When Women Talk

EMPOWERING EACH OTHER
ONE STORY AT A TIME
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COMPILED BY
BRIGITTE LESSARD-DEYELL

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WOMEN TALK
Women Sharing Stories
To all the women who hold a safe space for us to share our stories and allow us to talk for those who are silenced.

To my wife and my daughter, may these stories inspire you.

To my son and any man who knows, loves, and lives with women.
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The Power of Feminine Energy

By Brigitte Lessard-Deyell

Women Talk was a vision that woke me up at 2 am one morning, and despite not fully understanding what it meant at the time, it was crystal clear to me that I needed to act on this train of thought immediately. I knew that Women Talk was important.

Women Talk events are held across Alberta and BC where women get together in a space filled with feminine power and energy, where they are allowed to freely share their stories with each other. Women can be shy, timid, and careful when sharing emotional experiences. They must be surrounded with feminine energy and love to feel safe. At Women Talk, we hold such a space for each other. This sisterhood offers a sacred platform that is noticeably empowering to every female in the room. The power of the Divine Feminine is palpable at every Women Talk event in every location. It is beautiful, soft, patient, intuitive, and receptive. Women share emotional, personal stories, often for the first time. No one is superior to anyone else. Everyone’s uniqueness is celebrated.

I believe we need more Feminine Energy in the world and the world needs more Women Talk.

In the first 40 years of my life I mostly lived in my masculine energy. I was a tomboy, always gravitating to “boy stuff.” I loved all the physical experiences of competitive sports and loved the dominant energy. Although surrounded by women at work, at play, and at home, I was living in my masculine energy. And it served me well.

Then at the age of 41, I became a mother. Motherhood is the most powerful, beautiful energy one can experience. Absolute pure love.
blossomed in my chest and I can only describe it as the Divine Feminine. However, I started feeling unbalanced. Being a stay-at-home mom doing “mom stuff” was forcing me to live in my feminine energy. Little did I know that an epic internal battle was about to occur.

In its own right Women Talk propelled me into a journey of spiritual awakening. While my head, the masculine side of me, tried to fight back all of the “woo woo stuff” that surrounded me at the Women Talk monthly events, I secretly knew what energy would win that battle. Now that I was a mom, and that part of me was fully awakened, my heart was crying for more. I needed to live my life from a deeper place, a heart-centred place. Surrounded by women who live in that world, my journey began. Meditation, Sisterhood, Sacred Gifts, Angels and so much more. It was, and still is at times, a completely new, strange world.

My Sacred Gifts teacher told me that I would become a “bridge.” At the time, I had no idea what that meant, but now I see it. A bridge from a place of common sense to one of spirituality, from our heads to our hearts. I soon came to embrace the fact that my gift is to bridge the gap between the masculine and the feminine.

Once during a guided meditation, I fully experienced the two energies at war. Looking for inspiration to write one of my talks, I decided to meditate. As I sat quietly by my fireplace, feeling warm, relaxed and alone, I picked a guided meditation. The guide asked me to listen to my heart. What was it saying? My marriage immediately came to mind. I could feel its intense love and then I heard my head arguing with my heart. It started listing all that was wrong in my relationship. Then right at that moment the guide softly said, “Don’t be surprised if your head is giving you a completely opposite message.” I was shocked! How did she know? She knew because we are all composed of masculine and feminine energy and we all choose which side we will listen to and live in.

Gender is an illusion. Masculine and feminine are opposite: left brain vs right brain, straight vs curvy, hierarchical vs cooperative. We are all composed of both, despite the body parts we are born with. Women usually have a higher feminine energy and men usually have a higher masculine energy. Both are necessary to be balanced. The world also needs both for function and beauty.

Many people feel that humanity is in dire need of a return to feminine energy, an energy that has been suppressed for centuries and has been made to feel like the weaker of the two energies. Feminine energy is extremely powerful and is more accepting, inclusive, and peaceful. It is time for women to stand strong and once again speak from their power!

