



Sophia Rises

Changing the world through
feminine wisdom



Heather Plett

Heather Plett is on a quest for stories, wisdom and courage. She is passionate about writing, teaching, and facilitating transformative conversations. On her blog, www.sophialeadership.com, she explores the power of feminine wisdom and the impact it can have on the world.



THE QUESTION ON MY HEART

There's a question that's been burning on my heart for a year now. It is this:

What could happen for the world if all of us – women AND men – learned to trust our feminine wisdom more and let it inform the way we live, the way we lead, the way we treat our earth, and the way we make decisions about justice and politics and relationships?

It's a big question, and I'm not sure that, after a year, I'm much closer to the truth. It's a question that I believe we all have to commit to sitting with for a long, long time while the answer slowly but surely takes root in our hearts.

Sophia Leadership (my website) was never meant to be a solo journey. Since its inception, I've been looking to the wisdom of others to help understand just what feminine wisdom is and how it can change the world.

This e-book is a collection of some of the wisdom I have gathered from others in that journey. In the past few months, I've posed the question to a number of wise people

whose books or blogs I've read, whom I've met in my travels, or whom I've sat next to at various conferences and gatherings where we were asking similar deep questions.

I am absolutely thrilled with the variety and depth of the people who have offered their wisdom on the pages of this book. Writers hail from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, all over Canada and the U.S. There are artists, authors, dancers, musicians, yoginis, development workers, designers, leadership consultants, bloggers, and explorers of every kind. These are extraordinary people, every one of them, and yet they are as ordinary as you and I. Each of us has wisdom to share in this great and powerful exploration.

This e-book is a love story. All of the participants in it are in love with ideas, with possibilities, with dreams, and with hope.

I welcome you to participate in this love story. It's your story too. I hope that you will sit with the question and explore the places where it takes your heart.



Christine Claire
Reid

Christine Claire Reed is a dancer and healing movement instructor. She writes at www.blisschick.net



OUR BODIES

All that we build on this earth is a direct reflection of our attitudes toward our human body. The way we treat our bodies is mirrored perfectly in how we construct all institutions, from government to businesses to schools to religions. Thus far, the human imagination seems to be limited to two extremes: we either ignore our bodies and they become obese or begin to decay, being treated as nothing more than transport for our brains, or we strictly beat our bodies into submission, hardening our outsides as we harden our hearts. We see the same results outside of us: governments that are so glutenous, they are perilously close to self destruction; schools that treat each person as a cog; businesses that are only reactive, unable to take creative risks out of fear. The first step to solving any of these issues starts with each one of us. We must reject those two extremes that lead to different forms of self-hate.

We must embrace a feminine approach, treating ourselves as we would imagine a most perfect mother would treat all of her children: accepting each as the unique beauty we are while simultaneously nurturing the best from us. Do this to start your day for at least a month: Sit in a comfortable spot, light a candle, and breathe deeply, calling upon an image of yourself from childhood (perhaps imagined, perhaps real) when you were wildly, unabashedly free and happy. For the remainder of the day, make decisions about how you treat yourself and others based upon that image of your own inner perfection and light.

A WORLD OF HEROES



Dara McKinley

Dara McKinley inspires men and women to source their exquisitely powerful feminine juju in order to restore health to the world. She firmly believes that when the feminine essence is revered, the masculine will blaze bright and we will experience greater harmony on the planet in every regard. She blogs at www.volvemow.com



Most men over thirty would concur that hard work, making money and ensuring the security of his family, would have a piercing emptiness without the loving eyes of his wife. Though men can certainly celebrate the accomplishments of their fellow men, it is in the soft and approving eyes of women that their efforts are ultimately affirmed.

Women connect everything, including man back to himself. We are the co-pilots, navigators, readers of the stars. Our desires and pleasure set an undeniable course that men depend on.

Happiness is the huge opportunity modern women face and our desires are the only true path. Desires fuel the feminine's ability to genuinely admire, appreciate and adore ... men. No desires = no happiness = no admiration of men = lost men. Sigh. Lost men can cause a lot of problems. The desires of women are no frivolous matter.

Real feminine power SEES men and believes in them. A woman in her true power, effortlessly makes her man her hero, over and over again. It is in this reflection that he knows his true purpose.

Our feminine wisdom is in the midst of standing back up on her beautiful feet and dusting off the most stunning dress. Once she has risen, she will look around and pour adoration all over this earth. Masculine wisdom will soak up every exquisite drop and confidently step up to serve ... love.

And we will not only have a world of desires, a world of happiness AND a world of admiration, we will have ... a world of heroes.



