

Animism and Intimate Encounters with Mother Earth

*"Indigenous Perspectives" - Monthly Broadcast on HealthyLife.Net
4 - February 25, 2021*

For audio (55 minutes):

<http://www.ecologia.org/news/4.AnimismFeb2021.mp3>

Bozho, dear listeners. I greet you in the language of my Potawatomi ancestors and my tribe today. I am Randy Kritkausky, host of this show. I am an enrolled tribal member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

This episode of Indigenous Perspectives originates, not from my tribal homelands, but from N'dakinna, the un-ceded traditional territory of the Abenaki people who for thousands of years were, and continue to be, stewards of the lands to be found in the State of Vermont, in the northeastern United States, and across the Canadian border in southern Québec Province.

I begin by acknowledging where we come from, as this program focuses on understanding our roots in Mother Earth and our connections with ancestors. The theme of being rooted in Mother Earth is the focus of today's program, "Intimate Encounters with Mother Nature".

Many of you are familiar with the fact that indigenous people have deep spiritual connections with the natural world. Documentaries, ethnographic literature, fiction - much of it written by Native Americans - and my own book, all reinforce this notion. At the same time, these portrayals of indigenous people run the risk of sending another message - that those with Indian or First Nations ancestry are the only humans who can have and hold on to deep spiritual connections with Mother Earth.

This idea can discourage individuals from the joy of feeling connected with the natural world around them. And it can also discourage us from collectively developing the respectful and reciprocal relationships with nature that we need to cultivate if we are to emerge from the current culture of exploiting the natural world.

It's no coincidence that I met today's guests while taking an online course offered by Sterling College here in Vermont. That course is called "Surviving the Future" a title that expresses a concern many of us hold.

Today's guests come from varied geographic locations. Jordan Tierney comes from Baltimore; Yves Gonnet comes from here in Vermont, Bob Hawk comes from Vermont, Kristina Zill comes from the Catskill Mountains in upper New York State, and Christine Krzywonos comes from Vermont also. – Stephanie, I'm sorry, Stephanie Krzywonos.

So let me introduce my first guest. Who would like to go first? Don't be shy, you're going to force me to pick somebody. Bob, go ahead. Oh, Kristina, please, go ahead.

Kristina Zill: "So, I always lived in big cities before moving to the Catskill Mountains; I've been living here full time since 2004. And everywhere that I've lived I would always have a moment when I would be afraid inside a space. Maybe that's from growing up in Houston Texas which is kind of a scary place. And so for instance sometimes when I was a teenager I would just suddenly have to run outside, because the house scared me. And I always liked in New York City the way that you can live in an apartment where you can see everything.

And somehow that fear just totally went away when I moved here, to the country, because this is really wilderness. And it was really, it came home to me one time when I heard – I went out to the toolshed and I had a flashlight and I heard a noise – and that's the part in the scary movie when people are saying "don't, run, don't, turn around, don't go in there" - and I was totally fearless. And I just turned on the light and it was like, "oh it's a skunk, no big deal". So I just really came into my own when I moved up here to the country.

Yves Gonnet: "That reminds me a lot, - this is Yves -Krystina, of my upbringing. I grew up in a big city, in New York City, but I was super-fortunate in that I got to spend a lot of time for as far back as I can remember, in the woods at family members' houses. And one of the things that I will never forget, because it's certainly a part of me now, is playing in the water, specifically in a tiny little

stream not far from the house and experimenting with building and unbuilding dams. And how I'd get so immersed, if not soaking wet, in my experience that I'd often had to be called in because it gets dark and I'd still be playing around. So I really appreciate what it's like to touch and feel and be a part of even the most sort of rudimentary untechnically complicated places.

