

Taking a look at spirituality from different perspectives

by Theresa Tiny Demientieff Devlin
for the Tundra Times

Lynn Andrews, the author of *Medicine Woman, Teaching of the Shields* and other books regarding Shamanism, held a seminar in New York City in November. I was given the opportunity to attend.

The seminar gave me the opportunity to look at different perspectives in order to appreciate concepts of spirituality from other points of view.

I have been on my own journey of growth, recording the changes and am always interested in how others are doing on this never-ending path. Lynn Andrews is non-Native and others are very critical and have great concern as to whether or not she is genuine.

I maintain the attitude that no one has the corner on spirituality. Anyone, regardless race, age or creed has a choice of their lifestyle. Those that seek change, improvement, peace and joy have only to work on themselves. It helps a great deal to share the experiences so others could learn from a different view.

For years, I have said that I am proud that I am Athabascan Indian, German and Russian. Little did I realize that those words carried no emotion or truth with them.

It seems that we as human beings always seem to see ourselves as less than what we really are. We never seem to be happy with our appearances or who we are.

I traveled to New York to learn about spirituality and came back really happy with who I am, proud to be who I am and enjoying life a great deal more. I appreciate the days as they come, the people that come into my life whether it is but a brief moment, a quick smile or even a moment of anger. I am alive.

This woman gave me what she has

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gathered from others and taught me I did indeed have a great deal of knowledge that I did not recognize or appreciate.

She showed me how to reflect upon and remember those things that my own mother and father taught me that I paid little attention to in my younger years. That makes me humble enough to admit that not all of my education accumulated would mean anything if I maintained even a flicker of arrogance towards my mother and father or other dignified Elders.

It seems that if this woman is green, white or yellow makes no difference to me. I came away with a whole different attitude of who I am.

I am now excited to share with others my growth. They see the change, and I enjoy hearing others who are truly living. There is always more to learn.

The most important thing that I learned is that Lynn Andrews built a bridge for me back to myself, my family and my heritage. Now the rest is up to me.

Theresa Tiny Demientieff Devlin was born in Nenana and raised by her parents, Nick and Nellie Demientieff, who traveled the Tanana, Yukon and Inako Rivers. She is a member of Doyon Ltd. and has worked as a nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital in Fairbanks. Devlin is currently working on publishing a journal.