

An Excerpt From

The Seven Paths
Changing One's Way of Walking in the World

by the Anasazi Foundation
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers

ANASAZI FOUNDATION

FOREWORD BY GOOD BUFFALO EAGLE



THE
SEVEN
PATHS

CHANGING
ONE'S WAY OF
WALKING IN
THE WORLD

More Praise for *The Seven Paths*

“There is much to learn from any person who has lived his life trying to heed the wisdom he has gathered from the lingering voices of his ancestors—especially in an age, like our own, when those voices have been spurned. Ezekiel Sanchez (Good Buffalo Eagle), cofounder of ANASAZI Foundation, is such a person. He has used the ancient, tested wisdom of his people to touch the souls of thousands of once-troubled young people and their families and show them the way to reunion and peace. Such a person also is his literary collaborator, Jim Ferrell. In *The Seven Paths*, they have distilled their unique and luminous insight. Reading this book receptively, you will likely catch yourself already forward walking in your heart and awakening to the light.”

—**C. Terry Warner, PhD, founder, The Arbing Institute**

“This book is profound! The principle of ‘We’ is the secret to every success on and off the field.”

—**Steve Young, NFL Hall of Fame quarterback and ESPN commentator**

“Through the story of the Seven Paths, my daughter realized how she, too, had walked backward, away from her family. This profound discovery saved my daughter’s life, which in turn saved our entire family. It gave her a solid foundation to navigate through her very difficult teenage years...it gave our lost child new feet to find her way—her path to becoming a loving, successful young adult with truly a heart at peace.”

—**Elaine Taylor, President, The Taylor Family Foundation**

“Speaking with the wisdom of ancient ones, this guide to life’s challenging journey is brilliantly accessible and spiritually transforming.”

—**Richard Ferre, MD, adolescent and adult psychiatrist**

“*The Seven Paths* lays the groundwork for personal growth, insights, and strength required in long-term recovery.”

—**Jon Memmott, retired judge**

“Every page is filled with insight and wisdom. You will want to read it, share it, and read it again.”

—**Dale Tingey, PhD, founder and Executive Director, American Indian Services**

“*The Seven Paths* epitomizes the strength of one of my favorite words: TEAM—Together Everyone Achieves More.”

—**Bart Starr, NFL Hall of Fame quarterback**

“In the universal moments of feeling stuck or lost, the Seven Paths are simple and profound truths that provide not only solace but genuine ways to change your heart.”

—**Courtney Merrill, LMFT, marriage and family therapist and educational consultant**

“ANASAZI Foundation’s *Seven Paths* illustrates an oft-forgotten truth that it is not our experiences that determine the quality of our lives but who we are morally when we pass through those experiences. To walk in the light instead of in darkness means we see our experiences truthfully and learn and grow. When we betray the light within us, we walk in darkness and we find our experiences burdensome. This book is an invitation to all to live truthfully and distinguish toxic from nourishing ways of being in the world.”

—**Terrance D. Olson, PhD, Ernest Osborne award winner in Family Life Education**

“*The Seven Paths* is truly a blessing. I recommend it to anyone in need of healing, wisdom, power, and goodness.”

—**Stan Block, MD, author and founder, Mind-Body Bridging**

“A little book with a *big* message! *The Seven Paths* reminds us of who we are, our relationship to our Creator, and how happiness with our families is within our grasp.”

—**Danny Ainge, former professional basketball and baseball player and President of Basketball Operations, Boston Celtics**

“It is a privilege to recommend *The Seven Paths*. ANASAZI is one of the best programs for helping young people and adults make major changes in their lives, and I am thrilled this book will make the philosophy and wisdom its program is based on accessible to a larger audience.”

—**Ralph H. Earle, MDiv, PhD, founder and President, Psychological Counseling Services, Ltd.**

The Seven Paths

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The Seven Paths

**Changing One's Way
of Walking in the World**



ANASAZI Foundation

Foreword by Good Buffalo Eagle



BK

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The Seven Paths

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Dedication

*Most sincerely, we thank the young people
and their families who have come
to walk the trail with us.*

*It is to you that we dedicate this book.
Your courage and love give this book
life and meaning. Your forward
walking has filled the world with beauty.*

*One of our TrailWalkers,
Lara Ackerman, summed it up
when she said,*

*"The most beautiful thing in the world
is a heart that is changing."*

Foreword

I am Good Buffalo Eagle. Hear my words.

The Creator gave all Two-Legged beings a sacred gift. We call this the Gift of Choice. Regardless of where we are born, all come to earth with this gift. Along with this Gift of Choice, all Two-Legged beings have a sense of knowing right from wrong from the One Who Stands Within. Therefore, the Gift of Choice allows us to choose knowingly.