Jordan Tierney: Hi this is Jordan from Baltimore, and I do currently live in a pretty big city, and I grew up in suburbs, but had access to a big empty field in the back with a swamp and that was fascinating, you know. And I had grandparents where I learned to row and fish and find clams with my toes, and you know I would say when people ask me, what's one of the favorite periods of your life - it was all the hours we spent up in trees as children - I'm not sure exactly what we were doing up there but we really spent hours and hours up in trees. Until we got called in again at dinner time.

And I now feel like- Kristina, this refers to something you brought up - that the architecture of my elementary school, the first time I really left home and went to an institution-like place, was almost prison-like. It was designed in the [19]60's so it couldn't have been that bad, but I remember that sort of cutting my life force off from everything I knew and loved. It was so hard and so sterile and, I think that really -

For some reason though, I continued to spend my adult life in cities, Washington DC and Baltimore. However, I would say that wherever I go, on vacation or whatever, I'm not comfortable for the first 24 hours until I've seen the sun set and rise and understand where that happens and how. And then if it's going to be an extended stay, a move for instance, I need to see all four seasons. Because until that time, I don't know this place where my feet are. So I guess I'm grateful for those things even though sometimes the absence of them can cause some stress.

Randy: Stephanie, go ahead.

Stephanie Krzywonos: Yeah, hi, this is Stephanie from Vermont. Hearing your experiences of encountering the wild and built human terrains kind of made me think of an experience I had in college. I went to school in suburban

Chicago and I was walking with my best friend that night, which we often did, and we walked past this bed of tulips, and for me tulips were a significant flower I grew up in a town that had a tulip festival every year. So he asked me for a tulip and I picked this beautiful white flower, I picked it up by its roots and I gave it to him.

And he opened his mouth and he ate the whole thing. It was comical and it felt like a big moment between us. And my friend later committed suicide; that year, he was really really struggling. And then the next winter I returned to school and I was walking past that exact same spot at night, and I looked up, in the snow, it was the same spot where that tulip was.

And there was a great white snowy owl just sitting there looking at me. And I stopped in my tracks and kind of locked eyes with this yellow-eyed bird, and it felt like time stopped in a way? And I remember slowly I would take a step, and I kind of made a half-circle around this bird, but it felt like something else was going on beyond what was happening. It felt like there was a presence I couldn't really explain. I was probably with the bird for ten minutes before the trance broke and I went back up to my room and looked out the window; I could still see the bird. That moment was something that has always really stuck with me.

Randy: Thank you. When you first told me that story I thought of events I recorded in my own book about the visitations of owls surrounding the time of people as we say, walking on. Also other raptors. And in Native American lore, raptors are messengers. We don't always know exactly what the message is, but as you said, you feel that there is a connection there, there is some message being brought to you and it's very often up to you to figure out what it is. Thanks.

Bob, want to go?

Bob Hawk: Sure. I'm a Navy brat, we moved every three years. As a matter of fact the first dwelling that I've lived in longer than three years is this place here in Vermont that my wife and I built ourselves. And I've been here now for almost 41 years. And I'd like to share with you something: my encounter

with flowers. In preparing for this, I wrote down a few thoughts and this is what I wrote.

‘The plants understand human language. Can they sense a bond between themselves and their human caretaker? I discovered a love for working with the soil when I had my first garden in Heidelberg, Germany. There was something magical, new to me, about planting and caring for flowers and vegetables, and being rewarded with an abundance of gifts. I felt at peace there among them.

‘When I returned to the States in [19]’76, I stopped by my garden for the last time on a calm and sunny day. As I closed the garden door and said goodbye, a strong wind blew up and all the flowers waved back. I quickly shut the door, overcome with emotion that I could not explain, for I have no context to understand the language that was being spoken.’

I have another episode or two, but I’ll save those in case anybody else wants to add anything.

Randy: Really beautiful, thank you so much. And I’m intrigued because a lot of you are contrasting your urban and rural experiences, but in some cases you’ve managed to find intimate connections within an urban setting. And I think another stereotype that we have, that we have to deal with, is the notion that if you’re not living in the wild unspoiled nature you don’t make those connections.