Women living in their feminine energy have been made to feel inferior to men. Over time, women have believed that in order to be successful, they must live in their masculine energy. Today, however, women are rebelling against this long-held misconception as they realize that thinking and living in masculine energy does not work for them. Women are feeling, nurturing creatures meant to experience life in a heart-centered way, with compassion and love.

That balance is also needed in men. Men have been taught to suppress their feminine energy. A man possessing a dominant female energy is ridiculed, treated as weak and un-manly. But when men are forced to live solely in their masculine energy, to the point where they end up “hyper-masculine,” violence is often the outcome, in their relationships and in the world.

At a very young age, I was at the receiving end of this “hyper-masculinity” and know how terrifying it can be.

Aboriginal cultures throughout history were matriarchal societies and their peoples understood the significance of living in a more heart-centered, gentle place. They also respected those who had the ability, or gift, of being able to flow from the masculine to the feminine and back again. Gay people in aboriginal cultures were considered to be “Two-Spirited” and were celebrated and respected. Two-Spirited individuals, it was believed, understood and could move fluidly between both the masculine and feminine energies, and were often revered as healers or spiritual leaders.

The Masculine Energy is about power, logic, competitiveness, assertiveness, and rigidity. The Feminine Energy is vulnerable, cooperative, creative, nurturing, receptive, and fluid. I love both and can flow from one to the other depending on the circumstances. I use my masculine energy to attack my goals and achieve desired outcomes. But I love, and more often choose, to live in my feminine energy. Being able to move...
effortlessly between both energies has truly been a gift for me, and it has helped me understand both powers.

I am just as comfortable playing hockey as I am cooking in the kitchen. I am a fierce, physical competitor and a soft, nurturing mother. I enjoy living with both energies. It is not about balance as much as it is about being able to flow from one energy to the other. I am free to choose which energy I live in, and when. I can fully experience, feel, and live in both energies as I please, but the Divine Feminine Energy is the one I admire now most and the one I prefer to be surrounded by.

Understanding and living in both energies, accompanied by my visionary gift, has prepared me for an extraordinary path. I intend to help my community to raise and celebrate feminine energy. This is my legacy, my small contribution to the world, my life’s passion. I want to raise feminine energy in order to make people appreciate all its qualities and Women Talk is my vehicle. It is a beautiful, harmonious place where you can feel the unconditional love of the powerful feminine energy. Together, we help women reach their full potential. Together, we celebrate their uniqueness.

We acknowledge each other’s issues and weaknesses and provide healing for our dysfunction. You can feel the honouring of each woman’s story. That honour is palpable. As a group, and as individuals, we see each other from our heart-centered space and feel our interconnectedness. At Women Talk you are simply part of the tribe. In our collective state, we can heal each other and our communities. We might be a very small pebble in a very large pond, but our ripples are far reaching.

It is my personal belief that by sharing our lessons and teachings, we can create symbiotic energy together that will benefit both men and women and society as a whole. We will share the message of feminine energy that art, music, aesthetics, and love are as important as economics. Together we can raise feminine energy in our cities, our countries and around the world. In the future, perhaps, we can leave war and aggression behind and become a more peaceful society consumed with making the world a better place.

My philosophy behind Women Talk is just that — by sharing their stories, women will make their communities stronger.

**About Brigitte Lessard-Deyell**

Married, mother of two, entrepreneur, and visionary, Brigitte has spent most of her life supporting and empowering women through numerous female-based businesses.

Born a self-confident extrovert, Brigitte learned that sharing her energy to empower other women was something she adored doing. The first part of her life was all about sports, where she learned many of her leadership skills and how to motivate other women to push past their limiting beliefs. That’s also where she learned that together we are stronger.

Her insatiable curiosity has led her on the path of a serial entrepreneur. Over the years, she has owned multiple female-based businesses including a women’s sports store, a women’s gym, a physiotherapy clinic, and a women’s trade show, just to name a few! She presently owns Sportsbras.ca and Women Talk and is a professional public speaker. Brigitte is also a Certified Sacred Gifts Guide and has studied and practiced the Law of Attraction’s principles for almost 20 years.

