

A Fairy Tale

Once upon a time we were tribal. Like trees, we did not need to define ourselves. A tree does not have to ask: what do I have to be like to be a tree.

They came with the armies, religion, power structures of all kinds to dominate us and change us into their image of what they imagined themselves to be and forced our parents and grandparents to abandon their pagan tribal ways. Many of us know those stories but many still don't. Many of us did not want to follow what we were told we must believe for many reasons and searched for something more satisfying. Some were still able to grow up in better ways, even tribal ways. There are many different stories that could be told. We rejected the confusion of the world around us and searched for alternatives and found there are many. Some of us are still searching. Either way, it has its own confusion.

The search for what it means to be tribal is important but confusing at times but also exciting and challenging and will include conflict and threaten survival, as in many parts of the world today where it is dangerous when people choose to be different, a deadly hope. But it is preferable to live with this confusion and conflict rather than subscribe to the confusing world of domination all around us, everywhere, where 'nobody cares if the people live or die', as Leonard Cohen sings in "In My Secret Life."

The confusion and conflict are not bad as long as we strive for harmony and better ways, not just for ourselves but also for our children's children and future generations. What do we hope the world will be. An Australian Elder told me when we were talking about colonization that it took them 40,000 years to get to where they now are, and they are willing to allow the same time to the newcomers. He and others who said the same thing meant it.

We can support each other. We can listen to our stories and tell them. We can act. Too many are not that fortunate. We can be thankful.

Once upon a time we were people of the Earth. Many survived the holocausts. Many didn't. She has many tribes to take care of like the tree tribe, the animal tribes. We can choose to help her. She is doing her best.

We can become People of the Earth, too. They will survive. The tribal people will survive.

Bernie Harder