

PATHWAYS

TALES FOR THE SPIRITUAL SEEKER

FREE PREVIEW

**INSPIRING TALES WITH
PRACTICAL WISDOM &
GUIDED REFLECTIONS.**

JANICE M. PUTA

Pathways:
Tales for the Spiritual Seeker

**Inspiring tales with practical wisdom
and guided reflections.**

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FREE PREVIEW

Electronic book published by Our Spiral Journey, LLC.

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Dedication

For my Mom and Dad, Gertrude C. (Novak) and Ruben W. Puta, who gave so much of themselves and their own lives in providing a Christian education for me from grade school through college.

Thank you for introducing me to the mysteries of the Divine and supporting me on my spiritual pathways.

Personal Invitation

Dear reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read this preview of my book, and yet, there is so much more waiting for you.

Do you know what you want to do with your life? Are you already there, or still searching? Either way, through the pages of this book, let me walk with you along the journey and we can learn so much from each other.

I'm here, in these inspiring stories, to hold your hand when you need someone to support you, to answer your questions, to affirm the hope you seek in your life, to point the way to the Light you know you need and want to have along the way.

Looking forward to being with you on the journey,

Janice M. Puta



*Wind Walker:
The path of contemplative
stillness.*

“Jan Puta brilliantly takes age-old wisdom and weaves images and lessons into parables that warm the heart and sing to the soul! Her stories are timeless, appealing to people of all ages and spiritual beliefs. Pathways: Tales for the Spiritual Seeker will bless all who choose to ‘walk with the wind.’”

-- Tana Borron-Jerde, M.S., Certified Clinical Competence
Speech and Language Pathologist; Wisconsin

*“Search for the stillness in your heart
where the Holy and Ancient One is waiting for you.
Say to the Holy and Ancient One,
‘Here I am. I am here for You.’”*

Wind Walker: The path of contemplative stillness.

A long, long time ago, there was a place where it was always summertime. The people who lived there didn't know theirs was a special land. Everyone was so happy, no one ventured out into the far-away places.

Everyone lived in small villages. Each village was like a large family. Several older men and women taught the children about their traditions.

One of the sacred teachings of each village was the beautiful story about the wind. No matter how often they heard this story, children and adults wanted to hear it over and over again. It was as if hearing the story satisfied a hunger inside of them.

To them, the wind was the breath of the Holy and Ancient One, who made all things and now sustained all things by breathing over them. The wind was life. That's why no one built huts or houses. Everyone lived outside, sleeping under the trees where, even at night, the wind breathed over them.

When they cooked their meals over an open fire, they fanned the wind into their fires to carry the fragrance of their cooking back to the Holy and Ancient One and to receive, in return, a blessing of health and prosperity.

They did all their teaching, singing and dancing out in the wind where the wind could carry their sounds to the Holy and Ancient One. Then, as they paused and waited in silence, they felt inside themselves a rush of joy and peace as the wind came back from the Holy and Ancient One.

It was no wonder the people had great respect and reverence for one they called the Wind Walker.

As the story went, many of the people were sure this was the only person who walked on the wind and went to see the Holy and Ancient One. The Wind Walker traveled from village to village and stayed among the people for some time. So it was that one morning, the people of one village awoke to see the Wind Walker sitting in the glow of the rising sun, waiting quietly for the wind to blow the sun up into the sky and to announce the start of another day.

The people jumped out of their sleeping places under the trees and forgot all about eating or drinking anything. Making a large circle around Wind Walker, everyone sat down on the ground and waited in the stillness for Wind Walker to speak to them. But some of them were not very good at waiting.

“Tell us,” someone cried out, “tell us how you walk on the wind.”

“Yes, yes, yes,” someone else spoke up, “and tell us how to find the way to the Holy and Ancient One.”

“I do not walk on the wind,” Wind Walker gently answered. “I walk with the wind.” Knowing the questions in their minds, Wind Walker went on to teach them many things. “I do not go to meet the Holy and Ancient One, because the Holy and Ancient One is already here for you and for me -- the Holy and Ancient One always comes to meet us and wait for us!”

“The wind waits for us to make ourselves ready to walk with it. It’s not a matter of putting on -- putting on wings or putting on flowing robes. It’s a matter of taking off. Leave behind your blanket and your cooking pot. Leave behind your wife, your husband, your children, your mother, your father, your best friends.”

