

NATURE'S HERBAL HEALERS NEWSLETTER

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Spring is always such a glorious time of year. The earth rejuvenates and resounds with abundance as life begins to renew. So it is with our thoughts as this season spreads its flow throughout our being filling us with renewed purpose and creativity.

This is the time when winter reflections can, if we allow them, become a reality. There is purpose to our actions, a spring in our step, a knowing that with each action we take, there can be a reshaping of our lives and our thoughts.

Life is a fascinating journey, a journey we all take and make of it in how we shape our thoughts and deeds. Discovering our true selves is an exciting experience and with this in mind we have put together an end of year edition to celebrate and meditate on for the coming year.

Nature's Herbal Healers send to you all a healthy and enjoyable time of the coming months.

Enjoy the read.

EMBRACING THE SEASON with Gogo Nomvuka/Lynne van Zyl

Spring is in the air. What a joyous time as the seasons change, so too do the foods we must nourish our bodies with.

A natural buzz in the air and a rumbling beneath the soil. A sacredness waiting to burst from its cocoon, a promise made long ago. Nature naturally ushers in the spring and flourish in its green glory. The sweet smell of blossoming flowers with their beautiful colours start showing up in all their picturesque glory.

It's a ripe time of year to reshuffle the deck, shed our skins of the past and awaken yourself to a fresh start.

Embrace the season with a spring in your step and enjoy the new renewal of frequency. May you find yourself in strong connection within your core and the mysterious source of Be-ing that is you too.

As we walk together toward the warmer months. Invite these portals to awaken our ancestral past each holding their own innate healing wisdom, just waiting to be unlocked.

Sacred Practices

1) The Art Of Letting Go (unneeded stuff)

We're literally talking about physical stuff here. Observe what's taking up space, they take up more space in our psyche and energy field than we care to realise. I guarantee you will start to feel lighter as you begin to find a new home for these belongings. We're all being challenged to release what no longer aligns with who we are. Not only for our home, it's our thoughts, beliefs and behaviours too. Even how we lose our voice in the name of people-pleasing and the way society silences us.

Reflect on this, noticing the patterns of holding back, afraid of speaking your truth.

2) **Spiritual Scrub-a-dub.** We all know about the importance of spring cleaning, but how about doing it with full presence, as a meditative practice? In ancient Aztec culture, the act of sweeping held far more meaning than just cleaning your floor. It was considered a sacred art that could affect future outcomes in the household.

Cleaning out your refrigerator - Practice purifying and clearing the energy of your kitchen. Beautiful invocation of some fresh lemon verbena.

3) **Feng Shui your home** - A Fresh Perspective Invisible forces or Qi bind the universe and can be harnessed for our benefit through the conscious design of space, a powerful tool for your household. This can be as simple as realigning your couch and coffee table to create a flow between two doorways, or as involved as determining how your space orients toward the sun, moon, stars, nearby mountains or bodies of water.

4) **Planting New Seeds.** When was the last time you planted a seed and nurtured it to a fully realized adult plant? Gardening has been seen as a deep spiritual practice. The act of caring for and observing new life as it springs forth from a simple seed holds many untold teachings and inner awakening for us. Set aside that extra 10 minutes day to nurture our green friends & allies.

5) **Clearing The Air.** There is something primordial within us that connects deep meaning to the invisible elemental sea that surrounds us. Many native cultures consider the air itself to be full of life-force and laden with power. Purify, refresh, and activate the air in your home. Opening all the windows and doors for 20 – 30 minutes is a good start, but you can really spruce things up by burning certain herbs and resins, as well as diffusing the right essential oils in your space.

Some herbs/resins we burn in our home are – Palo Santo, white sage and copal. You can use a simple bowl, or purchase a more ceremonial vessel like an abalone shell. Guide the aromatic smoke into different areas of the room using a feather or other fanning device.

Diffusing essential oils. Simply fill the diffuser with purified water and squeeze a few drops of your favourite essential oil(s), (we use cedar, eucalyptus, and lavender). Note the meaning you attach to your motion dictates everything.