Diane
Jung

For the past 25 years, Diane has been involved in being a “lightbearer and teacher”—this path of healing and teaching. She considers it a great privilege to be a Reiki Master/Teacher, to be a spiritual counselor/healer—and also a creator/facilitator of “women’s wisdom circles.” She does her best to walk this path of Truth and Integrity.
www.dianejungreiki.net



CIRCLE OF HEALING

I have been involved in holistic/spiritual healing for the past 25 yrs and am grateful to the universe and to my guides for leading me along this path. My journey began in a small town in northern New Brunswick over 60 yrs ago—the eldest of seven children. When I left home bound for university, it was there that I had my first profound experience—and one that awakened me to my feminine wisdom—I met my husband John. One might ask why this was such an event—it proved to be as John was Chinese—and back in the 60’s and in northern New Brunswick, one would not ordinarily consider marriage with someone of another race. Well, after marrying him and then having four beautiful daughters, we both are grateful to this day that we trusted our instincts and our feminine wisdom.

We graduated from university and returned to Ontario where we began our life together; teaching in a high school in Sarnia. This was only for one year as we then returned to the town where John grew up in Lindsay. It was a few years later when I enrolled in a private school for Massage & Hydrotherapy that my

life took another turn. Once I became involved with healing, it made me realize the uniqueness and resilience of the human spirit.

Trusting in the guidance of my inner wisdom, I was led to the world of energy healing—of becoming very interested in body, mind and spirit and that we are more than what we see. My quest for knowledge and understanding led me to Reiki—and it was from here, that my journey took an amazing turn. It caused me to become more compassionate towards myself and to others. And this always occurs in the “circle of healing”. These “circles of healing” comprise both men and women-- who are not afraid to be receptive to their feminine wisdom.

It has been my privilege to have initiated many students into the wonderful world of Reiki—and to see these individuals go on and make a difference in their world. And through the presence of Reiki (universal life force) in their lives, they take this energy and this Light out into the various communities of this province, of other provinces and even as far as



CIRCLE OF HEALING

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into the United States. The wonderful gift is that these students bring the gift of healing into their personal lives as well as into their workplaces. I know of one person who took all three levels of Reiki and is now the principle of a school in southern Ohio – in an area that is not safe and where there are steel bars around the windows — she too makes a difference and brings the feminine wisdom and compassion there.

I have seen the power and the incredible influence for good that a ‘circle of healing’ can do to change the energy in a workplace, at home and in hospitals. This is why I continue to sit in circle and to invite others to join me– and sometimes it is both men and women and other times, it is only women. I am passionately committed to this idea of ‘circle’ and will keep on keeping this on– here, where we live and in other places.

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Jarda Dokoupil

Jarda Dokoupil is a coach, facilitator, writer and speaker with 10 years experience in facilitating leadership development and social change in over 20 countries. Jarda is a founder of Tribe Network, innovative consultancy helping leaders to do what matters.
www.jardadokoupil.com



THE THIRD WAY

How can we have more Love in us?
Instead of our Power?
As there is only one whole.
Can we ask as such?
To tip the scales, perhaps too far again,
and perpetuate the ancient and never-ending,
Rivalry...
No. Not now. Not anymore.

There is a third way.
To understand our Power.
To know when it creates, when it brings magic, when it moves things forward.
To know when it oppresses, destroys and alienates.
To understand our Love.
To know when it nurtures, when it connects, when it brings union and joy.
To know when it confuses and brings chaos, when it poisons and collapses the very essence of ourselves and the people and the world around.
To understand our Power, to understand our Love.
Because it is who we are. Both.
As men and women.

So we can be ready; aware, connected, full of love and courage.
And blossom from the right soil,
When the time is right and the world asks us to make a choice.
So we can become pioneers and specks of beaming light
Shining a new possibility into our holographic universe.





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A WARRIOR'S CREED

- I have no freedom: I make awareness my freedom.
- I have no power: I make rhythms of nature my power.
- I have no authority: I make honesty my authority.
- I have no enemies: I make indifference and carelessness my enemies.
- I have no friends: I make the earth and the sky my friends.
- I have no rules: I make readiness and adaptability my rules.
- I have no tactics: I make the appropriate action my tactics.
- I have no strategy: I make emptiness and fullness my strategy.
- I have no armour: I make stillness and intuition my armour.
- I have no weapon: I make courage and alertness my weapon.
- I have no shield: I make reverence for my life my shield.
- I have no uniform: I make gentleness and compassion my uniform.
- I have no victories: I make harmony and balance my victories.
- I have no rewards: I make tears and laughter my rewards.
- I have no home: I make the present moment my home.
- I have no life or death: I make the tides of breathing my life and death.

