



Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths to Healing Ourselves and Our World

Ed McGaa , Marie N. Buchfink (Illustrator)

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"A rich panorama of our native heritage which allows the seeker access to the heart of the Path of Beauty. Ed McGaa has walked this path so that all people may live in harmony."

Samie Sams, Hancoka Olowanpi, author of *Midnight Song: Quest for the Vanished Ones*

"Ed McGaa is one of the first persons who can write about Oglala religion in the first person because he has lived it. For years anthropologists have hoped a Native American would portray that society from the inside out. Ed McGaa has. It's about time."

William K. Powers, author of *Oglala Religion*

"Fascinating as well as inspiring reading. Ed McGaa makes an excellent spiritual guide and intellectual teacher . . . The information stimulates the mind, the drawings delight the eye, and the ideas soothe the spirit."

Jack Weatherford, author of *Indian Givers*

"Profound and insightful . . . Mother Earth Spirituality will be of great importance to those of us, both 'rainbow' and non-Indian people, who walk over land in search of a deeper spiritual life . . . For us, this book is an invaluable guide showing us how to do it."

Fred Alm Wolf, Ph.D., author of *Taking the Quantum Leap*

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Ourselves and Our World Ed McGaa , Marie N. Buchfink (Illustrator)**

From Reader Review Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths to Healing Ourselves and Our World for online ebook

Reuel says

I read this book while attending an Intercultural Communication conference in Banff, Alberta. Although the book was too spiritual for me, it presented the perspective of native American tribes and fit well with the conference and location.

Sara says

This book was recommended by Gloria Steinem as being a good representation of a spiritual belief system that includes women as equals. This book goes explain that very well.

Eagle Man lifts the veil on sacred Sioux spiritual activities - sweat lodges, spirit guides, sacred stones, vision quests, the White Buffalo Calf Woman, peace pipes and more are explained in detail. Eagle Man advises he wrote the book for all of us, not just the red man, to be able to use the ways of the red man to grow closer to Mother Earth, who is in dire need of help. It is his thought that by sharing the American Indian ways to communicate with Spirit that we will take better care of the Earth (the mother of us all).

This is a beautiful and fascinating book, and provides a great introduction to the Sioux spiritual practices.

Aaron Urbanski says

What a great read! This book has rejuvenated my spirituality, and was the catalyst to 3 supernatural feats I experienced this summer & I will cherish forever. The first half gives a little background information about Black Elk's vision and then moves on to Native American traditions such as the vision-quest, the sweat lodge, the sun dance etc. Highly reccomend to all!

Mary Helene says

It's unsettling to read something published 25 years ago and to feel how our communal viewpoints have shifted and not shifted. Ed McGaa (Eagle Man) writes very honestly. I could feel this book is coming out of a culture foreign to me, and yet shaped by the same cultural institutions. It is primarily a spiritual book written by a Marine, lawyer, professor and tribal leader with a voice clearly Indian.

I am now paying closer attention to Standing Rock; this text is surely background to that phenomena.

Francesca Lorenzini says

I contenuti non sono bene organizzati; è più un flusso di ricordi, riflessioni e appelli.
E' interessante in quanto testimonianza diretta di un nativo oglala che ha assistito alla rinascita della spiritualità del suo popolo e al progressivo recupero delle tradizioni.

Keith McArthur says

A kind of "How To" of Native American Spiritual Ceremonies: i.e. Sweat Lodge, Peace Pipe, Sioux Sun Dance, Visions

Gwendoline Van says

The tattered and worn cover from the library copy I checked out of this book should've been enough to convince me that I'd find Mother Earth Spirituality as riveting as previous readers, but alas, I remain beyond pleased and touched by the contents of its pages.

Ed McGaa introduces us "two-legged" folks to the realm of Sioux spirituality, offering ceremonies and symbolism for greater connection to each other and Mother Earth. McGaa lays down the foundation with forays into the medicine wheel, the peace pipe, the significance of four (directions), the hoop, stones, natural name ...

The bulk of the book talks through the 7 ceremonies meant to honor the Great Spirit. Although these are structured ceremonies, the honoring of the Great Spirit and of Mother Earth is spontaneous and constant, present in all that we do and in the simple act of "being." A big part of being able to honor the spirit, per McGaa, is going beyond the ego and allowing for belief in something different than our dominant norms.

The ceremonies:

- The Peace Pipe Ceremony and Crystal (tools to connect you to spirit)
- The Sweat Lodge Ceremony (purification)
- Crying for a Vision (personal, understanding your purpose and mission in this lifetime)
- Sun Dance (thanksgiving, coming together of tribes)
- Yuwipi, or Spirit-Calling Ceremony (calling spirits to the holy or medicine person to bring wisdom to the living)
- Making of Relatives (cementing friendships into relationships)
- Giveaway Ceremony (giving away a deceased's possessions one year after death)

A few gems:

- Chief Seattle's letter to the US President, 1854: "But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival. So we will consider your offer to buy the land."