Jordan, you’ve given me some examples of your work in Baltimore. Would you be willing to share the workshop - information about the workshop you do? I think it’s really relevant, picking up on Bob’s comments.

Jordan: Sure, Randy thank you. Jordan from Baltimore here. So -

Feeling myself trapped in the right angle and brick architecture of the city, I have always sought out those little pieces of land that most people ignore or throw their trash into. And here in Baltimore there’s a beautiful little stretch that is along Herring Run, and I began to spend at least an hour a day there with my dog, and then my daughter, who was kind of a toddler at the time. I

am an artist so I am either looking at the world and kind of absorbing it in order to translate it into something visual later, or I'm picking things up and I carry a back pack and a saw and hatchet, not to cut anything down but so if I find anything on the ground that I can't carry out.

And that turns into what I would call sort of spiritual devices that hopefully once the viewer's looking at them they can somehow intuit or feel that connection that I feel walking through there. And I was thinking as Stephanie told her story, about an owl that my daughter and I encountered.

So we - a little more than year ago - moved *[away]* from the little house that was right near Herring run, we walked out of the house to get to it. And on the day that the person who was very interested in our house - it was the evening - they were coming to look at the house one more time, so we had to get out of our lovely little house that I had renovated lovingly right near this creek.

And I was so distraught at leaving this area, and so I took my daughter, because we had to get out of the house, and we went down to the creek. And it was just being dusk.

And we heard a barred owl so loud that I thought someone was playing a trick on us. And it just did that *[makes a beautiful owl call - 'whirrkwhirroo']* And it was such a message like, yes you're going to mourn the loss of this but I'm always somewhere nearby and it's going to be OK, and, I saw you loving this place and thank you. Just, it was such a great relationship, you know. So, yeah, you can find it. I always look for the places that no one else cares about and there's so much down there, blue herons, beavers, everything.

Randy: I'm struck by the owl theme in the program here; I had no idea how often it would come up. It's all throughout my book at various critical moments of wondering what's going on, what's going to happen next, have I made the right decision?

It's uncanny how the owl appears. And as I describe in my book - you made the sound perfectly - in Potawatomi it's 'koo-koo-o-koo'- which imitates the sound of the owl. But numerous times I've gone out on nights like we're

having now, zero [*degrees Fahrenheit; minus 18 degrees Celsius*] weather, and had a conversation with the owl.

And not only do I have it with one, but others come from a distance and I hear them get closer and closer. It's just a mind-boggling experience, and it's a deep sense of affirmation, connection - as Bob was saying with the flowers waving - of Nature reaching out to us.

And I think that's an important lesson to take away in this first part of the program. And many people feel that they have to go out to the garden and the forest and speak to the trees. I've actually heard people say, "I spoke to the elderberry bush and felt silly because I don't know what language to use and I don't know if I would understand if it responded."

It's not the way it works. You each are saying so eloquently that the message is sometimes a silent one or just the thing they do, the motion they make, or their call, but it carries an extra message.

Yves?

Yves: Yes, - it's funny you should talk about the conversation with the owls there, because it's something that here happens - in rural Vermont where I now live as a farmer - all the time. There's actually some sort of deep listening that I have to do, because we also have a lot of bears where I am, a lot of black bears. And as you may know, their hooting can be somewhat akin to the sound that an owl makes. And I'll never forget being outside doing some cooking over some coals, and having maybe, maybe 50 feet away from me- hearing the first hoot, and asking myself, am I in trouble here? is that a bear? So I called out with my typical - making sure that they know that I'm here - 'Hey how're you doing?' And there was a hoot from maybe a hundred feet away not too far away, but I was sort of triangulated between a couple of owls. And I would say something and one would go off and moments later another would go off. It was the most fascinating conversation. And now I have better ears, I think for being able to distinguish the sound of a bear hoot and that of a barn owl.

Kristina: I didn't know - this is Kristina in New York -I didn't know that bears made a hooting sound, I'll have to listen for that. We have black bears as well.

