

In the Heart of a Mountain

Written By: Carolyn R Dodge

When I was 9 years old, I looked at my Mom and told her that when I grow up, people are going to have to travel into the woods of a mountain to find me. That is where I am today, living in an off-grid home that I designed and my family built together.

This mountain in the woods here in Dixmont Maine is sacred to me. I bought 180 acres on both sides of a discontinued road on purpose in order to lock in a thriving eco-system so significant that my two children had the honor of passing a mountain lion and her three cubs. There are eagles, owls and all kinds of hawks that fly over my house all the time. I can sit out on my steps on a summer night and see absolutely everything in the sky and hear every heartbeat around me. I become overwhelmed by a deep sense of satisfaction that the earth immediately around me is in peace.

I have always known that I am simply a piece of this earth, yet have always sensed a pain among the human race and needed to find out why people don't understand that same concept and just feel as I do. My Dad tells me one day, "Carolyn, it is the native in you that thinks in a circular concept, leaves no heart out in your thinking process, everything is connected for us, we struggle to separate them."

There is a lot to know about the presence of a mountain. People don't understand why they are drawn to them, not really. They love to ski down them, hike up them, and hang off their cliffs with clips and ropes. The mountains challenge us to discover something deeper about ourselves that moves beyond the physical realm and reaches into our spirit and touches our hearts, it changes us if even for a little while. The trick is to reach deeper in your thinking to ask what that mountain just taught you with the only universal language it knows. I can't help but to think about the responsibility I have as a landowner to be vigilant and concerned about the wildlife and their habitat, they are completely at my mercy to just exist.

The presence of a mountain gives us that untouched place where only trees grow and channels of water flow from the top reminding us with no words that there in the presence of that mountain is something greater and more powerful and yet gentler than us. I learned eventually how to put words to what I was feeling and have written many things through the years, but the most profound words I have ever written down was, "Mother earth silent but strong seeping into my heart as I sit in her center, listening to her, as her tears flow down my face, she is the ultimate teacher through self infliction."

We will never be stronger than the presence of a mountain, more compassionate and nurturing than the silence of her woods, more challenging and encouraging than her steep climb to be able to see from her eye at the top and bathe in her peace. We are simply part of her and we will reap what we sow. We natives have been taught to think seven generations out in the moment of our decisions today. Do you?

Bio~

Carolyn R. Dodge lives in Dixmont with her family. She is a graduate student from the University of Maine in Orono and Augusta with an MPA in Public Administration and a BS in Behavioral Sciences. She is a lifetime member of the National Honor Society as well as a member of the Dixmont Conservation Commission as well as the Dixmont Economic Commission. She adheres to her native culture and tries to blend that with her formal education to advocate in the best interest and culture of the people of Maine.