“Go alone out into a quiet place where the wind can touch you. There search for the stillness in your heart where the Holy and Ancient One is waiting for you. Say to the Holy and Ancient One, ‘Here I am. I am here for You.’”

Then Wind Walker paused and looked around at all the people sitting quietly in the circle. They seemed like eager children, hungry to hear and thirsty to feel everything Wind Walker could teach them. With great compassion for them, Wind Walker continued throughout the day.

To this day, no one knows how it happened. As they listened to Wind Walker speak to them, everyone gathered there felt a heavy load lift from them. Then Wind Walker stood up and breathed over them. Inside of everyone, a gentle and quiet wind began to stir.

So it was they passed the whole day with Wind Walker teaching them about walking with the wind, and being with the Holy and Ancient One. Night did not come until Wind Walker heaved a deep sigh, and the sun rolled out of the sky like a giant bird flying to its nest to tuck its head under its wings and to sleep.

Savor the Experience

Now discover and apply this wisdom in your own life experience.

“To these people, the wind was the breath of the Holy and Ancient One, who made all things and now sustained all things by breathing over them.”

- » Notice how the people in the story “honored” what they believed in: They slept under the trees at night, they fanned the wind into their cooking fires to carry the fragrance back to the Holy and Ancient One, their teaching and singing and dancing were out in the wind, and so forth.
 - ♦ What images or beliefs do you have about who or what the Divine, Divine Source, Higher Power, God, Eternal Love, or other such spirit is for you?
 - ♦ How do you “honor” what you believe in?
- » What images or beliefs about the Divine do your family and friends have? Can you respect their diversity and personal spirituality without challenging them, confronting them, or putting them down?

“As the story went, many of the people were sure this was the only person who walked on the wind and went to see the Holy and Ancient One.”

- » Have you heard about people credited with special powers or associated with miraculous events?
- » Do you listen to both their supporters and their challengers, or do you find yourself choosing to hear and believe only what supports your position?
- » What stories, legends, traditions, rituals, and devotions do your family and friends have about the Divine as part of their personal spirituality? Can you respect their diversity and personal spirituality?

Look at the bigger picture and what it might mean to you.

Choose one or more of the following statements. Allow yourself time to quietly sit with one statement at a time. Several times, repeat to yourself the whole statement or parts of it, and visualize it with all your senses: See it, hear it, touch it, feel it, let it speak to you, let it touch you, let yourself respond to it.

- » “The Holy and Ancient One is already here for you and for me – the Holy and Ancient One has always come to meet us and wait for us!”
- » “The wind waits for us to make ourselves ready to walk with it.”
- » “Go alone out into a quiet place where the wind can touch you.”
- » “Say to the Holy and Ancient One, ‘Here I am. I am here for You.’”

Go deeper into the stillness and quiet. Allow yourself into this experience without trying to control what is happening, without analyzing it, without making any effort to remember it.

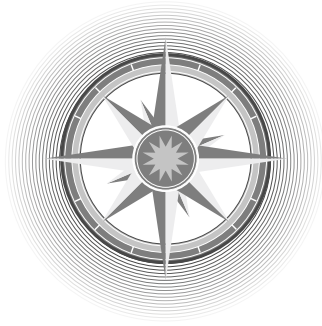
When the experience seems to be finished, to no longer hold your attention and your feelings, then consider journaling. Give yourself time to reflect and to write down what you learned about yourself, or what new awareness you gained in this experience.

Send Your Comments to the Author

Whether you only read the story or also work with any of the questions and exercises, feel free to send your comments about this story and your experience to the author at: Janice@OurSpiralJourney.com or Janice M. Puta, 114 S. Main St. #122, Fond du Lac, WI 54935.

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The Journey Goes On

*Though I cannot see the end for me,
I cannot turn away.*

*We have set our hearts for the way;
this journey is our destiny.*

Let no one walk alone.

The journey makes us one.

Text: Rory Cooney's hymn, "Jerusalem, My Destiny"
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The Journey Goes On

Every story in this book is like a fond memory, inviting you to come back and visit it again. Every time you read or listen to these tales, their layers of symbolism take you down roads with new vistas to explore. The journey is not difficult; simply take it one step at a time.