My Pauline, the Woman of my Heart, states that in her Navajo language, life is a walking, a journey. So, if life upon Mother Earth is a journey, there are two ways to walk.

By applying the Gift of Choice, we can choose to walk forward or we can choose to walk backward. Because we choose knowingly, with every step we take forward or backward, we are accountable.

Because we are accountable, there are consequences. Consequences, however, are not chosen. They might be delayed, but by and by they will come.

Forward Walking choices are rewarded with consequences that light the way to peace, happiness, joy, comfort, knowledge, and wisdom. Backward Walking choices bring to the Two-Legged beings consequences of misery, despair, and darkness.

At the end of our lives, when our bodies are about to be laid in Mother Earth, we will know for ourselves whether we are a Two-Legged being full of light or a Two-Legged being full of darkness. At that time, we cannot turn around and point a finger accusingly in the air. WE will know because WE are the

ones who chose to walk forward toward the light or backward toward darkness.

Hear my words. Ponder the narrative of the Seven Paths. For you, like the young man in the story, can turn toward a New Beginning. Don't believe the dark whisperings that invite you to walk backward. At any time in your life, you have the power to turn forward. No matter how young or old you are, you have the power to turn and walk forward. That's the ANASAZI Way.

We extend an invitation to all to utilize the power of the Gift of Choice, which will teach us the Forward Walkings that will bring peace. Let's look at the present and with anticipation into the future at what we can become—a Two-Legged being full of light!

I am Good Buffalo Eagle. I have spoken.

Preface

There is much to be learned from the world around us—far more than we normally comprehend. The Ancient Ones knew this well—most particularly the wise teachers among them—those who, in the Navajo tongue, were called “Anasazi.”

These ancient teachers understood well that no man is as wise as Mother Earth. She has witnessed every human day, every human struggle, every human pain, and every human joy. For maladies of both body and spirit, the wise ones of old pointed man to the hills. For man too is of the dust and Mother Earth stands ready to nurture and heal her children.

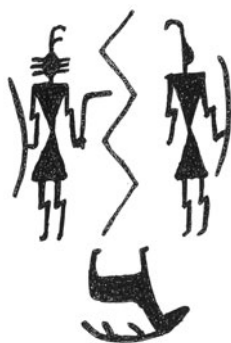
Unfortunately, modern man has moved far from Mother Earth. And as he has done so, his maladies have multiplied. Our work is with those who have been struck with the maladies of the modern age. We have found that no modern prescriptions heal the human heart so fully or so well as the prescription of the Ancient Ones. “To the hills,” they would say. To which we would add, “To the trees, the valleys, and the streams, as well.” For there is a power in nature that man has ignored. And the result has been heartache and pain.

This book, *The Seven Paths*, presents what might be described as a way to healing—seven elements among nature that combine to heal human hearts. It is a way designed by the Creator and presented by Mother Earth to all who have the wisdom to seek her. We have learned to seek her often over these many years, and like the Anasazi of old, we have the sacred trust of inviting others to do the same.

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Beginnings

The Making of a Walking



The Age of “I”

I am a lone voice, a lone man,
the last of a people.

In my walking, I have seen many days of the earth—
from the days of dust and simple villages to the
days of concrete and gleaming cities.

I have observed revolutions
in science, medicine, and technology.

I have watched as man, once bound to the earth,
has launched himself toward the stars.

I have seen what I never could have imagined and
what my people never could have dreamed of.

Man has become impressive indeed.



But, young friend (and no matter your age, to me you
are young), of all the days I have witnessed, today—
your day—is the most unhappy.

I see it in the faces I meet on sidewalks and in the voices
I hear in your cities.

Mother Earth has never been more crowded,
yet her inhabitants have never been more lonely.



You live in the age of “I.” Man looks out for himself, and only secondarily for others. In the philosophy of your day, happiness is a product of the fulfillment of personal wants.



Would it surprise you to hear that man’s unhappiness is due in large measure to the way he is seeking after happiness?

You know this already from your own life.

For when you have been unhappy, you have been unhappy *with others*—with your father or mother, your sister or brother, your spouse, your son, your daughter.

If unhappiness is *with others*, wouldn’t it stand to reason that happiness must be *with others* as well?



Man’s obsession with his *own* wants is taking him further from those without whom happiness cannot be found.

It is taking him from his people.

In truth, it is taking him from his true self.

Away from My People

I was once known among my people as
"The WE walking lost."

A strange way of speaking, to your ear, no doubt.

And a way I once thought strange as well.

For the speaking of my people had not yet become mine.



You see, there is no "I" alone in the speaking of our people.

When referring to another among us, as when
referring to ourselves, we speak in "WE."



One day, while on a hunt with others who
were earning their early merits of manhood,
the village leader's son—once my friend
but by then my rival—claimed my kill as his own.

