

The Record Keepers
By Teri Wilder

When I was a child, I had a recurring dream of a whale trapped in a built-in swimming pool, unable to move, much less escape. My view was always from high above and therefore somewhat removed. I felt like I wanted to free it, but had no idea how I'd make that happen. It was confusing, frustrating, and powerful. The dream eventually stopped, and it took decades for me to put meaning to it. Then about 15 years ago, I came across a deck of Native American Animal Medicine cards, and learned that the whale is our planet's record keeper. The poem that accompanied the card read:

Whale...

Of mighty oceans,
You have seen it all.
Secrets of the ages are
Heard within your call.

Teach me how to hear your words,
And how to understand
The very roots of history,
Of when our world began.

The poem alone is rich in a vibration of familiarity that I could feel deep in my gut, and that would become even more clear when I moved to San Diego in 2011 and saw my first live whale on a whale watching excursion. It was a humpback whale, and I wept. Tears of joy.

This experience led me to further research this remarkable creature, wondering what this magic hold on me was about. Who are they, where do they come from, where do they go, and why do I feel so connected to them? For me, I discovered the whole story is in the humpback and their song. It's a symphony of moans, shrieks, snorts, whines, clicks, and extended grunts, ranging from guttural-deep to soaring high, primal and universal, earthy and divine. It's all in there. I become the song and the song becomes – or rather, *is* - me.

Two and a half years ago, another extraordinary connection with the whale showed up in a completely unexpected form – the gong. I was

doing a concert with a friend who was also teaching EFT (tapping). He was showing people how to tap on acupuncture points on their body while my “positive-message songs” accompanied them, releasing stuck qi and clearing the way for peace & joy. A woman showed up with 2 gongs, and I wasn’t quite sure how that was going to assist in a peaceful experience (think “The Gong Show”). The first strike of the gong blew my heart wide open like no instrument had done before or has done since. I was mesmerized, taken almost into a trancelike state, and found myself toning along, even laughing. Then she made a new sound with a mallet known as a “flumie” (German for “rubber ball”). She dragged it across the gongs, producing a whale-like sound. My head jerked around to see what was happening. A new whale experience! And again, I wept. Tears of joy. This was the point at which I knew I had to learn to play them, and it changed my life. After 2 years now of giving gong meditations, I’ve witnessed in intimate situations the power of these sound healing vibrations, and the whale sounds usually stand out for people. It would seem I’m not the only one. Universal, indeed.

Humpback whales’ songs have been recorded since the 1950’s, and the quest to understand their meaning and purpose is still not quite fulfilled. Theories and analyses continue to propel the search. Only the males sing, and the initial thought was that they are mating calls, but that’s been dismissed as not *completely* correct, since the songs don’t only occur during mating seasons. What *is* known is that humans are disrupting this song with what’s called “acoustic pollution” – our technology out on and in the ocean, in the form of boats, ships, oil rigs, military sonar systems, and more. With this interference, whales are actually having to shift their songs – up an entire octave over the last 50 years – to be heard. It may also be causing hearing damage and disrupting normal behavior of the humpback, such as feeding and mating. Why aren’t we listening?

So back to my childhood dream. What was the meaning of this trapped whale? I asked a channel recently (Theo, channeled by my friend Sheila Gillette). They said, “You are a communicator, are you not? And so is the whale. You may have felt trapped and unheard back then. It is your reminder to sing your song, to communicate, to share what you know deep inside. You are a record keeper of love, joy, and peace.” I heard, I understood, and I wept. Tears of joy.