

Changing Core Beliefs: The Goose Who Believes

I am an Oḡwehó:weh (original being) of Six Nations of the Wolf Clan, Cayuga Nation. I am a mom, a grandmother, auntie, daughter and community helper. I have worked in the community for many years under the umbrella of Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services (GFASS), and have learned and passed on my knowledge of healthy lifestyle change. I have extensive personal and professional experience walking beside residential school and intergenerational survivors. Who like myself, became a victim of all the wrongs of life at a very young age. As an intergenerational survivor I was parentified when only five years old. At that time, my mother abandoned four young children and my father was hospitalized from a fall as an ironworker. We were orphans that burdened my maternal grandmother, who also experienced being an orphan since birth. My maternal great grandmother died giving birth, burdening her grandmother as an infant. The generational absent mothering impacted my life as well as many other family members. It happened in ways such as being unaware of how to express and model love; the loss of how to cherish our gifts from Shogwa'yadíh'sq̄h (Creator); how to nurture family units; honour our clans and yearn for our own true identity. These experiences can create negative self beliefs.

Changing Core Beliefs modality is an exploratory technique that uses all senses. With a good mind, we can anchor visualizations for changing negative beliefs to positive beliefs. A true connection between mind and body is encouraged. By anchoring with the body sensations and creating a memorable image it increases the emotional impact to acquire the wanted memory, thus, movement toward healing (Changing Core Beliefs, NLP Centre for Advanced Studies, 1983).

Story-telling has been passed down orally for generations amongst Oḡwehó:weh. Traditionally telling stories helps one to understand and learn. It is still practiced today. Many legends have many meanings for Oḡwehó:weh people. This was taught for understanding life changes as well as to teach others. Within this article I will use story-telling to share a birthing story about a vibrantly beautiful,

wonderful, wise woman that became so proud, extremely strong and resilient in her true identity through the use of changing core beliefs. She will be called Goose, who totally flipped learning new ways to fly through sharing her wisdom, using her voice and singing her songs as medicine for her own healing. Goose also came to rely upon her spiritual helpers.

Now she wasn't always this way! When I met Goose she was defeated and wounded, no spirit, no self-worth, low self-esteem and lived undeservingly. Goose believed her childhood teachers; she lived and felt trapped in a dome of abuse, with wounded wings and no motivation to fly, extremely emotionally deprived as a young goose, she learned false beliefs and ways of life. She was not living her truth as it was meant to be.

Throughout her childhood she was victimized by alcohol, multiple sexual abusers, abandonment, neglect and physical abuse that created a fear lining in her nest. Goose was not safe anywhere! Goose carried generational shame, fear and rage. Significant men were non-existent; her biological father denied her paternity; her maternal grandfather banished her mother and two gosling granddaughters from their nest when they were infants. She truly believed she was a mistake; a burden to her mother; placed in and out of foster homes; witnessed mom in multiple relationships; experienced the rage from her mother all before she was the age of nine years. It was not her fault for being born.

As she entered flying school, Goose was introduced to a new species of geese. She fell for the attention from a brown gander and thinking she was in love she left her nest and went to his pond. This pond environment was worse! It bubbled with alcohol, sex, violence, wild parties all the time and food was not a priority. This lifestyle was her introduction to what she believed was Native culture. She learned to squawk and defend herself with her beak to deal with the violence. Her mother didn't even bother to look for her when she was missing for those five months. Abandoned and rejected again.

One day, she was manipulated to fly to a different pond, a residential school that was run by nurses and priests. It was a totally different culture than she had ever known. She was placed here by

another step-father to teach her how to be a RESPECTABLE gosling. At this pond, Goose was fed, given attention, stroked and entered into a world of extreme physical work and being controlled. She lived in this pond for three years being seduced and groomed to enter a sexual relationship with a nurse. Goose thought she found love, again another wild goose chase.

Leaving the residential school, she immediately searched and found a swan who became interested in her. He had fine, sleek, shiny, white feathers and his own nest, in his family pond. Goose then married Swan and survived this abusive marriage for 15 years. Swan treated her less than, for being Native, even though she did not acknowledge her Native heritage. She was a bought sexual object, emotionally deprived, physically abused with power and control, financially dependent and verbally degraded by Swan who ultimately tried to transform Goose into something she was not. She even colored her feathers. Finally, Goose found love when she gave birth to a gosling.

Throughout his life the gosling was bullied, taken advantage of and was sexually abused at public school. It wasn't until her gosling disclosed sexual abuse that Goose found the courage to respond and protect him. Oh, the courage it took to stand up, knowing abuse was not acceptable! Goose made many changes in her life. She took a stand against her husband of 15 abusive years, left the matrimonial nest and all the comforts wealth provided. They went to live in a shelter for abused birds. Goose had no identity, no money, no direction and no support from anyone. She was totally alone, severely emotionally deprived and naïve, but determined to change her life.

Being unaware of a trusting relationship and having the belief of being a mistake stopped and blocked Gooses' growth and self actualization. Her feathers would crumble inside, her head hid under her wing. The first step for Goose was to have someone listen to her story of pain and suffering. Goose needed to trust to begin her healing journey and this helped in building a healthy relationship. As Goose presented for her healing journey with me, I recognized building an environment to create safety was primary. This was done through nurturing Goose's knowledge and encouraging her to use

her listening skills to be educated on emotions and emotional body storage as well as the impact of oppression and colonization. As trust began, Goose felt empowered by her rights and choices. Goose developed a future visualization of how she WANTS her life to be. (Montagnes, 1992)

Goose experienced various ways to release and express her suppressed emotions that contributed to freedom from her internalized oppression. By encouraging creativity throughout her therapy Goose learned to express herself in various ways. Art and play was utilized for Goose to express verbally what she could not. Kinesthetic cross crawls were used with Goose's wings and feet to reinforce her NEW BELIEF of being a vibrantly beautiful, wonderful wise Goose within her mind and body. Further visualization skills were encouraged for Goose to complete cathartic release work in her mind. This was beneficial as Goose feared loud noises, even her own. Many positive messages and affirmations were given for Goose to implement into her belief system. Therapeutic hypnosis offered forgiveness and spiritual safety for Goose to follow her heart as well as to learn and practice her spirituality. Goose honoured her helpers in ceremonial sweats, in song, in prayer, and in peace and love. She now believed she is no longer alone.

It took a few years but Goose was reborn, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically with kindness, self-confidence, a non-judgmental belief in self with her freedom to fly, while being fully aware she deserved to have unconditional love and to be loved in her life. Goose found this in relationships with two ganders, her son and new husband. She lives peacefully, extending her quality of life to family members. Goose believes she is worthy and deserving of self-actualization, being her True Self.

Goose was reassured she can return to Ganohkwasra for a balancing tune-up whenever the need arises. She is self-sufficient within her own nest and pond. Goose has forgiven her mother, grandfather, grandmother, and father for the generational traumas now healed. Peace and love have replaced Goose's false beliefs by opening and creating new ways to believe in self. Goose flies in

many directions with grace, ease and especially with the freedom to be proud of self.

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References

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