Randy: So, Yves, the first time I had that multiple conversation I wrote it up in my book. I was wondering, since it was a moonlit night, are they out just collecting mice which would be a natural thing to do? I remember thinking - I didn't say it but I thought it - OK, three owls on a moonlit night gathering mice. No big deal, maybe you're imagining things Randy. Show me something really to confirm that this is a spiritual experience.

The cloudy sky opened up and this giant meteorite splashed across the sky. Not one of those quick little two-second deals, but a very long one. And that was the heavens' way of saying 'Randy it's not your imagination, this is real.'

We're going to wrap up the first segment here and return with our guests after a short break.

Segment 2

Welcome back. We're here discussing with our guests animate encounters with Mother Earth. And we're going to pick up the discussion with Bob Hawk and his tale. Please, Bob.

Bob : Okay. Again, these are some thoughts I wrote down just to keep my senior citizen thoughts coherent:

'So what is synchronicity? What is meant by the abundance of the universe? Can a piece of land call a person home? When I set out from Germany in 1976, where I was living at the time, to find a piece of land in the United States and duplicate what Scott Nearing called living the good life, I had no language for knowing the context, no knowledge of the animate world, [or] the gifting economy. That dawning of understanding didn't come until a few years ago after reading Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, "Braiding Sweetgrass". But the sweetness of the raspberries, on what has for 40 plus years been my homestead, called me home, though I did not know it at the time. To make a long story short, of that journey, a chance encounter with a guy I met in Germany led to my ending up in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

He had told me about a New Age technology center, Farallones Institute in Northern California, which demonstrated passive and active solar homes - this

was back in the seventies - composting toilets, and organic gardens, which my new German bride and I visited on our search for a place to call home. When leaving, we gave a lift up the coast to a fellow who was staffed there, in our caravan home of a modified three quarter ton Chevy window van. And who shared the name and address of his Peace Corps friends in Hardwick Vermont, when we shared our dream for a homestead.

When we arrived in Vermont, having never been there before, it was an instantaneous recognition that we had found Nirvana. Those new friends introduced us to two more friends, also back-to-the-land hippies, who knew of a place to rent, that was about one and a half miles from our unknown future homestead. But my intellectual brain resisted the call of the land.

While traveling the back roads, I remember saying to my wife that quote, 'this was the last place I want to live', as the road narrowed down to almost one lane. It took three realtors who brought us to the same 40 acres before the last one said, let's get out and walk around a bit. Then my foraging-savvy wife discovered the sweet raspberries and said, 'Let's buy this piece of peace. It feeds us.' The sweetness of the raspberries had called us home.

Randy: Beautiful story. Thank you. And I just want to point out to listeners that you're talking about a piece of land. You're talking about landscape as well as raspberries, which is beyond the more familiar notion of flora and fauna having animacy. And on that theme, Stephanie, I know you have a story to tell that picks up on this notion of landscape being more than object.

Stephanie: Hi, this is Steph. Yeah. And I'd say for me, I'd replaced the bird landscape with icescape. I, in my late twenties, after my religious beliefs left me and I was pretty grieved about it, I went to Europe and visited all these ancient pilgrimage sites, kind of hoping for like a quickening of my spirit. I didn't find that. And I ended up spending the summer working in Alaska, where I encountered glaciers for the first time.

And for me, like the way that I would describe glaciers is that they have presence. And I felt a connection to them that I -it was hard to explain - and

looking back, I grew up on Lake Michigan and of course, you know, most of the world is scarred by glaciers, but the Great Lakes were like basins with these massive glaciers. And that was always a place I felt safe. But encountering glaciers in Alaska led me to work and live in Antarctica for five years on and off. Yeah, there's just something kind of magical and unspoken about them where, you know, I've heard a lot of people talk about Antarctica being an empty place, a void place that's barren of spare of life. But for me it feels very full and very alive.