Nourishing our bodies

Morning Rituals: Start your day with a warm glass of water infused with turmeric and a teaspoon of ghee. This combination kick starts digestion and provides sustained energy throughout the day.

🕒 **Balanced Meals:** Prepare balanced meals that include a variety of seasonal vegetables, whole grains, and proteins. Use spices like cumin, coriander, and fennel to aid digestion and enhance flavour.

🕒 **Herbal Teas:** Sip on herbal teas made with ingredients like ginger, tulsi, and cinnamon. These teas support digestion, boost immunity, and keep you hydrated. Of course good, clean pure water.

🕒 **Mindful eating** by savouring each bite. This helps in tuning into your body's needs and promotes better digestion and satisfaction.

Organic Moringa Leaf Powder

Moringa leaf powder is a nutrient-dense super food rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. It supports energy levels, boosts immunity, and promotes overall wellness. Moringa also helps in detoxification, improves digestion, and balances all three doshas, especially Kapha.

Spirulina - Superfood

Spirulina is a type of blue-green algae that is rich in nutrients, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory compounds. It may help lower cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, and protect against various diseases, such as cancer and allergies. Add it to smoothies, breakfast cereals.



Medicinal Broth: Easy-to-make medicinal broth that's packed with healing ingredients. (The best part is that you can tweak it to fit your family's dietary needs and taste buds, which is always a plus). Drinking herbal broth on a regular basis is one of the simplest ways to get concentrated herbal healing into your diet every day. Whether you put some in a bottle and drink it at work or you use it as a base for your favourite dishes, you're benefiting from the medicinal qualities of up to 10 herbs and veggies that you may be missing from your regular old diet. Think of a broth as a really strong tea. You can boost digestion, overall feelings of balance, strengthen your immune system and calm your mind in just a few sips.

Ingredients:

- 🕒 8-12 Cups of Water
- 🕒 1 Large Onion, Chopped in half
- 🕒 2 Carrots, Chopped
- 🕒 1 Stalk of Celery Chopped
- 🕒 3 Large strips of any seaweed per 1 Cup (Kombu, Alaria, or Digitata Kelp Seaweed (optional))
- 🕒 1-2 Cups Mushrooms- dried or fresh is fine (Shiitake, Porcini, Reishi, Lions Mane ideal for starters)
- 🕒 1/4 Cup Calendula Flowers
- 🕒 1 Cup Loose Nettle Leaf
- 🕒 3 Tablespoons Fresh Ginger, chopped
- 🕒 4 Cloves Garlic, crushed
- 🕒 1-2 Tablespoons Fresh Turmeric Root or add 1 Tablespoon Powdered
- 🕒 Optional but recommended: 1 Tablespoon each Burdock Root, Dandelion Root, Astragalus
- 🕒 Meat-eater option: add bones to the broth with 1/8 cup of apple cider vinegar and let it cook in a slow cooker for at least 12 hours.

Preparation: This recipe can be made in a slow cooker or on your stovetop. If using a slow cooker, set it on low for 8 hours or overnight-this is usually how I make my broths!

1. Combine all ingredients in a large pot and simmer on very low heat/flame for 4-8 hours.
2. Strain and press as much goodness as possible through a mesh sieve.
3. Salt to taste
4. add a squeeze of lemon
5. Add a tablespoon of Miso if desired (don't simmer or boil miso as it is alive! Mix it into warm broth)

PRO-TIP: If using a combination of mushrooms, know that certain mushrooms have a more bitter flavour, like reishi, so add a smaller amount if you are sensitive to bitterness.

Where to find the herbs: Many of the dried herbs/flowers and mushrooms can be purchased online from well-respected suppliers. However as always, work with what you've got and what's in season in your area.

"SPICES" – A measuring guide for balancing body, mind & spirit. Observe your areas to reset yourself back into balance.