Whether it’s at the microphone or on camera, you will instantly be moved by Brigitte’s larger than life energy. Her “joie de vivre” is contagious. As a motivational speaker, Brigitte inspires women to celebrate their feminine energy, to speak their truth, and stand fully in their power.

Passionate about women having the opportunity to share their stories in a positive, uplifting, safe environment, Brigitte became a story activist...
Sharon is like an enchantress. When she starts talking, we are all pulled in by her charisma. We sit there, enthralled by her brilliant stories, wondering what the lesson will be. Her metaphors are dazzling and her divine feminine is powerful. Watching this heroine walk a mile in her powerful red ruby shoes is mesmerizing. Her yellow brick road is an inspiration to many.

"You had the power all along my dear"
— Glinda the Good Witch

Why is it that we women think our power lies outside of our amazing selves? That in order to be the highest version of ourselves, a metaphorical wand must be waved or a pair of imaginary red glittering heels clicked together three times? Believing you are your own Glinda the Good Witch is an overwhelming thought, and stepping into her shoes is a daunting task.

Are we not the heroines of our own lives? The designers of our destiny? And as such, what is the payoff if we keep waiting for some magical occurrence to propel us to magnificence?

I read a book once where the writer said he would get up each morning, put on his lucky watch, get dressed, fill his lucky coffee cup, and sit down to work on his writing. It occurred to me a week later as I was schlepping about the house in sweats and slippers, completely avoiding my office, that maybe he was onto something. I puttered about all morning doing dishes, laundry, and opening mail, basically anything that could keep me in a justifiable state of resistance toward working on my notes for a speaking engagement that evening.
Later that afternoon as I began to get ready, I struggled to muster up the gumption to get in “the zone.” As I was expected later that evening to give a motivational talk to a group of women, I felt that a little excitement or enthusiasm might come in handy. However, as I went through the motions, I made a mental list. Shower — check. Hair — check. Face — check. New power dress — check, check! My enthusiasm level, however, remained a gloomy zero on the shiniest self scale.

Put on the shoes... put on the shoes... a little voice kept saying from somewhere in the part of my brain where my inspired self was on hiatus. Put on those four-inch heels and power up! Common sense self said, “Don’t be ridiculous, you can’t walk in those in the house!” But inspired self prevailed knowing the magnitude of the situation, and so I stepped into a pair of four-inch white strappy platform heels. They were my favorite and they were fabulous!

Bam! Just like that I was taller, and not just in physical height, but taller in presence, in stature, in gumption. Instantly I was a speaker and a motivator again. I was inspiring, I was someone I would want to get to know! I felt like a million bucks, baby! Yeah, best shoes ever!

As I drove the hour-long drive to the venue, I thought about the power of the shoes and it occurred to me that they were much like Dorothy’s ruby shoes in The Wizard of Oz. For her the shoes held the power to return her to her beloved home, or so she thought. It was really Dorothy herself who held that power all along, if only she believed she was the heroine of her own life. The good witch Glinda was merely a motivational coach along the way while the hard stuff was all on Dorothy.

Now I realized that my pretty white platforms didn’t actually have magical powers but what they did have was the power to push me into manifesting the person I truly was, and needed to step into being, for the occasion at hand. Those shoes were the catalyst for my transforming from comfortably resistant, into daring to shine.

Comfort breeds comfort. For years I held a romantic notion of being a weekend, world-changing warrior with a mug of coffee in my hand, while wearing fuzzy attire and reading socks on my feet. Yep, that’s right, reading socks... long, soft, feminine socks dreamt up by some overpaid marketing guru that retailed for $35 at Chapters. In reality, my $5 socks were old and fuzzy from years of washing. Armed with my favourite mug, I would head to the armchair in my office (not the desk) with grand plans to change hearts, inspire minds, and propel women forward into the shiniest versions of themselves, essentially all done in my pj’s. I will let you guess how that worked for me and women everywhere... You got it! Inspired to do the work — nope, take a nap — you bet! Leave the work on the chair to bake a batch of warm cookies to round out my comfort party? Mmmm yes, please! Now don’t get me wrong, many inspired ideas, processes, and results have come from just such cozy settings. However, “my process” for creating change in my life and the lives of women the world over was cloaked in comfort (aka: resistance), much like the place I was in in my own life. Change requires work, hard work. Uncomfortable work and in four-inch heels! Work that needs more than fuzzy pink socks to pack any sort of punch. There’s a reason designers call it the Power Suit, ladies!