Discover the subtle shifts in how you feel, savor the different scenes appearing in your imagination, nurture the deeper stillness in your meditations, and enjoy the richer moments of reflection and journaling.

Spend some time learning about your spiritual hunger and finding what it takes to satisfy your inner emptiness. Become aware of how everyone in these stories may be showing up in your own family, your neighborhood, at work, among your friends. Who are your teachers and healers? What is their message and meaning?

Now take a bigger and broader leap forward than you may have ever experienced in your life. Gently read the story about the young AIDS orphans in Tanzania at the back of this book. There are many worthwhile causes to support throughout the world; this is one that touches my soul.

When I first saw the beautiful shirts and dresses that these young women made, I didn't know who these women were, where they lived, how they struggled to stay alive, and what dim prospects they had for a future. As I learned more about them, I resolved to help educate and involve others in this humanitarian need, and to raise awareness about shopping with conscience.

As you read their story, allow yourself to become aware of these young women as part of the family of humanity where

we all are one in Spirit. Consider how supporting their skill training through the sewing project is one way many of us can enliven “the light within” for them and for ourselves.

That is why I’m sharing their story with you. Life gives us all so many more chapters to read than we’ll ever find in a book. But sometimes it takes something we hear or something we read to point us in the direction of our next path to giving, sharing, and growing.

May your heart be open to hear where Spirit is leading you. May your soul leap for joy to walk down the pathways opening up within you.

Blessings on your journey,

Janice M. Puta

Empowering Women

Welcome a Guest

In 1990, the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters in Madison, Wisconsin, welcomed Sr. Hellen Bandiho from Bukoba, Tanzania, in East Africa. Sister Hellen was coming to the U.S. to earn her MBA at Edgewood College. As the sisters exchanged information about their cultures and countries, Sister Stella Storch determined that some day she would like to visit Tanzania. Being a firm believer in “dream it, believe it, achieve it,” when Sister Stella had a six month sabbatical in 2000, she knew exactly where she was going to go.

When she made this first visit to Bukoba, Tanzania, Sister Stella visited the convent for the Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Not knowing that these were



Photo: Sister Stella

AIDS orphans, Sister Stella saw many girls being taught basic hygiene and things a mother would teach her daughter. She observed the abject poverty in Bukoba and came back to Wisconsin appreciating every convenience and the availability of food that many of us take for granted.

Think and Act Globally

In 2001, Sr. Stella became the Coordinator of Justice, Peace, and Ecology for the Sisters of St. Agnes at their motherhouse in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. In that role, she worked with other

Agnesian Sisters in founding Unanima International (UI), a non-governmental organization at the United Nations. (“Un” represents the United Nations, “anima” is the feminine spirit.) The members of UI focus on human trafficking, and, as she began to work in this context, Sister Stella made the connection to the girls in Bukoba, Tanzania.

She realized that without family, money, and skills, these girls were the perfect prey for those who would exploit them. Without outside intervention, these girls were prime targets for human traffickers.

Sister Stella searched for ways these girls could be taught a skill to support themselves. She came across a placemat she thought these girls could learn to make. She asked the Sisters in Tanzania to organize classes for the girls and teach them basic sewing skills. Sister Stella went on a personal campaign, knitting scarves to sell and asking for donations until there was enough money to send to Tanzania to buy the first treadle sewing machines for this project.

Empower Women’s Future

What began as a suggestion for a sewing cooperative evolved into a three-year school called “Empowering Women’s Future: The AIDS Orphan Sewing Project.” The Sewing Project is part of a much larger ministry to AIDS orphans called St. Maria Goretti Organization, which is recognized as a Tanzanian not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization. It provides assistance to AIDS orphans by paying school fees, giving money for food, buying school uniforms, and other services.

Many of the girls who come to the Sewing Project walk one to two hours each way — and one girl walks three hours. The sisters are looking to place her with a family closer and then

give money to the family for her upkeep. The girls, most of whom are 15 to 20 years old, are willing to do this for three years in order to learn the basics of sewing, and, ultimately, to become tailors.

During this training program, students are encouraged to bring to class orders from their village customers and to work on the clothing under the supervision of the instructor.



