

I am a saging, aging, slightly feral, introverted contemplative enjoying a quiet, simple life in the country.

I am, always have been and always will be, a wild child with a wild spirituality. My spirit comes alive while in relationship with nature and animals. Mother Earth is my sanctuary and all of creation speaks of my Beloved Spiritual Companion. I attend church in the woods and/or barn most days.

Most of my youth and mid-life life, however, led me into the ways of the world as a professional musician and singer-songwriter chasing a dream. It was on the stage in bars and churches, festivals and concert halls where I had to find an acceptable way to publicly share my gifts and passions in a more extroverted way. My heart was in the right place but my ego had a mind of its own. Eventually I couldn't stand myself anymore or deny the still small voice in the midst of my restlessness and resistance, hounding me to draw closer to drink from a deeper well.

So I walked away from all the hype and adoration. After a time of wandering around in my new lack of identity and purpose I found myself on a surprisingly challenging yet life-giving two and a half year sacred journey of spiritual formation to become a spiritual director/companion. This was to be that in-between season of my life where I would reluctantly acknowledge and befriend my shadow, explore my growing edges, and wrestle with and re-imagine the faith of my childhood so I could learn to welcome and embrace the beautiful mess of my True Self.

This calling to love and serve others with my spiritual gifts as a compassionate listening presence eventually converged with my love for horses and the natural world and my experience and training in the healing and equestrian arts with my creation of Divine Equines Horse-centered Soul Care (aka spiritual direction with horses!). I now come alongside adult trauma survivors to help them reclaim the wisdom in their body and soul and repair their relationship wound by mindfully and spiritually connecting and reflecting soul-to-soul on the ground in nature, with horses. I also offer traditional spiritual direction in my home.

It was a gentle, wise horse named Mighty Markus who came into my life and became my greatest spiritual teacher, gifted co-facilitator and healer, and dearest soul friend/companion. He showed me who I was, without judgment, by honestly holding space for me to see myself reflected in every moment of our relationship together. All of me. The good, the bad, the ugly, the brilliant and the

brave. He felt everything in me, the really real, almost always before I did, showing me how to get out of my head and into my body and opening my heart to the mystical. He modeled the practice of presence for me.

Building a relationship with a nuanced, sentient, 1000# being like a horse helps us become more centered and grounded in the sacred now, heightens our self awareness and attunes our connection with our spiritual source. Markus had to continuously ask me to whoa down and pay attention to my thoughts and body language and quiet my mind, one long exhale, one slow step, one ragged prayer at a time so we both could feel safe, calm and connected in our relationship. It sounds cliché, but he taught me how to be a better human be-ing. Gradually, over many years together, my insides began to match my outsides in a more congruent way and my human and horse relationships were greatly improved.

Markus left for greener pastures without looking back a little over a year ago. After a valiant, miraculous and overwhelming 3 week group effort to save his life we decided it was time to help end his suffering and let him run free at last. And so he did, with a bite of forbidden sweet grass in his mouth and a painless spring in his step that had been medically induced so he could take that one last meander down the barn aisle to his place of resurrection just outside the barn. I'm pretty sure he saw his friend Cappy waiting for him in the thin space as he let go.

I try to celebrate the sacred ordinary of his life and legacy daily like he did by savoring a yummy, sweet banana, a juicy slice of watermelon or a sprig of wild spearmint from the pasture, taking a nice slow drink of cool water, trusting my gut, being more honest, patient and kind, seeing others with the eyes of my heart, contemplating the sky and dear deer, staying curious about all beings, experiencing inner peace and silence in the midst of the storms of life, enjoying the gentle touch of healing, pausing often to come to my senses, and never forgetting a friend.

Horses may not be magical but they are Divine companions for our journey of soul care and healing.