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Back down to earth

Healer Denise Linn knows a thing or two about good vibes. Her experiences of hardship have fuelled her passion for honouring your truth, cultivating compassion, aligning to energy and embodying a sense of connectedness to all.

Words SONIA ZADRO

Denise Linn is an international lecturer, healer and world-acclaimed expert in feng shui and space clearing. She has given seminars in 25 countries to audiences of thousands, published 18 books, which are translated into 28 languages, and has appeared on the BBC, *Oprah* and NBC. Her message is simple: the soul loves the truth.

When you read Linn's work it transports you, sucking you into a meditative, sensual trance where her concepts stir a latent wisdom deep within. Speaking to her is much the same. You can almost feel the Earth's hum and pulse as well as the trees, clouds and sea coming to life when she speaks with such reverence for the wisdom of native cultures or the signs the natural world imparts to us.

Linn draws most of her wisdom from her Cherokee heritage and her time spent with the Australian Aborigines, Maoris of New Zealand and Zulus of Africa as well as with other native tribes around the world. Her connection to the Earth and her ancestry is deeply felt. Take her recent book, *Kindling the Native Spirit*. She opens with, "Sometimes I think I can hear the ancient ones whispering. On silent, windless nights, when the stars are bright against a black sky, I lie in bed and I'm sure I can hear the voices of my ancestors."

Yet Linn says you don't need to have a strong native heritage to connect to your native ancestry and attune to the Earth. Aboriginal leader Nundjan Djiridjarkan of the Bibbulmun people, known as Kenneth Desmond Colbung, was awarded an Order of Australia and an MBE for his service to the Aboriginal people. When Linn spent time with him, he said something she will never forget: "Denise, native isn't necessarily what's in your blood; it's what's in your heart." She explains how, if we go back far enough, we all have native

heritage, but it's what's in our hearts that counts. We can all feel our connections to the Earth. "Nature is always whispering to us," she says, "and it's up to us to recognise the signs."

Nature as a messenger

In our modern world we may think it's impossible to recognise nature's signs when surrounded by apartment blocks and concrete jungles. However, Linn believes that once we clear our busy minds the messages of nature are everywhere — and they don't always relate directly to the natural world. She says if something appears to you three times, something that seems unusual or coincidental, pay attention.

She gives a personal example of once seeing a woman changing her tyre on the freeway. Not long after, she saw a billboard of someone changing a tyre and then, soon after, she turned on the radio and an ad came on that said, "Have you checked your tyres lately?" Right after this, Linn pulled into a service station to get her tyres checked and was told her back tyre was about to blow out.

One might question how she came to such a vision of interconnectedness given her parents were both chemists with a scientific outlook. Despite being influenced by them, at age 17 she had an experience that changed her view of life forever. On a warm, hazy day, as she was riding her motorbike on a country road, a car that had been trailing her slammed into her from behind. The driver pulled up alongside her, rolled down his window and shot her.

What followed this near-death experience was a paradigm shift she continues to feel intensely to this day. "In those moments when the doctors actually thought I'd died, it sounds corny almost, but I experienced being [at] one with all things, all beings and all people; there was nothing that I was

not. I was everything. The thing that was so remarkable was that I knew I'd been there. And this place here, where we are separate, is the illusion.

"You know that idea in native cultures where what you do to the planet you do to yourself? This is actually true."

Path of compassion to freedom

Linn acknowledges how she often forgets this interconnectedness but, once she reminds herself of it, it can be powerful. "I get mad at people who are cruel and it's OK with me that I do. But the instant you judge someone you lose the ability to influence them and so, when I remember that I am not separate from you, it allows me to diminish judgement. When I diminish my judgement of someone else I am more able to make a difference; I'm more able to influence them."

Linn believes it's still important to go on protest marches and make phone calls to help positively change things but that it needs to be done from a place of compassion, as "that's the only thing that will really change the world". But how do you incorporate a philosophy like this, of oneness and compassion, when you've been hurt or severely abused?

In these situations, Linn stresses the importance of honouring your feelings. "If you are angry and suppress it, that's damaging. If you are angry and express it, that's healing." She says it's essential to set boundaries when necessary but this can be done from an understanding of this connectedness so that, when we set them, "There is a deep awareness that we are one. It's like forgiveness: you can forgive the person but not the act. I can forgive a person who has done horrific acts, but it doesn't mean I forgive what they did. I forgave the man who shot me. I didn't do that for him. I did it for me so I wasn't carting him around with me wherever I went."



“Nature is always whispering to us and it’s up to us to recognise the signs.”