I am well aware of what does not work for me when my highest self is being called up. I am also well aware of what I need to do to meet myself halfway. Before stepping into the shoes, the suit, the dress, I have to have at least one shred of belief in myself. That’s it, just a smidge of belief that what I have to say is important — that it might be important to someone else’s journey. I have to believe in my purpose, and with a mighty shove propel myself into my own light. Every woman’s journey is unique, and for some the belief may lie in putting that first brush stroke to canvas, it may be signing the offer on her first home, or going back to school after raising her babies. In order to do anything at all we must, like Dorothy, realize that the power lies within; that the belief in ourselves and our personal power is paramount to fulfilling and living the life of our dreams.

So how to find that belief? The meaning behind the meaning of what we love and were born to do? Being passionate about something doesn't necessarily mean we do something about it or with it. Some call it finding your “why”. I call it refusing to sit one more day living an unfulfilled and inauthentic life, cloaked in fear, doubt, and crippling inactivity! Sound familiar? Armed with Glinda style quotes, I decidedly show up and wade into my juiciest dreams and shiniest visions, repeating: “Eat the frog.” “Who does it serve when you play small?” “What
is it going to take to fall madly in love with your life?” These are just a few of my own heel clickers designed to continually remind me of what’s at stake here. They remind me that I am worthy of a big, fulfilling life, and that my voice deserves to be heard.

Doesn’t it all come down to worthiness? Believing in oneself means believing I am worth it. I am worth all the great things and experiences the universe is conspiring to put on my course — my yellow brick road. I am worth doing the work, worth risking failure and detours and discomfort many times over to get to my Oz. There is no shame in living an uninspired life, it’s just that I know better and when we know better, we do better. And really, why live uninspired? Do we not each have a responsibility to show up and shine in our own lives, automatically radiating our light, joy, and fearlessness, to others, and inspiring them to do the same?

I believe every woman has that proverbial pair of ruby shoes. Maybe it’s a lucky watch, a mug, that one stunning pair of shoes, or whatever item it takes for the spark of belief to be ignited enough for her to get up, dress up, and show up for her one precious life in all her magnificence.

What will it take for you to step into your Ruby Slippers?

ABOUT SHARON RENNECKE

Sharon Rennecke is a dynamic speaker and motivator, leading and inspiring women to step into their shiniest selves and live their biggest lives. She is the founder of a life coaching company called ‘Dare to Shine’. She believes we all have our own answers within and that once we get past our fear of really seeing ourselves that those answers will come forth to propel us into the grandest, bravest versions of ourselves.

Since her start in women’s fitness coaching, she has been coaching and leading women since 2008. She has been a volunteer life coach for Choices International Programs since 2011. In 2012, she completed her formal life coaching through The Coaches Training Institute in California.

Sharon lives in Central Alberta on 20 acres that is her ever evolving canvas, and soul’s safe haven. She shares this calming space with a variety of rescued cats, some part time cows, or horses, and her beloved black lab “Moe.”

www.sharonrennecke.com
www.facebook.com/sharon.rennecke
I Am Finally Free

By Brenda Hammon

Determined to hear the birds again, Brenda’s journey to healing from sexual abuse, rape and attempted murder, is very moving. I find it hard to believe that this strong, well-spoken lady has suffered so much. She is a wealth of information for so many who have suffered and her books and talks help many.

My life-altering journey began when I was five years old. The things that happened to me at that time would change me and my world forever. No longer was I a carefree little girl, no longer was I innocent of the ways of people, and no longer could I look to my family and friends of my family for comfort and safety.

Throughout my childhood, my adolescence, and into adulthood, my past haunted me. No matter how hard I tried to shove the memories back into the recesses of my brain and forget them, they would eventually come bubbling to the surface. These memories were like a balloon filled with air and forced under water until it eventually escapes your grasp and springs to the surface with such force that it bursts above the water. Such was my life. Without any warning, those haunting memories would break the surface and cause more chaos.