- 🕒 Spiritual
- 🕒 Physical
- 🕒 Intellectual
- 🕒 Creative
- 🕒 Emotional
- 🕒 Sensual/Self care

May this bring in a surge of new energy and motivation for this time of year. Taking good care of yourself. Everyone could use with an immense amount of TLC. It's vital for our well-being to take the necessary time for peace and reflection. Helping you find clarity strength and support. Remember self-care is a must that never goes out of style. It's our birthright to live a life of passion, good health, bliss and fulfilment.

Blessings, Gogo NomVuka



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CONTEMPLATION TREES With Michele Slabbert

Sand Olive - *Dodonaea species ysterhouttoppe* *Mutate-vhana - mutepipuma*

The green and pink hues of this tree make it an ideal place to contemplate, calm the mind and open the way to change. Named after the 15th century Flemish botanist Dodoens, this tree has meaning as the double giving tree, rendering service to all those who seek. When we are out of touch with our thoughts, surroundings and life in general, sitting beneath this tree assists with reconnection. It may not happen immediately, yet if you persevere, paths will open up in front of you that you never knew existed. In his book "The Cosmic Serpent" Jeremy Narby explains this interaction perfectly.



Medicinally a decoction of leaves and twigs are used for most bronchial ails, allergies and digestive issues. Take a small handful of the tips, place in 3 cups of cold water and bring to the boil. Keep the pot covered at all times. Turn down the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Allow to cool slightly before straining. A dessertspoon 3 times a day is useful. The roots are used for stubborn colds.

Schotia brachypetala/afra. – weeping boer boen Huilboerboon – ihluze – umutwa

The vibrant red is so grounding. Makes you stop in your tracks just to gaze upon the magnificence of this tree when in full flower. We have one growing that only after 20 years gave an array of red that was mesmerising. Thick fleshy branches give way to tiny branchlets of almost feather like leaves, which stay green all year round, but seem to disappear when the flowers make an appearance. When angry at either the world or yourself, meditating with this vibrancy brings immense relief to both body and soul.



Medicinally the powdered bark is used in a decoction for heartburn, to boost the immune system and treat diarrhoea. The powdered leaves can be applied to ulcerated skin. The mature pods can be roasted and the seeds then consumed

Rhus species - Karee / Taaibos / T'Kunie Bush / Rosyntjiebos / Jqarra / njarabessie

A valuable shade tree, resistant to both drought and frost, we planted the Rhus lancea, as with its willow like appearance this graceful tree stimulates our ability to follow our intuitions and assists us to move out of a negative state and make us aware of our place in the grand scheme of the universe.

The leaves bark and roots are used medicinally. Leaves can be chewed to relieve chest colds and the roots are used in decoctions in the treatment of disorders of the gastro-intestinal tract. Several of the Rhus species have edible, sour berries which are used traditionally to make honey beer or mead. In fact the common name is derived from the original Khoi word for honey beer. The berries are pounded (they are shiny brown when mature), mixed with water and then allowed to ferment. Either the Rhus undulate or Rhus lancea can be used.

The berries can be rubbed to remove the tough skins and either eaten fresh or soaked overnight in milk to form a curd. Bring 500 ml milk to the boil and remove from heat. Gradually add 750 ml fruit, stirring continuously until thickened. Remove pips by sieving. This can be eaten hot or cold.

The crushed leaves of these trees can be applied to stings to reduce pain and swelling.

These trees are held in high esteem in Namaqualand for their wood which imparts a sweet spicy scent. They are also a traditional source of tannin in the area. The straight stems of many of the Rhus species are ideal for arrow making.

GARDENING THE SOUL SEED by RIEDWAAN NORODIEN

'In the beginning was the word...' (Bible: John 1:1)

The universe is vast, and filled with amazing and spectacular wonders, but upon considering ourselves, we behold – the wonder of wonders! The human being is as a seed, planted here on planet Earth. This seed, in its present form, in no way resembles the final marvellous splendour into which it can blossom: here is a seed, indestructible, capable of either remaining dormant for a very long time, or of growing in diverse ways through diverse cultures. However, unless this seed is planted and nurtured in its appropriate culture it will not grow, it will not manifest its innate beauty and splendour, its creative potential will not fruit: we will not express what we are meant to be, our true innate form remains unrevealed: we cannot experience the meaning and fulfilment of our existence.