Author unknown, submitted by Jarda Dokoupil



Julie
Daley

Julie Daley is a certified coach, teacher and writer, and the creator of *Unabashedly Female*. Julie helps women who long to rediscover the sacred creativity and leadership that is at the heart of their nature as women. A graduate of Stanford University with a degree in Interaction Design, Julie also teaches Creativity and Leadership at Stanford Continuing Studies, as well as to corporations and organizations. www.unabashedlyfemale.com



EMBODIMENT IS THE NEW TRANSCENDENCE

For centuries, the way of finding the Sacred has been to transcend; transcend the body, transcend the earth, transcend life. To know the divine, one had to rise above the earthly day-to-day world where it was believed the sacred didn't exist.

I've witnessed birth and I've witnessed death, and it is clearly evident that life comes into the body at birth and life leaves the body at death. To believe that we must leave the body to find the sacred, only holds water if we believe the sacred is something other than life, something that transcends life. Yet, everything that is here is only here because it is life-filled.

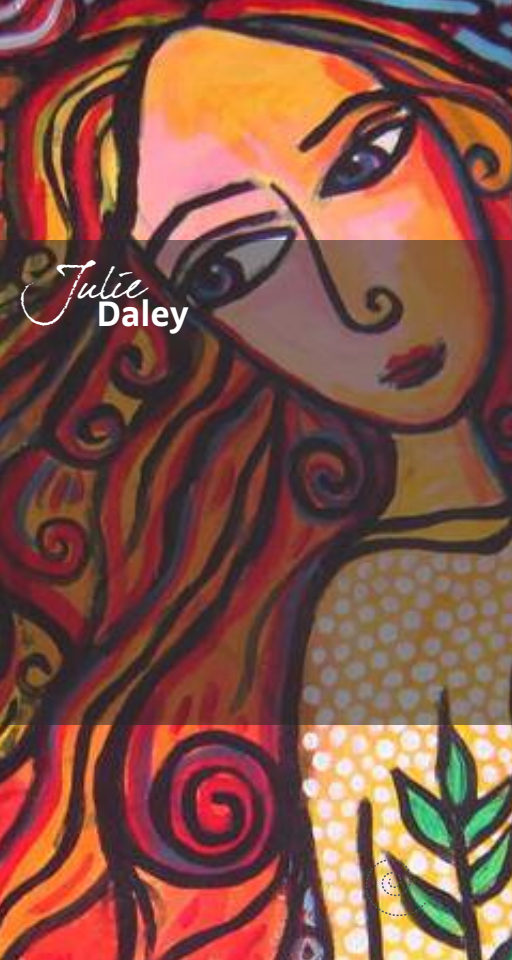
If you've ever really opened your eyes to the world around you, you get, in an unshakable way, that the sacred infuses the whole of existence. The sacred is here, right here, right now.

Babies are born, cherry trees blossom, leaves turn kaleidoscope colors, and the earth regenerates. Something is infusing matter with life, something that does it without man's ingenuity.

Our way of wisdom, part of the feminine principle of life, tells us that matter is alive, filled with radiance, and this radiance is wise.

We come to know our wisdom through embodiment, by way of the body, a body that does not lie. Whether it is the human body or the earth's magnificently fecund body, the body speaks truth.

When we come to know, as lived, felt experience, that all of life is alive, that we are radiantly alive in every cell, we realize there is only One and many living, breathing manifestations of this One. When we know



EMBODIMENT IS THE NEW TRANSCENDENCE

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this, anything we do to another we do to ourselves. If we harm another, we harm ourselves. We know this as lived experience and it is utterly painful. If we love another, we love ourselves. We know this as compassion.

This basic, yet fundamental root of wisdom changes every way you think about the world, and infuses every decision you make. Every decision. Every action. Every choice. Joy re-enters the experience; joy for what is here, for having enough, for the remarkable realization that we are even alive at all.

Knowing this, that every cell, every breath, every being is sacred and infused with light, life and love, is the Goddess made manifest. She is light awakened in matter. We are all, children and animals, the Earth in her wholeness, and women and men, the Goddess.

We come to know our wisdom through embodiment, by way of the body, a body that does not lie. Whether it is the human body or the earth's magnificently fecund body, the body speaks truth.



