

## Liz Mitten Ryan: One With The Herd by Awakin Call Editors

In 1999 Liz Mitten Ryan, award-winning artist, mother of six and founder of a successful fine art publishing company in Vancouver, traded in the secure terrain of her known life to move with her architect husband, and a herd of eleven horses, to Gateway 2 Ranch -- a 320-acre slice of paradise nestled in the grasslands of British Columbia. For several months their home was a simple tent in the midst of an enchanted landscape studded with lakes, wild flowers, emerald hills and whispering woods. In this vast solitude it became customary for Liz to spend her days following the herd. Communing with them she began to recognize their deep gift for connection to all of life, and how being in their presence awakened that sense of connection within her own heart. Thus began the path of her deepest calling -- to connect with animals and spirit and to share that understanding with the world as best she could.

Liz chronicled her experiences in a remarkable book "One With the Herd" a mesmerizing collage of journal entries, original art work and photographs of the horses from that early formative period. Several more books followed, and also nine book awards, including the prestigious Nautilus Award.

As an animal communicator, Liz considers all the creatures she lives with (now numbering fourteen horses, a pony, dogs, cats and a steer named Tesoro) as collaborators. She seeks to be a channel of their particular wisdom and messages, and many of her books are written in their voices. The animals often mix their insight with humor. From her cat Min Buddha Ben Puss Ha for instance, comes this cosmic catchphrase: "Isness Is My Business."

As Liz puts it, "Just experiencing downtime with each horse individually, and feeling their energy as a group, is a meditation. Horses are great spiritual beings; just being in their presence is almost like a tuning fork that changes the vibration of the instruments around it. I find insight in their presence; a thought simply pops into my mind and I recognize it as a truth that I know at another level."

Born into a loving environment, and free to roam the expanse of the property and return to the shelter of the barn at will, Liz's herd is offered a rare kind of freedom, and over time it became clear to Liz and other visitors to the ranch, that the horses had something truly unique to offer. For over a decade now, Liz has facilitated "Equinistry Retreats" on her magnificent ranch. Coined by her husband Kevin, the word "equinistry" means "the gift of finding the unexpected and truly meaningful perspective through the clear and almost 360 degree vision of the equine." People from all over the world come to these retreats, which run from April through November of each year. For a little over a week Gateway 2 Ranch becomes their home. During this time they are exposed to Liz's way of working with the horses, an approach that depends not

on pressure and punishment, but on the far more subtle, and stunningly effective powers of invitation, intention and focus. These unique healing retreats also offer opportunities for individuals and the horses and other animals to interact in unstructured, spontaneous ways, often times with extraordinary results.

Seventeen years of living on this pristine land in communion with the horses, the realization that underpins Liz's work and her efforts is this: "There is only one consciousness in ALL life.... all thoughts, emotions and inspiration flow from this higher consciousness and express through the diversity of all creation." It is the ineffable gift of this realization that she aspires to share with the world. She holds a strong conviction that when people are invited to connect with the sacred beauty of the land, the intuitive friendship of the horses and the wisdom of their own hearts, a profound shift can be catalyzed in health, well-being and consciousness. Many can hold up their own experiences as testament to her belief.

This year will see the release of "Herd", an award-winning film on Liz and the transformational work of the Equinistry retreats. Brilliantly shot, and documenting a group of retreat attendees from the time of their arrival to the end of their stay, "Herd" poignantly captures the light and shadows of individual journeys and the gentle miracles that unfold between the people, the land and the animals.

It has always been second nature to Liz to transform her love into art -- not just through words but also images. In addition to writing, producing the film, managing the retreats and caring for her animals, she has been a published artist for over 25 years, and her subjects include protected wildlife areas, endangered species, breathtaking landscapes and of course horses -- many, many horses. Her vibrant, soulful paintings have raised not just awareness but also millions of dollars in support for national and international environmental groups, and her prized artwork even includes the honor of a Canada Stamp.

"Beyond our mundane interaction there is a thread of something much more important, a higher message and meaning that is weaving a fabric of our higher purpose here as spiritual beings....We are all pieces of that puzzle, evolving in each others company. With that in mind let us recognize our animals for the amazing spiritual beings that they are and begin to resonate in that oneness." - Liz Mitten Ryan and the Herd

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This Saturday join an Awakin Call with Liz to learn more about her work and journey. RSVP details here.