Randy: [What] did you encounter in the Antarctic?

Stephanie: Besides glaciers?! Yeah, hearing everyone's other stories about birds, some of the encounters I've had down there have been with penguins. And for me, my first penguin encounter came probably at my lowest point there. Kind of one thing you say about Antarctica is that everything there, if it had intent, seems like it's trying to kill you, because it's a really, really harsh place to live. And, one day on the ice, I was standing on the frozen sea and out far in the distance, my companion and I saw this black dot, just like making a beeline for us. It [*the penguin*] had seen us before we had seen it. And, I kind of crouched down on my knees and it came and circled us very curious, very playful, just like very childlike. And it was such an antithesis to the incredibly intense landscape around us because here was this very tender creature and it just, it just brought an experience of tenderness.

I do know people who have gotten what we call 'Penguin Married.' So penguins give each other rocks when they court each other. And one of my friends was at a penguin rookery and held up a rock for a penguin that she thought she saw was staring at her. And the penguin came and picked up the rock, brought it to its nest, set it down and then came and picked up a different rock and brought it to her and sat down next to her. So they exchanged this gift of a rock, which is pretty remarkable.

Randy: Such a beautiful story. We've all heard stories of people who feed birds at the bird feeder, having a crow or another bird, bring a gift and leave it

on the railing or at the bird feeder. It's sad that some of us don't have the time to appreciate and embrace those experiences. We'll take another brief break and then we'll be back. And hear some more of these amazing stories. You guys are fantastic.

Segment 3

Welcome back to the program. We're going to continue with more inspiring tales about the ability of people in the mainstream to have experiences that we sometimes associate exclusively with indigenous people. Kristina, I know you have a story you'd like to share - please.

Kristina: My husband and I, when we built our house, the first thing that happened was that the phoebes moved in, even though there was a lot of loud construction going on, but they decided that our very tall eaves were just perfect for them. And a phoebe is a fly catcher. They feed exclusively on insects. And so I've actually raised a phoebe, even from a baby because, one time the parents pushed the two babies out of the nest because they were covered in mites, and only one of them survived.

And I raised it to the point that it rehabilitated. And I would go to the forest every day and, and feed it, you know, give it a little supplemental food. And there's just no feeling like having a bird come fly to you through the forest and land on your shoulder. It's, you know, it's just the most incredible thing.

So phoebes are very much a part of our life. And of course they're migratory birds. And so every Christmas my husband and I were going to Texas to go see his family. And, one morning we were sitting in bed and a phoebe came and looked in the window at us. And, you know, I had never seen a phoebe around their house, which was outside of Austin [*Texas*], about 45 minutes outside of Austin. And here is this phoebe looking at us. And we just had to wonder, you know, is that our phoebe saying, 'I didn't realize you guys were migratory too!'

Randy: My relatives would say it might not be the same phoebe, but it might

be the spirit of the phoebes that somehow have some remarkable ways of sharing knowledge about the humans they can trust. Beautiful story.

Jordan? - Yves, go ahead, Yves.

Yves: Well, I was just thinking what Christina was talking about, seeing something out the window and, what I see out my southern-facing windows are just these expanse of woods, and close to the house they're all very, very new, because it used to be a night pasture for cows. And up until 75 years ago it was really just completely grazed down. But the trees are now coming in, they're good diameters. And we've got a path that goes through that sort of new growth. And, often I'll just be looking out the window and figure it's a good time to go and take a walk to one of my favorite spots, which leads through these, these very young trees. And there's a sharp contrast. Once you get just a few hundred feet up this path, it starts to become very, very ledgy, and you can just transition from grass and moss onto this bedrock path that goes through a very, very dense area that's maybe another few hundred feet of very short windblown hemlocks.