In the beginning of my therapy, I remembered the farm hand’s sexual and mental abuse, but I had blocked out the rape done to me by a family member. This hidden memory was the most damning. My only way to escape from my home and the people who had violated my trust was to catch my horse, jump on bareback, and ride away as fast and as far as I could. My horse became my savior and my best friend. I cried on her and I prayed on her for God to take me away from all the pain.

All my decisions were rooted around the abuse and how I viewed
I Am Finally Free

Brenda Hammon

My first marriage to Alfred was a disaster. Even my choice of wedding dress reflected my childhood abuse. All that was visible was my face and hands. If you coloured my dress black, it looked like a funeral shroud with a vampire cape (minus the high collar). To me, that was the dress I deserved because I felt ugly and needed a dress to match my feelings.

Alfred was an emotional and mentally cruel husband that had a sex obsession that drove him over the edge and ultimately to his death. During our marriage his constant cheating with other women and lying and pure lack of regard for his children had damaged our marriage beyond repair. His possessiveness and jealousy was out of control and got to the point where I was not allowed to talk to anyone, especially a male. When someone talked to me that he didn’t approve of, it would be days of the silent treatment then and the accusations would start. Alfred would accuse me of doing what he was doing and thought I was lying about it. It was an emotional roller-coaster and there was just no winning with him.

After 21 years in this emotionally and mentally abusive marriage, I finally managed to leave. I thought I was finally free to have a life that I wanted but that was not to be. Alfred was not the leaving kind. He was jealous and possessive and I was his property. He decided that if he couldn’t control me and contain me, then I must die. He threatened me and stalked me during our separation and after we divorced. I was forced to give up my apartment and live on the run. The only contact my daughters and parents had for me was my cell phone number.

During our separation, Bud entered my life, and I believe with all my heart that if it wasn’t for him shielding me from Alfred, I wouldn’t be here today. During one of my many lawyer visits for the divorce, my lawyer told Bud to never leave my side, for if he did Alfred would kill me. Realistically, Bud couldn’t always be there, so I was forced to live in my horse trailer or my car to keep safe from Alfred’s reach. This had been a recurring life pattern from childhood: to run, run hard and fast to escape the pain and turmoil, and to escape my life.

Alfred died 18 months after our divorce. With his death came a variety of emotions — guilt being one — as his family blamed me for his death. I also felt shame and relief. Now that Alfred was dead I thought that I could finally have a normal life, but that dream was soon shattered when the RCMP informed me that Alfred had hired someone to kill me. For the next six months I lived in fear that I was going to be shot. When the RCMP finally called our daughters and told them that the investigation into their father’s death was over, I figured that they must have found out who he had hired to kill me. The RCMP refused to tell me anything about the investigation as I was not the next of kin. I was totally in the dark. Talking to my daughters about it was out of the question as they were having difficulty dealing with his untimely death and the chaos it had caused for his family. My life couldn’t get any worse.

Within weeks of Alfred’s death, weird things started to happen to me. I could feel a presence around me that I didn’t understand. Suddenly, I saw Alfred standing at the foot of my bed at night. When I refused to allow my mind to accept this, the bed would start shaking, forcing me to put one foot on the floor to stop it.

It was New Year’s Eve and Bud and I were sitting by the fireplace. I had closed my eyes and when I opened them I saw Alfred’s face staring back at me instead of Bud’s. To say that I was freaked out was an understatement. I quickly shut my eyes and opened them again, only to see Bud looking back at me with a puzzled look on his face. I never told him what I had seen. I honestly thought that I was going crazy. Was guilt and shame about Alfred’s death reaching out, grasping at my soul, trying to suck me down to hell with him?

The feelings I was experiencing became unbearable and I decided to speak with my new doctor about how Alfred’s death was affecting me. I feared my doctor would have me committed to a ‘nut house’ but instead she referred me to a grief counsellor named Lorraine. That is when my world began to change.

