

ROSES AND REUNIONS

May 2002

In an effort to capture the entire experience onto paper and lest I should forget any small bit of it, I recount here one of the most joyful experiences of my life.

It was a glorious early May weekend at Omega, a spiritual retreat center in NY. I had been eager to be on my own and on the road, to connect with nature in a peaceful place where I knew no one. Rosemary Althea had intrigued me since I read her first book The Eagle and the Rose several years ago. She is a world-renowned medium, clairvoyant, teacher, channel, and healer. Her life story, her life's work and her sense of humor had intrigued me. The weekend was to be about connecting with spiritual guidance, something I'm always eager to learn more about.

Friday night she taught us about the importance of identifying and using what she referred to as one's personal power symbol. Unapologetically laying out a few general fundamental truths as a foundation for subsequent discussion - such as we each choose to come here, choose our families, and choose the lessons we want to work on ("so just get over it, I don't want to waste our time debating this or we won't get anything done"), she then spoke about a "toolbox" that each of us arrives with. This includes our 6 senses, our angel(s), and spirit (family and friends who have died) support team, our intuition, the creative power of thought, common sense, and the power symbol. I was not quite sure by the end of the weekend whether this was a complete list, as many topics that were on our agenda did not get covered in full. For example, we discussed only 2 of 14 different soul types which are to appear in a soon to be written book. The topic of her discussion followed the participants' line of questioning as much as any agenda she may have had in mind.

With regard to spiritual guidance, she explained that using common sense we can easily understand that not everyone has a "spirit guide" such as she has in Gray Eagle. Spirit guides are a select group of highly evolved teachers who are sent to accompany those with significant gifts and/or responsibility for spiritual leadership. She was quick to clarify that if and when any of us requires assistance of *any* kind, it is always available to us, including that of these mighty teachers. But few have guides accompanying them on a consistent basis. But of course we each do have at least one guardian angel, God's gift of constant love to each of us.

The power symbol is also something everyone has. It is an object, color, shape, animal, flower etc. that reminds us strongly of who we are and why we are here. It empowers us as we reflect on it, as it serves as a mirror. I realized very quickly that mine is and always has been the rose, although I had not consciously thought about it before. Friday night,

after the workshop I sat down and reflected on all the ways the rose has been significant in my life up to and including this day:

- When I was a baby, grandmother Burke (herself named Rose) said she smelled roses when I was in the room. She was known to be a bit of a psychic herself, so I am told.
- I took the name Rose for confirmation despite the fact that Denny (my sister) did and people might call me a copycat.
- I received 3 dozen roses for my 18th birthday: one from Ted (my boyfriend), one from Ted Heintzelman (a dear friend), and one from my parents. A significant birthday, a beautiful, powerful day.
- Ted (my husband) and I had a single rose on our wedding invitation and we wrote our vows around the analogy of caring for a rose.
- Katie (my daughter who died as an infant) was always known as our little rosebud. Her christening (and burial) dress and bonnet had tiny pink rosebuds on them. There are roses engraved on her marker.
- Several years ago a very beautiful spiritual teacher and author named Michael Roads (a friend of my friend Ute's from Australia) met me for the first time and quite lovingly offered me the analogy of a rose as he talked to me about **self acceptance**. "A rose blooms best when not prodded or pried but left to unfold in the light of love and in its own perfect time". It was just the right lesson at the perfect time for me and it has stuck with me from that day. Actually, I think this is one of my most significant life lessons; I've reflected on it often. Is it a coincidence that I am scheduled to do a workshop with him next month and have not seen him or heard of him since then?
- The weekend before the retreat for no reason I bought 25 roses, which blossomed to be among the most beautiful I ever recall seeing - rose colored. Ray was over and was incredulous that they were real. Very rarely have I bought myself roses for "no reason".
- The same week Meg (my daughter who had been staying with me) bought me a thank you gift. It is a beautiful yellow pillow with roses embroidered on it.
- On my way out the door to the retreat I grabbed Bette Midler's CD and played "The Rose" in the car, singing along and remembering Ted introducing the song to me years earlier. (I had not listened to that CD in several if not many years.)
- I made a stop on the way to the retreat and bought one item. A dress with roses all over it (on sale for \$19)! Those who know me, know that I rarely shop. Usually one or two seasonal trips to the mall per year at most.

I was thrilled to make all of these connections about roses, and especially all the very recent ones. Weary from my trip, I turned in for the night not realizing what was yet to "unfold" the following day.

I attended a meditation service in the morning in the beautiful sanctuary. The flower arrangements on the altar and all over the campus were extraordinary. In the sanctuary

was a vase of dogwood and a beautiful, delicate pink flower called the “bleeding heart” that reminded me of my Katie (who had died only hours after open heart surgery). After a hearty breakfast, we reconvened for the workshop. Among other questions that she was asked, someone wanted to know which of all the roles Rosemary plays is most satisfying to her. She responded that without a doubt, the work that she most enjoys is reuniting parents with their children who have crossed over. At that she crossed the room and began to “read” a woman in the circle. She described a little boy who was following her around and after describing in significant detail the woman’s kitchen of 40 years past, she began describing the now 2 (twin) boys who were standing behind her to let her know they were “alive and well” on the other side. This reading went on for some time. Because the twins were still born there were few stories to recount, hence the reference to her home at the time to verify their connection to her. It was very moving and clearly very healing for this woman.