And there's just no wind all of a sudden; they're completely screening it out. And so you get this very sort of serene quality where you're able to really hear everything, whether it's, you know, rodents running around, or birds moving through the trees, or, you know, getting terrified by kicking up a grouse that sounds like a helicopter taking off next to you. And, one of my favorite places is not too far down this path. It's really inaccessible by anything other than walking. There's this ridge line that is a cliff space on one side and just goes up about 150 feet.

And right over the edge of this ridge line, you find yourselves in this old growth forest with trees that I've been told are, 3- and 400 years old. They're immense and they're unbelievably tall. And they block out the most of the sunlight. And the canopy, or rather the floor of the forest there that rolls down towards a brook behind our house and then goes up into the mountains is just one of the most fabulous places that I go just to be with the trees and pay attention to everything and nothing at the same time. It's just so relaxing.

And there's always amazing stuff that happens there.

Randy: So -in terms of connecting with trees, Jordan, you do a workshop to help urban people imagine their way back to connecting with trees. Could you briefly summarize what you do?

Jordan: Yes, I, so my sort of soulmate is this Herring Run and I find the trees to be equal persons to me. And I know many of them intimately. And if you showed me a picture of one, I could tell you exactly where it is. And so I thought, you know, if people are going to help this climate business that we're all dealing with, they need to fall in love with nature. And some of them never even stepped foot in it. And how would I, how would I facilitate that?

So what I ask of them is that we all meet in this place and we go our separate ways, each person, and spend, you know, a little bit of time wandering, open-minded, open your heart to what you hear and see. And then kind of notice a tree that somehow calls your name and then sit and be with that tree, and maybe pick something up off the ground near the tree, a few things, could even be trash. Sometimes I have people make a sort of a bundle or sculpture of things that they find on the ground near their being. But they come back and I ask them each one by one in the first person: can you describe what life is like as this tree?

And, you know, the first few times I gave this workshop, I thought maybe this is silly, but people are just so moved. It's apparently a very provocative thing to do, to become a tree. And maybe it's a little presumptuous to think that you could speak for this tree, but I feel that if you're observant enough, for instance, you know there's a tree that's fallen over the creek. And what does it feel like to have those plastic bottles scrape across your back when the creek floods? Just like, put yourself in the shoes, so to speak of the tree. So that's the way I hope to get people starting to connect with even the inanimate things around them.

Randy: Thank you. Again, another astounding tale. We're going to have to wrap up this segment. We have one more *[segment]* and I don't want to

discourage you from telling us more tales. I could probably listen for hours and I think our listeners could, but I'd also like to back a little bit up and ask a question I know that listeners would if they could call in on this show today - and that is, "So how do I get started? You know, I've never done this. I've never had this experience." If you could reflect on that during our break and then some of you give some advice to listeners in the final segment, I'd really appreciate it. Thank you.

Segment 4

Kristina, why don't you lead off the final segment here, talking about your experience and how it might apply to our listeners.

Kristina: How somebody might get started with nature? I think, obviously one of the great things to do is just to sit quietly and listen to birds, which believe it or not is very difficult for some people to do. I've had people over, and we're so fortunate that we live near the woods and we can hear the beautiful trill of the wood thrush, which sounds like Pan playing his flute in the woods. It's just the most magical thing you've ever heard. And I'll say to someone, listen, I'll stop the conversation. Listen, just listen to the bird. And it's amazing how friends of mine, even friends who I think of as being more sort of awakened in their consciousness, cannot stop and listen. They can't do it. You know, they can't just sit there and just take in the beautiful bird.

Now I was a kid who loved bugs, and a lot of kids love bugs, mostly little boys love bugs. And, in fact, I had a brother who would very meanly kill my bugs and I would run to my mother and say he dented my bug! I was so upset. So, I have continued this love of bugs. And I would say that one thing that you can do, that's really fun, because we all wish that spiders would eat bad bugs instead of good bugs.

Since people, if they're living in a suburban neighborhood, for instance, probably have an experience with mosquitoes. You have to get very good at when a mosquito lands on you, just stunning it and then picking it up and throwing it in a spider web and then watching the spider come out of its layer

and pouncing. You almost feel like you're catching nature in the act and you're not supposed to really see that.