Photo: Sister Stella

Upon graduation, they are given a sewing machine so they are fully independent. The first three graduates staff a store in town that sells their dresses and nightgowns. Occasionally, they receive a contract from the government to sew uniforms for children going to school.

Through the Sewing Project, more than thirty girls in their teens or early 20s now have a chance for a modest existence.

Organize a Business Venture

Some of the African dresses and shirts made by these girls are shipped to Sister Stella in Wisconsin. She sells them locally and sends the money back to Bukoba, where it covers the cost of the training program and one hot meal a day for these girls.

You'll find Sister Stella at area festivals, fairs, and art shows. She also approaches retailers to sell these authentic garments. Her fondest dream is seeing these beautiful clothes sold in specialty stores and available online.

Thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the Sophia Foundation and money raised from selling more than 100 scarves she knitted herself, Sister Stella made another trip back to Bukoba in May of 2006. This was an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and to address fundamentals like sizing and labeling for a retail clothing business.

Add the Human Element

In order to better represent these beautiful girls, Sister Stella is composing biographies and photos of each seamstress. She hopes to be able to share this information with customers so they can have a more personal connection with these girls in Bokuba. One of the major motivations for these girls to diligently study in the Sewing Project and to graduate is the prospect of creating an income to buy food for their family and to help educate their siblings.

How You Can Help

To learn more, to send donations, or to purchase or sell these garments, contact Sister Stella Storch by E-mail at: [sstorch@csasisters.org](mailto:ssstorch@csasisters.org).

For more information on human trafficking:

Unanima International

www.unanima-international.org

Coalition Against Trafficking Women

www.catwinternational.org

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

www.ecpat.net and www.redlightchildren.org

Appendix

Recommended Resources

Books

Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina (With 500 Scripture Texts for Prayer) by Thelma Hall, r.c., published by Paulist Press.

Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue Book 1 by Neale Donald Walsch, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Heal Your Body: The Mental Causes For Physical Illness And The Metaphysical Way To Overcome Them by Louise L. Hay, published by Hay House, Inc.

Chakra Clearing: Awakening Your Spiritual Power To Know And Heal (Includes a Chakra Clearing CD) by Doreen Virtue, Ph.D., published by Hay House, Inc.

The Healing Earth: Nature's Medicine For The Troubled Soul by Philip Sutton Chard, published by NorthWord Press, Inc.

Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life by Byron Katie written with Stephen Mitchell, published by Harmony Books.

Ask And It Is Given: Learning To Manifest Your Desires by Esther and Jerry Hicks (The Teachings of Abraham), published by Hay House, Inc.

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Release those self-limiting beliefs and programming that are not working for you any more. Create all you desire in your life with these effective and easy meridian exercises.

OUR SPIRAL JOURNEY



Acknowledgements

My journey from stories to book follows the trail of wonderful teachers and guides who showed up in my life to help me walk my spiritual pathways and to honor my passion for teaching and writing.

Spiritual Directors, Retreat Directors, retreat house administrators and staff at the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, St. Joseph's Retreat Center in Baileys Harbor, and the Norbertine Center for Spirituality in De Pere shared their journeys and insights, their wisdom and experiences in such a way as to encourage and inspire me to walk into the Light and keep on going. I'm especially grateful to my instructors, supervisors, and classmates in the first certification program for spiritual directors at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality for challenging me to reach deeper into my soul and to own more of who I am.

Elyse Hope Killoren introduced me to the secrets of the Law of Attraction and living a whole and beautiful life in her Prosperity Partnership Program (PPP). Max Wellspring led me through the certification program to become a Guide in the PPP and to use those powerful tools and life-changing concepts for myself and for others. My instructor in Emotional Freedom and Healing, Richard Ross, introduced me to his gentle and effective energy work as a process for making a difference in my life and the lives of others.

The terrific practitioners, volunteers, and staff at the Fond du Lac Center for Spirituality and Healing and the Fox Valley Wellness Center offered me a place to teach, to meet with clients, and to join in team efforts of healing and wholeness for ourselves and others. Special thanks to Michael A. Ketterhagen, spiritual director of the Fond du Lac Center

for Spirituality and Healing, for writing the Foreword to my book.

My many friends and fellow poets in the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets taught me high standards and zest for great writing. Our own closely knit group of poets — Judith Barisonzi, Cele Bona, Karen Schuppe, and Mary Wehner — contributed much to my confidence and growth as a writer.