Katharine
Weinmann

Broad stroke impressions: mentor-coach, student-seeker, process artist-conversation host, edge rider-bridge builder, foodie-yogini, earth dancer-mountain hiker. Now immersed in a year-long vision quest to contemplate "what if?, what now? what next?" for her Self, for our World.

www.katharineweinmann.com



VISIONARY DREAMS... a wise-dame myth

Once Upon a MidLife there lived many women and many men asking The Hard Questions for an Authentic Life. Accepting The Invitation, they became Awake at Work and began to ponder:

"Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?"

"How do I find A Hidden Wholeness in these Second Acts on this New Earth?"

Being among The Rise of the Creative Class, they knew to Take a Deep Breath and to trust their Improv Wisdom. Listening Below the Noise they remembered they each had The Power To Make It Happen by making Elegant Choices, Healing Choices.

Managing Transitions using Power and Love, these women and men were on The Path of Least Resistance to re-writing Rules for Radicals. They were to become the authors of a Little Book of Practice for The Art of Being and Becoming in Conscious Business and Simple Living in a Complex World.

Attending to the Signs of Life and in Communion with God, each in their signature way... Medicine Woman and Reluctant Shaman... men and Women Who Run With the Wolves... are Turning to One Another, Calling the Circle and Finding Our Way to A Path with Heart.

With Earth Prayers, Angel Voices, and Perseverance they invoke The Art of Possibility to Imagine a Day and Imagine A Night, each becoming a Storycatcher for The Family of Woman and The Family of Man and The Family of Children.

The Happiness Project, The Intention Experiment has become The Way of Passion, The Way of Life.

In Search of Balance, these Ordinary People as Monks and Mystics, using The Poetics of Space, are Creating Love, Living in Joy and Dancing in the Light, and leaving Footprints for the rest of us to follow.



Katharine
Weinmann

VISIONARY DREAMS...

CONT'D

Composition Notes

Feminine wisdom, wise-dame, sources and re-sources to create and compose. Sitting with what is, value becomes apparent, potential obvious, patterns emergent, beauty manifest. Honouring and sustaining, process mirrors principles. Think braided rug, stone soup, patchwork quilt.

From self-trust and patience emerged this variation on a favourite artform: collage. Using titles from my bookshelves, limited to what I could easily see, I composed this myth, similar to how I create a collage from found words and pictures. I call my picture collages “Dharma Perspectives” because simple truths emerge from what is, reconfigured in a new context, seen in a new light.





Michael
Jones

Michael Jones is a pianist, composer, writer, speaker and leadership educator. He is the author of *Artful Leadership: Awakening the Commons of the Imagination* as well as fifteen recordings of original compositions for solo piano. www.pianoscapes.com



MYTHOS AND LOGOS

The Reawakening Of A Two-Fold Consciousness

"When you gather to plan, the universe is not there." – Poet Gerard De Nerval

We cannot study leadership practice without also exploring the interrelatedness of a twofold consciousness: mythos and logos. This twofold consciousness -- the re- uniting of the inner vision of the mythic world together with the brightly illuminated world of logos -- is where the inner world and outer world of leadership meet. It is in this overlap that a new imaginal worldview of leadership is possible, one that takes full account not only of the processes, issues and style of leadership but also the deep parallels between leadership and the deep feminine of the mythic imagination.

With the rise of the industrial economy we found ourselves in a world out of balance. Scientific logos quickly rose to dominance and the mythic life fell into disrepute. The resultant loss of languages, cultures, stories, landscapes, ancient gifts and wisdom has been but a few

of the greatest tragedies of the loss of mythos. With the loss of the mythic life, we no longer had access to the grace of ekstasis- of stepping out from the norm and allowing life to live through us so that we may experience the ecstasy of our intimate connection to a more enchanted and more than human world. The gift of this inner reality of mythos cannot be retrieved when our worldview is only legitimized in the context of a rational, orderly and scientific life.

To re -awaken mythos entails shifting our attention from a sole focus on discrete objects, things, fixed boundaries and categories to a greater awareness of processes, energy, transformation and flow. Leadership from this perspective creates a new marriage between mythos and logos and in so doing links ancient wisdom and modern thought and thinks them together again.