There's something that's just so incredible about watching the cycle of life. So just very simple things like that. You can just go and sit in nature and just sit there quietly for a moment and watch nature come back to life. So those are several things that you can do to, get started with sort of a journey into nature.

Randy: Bob, you wanted to pick up on that theme; why don't you run with it?

Bob: Sure. I think Kristina is exactly right. That it takes time. It takes patience to be out in nature and listening. And perhaps even more than that, it takes permission for yourself to really accept that there is another language there's another connection there and that you're not 'cookoo' [*crazy*].

Speaking of birds, a bunch of us back in the day would do wikiups, sweat lodge. And one time we had a ceremony and each of us wanted to represent a certain animal and I, for some reason, chose the Crow. And I never made this connection before right now, but every morning of that summer, a crow would land in a tree right across from our eastern facing window and would caw. And if I would rouse myself and get up the day flowed, it was as if I was on; everything just happened perfectly. But if I 'aah, go away Crow" and slept in longer, the day was like driving a three-wheel car down the road, or a car with three tires and a flat.

Randy: Thank you. Yves, go ahead.

Yves: I think some of the issues that, that some folks have, have to do with, language and mindset. I know that I hear all the time in discussions, people referring to "the environment" and it drives me a little bit nuts because it's OUR environment. And I think that's, that's really one of the first steps is to go out and be in your environment. Just the part of it that's natural. and listen to it if you can, if it's not overwhelmed by other sounds. Look at it if you can, if it's not covered with stuff that's unnatural. But the one thing that you can almost always do is inhale, close your eyes and experience it by breathing it in.

Randy: The advice you guys are giving is so pertinent. Bob, I liked your notion of giving permission. When I'm interviewed about my book and people say, why did you write a book? I say, to give others permission to go down the path that I went down. And it's not easy for people to accept that and to do it, you know, Kristina, as you said, it's sometimes hard to get people who are chatting away on your back porch or at a picnic to go silent and listen, it's - that's the prior step.

Yves is saying to listen, but you've got to stop before you're ready to listen. And then you have to give people permission to feel connected. And for me at this point in my writing career, it's necessary to give people permission, to tell friends about the kinds of stories that you're sharing. When I first started writing, I was terrified when people would say, so what are you writing about? And I would think, Oh my God, if I tell them, you know, I'm writing about Coy-Wolf visiting me, they're going to think I'm crazy. But it was the opposite. You know, people would gather around at a setting and lean into the conversation. Totally intrigued.

I want to thank you all for sharing these stories. I hope listeners get some inspiration and get some permission to go there. I hope they've gotten some useful tips. And I hope we've helped to demystify the notion that you have to be, you know, a hundred percent Native American to have this kind of connection with nature.

So let me wrap up the program by saying migwetch, thanks for listening. I hope the broadcast has given you time and space to reconnect with your roots in Mother Earth and with your ancestral roots. Before your busy day distracts you from this moment, I encourage you to take a few minutes to reach out and feel the presence of living flora and fauna. And perhaps even that of ancestors. Allow yourself to touch their presence, capture that moment and hold onto it. And if you might, write to me and let me know about your experience. I can be reached at randykritkausky@hushmail.com, or through my website, at randykritkausky.com.

Written transcripts of these shows, with vocabulary assistance and a brief supplementary bibliography related to each show theme, are also available on my website. Thanks for listening.

“Indigenous Perspectives” monthly podcast is hosted by Randy Kritkausky, and broadcast on the fourth Thursday of each month, 12 noon Eastern Time (US & Canada), on HealthyLife.net.



Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike CC BY-NC-SA

Creative Commons License Others may remix, adapt, and build upon this work non-commercially, as long as they credit “Indigenous Perspectives – Randy Kritkausky” and license their new creations under the identical terms (ie non-commercial; share with attribution.)