'When we return to the root we gain the meaning...' (Zen)

Culture is the nutriment and the nurture the seed of the soul needs to grow, to flower and fruit the creative functioning of its innate faculties or centres of power: Intellect, Emotion, Imagination and Will. To mature into a solid flourishing tree, redolent with blossoms of happiness, of beauty, the seed needs to

grow roots that penetrates deep into the culture of its native soil, to tap all the nurturing goodness it needs. But who is to be the gardener, who will sow the seed in its culture, who will ward off weeds, who will nurture and nourish the seed till it fruits and blossoms?

It is our own intrinsic Intelligence itself, that is the gardener: when the seed sprouts the desire to grow, the dormant intelligence becomes activated, and initiates and orchestrates the entire growth process: the cosmic marvel of evolving what is involved, unfurls.

As the gardener studies his soil, considers the climate of his region and plants the seed in exactly the right season, in just the right place, so too, the aspirant to growth in happiness and fulfilment learns to understand his own individual temperament and tendencies, and commits himself to that particular and unique culture that suits and satisfies his peculiar needs at his present phase of growth, thereby ensuring the harmonious development of all the consequent stages.

As the plant needs light and water, so the soul seed needs the light of understanding, and the water of the emotions of aspiration and faith.

“When the ten thousand things are viewed in their oneness, we return to the origin, and remain we always have been (Zen).

We grow in the direction of our vision (what we see through insight and understanding) and our faith (what we feel to be true). When we aspire earnestly to experience and manifest Truth, we are inspired and led to find that path of learning which will lead us to the vision of Beauty (the sense of our wholeness): the understanding of who we are in Truth (able to discern our ego from our unsullied identity)”

“There is a time for everything and a season for every purpose under heaven” (Bible: Ecclesiastes 3: 1)

As the gardener loves his garden, as it changes throughout the passing seasons, just so understanding the process of organic growth, he plants the seed in the right culture, and nurtures it – all the while waiting and resting, observing and enjoying all the changes of the seed at each stage of its growth.

Though it sometimes appears as if nothing is happening, he knows that the process of growth is continuous, uninterrupted and spontaneous, so he does whatever needs be done; then, he rests, waits and watches in appreciation and joy, Patience is the fundamental virtue that secures graceful, spontaneous and simple growth!

The patience of the gardener lies in his knowledge of the reciprocal partnership existing between his own creative initiatives (his dreams and visions, his talents, skills and resources, his energy and time) and Nature. He accepts that once he has played his part, plied his 50%, he must allow Nature the time to complete the process with her 50% contribution.

***‘Whoso performs- diligent, content-
The work allotted him, whatever it be,
Lays hold of perfectness!’ (Bhagavad Gita)***

Planted in soil of wholesome attitudes, the aspirant to Wisdom subjects himself to all that is necessary; he pursues and immerses himself in the culture for growing: he acquires knowledge; he learns; he thinks and reasons; he meditates on his understanding; he

contemplates his insights, and he prays; also, he exerts himself in the rigorous discipline of weeding his mind from distractions and unwholesome habits. Fulfilling his part, he can do no more but wait upon Grace to complete and fulfil his growth.

***“Lord, Grant us the courage to change the things we can, the serenity to accept the things we cannot change”
(St. Francis)***

It is this very understanding of the interplay and balance between our own willing, and the acceptance of those processes beyond our control - that is the secret of patience: a calm and confident acceptance of certain results or events being assured!

