

One particular Wednesday, I headed to the lake for my blissful routine. I had enjoyed an uplifting run and sat on a stone bench seat,

two metres from the shoreline overlooking a jetty cast out over the slightly choppy water. There was a special energy there that day. It felt vibrant, energetic and a tad powerful. I sat with an inner smile and took in the beauty that surrounded me. After a few moments of reflection and gratitude, I put on my Soul Sync meditation music and went through the steps of the meditation. As I came to the last phase, I felt myself expand past the confines of my body, similar to my running experience on the Fernleigh track many months before. I felt connected and whole. At this point, I felt compelled to diverge from the practise and asked, 'What is my purpose?'

Instantly, I received my answer. 'Love.'

I felt a flood of love everywhere; it was infinite and everlasting. I saw my heart full of love, and I had a vision of spreading the words of love and healing to people all over the world. There was a complete acceptance and knowing that this was my path from that moment. My purpose in life was to share my experiences with darkness and my search for love. My search to find love for myself, to love my life once again and my lesson in pure love. I had spent most my life trying to earn love. I had taught myself love came from being sexually desired. I thought love was painful, would be taken from me and would break my heart as losing my son did. I had believed love had to be earned with accomplishments and deeds. I couldn't purely be me and feel love.

I had discovered the most profound learning: love just is. It is everywhere. It is feeling connected and releasing judgements. It is in nature and when we nurture. It is within all of us and surrounding us. When you open to the purity of true love, you feel an unconditional acceptance and peace that cannot be placed into words. I had learnt how to tap into this and my life's purpose was clear.

I want you to feel convicted of your life's purpose. You are here for a reason, and when you can recognise how important you are, you will have more passion for life. If you have been feeling uncertain and lost, I recommend trying my simple prayer/reflection and using journaling to get in touch with what excites you in life. Remember, prayer can mean speaking with a higher power or speaking to

your inner strength; there are no spiritual belief systems required for this practise.

Find a place that inspires you and connects you to nature and follow this prayer to find your purpose. We cannot be depressed when we have a strong conviction of our purpose. Have your dark side diary handy for when you have completed your reflection. Sit in a comfortable position where you will have no distractions. Take a moment to enjoy the beauty that surrounds you. Allow a smile to fill your being.

Start to slow your breath down, breathing deeply. Place your hands on your legs with your palms facing upwards. Place your thumb onto your index finger. Close your eyes. On your out-breath, hum like a bee, allowing it to vibrate into your head. Repeat this for eight breaths. For each breath, touch your thumb with a different finger to keep count. Do this twice. Sit in silence, bringing your awareness to your breath for a few moments. In your mind or out loud say, 'Thank you for my blessings in my life. Thank you for your love and guidance.' Enjoy your moment of gratitude and allow that feeling to raise your energy field. Then ask, 'What is my purpose? How may I live my life completely?' Sit in silence and allow the answers to come. You may have visions, hear words spoken to you, feel a conviction or just a deep inner peace come over you.

In some cases, the answer may not feel clear immediately. You may have a sign come your way shortly after your reflection. Remain open to guidance until you receive it. Stay in this reflective state for as long as you feel inspired to and when you are ready, complete your practise by chanting, 'Thank you for my heart and my purpose' as many times as your heart desires. When you come out of your reflection, take a moment to write down whatever you experienced and how you feel. If it wasn't a strong answer, that is okay; the writing process may bring up more for you. Scribble away or draw images. This is your journal, so create it however feels right for you. Add to your purpose page anytime you feel inspired to. Do not fret if you don't feel crystal clear on your first purpose reflection; keep practising it until you do.

My initial prayer felt powerful although it gave no detail; however, I continued to receive more information about my purpose in subsequent check ins. I have had visions of my husband and I running workshops together, which is interesting, as we have both sworn we could not work together. We are both leaders and neither like to follow, so this will be a fun challenge for us. I have also seen other books to write. All these visions make me giggle; writing wasn't something I thought I was capable of. I got a C in English, and Glen is constantly correcting my poor grammar. My husband and I working together seems so farfetched too. However, I trust in my purpose and visions, and I am willing to go along with anything I am shown now that I live in faith.

Another great way to get in touch with your purpose and passions is to give yourself a passion test. Open your journal to the new beliefs and values you wrote in chapter ten. Either beneath your top values or on a new page, write down when you feel these values most in your life: with family, at work, when I help in the garden, when I am in nature. Write all the times in your life you have felt more connected to these feelings. Next, discover what values you do not like such as: feeling restricted, lack of freedom, being alone, and then write underneath the times you felt these unaligned feelings. If you're coming up with an answer that looks like you spend more time doing things that create the feelings and values you do not like as opposed to what you do, then it may be time to look at how you might be able to move things around so you spend more time moving toward your desired values and feelings. Do not be afraid to ask for a sign from the universe to show you are on track; signs are not testing your truth. They are very reassuring. I share my sign with you to give you faith you are being guided.

Our business and home is perched on two and a half acres; needless to say, mowing the lawn is a lengthy task. The four older children have sections that they tend to, and Glen and I share the greater part. We both love our time on the mower as we use this time to flick on an audio book or podcast for our own personal growth. It is our 'crop and culture' sessions. Another effective multi-tasking example for you, my friends.