Mihirini
de Zoysa

Mihirini de Zoysa lives and works in Sri Lanka. She is a Leadership Coach & Trainer, an Organisation Development Consultant and Workshop facilitator. She is interested in enabling authentic and insightful conversations, making meaningful relationships and learning to trust her inner intuition and the wisdom of the universe.
www.corporatedruids.com



NAKED ABUNDANCE

I will open wide my eyes
so that I will not miss
the morning sun
I will gently brush my fingers
so that I may touch
the dew tip grass

I will walk barefoot
so that I may find root
on the earth that cradles me

I will look up to the sky
so that I may show my face
to the cosmos that holds me

I will uncover naked my body
so that I may feel
every sensation of love

I will laugh out loud
so that my joy will be
unbridled in the world

I will open my heart
so that love will abound
within and without

I will lay bare my soul
so that the world will
know me intimately

Ronna Detrick

Ronna Detrick is the owner and voice of RENEGADEconversations through which she tells (and writes) the truth. Passionate about tales and texts of women that have been silenced or misunderstood, she redeems their stories so that we can live ours in out-loud, stunning, faith-filled ways. This happens through her blog, a newsletter, classes, workshops, speaking engagements, online products, and her upcoming book.

www.ronnadetrick.com



THE SHELTER AND STARLIGHT OF SOPHIA

*Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades.
By those who love her, she is readily seen,
by those that seek her, she is readily found.*

(The Book of Wisdom, 6:12)

It often feels like Sophia is in hiding. We don't see her brilliance. Nor do we experience our own. And our search for either often seems futile.

It's understandable. The rush of patriarchal history has valued the power and might of the objective, the scientific, the rational, and the masculine over the beauty and strength of the subjective, the mysterious, the instinctive, and the feminine.

More than just Sophia has been lost.

In her absence we've distrusted our intuition, disbelieved that our voices are worth hearing, and disavowed the telling and living of our deepest, most resonant truth.

But what if Sophia never left us?
What if we've just failed to seek and find her?

*[Sophia] led them by a marvelous road.
She herself was their shelter by day and
their starlight through the night.*

(The Book of Wisdom, 10:17)

When seen and found, she invites us out of hiding and into our ever-waiting, ever-present feminine wisdom. We (re)discover that our intuition is worth trusting, our voices worth hearing, and our truth worth telling and living. And more, that history can be retold, the present restored, the future redeemed.

Sophia's been with us all along – compelling courage, beauty and strength – on both treacherous and marvelous roads. Brilliant in shelter and starlight. Readily seen. Readily found. Never lost. Always within.

'Segun Olude

'Segun is a visual communicator, with over 20 years of design experience. His personal portfolio includes the design of various corporate identities, postage stamps, editorial design, Canadian and international event branding, package design, and signage systems. He is currently a Sessional Instructor in Graphic Design Studio at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus, and speaks to schools and organisations about human rights, immigration and multiculturalism. Learn more at www.segunolude.com



LISTEN...

Listen to your mother. I wish I had listened to her old wives tales and snippets of wisdom, instead of shy away. I shied away at public events because I did not want to be called “Mama’s boy.” In her last days, I spent a few days alone with her, thankfully, and gleaned much knowledge and information from her. She told me as much as we had time for. I learned to love this compassionate woman, who I learnt, at her funeral, had been secretly paying the fees of some students so that they could get an education. Oh, did I cry.

Listen to your sisters, they grow in your mother’s wisdom. You may not know it yet, but one day, they become mothers and wives. They are custodians of the next generations; they are wise. They are protective. They are strong. They pass on knowledge.

Listen to your daughters. Just listen.

Listen to your girlfriend(s). They too possess knowledge. And one day, when one of them becomes your wife, listen, listen, listen. Listen, because she is looking out for the best for her family and you. She wants a husband to be proud of; a man that she would support to greatness. Do not throw her words away as those of a “mere woman,” but treat her as a dear woman, a part of you. If you listen, you will achieve greatness in many places—spirit, family, career, sports.

Don’t fight it when you feel the urge to resist. Listen. There is wisdom in there.

ONE WAY I'VE DREAMT THE ENDING OF THE ODYSSEY

Oh angel, messenger,
face in the mirror —

Something keeps asking me
to see my face.
Something waits for me,
is waiting for a meeting
I am busy putting off.

But when this odyssey has reached its end,
you will know it by my face:
clear like a porcelain bowl,
lenient and tender,
round as humility,
All open, all true

My face will curve itself
around gravity toward you.
And you – angel, messenger, long lost friend -
will silk my cheek to your palm.

All is forgiven.
All floats like air and streams like water.
All tumbles down into the river of compassion.

Then we'll meet one another, all of us, in the
field,
And, turning northward,
Decide to take the long way home.