Both of us rushed to the fallen carcass.

"You!" I yelled, violating our language's
commitment to community, "You lie!"

Others in the party rushed to pull us off each other.
I swung at him in vain, restrained by the others behind me.

We were taken before the village council,
my father sitting among them.

My rival's father rose, looking back and forth from me to his son. He stood silently for several minutes. Finally he said, "WE suffered today. Our warring in the forest was against Our way. WE do not fight WE."

"But WE," I interrupted, pointing at the other, "is cheating WE!" I said, looking first at the chief and then at my father.

But my father looked at me in stone silence. He offered nothing—no defense, not even a look of encouragement or understanding.

My heart was wounded.

My rival's father now focused his eyes on me.

"WE, young son," he said slowly, "have much to learn. Much to learn before manhood."

"What about WE!" I exclaimed, pointing at his son. "Does not WE have much to learn, too?"

The air stood still in the chamber.

"Silence," he said with a quiet firmness. "Silence is what WE must learn."

I turned and fled in humiliation and fury—my father's silence closing my heart and my rival's air of triumph poking at my skin.



From that moment on,
I began to turn my heart from my people.

I resented the village elders, especially my father. And I kept myself distant from those who had before been friends.

The mere thought of my rival stirred my heart to anger.

And our beliefs and customs irritated my ears.



I saw pain in my people's faces when I mocked our ways and reveled in what I considered victory. But my bitterness grew.

My parents bothered me, my sisters and my brother
bothered me, my village bothered me.

I longed to be independent and free—
free from the tyranny of WE.

And so one morning, long before the dawn, I ran.

My People, Again

But I discovered a surprising thing in my running:
Those who had granted me life and language accompanied
me wherever I went. I thought with words they taught me.

Their very identity was replicated in my skin.

Although I had left them physically, they nevertheless
traveled with me in my mind, my flesh, my heart.



How surprised I was to discover this—
that there was no escaping my life.

With a heart that glared at my people, I glared as well
at the hill that rose inconveniently before me.

I swung angrily at the tree that obstructed my way.

I cursed at the valley that fell far below me.

I shook my fists at the rapids in the stream.

When I finally scratched my way to the summit of
Big Mountain and turned for a final glance at the village
in the distance, I was committed to never returning.



But you know that I did return, for you have sensed
the reverence and love I now have for my people.

And perhaps you have guessed that I desire
nothing more than to be among them again.

How did it happen? What brought me home
and taught me love and reverence?

How did I discover happiness with a people
from whom I had felt estranged, even banished?



My young friend,
this is what I have pondered every day since.

And the answer may surprise you.

The hill, the tree, the valley, and the stream—
those objects of my wrath—were my teachers.

Mother Earth reintroduced me to my people.

Nature as Teacher

Unfortunately, modern man has become so focused on harnessing nature's resources that he has forgotten how to learn from them.

If you let them, however, the elements of nature will teach you as they have taught me.

Consider:

What was the point in being angry at the hills?

They had nothing against me.

And how silly to curse the trees when they merely offered me shade. Likewise the valleys that offered rest, and the streams refreshment . . . what cause had I to blame them?



Mother Earth taught me that my anger toward nature was unfounded.

And she therefore invited me to open my heart to this possibility: so too may be my anger toward man.

Forward and Backward Walking

In the years since, I have learned that
the point of life's walk is not where or how far
I move my feet but how I am moved in my heart.

If I walk far but am angry toward others as I journey,
I walk nowhere.

If I conquer mountains but hold grudges against others
as I climb, I conquer nothing.

If I see much but regard others as enemies, I see no one.



My young friend, when the days of your walking begin
to draw to a close, you will know that I speak the truth.

Whether we walk among our people or alone
among the hills, happiness in life's walking depends
on how we feel about others in our hearts.

We travel only as far and as high as our hearts will take us.



When I ran from my people, *this* is what the hills,
the trees, the valleys, and the streams invited me to learn—
and before it was too late:

That the success of my journey depended on
whether my heart walked forward—*toward* my people—
instead of backward, *away from* them.



My walk is nearly finished. Soon I will join my people.

How fortunate and grateful I am that I want to.



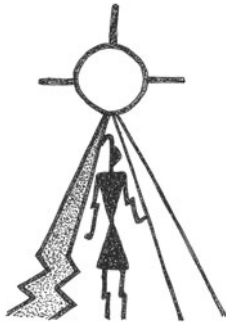
My young friend, before the close of my days,
I will share the making of my walking—paths of clarity
and healing that can be found among the hills.

May your heart walk forward in your receiving.

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1

The Path of Light



A Ray of Light

A few days into my journey, still kicking against nature,
I swung at what turned out to be poison oak.

