet — where the boundaries between the individual and the collective dissolve. A timeless place. A sacred space.

On an ordinary day, you may be moving so fast that you miss your experience. Time passes you by. You are not present. You do not raise your head to smell the air or feel your feet on the earth. But when you tell stories, your experience lives. It takes on the ring of truth.

In this spirit, I'm called to tell one last story.

Story Seven: Welcome to the Heart Sharing Circle

This story takes me back to the beginning — to December 1994, when I first arrived in Aotearoa–New Zealand. It is drawn from *Migration to the Heartland – A Soul Journey in the Land of the Awakening Dawn* (2005), and it marks a quiet turning point in my life.

“There are many wonderful stories of these islands for you to hear,” Kerry said as we pulled into the retreat centre, perched high above a wide silver lake.

Women were everywhere — gliding across the lawns in flowing skirts and sarongs, stirring pots in the kitchen, laughing on the decks with cups of tea in hand. They were young and old, mothers and elders, barefoot and purposeful. The atmosphere felt tribal, slightly chaotic, deeply alive — infused with belonging.

I felt not excluded. But separate.

An hour later a subtle shift passed across the land like wind through grass. Conversations softened. We gathered beneath a wide old tree.

“You’re about to be initiated into the Heart Sharing Circle,” Kerry whispered. “There will be a pōwhiri — a welcome. I’ll be on the other side giving the karanga, the call. Visitors are called from their waka, their canoes, to come ashore.”

And then she left me.

A small welcoming group stood near the house. The rest of us waited beneath the tree. Silence thickened.

Kerry stepped forward and began to call in Māori.

Her voice rose in a primal wail — earth-sound, grief-sound, summoning-sound. It travelled through time. It entered my spine.

A woman from our side answered. The chant unfolded:

*Toia mai
Te waka
Ki te urunga
Te waka
Ki te moenga...*

Paddle the canoe to the resting place.

The air vibrated. We sang in response. Then the ritual shifted — sage smoke, blessing, the crossing of a threshold.

When it was my turn, sweet smoke circled my body. I stepped across into the house.

Inside, cushions and mattresses covered the floor. An altar to the Goddess stood at the centre — feathers, driftwood, crystals, candles. Through the window Lake Taupō shimmered. Tūi and bellbirds stitched liquid notes through the dusk.

Forty women gathered.

Two priestesses entered with bowls of warm water scattered with rose petals. One by one, our hands and feet were bathed.

When my feet were washed, something inside me gave way. I felt like a child received without condition.

Resistance dissolved.

Time loosened.

Magic entered my cells.

A woman rose.

“We are here to celebrate the summer solstice,” she said. “Fullness of light. And already, the turning toward darkness. Tonight we reflect. We let go. We empty ourselves. We speak without interruption. We listen without fixing.”

One by one women rose and took the talking stick.

Stories spiralled outward and downward — love and illness, children and solitude, betrayal and forgiveness, humour in hardship. The ordinary and the archetypal braided together. As each woman spoke, she seemed to grow larger — not in ego, but in presence.

Life was hard.

Life was holy.

Life was shared.

My heart began to pound.

Now.

Now.

Now.

I was on my feet before thought intervened.

The talking stick felt heavy, carved and jewelled, warm with human hands.

“I was born in Britain,” I began.

And then the story poured out — of restlessness, of rejecting the script of success, of longing for something truer. Of love and confusion. Of the Goddess of Poetry who had awakened me into another dimension of consciousness — who had flooded my world with image and fire and beauty — and of how I had tried to live in two realms at once — and how the Goddess disappeared.

I spoke of leaving the city. Of calling the Goddess back at dawn on a hilltop. Of choosing to step out of what I had come to call the *Mistaken Time* — a state of illusion in which we have lost connection with Soul, with each other and with the Earth.

“Words are magic makers,” I heard myself say. “When we stand and speak our truth, we change reality.”

The room was so still it could have held a feather.

I felt shy and bold at once.

What if they thought I was ridiculous?

Too much?

Too intense?

I glanced across the circle and caught the eye of a dark-haired woman. She grinned — and something passed between us. Recognition.

I exhaled.

This Heart Sharing Circle was initiation.

Not into mysticism.

Into belonging.

In that moment I understood something with my body:

Community is not created by agreement.
It is created by truth spoken into listening space.

The Goddess was here moving through the field we had created together.

Being heard — and received — was balm.

As each woman rose after me, another veil dropped. Beauty revealed itself. Fear softened. The air felt charged, almost luminous.

We were not escaping the world.

We were inhabiting it more deeply.

By the time the circle closed, I knew something irreversible had happened.

I had crossed a threshold.



Becoming Embodied Souls

What if we are souls here by choice, to have a human experience?

It is a spacious thought — one that can quietly transform the way we live.

What if we are beings of multi-dimensional consciousness inhabiting a three-dimensional world — shaped by cultural conditioning so pervasive we rarely see it? And what if the Soul Journey is the gradual liberation from those invisible confines, so that we may live our Soul values here, in this body, in this time?

Not by escaping the world.
But by inhabiting it more deeply.

Some say we are a bridge between Cosmos and Earth — between infinite possibility and lived limitation. Conscious spirituality is not about floating above life, but about bringing possibility into our bodies, our relationships, our work, our daily choices.