Tara Sophia
Mohr

Tara Sophia Mohr is a writer and coach who helps women leaders, artists and innovators realize their visions to change the world. Visit her blog *Wise Living* at <http://wiselivingblog.com/> or download a collection of her poems at <http://wiselivingblog.com/poetry-book/>





Thomas
Ryan

Thomas Ryan leads retreats and workshops internationally, specializing in the field of ecumenical and interfaith relations. He is the author of 13 books and the DVD Yoga Prayer.
<http://www.tomryancsp.org/>



THE COMMUNION LINE

Her dark hair touched her shoulders, curling up at the ends,
and two hazel-nut eyes stared at me intently
as I placed my hand on her head in blessing,
for though she carried a blanketed child in her arms
whose rubber eyes were drooping to the choir's soft chant,
she was not yet of age to receive the bread of angels.
And when my hand lifted from her head, her gaze
Held mine as she slowly extended her arms,
raising her swaddled babe to be similarly blessed,
and in that moment, moved by her innocence and faith,
I felt the tender kiss of God and knew that it was she,
not I, who stopped the line to touch and bless.



ANTICIPATED GRIEF

I lived my mother's death today.
I don't know why.
It just was given.
Saw her lying in her bed.
put my fingers on top her head
and felt the life force flowing out.
Her expression was so soft
--the look I love the most in her--
the look that comes deep down
from the well of love within herself.
And I wept inconsolably
for the breaking
of that precious mirror
which all my life
has reflected back to me
the love within myself.

Vurayayi Pugeni

Born in Zimbabwe, Vurayayi Pugeni has seen and experienced some of the challenging living conditions faced by the poor communities in his native country. While in Zimbabwe he worked with large food aid and food security projects. His experiences working with woman and mainstreaming gender issues in programs influenced his writing. He is a very vocal speaker on vulnerability and livelihoods adaptation issues.



WISHES FOR MY MOTHER “EARTH”

She would be free from socially constructed oppression
Oppression socially profiled around biology, religion or tradition.
Tradition that has led to the feminization of poverty and religion
Yet God the creator is one and His son Jesus was born by a Virgin Mary
A true testimony of her Holiness and sole contribution to religion and our spirituality.
Indeed, the image of God is found in both man and woman equally.

In her girlhood, all the delicate tenderness of her sex would be protected
She would not be thrown in the companionship of coarse and arrogant man.
She would not have to fight like a tigress for ownership and possession of her own person
She will be treated like an equal when she contributes across the table
Without being prejudiced, she would be given opportunities to explore her potential
Allowing her feminine energy to flow freely and be expressed in whatever manner it chooses
Not being sacrificed as a common field hand, hoe, plough or hewer of wood.
Or being abused physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually.

At maturity, her womanhood would be passionately respected.
And not be mated to HIV and AIDs, least she dies of hunger and starvation
Or be separated from her loved due to poverty, disease or war
And be mated to the other under cultural inheritance customs.

She would be given rights and control over land and property
She would be given suretyship of her motherhood
Her offsprings would be hers, giving her an opportunity to be a true woman
Her compassion, empathy and nurturing would lead and heal the world
Making it a better world for you and for me.



Desiree Adaway

Desiree Adaway is a consultant, strategist, coach, storyteller and explorer. She uses her superpowers-her voice, sense of adventure and belief in the transformative power of community-to help organizations create lasting change.

<http://desireeadaway.com/>



HEALING THE WORLD

If we trusted our feminine wisdom, if we trusted our tribal wisdom- I know exactly what would happen.

We would repair and heal the world.

I am not a writer.

I am a connector. I help connect people, ideas, and organizations. I am a builder of community and the foundation of my building is based on the rock of social justice. This for me taps directly into my feminine wisdom-the building of community and family. This voice in me speaks to me so strongly and clearly that I have made myself personally responsible for my brothers and sisters.

This wisdom is the foundation of my belief system and how I live my life.

It teaches me that:

God's love for the world is an **active and engaged love**, a love seeking justice and liberty for all.

We cannot just be observers to pain and suffering.

We should care enough about people's lives to **risk our own creature comforts**, to take a stand- no matter how controversial or complicated.

That we should hold nations and leaders accountable for unjust treatment of their citizens.

All people including those living in developing nations **have the right and ability to shape their own destiny.**

That all humans are worthy.

Harnessing and leveraging the power of everyday people to change communities is holy.

To support people facing difficulty

There is power in prayer.

The power of service is transformative.

I KNOW that I was placed on this earth to tap into that force and let it sustain me. It's the force that will help repair both me and the world.