I cursed my carelessness and
my anticipated discomfort and pain.

Truly all creation is against me, I murmured.



Later that day, I tripped in a bone-dry creek bed,
smashing my knee against a rock.

I remember grimacing in pain toward an empty sky.

As I lay there, I recalled words my father had spoken to me
while on a hunt: "We who lose our footing have lost our
way," he had said. "Our walking is in darkness."



*What did he mean by walking in darkness? I wondered, as
I picked myself up and limped on my way. And what did
darkness have to do with stumbling in daylight?*



Despite my anger toward my father, in that moment I had to
accept that I had seen my father, and the great ones among
our people, sure-footed and rooted upon the earth as any
tree or plant, yet as light as a seed upon the wind.

This memory awakened my life to light
and for a moment brightened a son's hurting heart.

Light and Darkness

Young friend, each morning offers lessons in light.
For the morning light teaches the most basic of truths:

Light chases away darkness.



We order our physical lives by this truth, for good reason.
Our own instruments of sight, our eyes,
mislead and are weak in the dark.

We need help from above
if we are to make progress in our journeys.

So we begin each day's walk after the great light
illuminates the terrain around us.

In this, we are wise in the walking of our feet.



But, young friend, are we as wise in the walking of the heart?

Do you and I allow light to
chase darkness from our *souls* as well?

This was the meaning of my father's saying.
Darkness *within* clouds the world *without*.



Perhaps I stumbled in the creek bed because
I was too troubled on the inside to see with clarity.

And maybe I failed to recognize the poison oak
because I had turned my heart from the light.

In hills, as well as in villages and cities, hazards
and predators find those who walk backward.



My young friend, having seen your day
and the dangers that lurk in its shadows,
I repeat the words that first pointed me toward light:

“WE who lose the light within have lost our way.”

I ask you:

Does your heart walk forward in the light?

Illumination of the Heart

My own answer to that question has been,
“Sometimes yes and sometimes no.”

But after many days of hating my life amid the hills,
I began to welcome the dawn—and the trees, valleys,
and streams that were illuminated by it.

I could feel my heart walking farther and my feet stepping
with more assurance upon the earth.

Just as the morning light sweeps away the night, the darkness
within me began to be chased away by a dawn in my soul.

Then and many times since, my body and my heart have
been illuminated alike—each of them saved by a sun.



Young friend, have you felt what I am speaking of?

Have you felt light in your soul?

Have you felt warmth where before was coldness?

Have you discovered insight where
before you had been blind?



As great as is the light above us,
greater by far is the light within.



The outward light is but a reflection of the inner.

The Source of the Light

I know the source of this light.

During my days of solitude, I have come to know Him well.



"Him?" you ask.

Yes, *Him*.

I speak of the Creator. He has walked with me often in my journeys, and it has been by learning to walk with Him that I have learned to walk forward.



Are you surprised by my candor?

In a world that has killed the sacred, mention of it can seem shocking, even foolhardy.

But how foolhardy it is to kill the sacred!

And how shocking to think that we could!



For there is always a light that walks forward.

When I was very young, I played in that light; I learned to play walking forward. I know this must be so, for I loved those I played with.

For even in my darkest hour, when love was far from me, he who is light walked near.



How do I know?

Because of what I have already mentioned—
because of the dawns in my soul.

Darkness cannot illuminate itself any more than
night can call itself day.

Light means that the sun is near.



The dawns I have felt in my soul testify that
I am known by the Giver of light.

To walk forward, I need only walk where he shows me.

Messengers of the Light

All creation shows us how to follow the Creator's light.

Look around and learn.



Notice how the hills receive the dawn.

They feel no attachment to darkness.

As quickly as the sun rises, the darkness from them flees.

You will witness the same response in the trees,
the valleys, and the streams.



And notice as well that all nature flourishes in the light.

The hills and the trees reach to greet it.

The grasses in the valleys grow tall and green
under its influence. The stream shimmers and
multiplies the light to all that are around it.



In the early days of my running, nature's acceptance
of the light stood in stark contrast to my own. For I had
turned my back to the light—my thoughts and feelings
withering in bitterness, so centered on myself that I had
neither thought nor desire to reflect on others.

But the elements of nature were never offended
by the back that I turned. They still reached,
they still shimmered, they still grew.

By so doing, they kept inviting me to turn again to the light—to join them in stretching forth my arms, brightening my thoughts, and conversing again with *others*.



In these and other ways, the hills, the trees, the valleys, and the streams testify of the Creator and his walking.

If you listen, you will hear them do so,
for his voice can be heard in them.

It is a beckoning voice—
a voice that calls us to walk forward.

A voice that brightens both soil and soul.

A voice that invites us to join him.

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