We can neither will nor command patience, even as the gardener cannot will the fragrance of the rose, but we can cultivate it through working on our attitude, and broadening our perspective. Patience is one of the flowers that blossoms forth from clear understanding. The gardener sows the seed in the soil, while clearly understanding the invisible organic and dynamic process of growth: patience lies in our right understanding and perspective of what needs be done, in our attitude of confidence that everything is growing as it ought to.

Any negative emotion or movement of anxiety about the rate of growth we see is a weed – an impediment to spontaneous and healthy growth: patience is our joyful anticipation of flowers and fruit in the right season! This perspective induces the appropriate attitude: earnestness, authentic aspiration and certainty that we are planted in the right culture. We are able to remain simple, enjoying ourselves at every stage of our growth and self-cultivation – rejoicing!

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (Bible: Luke 12:27)

The apple tree will blossom and give rise to fruit in its own season. Even now as we behold its bare branches, the laws are ceaselessly at work to produce the apple – everything is in order. It is the cultivating, the culture that is all-important – the care, the nurturing - sheltering the tree from excessive sun, or exposing it to enough light, that is what we can and have to do to produce the optimal conditions; but the law operates spontaneously without our concern or anxiety!

Similarly, with our own self-cultivation and growth: as we candidly review and assess ourselves in terms of our ideals and values, we may find that we are still far from actualizing them: the juicy, red, rosy and ripe apple may still not yet be visible. Our intelligent response now is to maintain our clear perspective, to remain objective - to stand outside ourselves, and to watch and wait patiently, even as the gardener, understanding Nature’s seasons and processes, waits patiently, with appreciation. Nurturing patience implies the subtle knowledge that enables us to discriminate between when we can make a difference to a particular situation, and when we have to accept that we cannot change the situation, for whatever reason; while we are acknowledging and acting on those factors necessary to effect and promote growth, such as knowing that there are still certain

conditions that we can secure and fulfil: a plant that is not as green as it could be might need more water, or moved to a spot with more light.

***'The Tao gives birth to all of creation.
The virtue of Tao in nature nurtures them,
No one tells them to honour the Tao and its virtue,
it happens all by itself. So the Tao gives them birth,
and its virtue cultivates them,
cares for them, nurtures them,
gives them a place of refuge and peace,
helps them to grow and shelters them'
(Tao Te Ching)***

In this attitude we blossom in joy throughout the various stages of our Self-Cultivation and growth. We understand the secret of patience rests in the humble and joyous acceptance of the certainty of inevitable manifestation - sure fulfilment. This confidence, this faith stands us in good stead when we are faced with situations, relationships or incidences that may appear as insurmountable obstacles, but which we turn into compost, using each to foster our growth. We rest assured that each stage of our growth is right and necessary.

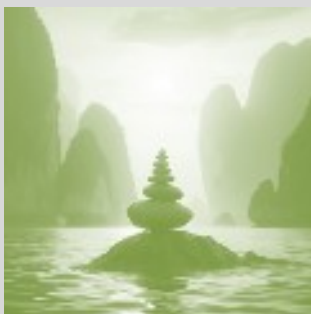
***'One world is aware and by far the largest to me,
And that is myself,
And whether I come to my own today
Or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now,
Or with equal cheerfulness, I can wait.'
(Walt Whitman: from "The Song of Myself)***

The soul's gardener works, and accepts with serenity, the "things that he cannot change" - knowing Grace to be the partner that complements the work he wills. Patience sprouts humility and humbleness: we work, we wait - and before we know it – our soul garden is complete: blossoming in creative expression of the harmony and beauty of its Being.

