

The Little Girl Who Spoke With Trees –

A story of stewardship: When we take care of nature – it will take care of us

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It wasn't so long ago when trees spoke. As a matter of fact, all the animals and plants, and even the mountains, the rivers, and the sky spoke. And just about everyone could hear them. The people listened to their stories and prospered. But over time, the people forgot to care for the earth. They never asked before hunting and took whatever fruits and berries they wanted without thanking the bushes. They didn't even keep their camps clean. The people became so selfish that Nature stopped talking to them. It was sad.

But in every tribe and nation, there was always one child born who could still hear the Voices of Nature calling. And so it was that a special girl was born into her nation, who almost from the time she could walk would run to the trees around her village and sit with them, as we sit at our grandmothers' feet, and listen to their stories.

It was said, that in the old days, when the earth was fresh, the Creator gave names to all those creatures and beings that He made. We may call a tree a maple, or an oak, a pine or a spruce, a birch or a hickory. But in those days language was alive with power. Not like today when sometimes we speak just to hear ourselves talk. Then each word had power, and each name actually called the spirit of the tree.

And if you knew their name, then the tree would answer you and tell you their secrets. So this little girl would call the trees by name and they taught her all the animal names, too. After all, the trees have been around for a long time.

Soon the little girl became known as "She Talks With Trees." And whenever she would walk in the forest all the trees would greet her and call her by name. They would tell her stories of the times of great drought when it was hard for them to get water; or how some had survived the great fire and had black spots on their trunks to prove it.

When she would go deep in the forest, she would call the animals one by one, "Come bear, come fox, come deer, come wolf, come raccoon, and beaver. Come rabbit, and chipmunk. Don't be afraid."

She would sit down in an open area and pretty soon all the animals would come out and form a circle around her. There they would sit and talk to each other, each in their own language, and the little girl understood.

When the little girl grew older, her people depended on her to tell them the secrets of nature; because when the winter was harsh she could show them where to go for shelter. When the summer was hot, she could tell them where to find water. She would tell them what food grew best at which seasons.

Soon her people trusted her. Many even tried to learn from her to listen to nature again. The more they listened, the more they were able to understand the needs of not just the plants and the animals around them, but the water and the sky, too. By listening more, instead of talking so much, we can learn lots of important things. And maybe we can even hear the mountains sing.

Thoughts:

And so, my fellow travelers, it's good to care for all living things. If we are more in tune with nature, we will learn to take care of our environment and perhaps we will never run out of food or water.

Essential Question:

Why is it important to take care of nature? Let's think of ways we can care for our environment.

Background:

This is a Ralph Singh original story based on conversations with indigenous people, many of whom are still in tune with nature. It represents and reinforces their basic teachings that we are all part of nature and must learn to be stewards of our environment, and not always try to conquer it.

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