Lorraine was the answer to all my prayers. She unlocked my Pandora’s Box and pulled and dragged those long-buried memories to the surface. At times, I felt that I hated her for prying, yet at other times I loved her for helping me.

Throughout my four years of grief counselling with Lorraine, I
I worked on exorcising the demons of my past. There were times that I couldn’t deal with all the memories and the suffocating pain. I would fall into my old habit of running hard and fast once again, until I couldn’t go any faster and would eventually have to go back to Lorraine and continue this horrible journey of acknowledging and accepting the truth about my abusers.

I hit the wall three years into the grief counselling therapy when I finally had to accept what my family member had done to me. When I realized that someone else in my family knew what happened and never told anyone until over four decades later, it shook me to my core and literally knocked me off my feet. All those years I had refused to believe the truth: that the haunting images that constantly bubbled to the surface of my conscious mind that felt like sharp arrows piercing me and making me bleed, were in fact real. That was the hardest thing I ever had to face. It took another year to work through that, but in the end I realized that if I wanted to have a ‘normal life’ (and I had no idea what that looked like) I was going to have to see this through.

I was determined that I was going to deal with all the demons of my past. I made a commitment to conquer them, to leave them in the dust of my tracks and walk away.

After Lorraine and I finished our journey together, I thought, “Wow, I made it! I am finally free from my past!” No longer were those dark shadows hovering over me. My mind was free.

However, although my mind was free, I could still feel Alfred’s unsettled presence around me. Fortunately, I met Mary and she introduced me to Hypnotherapy. This therapy enabled me to break all ties with Alfred and stop the feelings of being attacked by him, even though he had not crossed over when he died. It wasn’t an easy task but in the end I succeeded.

When I started to write my first book, the five-year-old little girl in me was screaming loud and clear that she wanted to be released from her prison. She wanted me to write her story through her eyes, and so my book, “I can’t hear the birds anymore” was born. During this time, I realized that although my mind was clear and free, my body was not. It wasn’t long before my body had to fight infections and strange ailments.

The stress that I had endured for four decades was once again manifesting itself in my physical body.

I was feeling frustrated and angry with my body for continuing to hold onto the past and I wondered how I would ever put those memories behind me. That is when Thrya entered my life and my ‘cellular release therapy’ began. We worked on releasing all the emotions that were trapped in my cells so that my body was no longer reacting to the dramatic events of the past.

Once my cells were free from trapped emotions, my second book, “I AM” sprang forth like a Phoenix from the ashes. I was finally able to tell my story, unencumbered by the past and the ailments that created my turmoil.

After five decades, I am proud to say that my body no longer holds the emotions of my past. My mind is clear and free and I am living the life I was meant to live. I have finally found happiness.

Today, I am neither a victim nor a survivor, but an ordinary woman who is well-adjusted despite my past.

**About Brenda Hammon**

Brenda and her husband own a Lifestyle Protection Insurance Business, called Spirit Creek Financial, where they provide life, mortgage, disability and group benefits. Brenda also sits on the Advisory Board of one of Canada’s’ Leading Lifestyle Providers, The Edge Benefits, has competed on the National Circuit in Dressage, and is an international bestselling author.

Her first book, “I can’t hear the birds anymore” is narrated from a child’s point of view and reveals how being sexually molested and raped at the age of five years old affected her life. Proceeds from the sale of this book are used to purchase more books that are donated to women’s shelters.
Brenda’s sequel book, I AM, is told from a woman’s perspective. Its story takes readers on the journey of Brenda’s life, complete with its triumphs and failures, and shares her determination, resilience, and conviction that there is a better life out there waiting for all of us.

www.spiritcreekpublishing.com
www.brendahammon.com
www.facebook.com/brenda.hammon.9
www.thereishappinessafter.com

I have a problem with what people think of me. Or rather, I have a problem with what I think people think of me. This is not a new issue for me, but it is one that became very problematic when it interfered with my ability to provide the absolute best care to one of my patients.