I'm forever grateful to my mentor and best friend, Leni Onkka, whose clearing sessions helped me choose to be fully alive and focused on my greater good, who taught me Spiritual Response Therapy, encouraged me to put my book together, and recommended Lynne Klippel's Book School as a great tool for doing that.

My classmates in Book School offered helpful feedback during the class and on the forum discussions. Their creative genius and supportive energy were a great inspiration and motivation in getting my book together and off to a publisher.

Many friends and clients stepped up to choose and read their favorite chapters and to graciously give me their feedback. Thanks to all of you for being there for me when I needed your help.

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I offer thanks, also, to my mentoring clients, whose trust and support fanned the flames of my fire. You have no idea how precious you are to me.

My most gracious thanks to my family: my Mom and Dad in their celestial home, keeping the apiary buzzing and the garden growing until we join them there; my sisters and brothers Ruth Nielsen, Diane Beaudry, Cathie Mocarski, and Edward and Joseph Puta for helping me out when the going was rough and celebrating with me my journey forward; my aunt and uncle Hazel and Frederick Eisenmann, whose faith in God is an inspiration to me.

Finally, I thank all of you who read this book and share it with those you love and care about. May you be open to seeing the Light within you shine on your path and the Divine One walking beside you on your spiritual journey.

From beginning to end, I acknowledge and honor the presence and guidance of Divine Love and Light from whom I receive my life and my vision, my gifts and resources. I am blessed and I am grateful.

About the Author

Janice Puta, the owner of Our Spiral Journey, LLC, is on her own journey through life, learning from both teachers and students. Her goal is to make a difference in the life of others with her particular gifts and abilities as teacher, dream interpreter, spiritual director, and energy practitioner.



Photo: Erik Nielsen

Since graduating cum laude from Silver Lake College in Wisconsin, Janice completed certifications in Spiritual Direction, Emotional Freedom & Healing, the Prosperity Partnership Program for Guides, and Teacher in Spiritual Response Therapy.

This focus on healing and wholeness is basic to Jan's passionate service and mentoring career. She helps clients reconnect to their Divine Source, revive their courage and gusto to live a passionate life, embrace their inner wisdom, and choose ways to bless others.

To work with Janice in dream interpretation, to experience a session in Emotional Freedom & Healing or Spiritual Response Therapy, to invite Janice to lead a retreat day or workshop based on this book, contact her at Janice@OurSpiralJourney.com. Or write to Janice M. Puta, 114 S. Main St. #122, Fond du Lac, WI 54935.

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PATHWAYS

TALES FOR THE SPIRITUAL SEEKER

A spiritual companion, easy to take with you, comfortable to work with.

In this refreshing collection of original tales, Jan Puta helps you choose wisely what will fit your needs, spiritual hunger, and quest for wholeness.

- » From along her own journey through directed retreats, Christian mysticism, and energy consciousness, Jan selects for you clear, concise, effective, and transforming wisdom.
- » Each of these inspiring tales offers easy-to-use reflections, inviting you through symbolism to explore the wisdom and practices of your spiritual journey.

Let Jan be your spiritual companion as she introduces you to 13 pathways for spiritual seekers.

“Puta is Wayne Dyer without the egomania, Marianne Williamson without the mush, and Mother Teresa without the guilt complex. ‘Pathways: Tales for the Spiritual Seeker’ really is a companion - a beloved friend who holds your hand and helps you be your best version of yourself.”

-- Lee Reinsch, former Metro reporter GreenBay Press-Gazette; Wisconsin

“The stories captivated me. The questions and reflections took me in, inviting me to go deep. Perfect for anyone, any place along this spiritual journey we call life.”

*-- Susan L. Reid, M.S., D.M.A., small business start-up consultant, Alkamae.com;
Penn Laird, Virginia*

Janice M. Puta, B.S., is an experienced teacher, author, naturalist, and practitioner in several healing practices. Janice is a certified spiritual director, certified facilitator of Emotional Freedom & Healing, a certified guide in the Prosperity Partnership Program, and a certified practitioner and teacher in Spiritual Response Therapy. She works internationally with clients over the phone and lives in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Her website is www.OurSpiralJourney.com.