

MERGING WITH NATURE

by Hugh Perry

Does Spiritual innocence exist with certain children and not with others? If so, what do we remember of such events as adults? Surprisingly, some people recall having invisible friends, magic carpets rides with angels, unusual connections with animals and even sameness to their surroundings. In each case the experience makes a positive contribution to the adult life.

When Chris O'Brien returned home to the First Nation Reserve in Northern Ontario, Grandfather asked him about his childhood dreams. Chris's story is an excerpt from the fictional novel entitled, *Silent Partners*. Perhaps his story will bring back memories of your own childhood experiences.

A: Do you think about those dreams you had as a child, My Son?@Grandfather asked Chris.

A: If you mean the ones when I merged with Nature, then yes.@

A: I'm glad. Your father did not understand your experiences. He had no one to discuss these things with, so he brought you to me, his old friend. I want you to tell me the story of your dreams,@ and he sat back in his chair, making himself more comfortable.

I knew that my story would please him, so I settled myself on the bed, and let my mind backtrack to those days.

A: Dad had brought home a rabbit and then built a pen for it. The pen had wire mesh on all four sides, and on top were large boards. This kept the rabbit in and protected it from the rain. Dad put me in charge of the rabbit's survival, and it made me proud. Every morning I cared for it by lowering food and water into the cage with a string. Then I would climb over the top, and fall into the pen.

A: The rabbit became my daily entertainment, and now Dad could then get his chores done without me tagging along. I can still remember the background sounds of him splitting the winter firewood. He had only one rule: the rabbit wasn't allowed inside the house.

A: Back in my bedroom at night, I crawled into bed, closed my eyes and pictured my rabbit outside. Once asleep, I would see myself inside the pen. I wasn't just looking at my rabbit, I was my rabbit. I would look through its eyes, and watch the backyard through the wire mesh. My surroundings were slowly swallowed by darkness as evening turned into night. I could feel the rabbit's fine hairs softly move with the rustle of the wind across my body, and the hollow dry texture of the straw beneath me. It was perfectly natural at the time.

A: Each morning when I awoke back in my bedroom, I would open my eyes, gaze at the walls and the ceiling, smell the air, feel the roughness and the warmth of the sheets, all in the same way, as I had done in the pen when I went to sleep.

A: I was confused. Who was I? Was I me, the rabbit? Or me, Chris?

A: By the time I dressed myself I knew that when I was sleeping I had definitely been the rabbit, and while awake, I was Chris. Until one chilly morning.

A: I was back being a rabbit. My surroundings were becoming visible as the sun started rising. Through my rabbit's eyes, I watched a ten inch round rock at the base of our rock garden fifteen feet in front of the cage. I stared and stared at that rock and eventually I was no longer the rabbit. I became that rock. Its body became my body! I could not hear but I was aware! I couldn't move, but I could feel other rocks around me. I was more than a solid mass! I was alive! I just was.

A: When I awoke back in my bed, I really didn't know who I was anymore. So I headed straight for Dad and sat on his lap. I hugged him for comfort while he tried to eat his breakfast. I wasn't scared; I simply needed reassurance that I was indeed Chris. That's when I started asking Dad questions like: >Are rocks alive? Can I be friends with a rock? Do you think that I could talk to a rock? Do they know what we are thinking?=<

After a few more nights of this, I decided it was too cold outside. I no longer wanted to be a rabbit or a rock. I wanted only to be Chris. It was a conscious decision. I knew that I had a clear-cut choice. That morning while sitting on Dad's lap, I told him that I didn't want to be a rabbit anymore. That must have freaked him out. I don't remember what happened after that, except that the experiences stopped. And telling you the story brings it all back. It's like reliving it again.

That is a sign that your experience is real, Grandfather remarks.

Just as remarkable as this experience, is how people can recall having a clear choice to either continue the exploration or move on with their physical life. It would appear that as a child we instinctively know what our agenda is. We also consciously choose to either say good bye to this innocence in order to fully explore the unknown physical reality or remain partially connected. Our choice alters all that we do for the balance of our lives, and yet I believe that each child makes the correct decision for themselves.

As an adult, the vague memory resurfaces to become a longing for a return to what we once knew. This is evident in seniors and in all ages. The desire to reconnect or rediscover, draws us back to out innocence where truths lay waiting. Reestablishing the link becomes another aspect of our journey and our lives are enriched as are all aspects of the world around us.

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