- Native Americans already practiced democracy and personal freedom (speech, council, vote, election, etc.) because of their deep ties to Mother Earth. Being unmaterialistic, politics weren't intertwined with material gain, and society, therefore, was essentially classless. The arrival of the pilgrims is the ultimate irony, for they flee a land of tyranny, peasantry, and strife and arrive in a new land professing superior experience in and knowledge of democracy and equality. Whatever system the pilgrims came from drove them away from their mother land, both in political climate and resources, to excavate and take what they could of the Native Americans. (p. 20 - 21)

- "The Hurons decried the European obsession with money that compelled European women to sell their bodies to lonely men and that compelled European men to sell their lives to the armies of greedy men who used them to enslave yet more people. By contrast, the Hurons lives a life of liberty and equality. According the Hurons, Europeans lost their freedom in their incessant use of thine and mine." (p 21)

- "Those who seek a sincere reach into the spirit world should follow the example of the devout and selfless holy persons who maintain their yuwipi power to serve the people [keep the body clean, no chemicals/drugs/alcohol/sugar/etc, honest, noble, etc.]. To achieve this communication, model yourself after the ways and lives of the yuwipi persons who have conducted these ceremonies for generations. Men, especially white men, you must learn to subdue your egos if you want to ever come close to becoming a real shaman. You must also develop and respect your feminine side and learn to balance your skills and knowledge with the female. Correspondingly, woman must learn to develop her masculine side and dispel all hatred of or antagonism for the male, regardless of past sufferings at his hands." (p. 101)

- "It is good to be a relative, but the horse tails remind us to remain free and flowing and not to hold each other back" (p. 114)

- "Both (holy men) insisted that to properly conduct ceremony, absolutely no alcohol or other chemicals were to be consumed, and this included the cactus bud called peyote. 'We get our visions from our own juices,' Bill would tell me." (p. 190)

- "Holy men and women who are schooling aspirants look for the absence of ego in their proteges. Ecocentricity is considered an unwelcome trait for those who seek leadership in ceremony. One who has a large ego, even with the counterbalancing traits of sharing and generosity, would still be considered a poor risk for the powerful position that the holy man or holy woman occupies. We have all seen how some religious leaders on television have severely misused their spiritual stewardship. Native American spirituality has not projected itself on such a grandiose scale, but the disheartening and harmful results can be very similar." (p. 190)

- "Freedom more excess materialism is another prerequisite ... " (p. 190)

- "Establishing a sense of purpose and relaxed surroundings are essential for conducting ceremony. Fasting before conducting the ceremony is also a worthy preparation. Politeness, respect, brevity, straight-forwardness, truth, and impeccable honesty are strict prerequisites to being a ceremonial leader. Double-talking, skepticism, ulterior motives (such as pleasing or impressing your audience), and self-aggrandizement are to be avoided in a leader. Being smart-mouthed, rude, or inconsiderate are also obstacles to the successful conduct of a ceremony. Avoid the grandiose. Be sincere." (p. 191)

Krystal says

This is my favorite book about Native American Spirituality. Ed McGaa, Eagle Man is very, very thorough in his explanations. He goes into detail about the history of the Peace Pipe, the Sun Dance and other spiritual and healing ceremonies. He is passionate about his heritage and spirituality and teaching non-Native Americans the way of his people. He comes off as a very kind and caring person. I originally borrowed this book from the library and loved it so much I had to purchase it, I knew I was going to refer back to it many times.

I've always been interested in Native American Spirituality and medicine, this book is a great starting point for anyone new, and wanting to find out more, or doing research for a school project or even just for your own self.

I do have a story to share that made me even more interested in Native American healing.

A co-worker of mine had to take leave from work for many months, as she could not walk without the assistance of two canes. She didn't know what was wrong with her, and neither did her doctors or the specialists she was sent to. She was given numerous tests to try find what was causing her to be unable to walk or be mobile. There were days when she would literally not be able to move at all and wasn't sure when she was going if ever to return to work. She attended a Native American healing ceremony (more than one, i'm not sure how many), she now walks perfectly fine with absolutely no need of a cane, never mind the two she previously needed! She is back at work AND participates in the company's annual soft ball game. She and her doctors still don't know what the cause was, but it's amazing to see her now from how she was! It's like one of those "miracle" healings you read about, it's really awesome!

Phil hart says

Mother earth

This book relies on you to have an open mind to see things from the native American perspective. It is wonderful intriguing and well worth the read.

Summerrain says

Native American Spirituality, Loved It!

Rah~ri says

So ya wanta learn about shamanism, hmm? :) Dude. It's better to ask the aliens to come and get you right now ! Shamanism exists in every culture. In order to really learn about it though it's better (IMOHO) to chose a culture you love and go to the roots of it. The roots of that society/the religion/the cultural beliefs of

the people that are so ingrained that the general populace don't even know they exist. Your looking at Native American stuff so a good way to get to the shamanistic stuff is to look their spiritual beliefs as a people (sorry for the generalization) This fellow Ed Mgaa is Oglala Sioux himself and a spiritualist in my opinion more than shaman. There is a difference :) He talks about the beliefs and approach to life (following the good red road...i.e. "the Way") as well as going into some detail on ceremonies like the 7 "rights" and stuff . This can lead you deeper. Just like yin and yang have become such a integrated part of your own philosophy there are many little things to understand and allow into your own world view before the words make sense sometimes. In this stuff lineage is very important for some people, they can get as bad as some martial arts folks! Ed comes from a good "line". Two, um?"teachers" he "studied" with were Chief Fools Crow and Chief Eagle Feather (2 Sioux Holy men, all around good guys I'm told, for the most part!) Think i may have met him at some point though i have no memory of it!...but oddly enough i do have an autographed copy of the book of Native Wisdom by him...Strange?

Todd says

This is a good book for getting a foundational knowledge of native American (plains) spirituality. McGaa is a second generation learner and does not have a pure Indian outlook, not to mention that he is quite opinionated, but it is worth the read.

Alyssa says

Beautiful and fuels compassion for all living things. The Natives had it right. McGaa writes honestly and simply. I read this book very quickly.

Jonathan says

Similiar to "The Way", this book led me in the right direction for who I am today.

Scott Block says

A wonderful, straight forward look at spirituality. This book really gives you an understanding of Native American beliefs and their relationship with the earth and all things natural. It goes into all aspects of their religion, how they practice it, the ceremonies that are used to practice it, and how it is used in their everyday lives. It's an educational read, a spiritual read and, I believe, a book that anyone can read and come out a better person.
