

Foreword



The sound of the insistent early morning phone kept punctuating my dream. I wasn't ready to wake up. I knew that I was dreaming about something important but just when I thought that I was about to capture it, the phone would ring again. Reluctantly, I reached over and picked it up.

"I'm just calling to let you know that your grandmother has passed on," said the voice on the other end. The relative who called seemed to drone on, but I didn't really hear anything after the first sentence. I thanked the voice. Hung up. And then numbly stepped outside. Of course grandparents die. That's the nature of the cycle of life. But somehow I didn't expect this or plan on it. I thought my grandmother would be around forever.

I found myself climbing up to the top of a nearby hill. The sun wasn't up, but a storm was brewing in the wane light of east. The cold wind whipped my hair into my eyes. Images of my grandmother with her turkeys and the one feather she wore atop her head filled my heart as I watched jagged shards of lightening pummel the earth. My heart was heavy with grief.

My grandmother was Cherokee as was my grandfather, who had already died. Their world was alive with Spirit. Spirit was everywhere. It was in the wild colors of the sunset. It was in the scent of newly sown hay and in the warmth of winter sun filtering through a window on a frosty morning. They understood that a living spirit flowed through all things. They had an innate understanding of the natural forces that shaped their world.

I watched the approach of the storm. One drop. Then another. The sharp, bracing rain pounded my body, but I didn't move. Then, just as quickly as it arrived, the storm passed and sunlight flooded the land. The grass looked greener than I remembered and the air smelled fresher. There wasn't the ubiquitous rainbow that always seems to accompany the passing of someone dear, but there was something even more precious in the wake of the storm. There was a feeling of renewal.

The power of the wind, the water from the pelting rain, the warmth of the fire of the sun and the green bounty of the earth that was so vibrant after the storm – all of these things renewed and replenished my soul. I felt cleansed by the elements and I was at peace with my grandmother's death. In a mystical kind of way, the storm and the elements of nature activated an inner knowing of the

truth that my grandmother was not dead, but had only passed to what my family called “the happy hunting grounds.”

Throughout history, the elements – air, water, fire and earth – have been associated with healing, natural balance and wholeness. Ancient and native people knew that within each element were patterns of energy that permeated the universe. They used this understanding to develop cosmological models to create a sense of harmony in their lives. From Native Americans to ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Mayans, Aztecs, Persians, Celts, and Hindus, the mysterious panorama of nature has been divided into separate parts that are designated by the four elements. Egyptian sages fervently believed that reflecting upon the four elements provided a profound understanding of life. In the mystery schools of Mesopotamia, initiates underwent rigorous rites of Air, Water, Fire, and Earth to test particular aspects of their natures. Hippocrates, honored as the father of medicine, declared that a patient’s health depended upon a balance of the four elements.

My grandparents died before I designed the Soul Coaching® 28-Day Program; however I felt their spirit flow through me as I created it. I knew that the same elemental forces that helped harmonize the lives of my ancestors (and so many native and ancient people) could, in an almost mystical way, bring life into harmony for others. Hence, the four element aspect of Soul Coaching® was born.

Each of the four weeks of the Soul Coaching® 28-Day Program is assigned an element, and during that week the element is a backdrop for the exercises done during the week. For example, the second week is focused on emotional healing and the element is water (which traditionally has been associated with our emotional state). During the week, as you are examining your emotions, you also pay particular attention to the water that you drink, the water with which you cleanse yourself, and the water in the natural world – the rain, streams and oceans. In an alchemical way, the elements profoundly deepen the exercises in this program.

Every writer in this anthology has trained with me to become a Soul Coach and each of these remarkable women has an innate connection to the four elements through their work in this field. In this anthology, they have dovetailed their understanding of the elements and their practice as Soul Coaches into immensely valuable information that you can use in your life. The Creator always sends me the best people and I have been blessed to have these women in my life. They are truly making a difference in the world. My additional kudos to their splendid editor, Sophia Fairchild. Through her gentle nudging and kindness, honed with the clarity of her editing skills, each of these stories has been polished and blessed. Enjoy!

May the power of the Air, Water, Fire and Earth bring blessings into your life and may this book deepen your connection to the wonders of the natural world and to the truth of your soul.

DENISE LINN
Founder of Soul Coaching®