People have walked this path across centuries. They have crossed inner oceans. They have endured initiations. They have known beauty and heartbreak.

Becoming an embodied soul is not a destination. It is a lifelong unfolding — if we are fortunate enough to have the safety and conditions to undertake it. Not everyone does. It is a privilege to be able to turn inward, to heal and integrate.

Perhaps many of us are arriving now — not at an endpoint, but on firmer ground. A place of integration.

As we learn to hold joy and sorrow with less judgment, something softens. We release the dream of perfection — the perfect self, the perfect relationship, the perfect world — and begin to meet life as it is.

For me, being an embodied soul means:

Being authentic — seeking and speaking my truth.
Listening for deep wisdom and trusting its guidance.
Knowing my home is here, within me, a solid ground to stand upon.
Living the adventure wholeheartedly.
Respecting others as sovereign beings with their own journeys.

It means remembering:

I am a spiritual being having a human experience.

As spirit, I belong to the spaciousness and infinite possibility of the Universe.
As human, I am rooted in Earth, ancestry, limitation and choice.

Honouring both, I choose to live in service to life — embracing light and shadow, wholeness and suffering — walking, as best I can, with compassion and freedom.

What does it mean to you?

Let the question rest in you.

The Choice We Live With

We can step through this doorway now — or later.
We can move gently, cautiously, in our own time.

This is not a dramatic decision.
Not a once-and-for-all declaration.

It is a series of small, human choices —
to listen a little more deeply,
to trust what is already stirring within us,
to soften defensiveness,
to respond rather than react,
to speak truth kindly,
to trust what is already awakening within us,
step forward when called,
or wait when waiting is wiser.

We step through the doorway in our own time.
We falter.
We return.
We begin again.

To live as an embodied soul is not escape.
It is response-ability — our willingness to participate consciously in the unfolding of life, and to bring what we carry in our hearts into lived expression.

You may feel daunted.
You may feel tired.
You may feel ready.

Whatever you feel is part of the path.

You do not have to do this alone.

A Blessing

If these stories have stirred something in you —
may it continue to unfold quietly.

May you walk your path with courage and tenderness.
May you trust the quiet movements of your soul.
May you find companions when you need them,
and solitude when you require depth.
May your questions lead you where you need to go.

May you feel the steady ground beneath your feet
and the vast sky above your head.
And may you remember that you are woven into life —
not alone, but intimately connected.

And when you falter — as we all do —
may you remember that you belong
to something far greater than fear.

Walk gently.
Listen deeply.
Live fully.

With Love,
Rose

If You Would Like to Go Deeper

Some readers choose to explore these themes in a contained Heart Sharing Circle.

The circle continues the spirit of the book — story, reflection, and quiet transformation — within community.

This is not a course. Not a programme. Simply a guided space for reflection, connection and deepening.

I will send you an email with details of dates and themes.

You are welcome if, and when, it feels right.

What people are saying

“As someone who is passionate about stories. I have thoroughly enjoyed how in, *Becoming an Embodied Soul*, Rose has blended personal story, mythology and archetypes, into something unique and vital. Her work slows you down to the pace and peace of the breath, allowing our own personal wisdom to emerge alongside hers.”

- Sara M, Founding Member, The Tribe in Transition Community

"From the beginning this book took me straight into my center. To the place where I feel at peace and grounded. It's from that place that I continue to explore being an embodied soul. I felt held and free to remember forgotten aspects of myself. Rose invited me to look at them with new eyes and consider other options for continuing my journey. It's a book I can return to again and again for validation and guidance."

- Concetta A, Founding Member, The Tribe in Transition Community

“I found it very gripping to read Rose’s stories. In particular, the story of her mother’s death prompted a deep reflection about my mother daughter relationship and death as a threshold. Reflecting with the stories and inquiry questions, journaling with no idea where it is going, just moving with the process, stirred deep learning.

I believe the place of wholeness is to be found within us all and my quest is to live from that place more and more in my everyday life, and to enable others to do that for themselves. Coming home for me is that moving moment when it all comes together and I feel connected and spacious, not separate and boundaried. This book from Rose Diamond has helped me to step more fully into that space.”

- Hazel B, Member of Women Create!

I loved walking beside Rose and getting to know her as she shared some of her most profound life stories and watershed moments.

Through practical inquiries, she invites us to reflect upon our own life stories. Magically these revealed and strengthened my own values to live and love by.

- Bev M, Member of Women Create!

“This book is both a story book and a workbook....and a lot more ...

I was invited into being alongside Rose as she shared a few of her personal life stories.

The inspiring inquiry questions at the end of each story, gave me a starting point to consider my own life path as a soul living as a human being and how my own stories have shaped my life and my experience of personal growth and self-awareness.

It’s the inquiry questions that make this book just that little bit different.

Some deep and delicious thinking around aspects of my life that have forged me.

There’s permission to let it evolve slowly, and there’s a 6 month (or longer) personal curiosity work (and play) shop within these pages

- Sundy G, Founding Member

If you would like to add a testimonial, please email me: rose@tribeintransition.net.

Acknowledgements:

Tarot imagery based on the Rider–Waite–Smith deck (1909). Images licensed via Depositphotos.

For Memory, from *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*, Adrienne Rich, Norton 1981

Migration to the Heartland, A Soul Journey in the Land of the Awakening Dawn, Rose Diamond, is currently out of print.