***'My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time'
(Walt Whitman: from "The Song of Myself)***

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POETS CORNER With Gerrard Chaiken

Comings and Goings"
(Sonnet from "Butterfly Dreaming")

**Tiger time would seize
Each molecular moment
Underlying the undulating
Fierce fiery fluctuations-
Freak frequencies
Of energy's continuations:**

**Here, in the rippling silence
Serene trees sing, ringing out
Rhythms of coming and going,
So breathing body must bide
Its time, until its time
To lightly let go, and let go:**

**And then to awaken once more,
And find oneSelf on another shore.**



SeedSun Sonnet

**Love's vigilant eye
Truth's tender but sometimes
Seeming severe touch
Has awoken the seed.**

**Flowing with the seasons
Evanescence, not enduring
In perennial purity,
Flowering at its destined time –**

**Blossom of Beauty upon
Truth's tree of Life –
I am wife, midwife
And husband of Self –**

**Seedsun planted in my Being
Freedom unfolding from the seeing.**

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FESTIVITY RECIPES With Michele Slabbert

ROSEMARY FLOWER PUNCH

2 15cm sprigs flowering tops of rosemary
150 ml water
pinch of salt
600 ml apricot juice, chilled
150 ml lime juice, chilled
1 litre ginger ale, chilled
2 lemons or limes, thinly sliced

Put the rosemary, water and salt into a pan and bring slowly to the boil. Simmer for 2 minutes. Leave to cool. Strain and chill. Pour this rosemary infusion into a bowl and stir in the apricot juice. Whisk well and then whisk in the lime or lemon juice. Chill. Add the ginger ale just before serving. Decorate with slices of lime or lemon and sprays of rosemary.

This recipe is ideal for children, who often feel left out as their elders partake of slightly more potent thirst quenching draughts.

HERB HONEY

6 small sprays of herbs e.g. rosemary or marjoram
4 tablespoons scented petals, try rose
1 long strip orange peel
15 ml orange juice
900g clear honey

Put all the ingredients in a heatproof jar, cover and stand in a pan of cold water almost to the top. Bring water to the boil, remove pan from heat and leave it to cool. Leave the honey to steep for 7 days, then gently reheat and strain.

Marjoram honey is good for small children (2 years and older) in helping to alleviate many chest problems. A little lemon and ginger can be added.

PANSY JELLY

2 packets of gelatine
45 ml water
thinly grated zest and juice of 2 lemons
100g sugar
1 cinnamon stick
whites and finely crushed shells of 2 eggs
150 ml sparkling white wine
4 pansy flowers, washed and patted dry

Dissolve gelatine in water. Put the lemon zest, lemon juice, sugar and cinnamon into a saucepan (use stainless steel or enamel) pour over 450 ml water and stir over a medium heat until the sugar dissolves. Remove the pan from heat and discard the cinnamon. Stir in the dissolved gelatine. Beat the egg whites and shells until frothy. Pour these into the pan, add the wine and bring to simmering point. Remove from heat and stand until the froth subsides. Reheat and set aside the mixture twice more, then leave to col. Line a sieve with muslin and strain the jelly to extract the eggshell. Divide into four glasses or little bowls, reserving a little jelly to pour over the pansies. When set place a pansy in each glass, melt the reserved jelly and pour over the pansies. Leave to set.

THE CAULDRON OF ALL NATIONS, OLIFANTSHOEK.

With Kgara Kevin Rack

Kgara Kevin Rack travels around Southern Africa meeting and befriending people from all walks of life. He shares his experiences in Olifantshoek.

I stood a gasp under the acacia tree, before me stood the cauldron of all nations, all faces of all the races represented. It is beyond race, colour or creeds, it is The Cauldron of all Nations.

As we roll into the small South African town of Olifantshoek, the summer heat wraps around us like a heavy blanket, dark, brooding rain clouds gather in the sky, hinting at the impending Kalahari summer storm. The air feels charged, crackling with a tangible energy that mirrors the tension of the recent events at the local school. The humidity clings to our skin and the distant rumble of thunder adds to the sense of anticipation.

Despite the unsettling mood, we meet with the community leaders who, with a quick decision, suggest moving the day's activities to the nearby park, away from the school that had to close due to a stabbing. We follow community leaders Piet Berendse (Bushman Piet) and Lena Gertse to Welgelee Park. Welgelee Park is a contrast to the very tidy town of Olifantshoek, with broken glass of all colours littering the park, however this did not deter us as we rolled out of the bus to entertain. We had arrived to offer more than entertainment, to host a Blank Canvas Express event, a cultural roadshow as vivid as the kaleidoscope beneath our feet.