The feminine spirit

This world view of oneness may not be new but it is still profound. There’s an increasing disconnect from the Earth “civilised” humans have experienced over the past few hundred years. Humans are encased in houses and buildings; streets are lined with roads and boundaries. In industrialised areas, little of the natural world remains except what is crafted, planned, designed and manufactured.

We never stop to think there was a time when humans slept under the stars on the bare earth every night,

completely immersed in nature. What would that have been like? It’s perhaps not surprising that indigenous cultures all over the world were so attuned to the Earth’s wisdom, energies and rhythms. Why is it we never stop to think — what have we lost in giving up this way of life?

The wisdom Linn imparts from native cultures suggests we have lost more than we know. When it comes to preventing Earth’s demise, indigenous cultures believe this is a very dangerous time. She says when native people talk about why we need to protect our land,

“It’s not just because it feels good, but it’s actually an emergency that we begin to cherish the Earth.”

In Africa, Linn spent time with 96-year-old Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, a revered Zulu spiritual leader who is a healer (*sangoma*) and diviner (*sanusui*). She recalls him saying, “When 40 women are the heads of state around the world, only then will the fate of the world change in a positive direction.” Linn believes this return of the feminine spirit is not just about the influence of actual men and women.



"Feminine spirit is not just about those that have a female body," she says. "It's [about] those who cherish and understand that receptive force rather than the competitive yang force." On a personal level, she believes we have to do it all: exercise the power of intent and prayer, hold personal responsibilities such as recycling and, importantly, take political action.

Honouring energy

Related to the notion of oneness is Linn's belief that everything is alive and has a soul. Not just animals and trees, but even inanimate objects such as clouds and the very homes we live in. "In native cultures around the world, altars were built in the home in honour of the home spirit. One thing I know is that those ancient ceremonies were done because they worked," she explains.

"When you stepped into a home that had been honoured, it felt better. The energy was better, your kids were more in balance and you were healthier.



"Indigenous cultures all over the world were so attuned to the Earth's wisdom, energies and rhythms. Why is it we never stop to think — what have we lost in giving up this way of life?"

Isn't it interesting [that] when we honour our homes we are healthier. I communicate with my home; I might be anthropomorphising, it might be psychological but it doesn't matter. I believe there is a spirit within the home."

Working with the energy of a home is at the core of feng shui. This can take years of study, but Linn shares her wisdom for cultivating good vibes in your home. "If it feels good, it's good feng shui." However, she says you can't just think something feels good because you saw something you liked on a magazine cover. She says you need to close your eyes "and tune in to this realm of the soul. If you do this, it will be right for you."

She also notes that the homes we are drawn to are the homes we need for our own evolution. "Some people have the same issues in different homes because the issues are reflecting something inside themselves they need to look at, grow through or understand."

Truth seeking

If there's a guiding principle for a happy home, is there also one for a happy life? "The soul loves the truth," Linn says. "Understand that every moment

is precious. Instead of judging some moments as good, bad, happy or sad, instead [realise] it's just life."

Linn believes people become unhappy when they are out of tune with the truth of their feelings. They are not saying, "What's real for me now?" or, "How am I feeling now?" Instead, she says, "They have an idea of how they should be feeling, how they want to be feeling or what other people expect of them."

Instead of comparing our feelings, she says, "We need to sink into that very precious place of what's real right now ... to being present in the moment and sinking into the truth." She sums it up by saying, "That's a lot of words for the very simple phrase, 'The soul loves the truth.'" Linn doesn't deny the value of trying to be positive, but not when it's at the expense of what's authentic and real.

Finding your purpose

What about living a physically long and healthy life? This question makes Linn reflect on her friendship with a 96-year-old woman who is sleeping in her car and waking every morning to cook for 30 bicyclists cycling through Death Valley. This would be somewhat

uncomfortable for a 26-year-old, let alone a 96-year-old. Yet this is what makes her elderly friend feel alive.

Through this friend Linn has met other women in their 80s, 90s and 100s that are vital, healthy and joyful. "The one thing they have in common is this curiosity about life and a willingness to continue being productive and exploring and learning."

As well as exploring, she says there's a big connection between feeling like you are making a difference, or contributing, and good health. She stresses that this sense of contribution doesn't necessarily have to be huge. "It can be making breakfast for your neighbour who can't get around very easily."

As our interview comes to a close, Linn observes a rainbow reaching across the valley, from the clear lake to the snowy mountains. "This is a really good sign," she says. "Our meeting, our connection — it's a blessing." 🌈

Sonia Zadro is a freelance writer and clinical psychologist with 20 years of experience. She is interested in helping people heal and opening their minds through science. For further information, see soniazadro.com.