Rosemary then turned to face the opposite side of the circle where I was sitting and began walking toward me. Tilting her head and smiling she asked, “Do you have something you want to ask me?” I immediately began to fill up with tears of excitement. As she approached me she held out her hand to hold mine and explained that she was not particularly feeling called to me, but rather had heard from one of her assistants that I had lost a child (which I had shared with her at the break). She said she was “checking in with Gray Eagle, her spirit guide” and she was sure he would have some message for me. Rosemary did at least 10 readings over the course of the weekend, (people who were visited by children, fiancées, parents, spouses, etc) and I was the ONLY person she knew anything about ahead of time, and all she knew was that I had lost a child, (nothing about sex, age, circumstances, etc.) Many of the loved ones she connected with were victims of 911 and her story of their group ascension with the angels was very powerful.

She went back into the middle of us and for 5 minutes or so told us a story (which she did from time to time over the weekend, somewhat slowly and distractedly while she was evidently having simultaneous discussions with Gray Eagle on the side). After what seemed like an eternity because I was excited and hopeful beyond telling of hearing from Katie, and cold due to a strange chill that came over me (I know it sounds hokey and I’m NOT making it up) she came back to me.

“I’m seeing a daughter, a babe in arms. She’s not as dark as you and the color of her skin is intriguing. It’s like she has fever or is flushed somewhat”. Stroking her own head in just the spot where Katie’s had been shaved for IV’s during several procedures and surgeries, she continued, “I am drawn to the head. I’m seeing your daughter as a baby. She’s a cute little thing. There is a sharp pain in the head in this area but it doesn’t last long. She is a fragile thing, a little rosebud. She is a babe in arms. You have known since she was born that she was sick and terminally so. There is a swelling feeling around here (the collarbone and upper chest area). Her death is slow but she is gone before you could grasp the situation.

And **now** she is **standing behind you**. She is grown, no longer a baby but a beautiful young woman. She has a heart-shaped face (I remember the bleeding heart flower on the altar) with dark eyes and long lashes. She is very very beautiful and very smart. She is very excited. Rosemary asks, “Who is the nurse?” I began to explain that Katie’s grandmother was a nurse but she quieted me clarifying that she was talking to “them” (my daughter and Gray Eagle). “Oh, She is a nurse”, she continued. “It is her job over there to orient the babies when they cross over. She receives them and rocks and comforts them as they adjust to unfamiliar surroundings. When babies cross they are ‘home’ but sometimes there is difficulty in the transition, leaving everything that is familiar behind. Your daughter takes the individual children and helps them to adjust. She nurtures and cares for the children. They rock them and comfort them. She is one of the best because she was in this place once. She was a small rosebud plucked very gently from the field by angels and taken to a safe place where others nurtured her. She is laughing and crying just like you. She knows you have been searching for her everywhere. You searched for your power even though you didn’t know it. This has not happened to you before. She’s laughing and was told by Gray Eagle to give you this message. She knew you were coming. She knew she was going to see you. **She has a message: Rosebuds.**”

[I think of all of the roses that had showed up in my life, in just the last week!]

Rosemary continues: “There is an older woman with the name of Rose behind your daughter (my grandmother, Rose Burke). She is smiling and very excited also.(Going back to speaking of Katie she continues...) When she was lifted by angels and carried, she heard screaming. She tried to look back but couldn’t so she went ahead with the angels to a healing place. She says you got new glasses and they are always breaking. (Rosemary says, you’d think you could afford to not buy cheap glasses). This is her way of letting you know she is with you now, and always with you. She was about 6 months old. I am seeing a coffin (I think this is her way of acknowledging Ted, her father, who sat with his arm around her coffin) and I’m seeing a rosebud, symbolic of the child who didn’t flower. Now I see many roses around symbolic of the other children who are flowering. (Rosemary adds ‘on the other side’. I am thinking, ‘no, she means Matt, Meg, Chris, and Teddy ...my other children, her sister and brothers)

She is your precious child. She knows you are broken hearted but you need never think you are alone again. She will visit you in your dreams. Now I’m seeing showers of roses and rose petals all around you. She says ‘I am alive. I am living and breathing and I am right by your side. Never again do I want you to be alone.’ She says ‘You really should have kept the dress (the one I christened and buried her in), but don’t worry about it, that’s okay’. She hears you call to her and will always be with you. She says ‘It won’t be for a long time but don’t be afraid to die. **Mine will be the hand to help you cross over.** I will always be with you.”

That night I prayed to see Katie in my dreams. I did not that I recall. I was, however, awakened by the sound of a doorbell in the middle of the night. It was familiar. I've heard it many times before. **There was no doorbell in the cabin where I slept.** When Ted and I had moved to Roberta Avenue just after Katie died, I used to hear the doorbell in the middle of the night. Ted would go down and check it out for me although he never heard it himself. This happened at least a half dozen times at Roberta. I heard the same thing about 3 times during my 10 years on Ferndale Avenue...never anyone there. Once it happened in my next home, the townhouse at Newtown. And now I know what I had never thought of before...Katie was just saying "hello".

A postscript: I made an appointment with each of my "kids" to share this story with them. Chris and I made a date to meet at a restaurant near my work several days after my return. He arrived for our meeting with a yellow **rose** in his hand for me. He had never done such a thing before.