Let me take you back a few years ago, so that this story makes a bit more sense. I’ve been very blessed in my life to come from a very loving, supportive, privileged family. Not that my parents were excessively wealthy, but I never wanted for food, shelter or love. I was a fairly bright student, athletic, and popular growing up. I didn’t worry about grades. I played high-level competitive sports and started working part-time when I was 14. I was fortunate enough to buy my own car when I turned 16 and gained comfortable independence to lead an active social life in high school. Surprisingly, with all my privilege growing up, I never developed a very solid sense of confidence and self-worth. Maybe it’s because I always assumed that people would think I was less of a great person if I didn’t have myself completely put together 100% of the time. I was so uncomfortable with not being the best at things, whether it was being at the top of my class, or being the captain of the volleyball team, and with keeping up the appearance that I had no worries. This followed
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This book would not have been possible without the generous and vulnerable sharing of the stories by my 29 co-authors. I would also like to thank Tammy Plunkett and the Big Sky Author Services team who taught me to believe in myself, and that I can write. Tammy encouraged and inspired me to use my storytelling skills and translate them onto paper. She was amazing and I love her for everything she did on this project. Huge thanks to David Moratto’s artistic vision for the book cover and interior design. He took an idea in my mind and made it real. For the production magic and editing giftedness, I am very grateful for Dawn James and Christine Bode.

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The art work is called *Spirit Woman — Talking Stick*
This Ceremonial Earth Goddess sculpture embodies Women Talk. *Spirit Woman — Talking Stick* is made from driftwood, shells, four quartz crystals, and feathers. The sculpture was inspired by the soft wind bringing breath and by the elements of nature.

**DRIFTWOOD:** while each tree celebrates its own unique magical qualities, when wood becomes enveloped in water’s ebb and flow, its original properties and form become altered by the additions of other multiple energies it then encounters. The wood absorbs the new energies from life sources which are also housed within the water. And too, since it no longer is restrained by roots and earth, within its newfound freedom of travel, wood’s magical energy base and form is then continuously enhanced by a multitude of natural forces.

**QUARTZ CRYSTAL:** is a power stone. It enhances energy by absorbing, storing, amplifying, balancing, focusing, and transmitting. It channels universal energy. Quartz also enhances thoughts, as they are a form of energy. Because it directs and amplifies energy, it is extremely beneficial for manifesting, healing, meditation, protection, and channeling. Quartz is a stone of clarity which dispels and clears away negative energy. It can be used to purify and clarify on the spiritual, mental, and physical planes. It is powerfully protective because of these properties. Quartz enhances spiritual growth, spirituality, and wisdom. Because it clarifies thought processes and emotions, it can increase inspiration and creativity. It can also help particularly with concentration, studying, and retaining what one learns. Quartz is also a stone of harmony because it balances energies, and is even helpful in romantic relationships.
FEATHERS: the symbolic meaning of feathers deals with ascension and spiritual evolution to a higher plane.

SEASHELLS: they connect us to the ocean and to water energy. Water is the element that represents our emotions. By being in contact with seashells, we open and activate our intuition and sensitivity. This allows us to be able express our imagination, and our creativity.

When we are able to express and share our emotions and ideas, we begin to heal ourselves and have a greater impact on others and the healing of our planetary family.

DEBRA BERNIER grew up as the middle child in a home without TV and was free to wander and explore her world, encouraged by her mother to befriend squirrels, bring home salamanders, unearth bones, and cherish bird’s nests. One of Debra’s earliest memories is digging at the beach, discovering the rich, dark clay layered under the sand. Buckets of clay were hauled home and soon the family’s spider-webbed shed was converted into Debra’s childhood studio. Clay figures of animals and mermaids would be sculpted, only to dry out and crumble. Never one to be discouraged, she soon found new mediums to work with and would later complete a B.Ed at Ottawa University, Canada.

Today, Debra still collects shells and stones, and with her husband, encourages her two beautiful, messy children to explore nature’s diversity. Living on Vancouver Island means Debra has an endless supply of driftwood to work with; her favorite medium. Like the bones of past trees, each piece of driftwood holds a story and the spirit of nature. Debra hopes that her art inspires creativity and awakens a connection to the beauty of nature.

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