Music, art, and storytelling were our instruments.

The wandering troubadour, Vuyo Qrasvu Mayesa (Mafafo), stood in the shade of the ancient acacia, his guitar cradled as if it were an extension of his soul. Each strum of his guitar resonated through the air, like a heartbeat echoing across the nations, his gravelly voice rich with the stories of countless journeys and forgotten roads. Drawn to his melodies, children poured from their homes like spirits summoned to a sacred gathering, their feet carrying them to this sacred assembly. They came, not merely to listen but to be part of something larger—an unspoken ritual that binds us all, storytelling. I watched in awe, surrounded by my companions and this incredible cauldron of humanity, a tapestry of genes and histories from every corner of the earth.



Here, in this small South African town, I stood face to face with the origins of mankind, seeing the entirety of human diversity reflected in the eyes and skin of these children, laughing and dancing beneath the sprawling acacia branches. Vuyo, the storyteller, the keeper of melodies, strummed his guitar with resonance as if he were singing to all the nations at once, his voice carrying the weight of ancient paths we have travelled to all corners of the planet and the wisdom of countless lives lived. And for a moment, under that tree, time stood still, and we were all connected by the song of life itself.

P.S. I have had the grace of travelling far, meeting many nations driven by my fascination for the origins of man, genesis. Before me, stood them all, the diversity of man reflected in the gene pool of the children laughing and dancing pulled together under the expansive branches of the acacia tree, their eyes filled with the same wonder I had in my eyes.



I have read how the garden of Eden maybe located in southern Africa and in front of my very eyes, genesis. Early man that left Africa and populated the whole planet now flowed from the houses, our collective ancient ancestors of Asians, Africans, Americans, and Europeans

all the hues, shapes and sizes spilled out and gathered in the shade of the acacia tree. I was unsure as to whom I looked upon or where I was. I was temporarily disorientated by the diversity of faces, however what synergistic was the smiles on all our faces. As I looked around, it felt as though I was seeing the genesis of something ancient and yet wholly new.

The myth of Eden resurfaced in my mind—the notion that the very cradle of humanity may have been here, in this land, in these people and in this moment, it felt plausible. Before my eyes stood the descendants of those who had left Africa long ago to populate the world. The faces of ancestors, ancient and modern, mingled together—Asians, Africans, Americans, Europeans—all present, all represented. I stood in awe, marvelling at how the world had shrunk in this moment, how all of humanity seemed to fit so easily under the shade of the acacia tree. Here I was again, blessed by the company of giants. Not just my Afrikaburn colleagues, but the giants of the human spirit—The Cauldron of All Nations—people whose genetic stories spanned the continents, but whose shared smiles bridged any divide.

I had travelled far and witnessed many wonders, but today I stood in awe before something ancient, something eternal. The Garden of Eden was in Southern Africa, and before my very eyes, a genesis of sorts unfolded. The descendants of humanity spilled forth from their homes, all hues, shapes, and sizes came to gather beneath the acacia. For a moment, I lost my sense of place. Who were these faces I beheld, and where was I? But then, it didn't matter, for what mattered was not the faces or origins, but the unspoken unity reflected in the light of our smiles.

On a side note, one person's epiphany is another's disappointment. My colleague noted the broken glass in Welgelee Park where the children gathered, the many colours of broken glass painted a picture for themselves to frame, a place of trauma and alcohol abuse. As a photographer I noted the children wore clean neat clothes that shone like their pearly white teeth and the high cheekbones and thinner eyes were characteristics of a root race and not of trauma. How quickly the Cauldron of Nations becomes the Cauldron of Trauma simply by our own traumas. One person's epiphany is another's disappointment.

Olifantshoek is a town in John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The village is 60 km northwest of Postmasburg and 80 km southwest of Kuruman. It developed from a police post and is administered by a village management board. Wikipedia



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