Michele
Visser-Wikkerink

Michele is a mother, sister, daughter, wife and friend. She is also a writer and the director of a resource centre in Winnipeg's North End. She enjoys exploring her world through yoga, cooking, reading, sharing circles, and her church community of spiritual misfits and seekers. She blogs at www.myfarawayfriends.blogspot.com/



GATHERING IN CIRCLE

Every Thursday, at the place where I work, we move out the tables and set up our chairs in a circle. Thursday mornings are sacred.

In Prairie Aboriginal tradition, everything happens in a circle. Life is seen as circular, the seasons circle endlessly, the medicine wheel is circular. Even traditional homes, teepees, are circular. And so discussion happens in a circle, and historically, decisions were not made until everyone in the circle agreed.

Our sharing circle is not intended to be one where big decisions are made, it is intended for healing. We always have a box of kleenex on the table because tears are so often part of the healing process. After we smudge by burning sage and allowing the cleansing properties of its smoke to wash over us, we read some teachings together, talk about them, and then we pass a stone or a talking stick.

When you are in a sharing circle, the person holding the object is the only one who is allowed to speak. Everyone must listen, no interruptions. It is a wonderful way to ensure that everyone who is given the opportunity to

share. The shy and the loud, the well spoken and the stumbling.

Sometimes there's a lot of laughter in the circle, sometimes a lot of tears. I cannot predict it and I most certainly cannot control it. One of the lessons I'm learning, I suppose. We can set up the circle but we cannot determine what happens within. Kind of like life, perhaps.

I feel like I am one of the lucky ones. There are not many opportunities, or perhaps we don't tend to make opportunities for our European and Aboriginal cultures to meet and to mix. But each day, as part of my work-day ritual, I am able to experience the richness and beauty of this heritage.

I don't think the circle calls out for either masculine or feminine wisdom. I think it calls out the divine. The sacred that exists beyond gender. A circle created by imperfect people made whole simply by sharing their brokenness.

Yes, indeed. One of the lucky ones.



Chris
Zydel

Chris Zydel, founder of Creative Juices Arts, has over 32 years of experience as a compassionate and soulful creativity guide. Through her classes, workshops and training programs she has devoted herself to providing the support, guidance and inspiration that allows her many students to connect with the sacred force of creativity that lives inside of us all. Visit her website at <http://www.creativejuicesarts.com>



SACRED HEALING CIRCLES

I have been a women's group leader and facilitator of sacred healing circles of creativity for women and men for over 30 years. So understanding the dynamics of women's leadership is something that is very near and dear to my heart.

Because I have worked for myself I have also been outside of the dominant, mainstream culture which left me free to explore how feminine leadership can offer some divergent approaches to the prevailing model of top down leadership .

First of all, operating from a feminine perspective means I can be more transparent and human in my role as a leader. I don't have to act like I am above other group members or hold myself at a distance or give the message that I'm somehow better than the people I am leading. I don't have to have all the answers and I can even admit when I am wrong and have made a mistake.

The second difference is that feminine leadership creates a space where power and leadership are shared. The leader's role is to provide a structure that is fluid enough to welcome and invite interaction between group members and with the leader. The focus is on co-operation more than competition. The group becomes something that is co-created and every member of the group is inspired and encouraged to speak up and about what they want and need the group to be.

The leader is asked to hold the container and the vision for the group, but each group member is also expected to take responsibility for the life of that vision.

Using the feminine leadership strategy means that the leader doesn't get burned out and the group feels more empowered. It fosters a sense of equality between the group members and the leader. And ultimately more passion and commitment from everyone in bringing the vision into being.



Connie
Hozvicka

Artist and owner of Dirty Footprints Studio, Connie helps women rise above their fears, strengthen their intuition, and grow confident as Artists through her FEARLESS Painting Process that she wildly shares through workshops, retreats, and also obsessively on her blog Dirty Footprints Studio.



Kathy Jourdain

As a process artist, Kathy's passion is co-creation, collaboration and shape shifting on individual, collective and system wide levels. She is a student of life and a practitioner of changing the conversations we engage by how we enter and then stay in them. You can find her at www.shapeshiftstrategies.com and at <http://shapeshiftstrategies.wordpress.com/>



WE ARE CALLING FOR HEALING

The shape of the world is shifting.
Now
More so than ever before.
Balance has been askew

We have been taught to shun the feminine
Embrace the masculine
As THE way
Focus on results
Grow the bottom line
At what cost?

Hear the call of mother earth
Father sky
Hear the call for healing.
Faint it was
Louder it grows
Tune into the frequency
Feel it in your being
The body has knowledge
Screaming to be heard.

Pay attention.
Return to roots.
Return to places of knowing
That emanate from a place of depth
That is neither within
Nor without
And is both
At the same time.

The body has a tendency toward health
And wholeness
So too does the collective body

How we hold it down
Turning away
Muting the sound.

The world is calling for healing.
We as a people are calling for healing.
Spirit
Soul
Calling for healing
And for wholeness
Nourishment



WE ARE CALLING FOR HEALING

CONT'D

Joy
Delight
Shifting the shape of the world
Not by force
But by paying attention
To what is wanting
Needing
Ready
To grow
Emerge
Burst forth
Unfettered from the trap
Of Paradox
Of being masculine or feminine
To embracing both
As the shadow
Mirror
Of each other
Necessary to the breath of life
Shifting the shape of the world



Michele
Lisenbury Christensen

Michele Lisenbury Christensen is inspired by her yoga practice to integrate masculine and feminine, effort and surrender. www.workingwithpower.com shares her writing, leadership coaching, retreats, and personal guidance.



INTEGRATED POWER

When we... any one of us... male or female... make room for the feminine, we see that all the masculine Elements of Power we've so prized and honed are not displaced by the feminine Elements. On the contrary, like complementary muscles or two sides of the same golden coin, our feminine and masculine strengthen and enrich one another.

Add in the feminine, and...

The erect result-seeking power of our Driving is joined with the fertile, yearning, patient womb of Receiving, and we know that

Allowing is Power

Our I-can-do-it rocketship of Self-Reliance gets turbo-charged by the fuel of our Connection... to body, spirit, emotion, all living beings, and the Divine. And we know that

Feeling is Power

The give-the-answer, fix-the-problem handiness of our Providing finds its perfect place in service to (and always following a few

steps behind) our spacious, patient, listening Nurturing, who knows that

Caring is Power

Our right-on-time, ultra-efficient Pragmatism is electrified with the hot-cherry, feather-boa shimmy of Sensuality and we know that

Pleasure is Power

The stand-for-what-is right, see-it-through strength of our Fierceness finds refreshment in the cool choose-my-moment, let-it-blow-through pool of our Resilience and we know that

Vulnerability is Power

The precision and linearity of our Focus creates brilliant points of light that shine all the more brightly when set on the backdrop of the infinite vision our Holism can paint. We know that

Paradox is Power

AN OPEN LETTER TO MY THREE DAUGHTERS

I dream of a better world for you.

I dream of a world where
the feminine rises up and takes her rightful place as an equal
dance partner along with the masculine
a council of grandmothers must be consulted
before a country can go to war
artists, poets, and dancers become advisors to heads of state
manufacturers spend a month with Mother Earth before they make decisions
about what natural resources they will use or destroy
spirituality is not a foreign concept around the boardroom table
government leaders are sent to live with the poorest people of their country
before they can take office
artists are valued as much as sports figures
business transactions slow down to the speed of soul
marginalized people have the opportunity to
sit in circle council with anyone making decisions on their behalf
business meetings routinely include a time of
meditation, contemplation, storytelling, and creative expression
every government session begins with
mindfulness or meditation practice of some kind
students emerge from high school understanding
the holistic connections between their body, soul, and mind.

I dream of it for you, my dear daughters, my three muses.
And so I work to make it so.

Heather
Plett

Heather Plett is on a quest for stories, wisdom and courage. She is passionate about writing, teaching, and facilitating transformative conversations. On her blog, www.sophialeadership.com, she explores the power of feminine wisdom and the impact it can have on the world.



A BLESSING FOR YOUR SOPHIA JOURNEY

Rachelle
Mee-Chapman

Rachelle Mee-Chapman offers a customized mix of life coaching and spiritual direction online and in Seattle. She writes at Magpie Girl where she provides care for creative souls; and hosts Flock, an online soulcare community for women dedicated to “finding a spirituality that fits.”
www.magpie-girl.com



May Sophia lay her hands upon you
as you seek to see things anew.
May her blessing rest lightly upon your forehead.
May you feel her guiding hand upon your shoulder.
May her voice catch your ear, turn your head.
As you trust your body to guide you,
As you listen to The Muse,
As you let Whimsy be your guide,
May insight rush to greet you
May compassion fill you to overflowing
And may bravery be your constant companion
For the fulfilling life that lays ahead.
In the name of She who birthed and created you
the One who is your guide.
Amen.

Sophia Rises

Changing the world through
feminine wisdom

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Sophia Rises: Changing the world through feminine wisdom

Compiled by Heather Plett, www.sophialeadership.com

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please contact Heather at heather@heatherplett.com"



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