In the thick of my depression, I was listening to a Sean Croxton podcast. If you have not heard of this guy, he is a real dude. Sean gives life and character to any topic he covers, and I love his interview style, so I find myself listening to everything he uploads from his Underground wellness site and his newer Sean Croxton site. As I sat on the mower engrossed in the interview he was conducting with Pam Grout, a particular topic drew me in. Sean had asked the universe for a sign; he wanted a hawk to perch outside his window. Sean had asked for his sign days before this interview, and as Pam was chatting with Sean pre-recording, from her home elsewhere, she disclosed her wonderment of a big hawk that sat outside her window for the duration of the interview. Pam wasn't aware that Sean's sign was a hawk, so they both were quite amazed at the connection they shared from this experience. Sean got his sign. It may not have been his window the hawk flew to, but the hawk certainly came to him and in a far more majestic manner. How considerably more beautiful blessings are when we share the experiences with others. I loved the idea of having a sign. I made my request to the universe; I want an eagle to be my sign. Got that, God? I didn't know what I wanted my sign to mean or show; I just thought it seemed pretty cool.

After starting to write my book, I had a pang of insecurity pop up. I felt that old song start to play. 'You are not good enough to be doing this.' I began to doubt what I was trying to achieve. Am I kidding myself, can I really help people, do I really have enough to offer others with depression?

I prayed, 'If I am supposed to write this book, I want to see my eagle; and if I am not supposed to be doing this, I want to see a crow.' I stood up and explained the heads or tails game I was playing with the universe to Glen.

He laughed, 'Melinda, you may as well of asked to see a dog if you're not supposed to write it and a giraffe if you are!' I looked puzzled at him, not understanding the analogy, and he continued, 'We have crows that live here; they eat all our chook food. I see them every day. Eagles are rare around here.' Not really knowing my birds all that well, I decided I was being slightly foolish. However, I did not

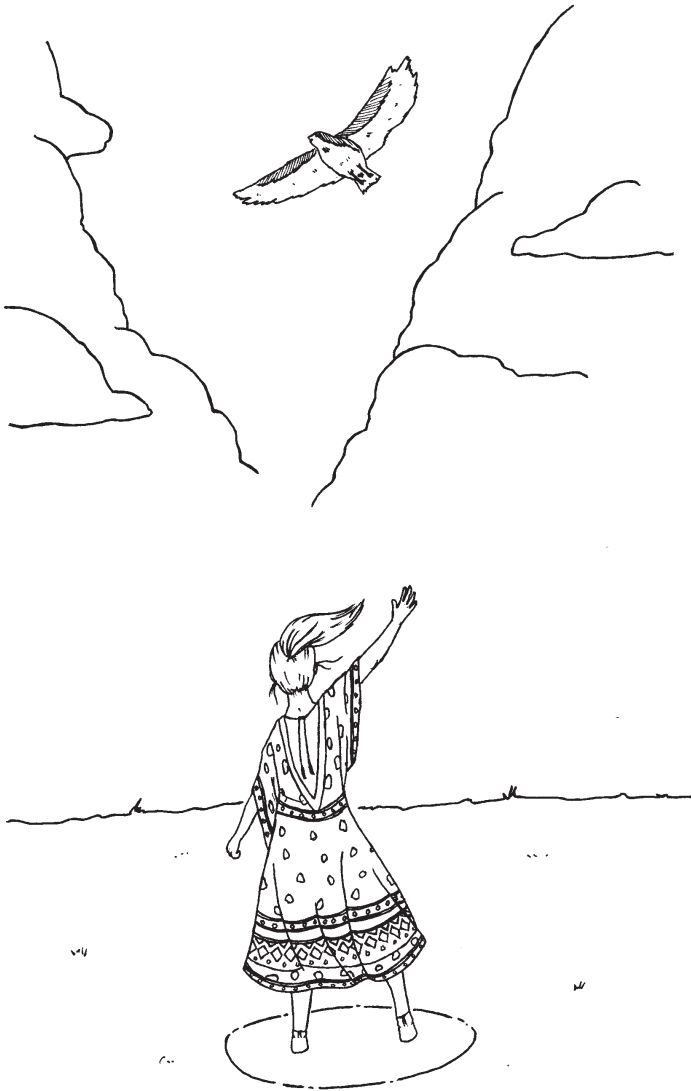
see a single crow. My husband continued to see them in our yard. I saw the lorikeets in the trees in the garden and rosellas would feed off the fallen seeds on the ground near our driveway; I did not see the crows. They stayed out of my way.

A few weeks passed and we had a weekend to ourselves, a rare find. We decided to go for a drive down the coast. I had explained to Glen earlier that morning I wanted to have a spiritual day, whatever that meant. I felt like I needed some guidance or wisdom. I had suggested heading to the entrance as years prior, I had seen a spiritual guide there, and I was hoping we could get an impromptu consult with her. As we drove along the winding road down to the little coastal town, I peered up into the sky, and a vast bold eagle was flying above us. As I was looking up, my husband had noticed too and pointed out my eagle. I was in awe. I didn't get my appointment with the spiritual guide that day, but I did get my spiritual encounter I had desired. I felt reassured and empowered. I felt watched over and guided. I believed my eagle was assuring me that I was on the right path, and my niggly self-doubt went away in that moment.

Every now and then, we will have doubt and fear crop up; it is what we do with it that counts. In the past, doubt and fear consumed me and put me in a shady place where I felt unworthy and unsure of my true magic. In this moment, I chose to observe the feelings of inadequacy and continued writing my book. I did not buy into its story and took my insecurities to my energy source. When I got my sign, I felt strong again in my direction. Choosing a sign isn't testing the universe; it is allowing it to speak with you in a powerful way.

I encourage you to have a sign that you can use to help you feel convicted of your path. Your sign does not have to be a bird; I was inspired by Sean's hawk, and an eagle was the first image that popped into my mind at the time. I ran with it. Yours could be something completely different. Crystals have a tendency to find people; yours may be a crystal or a gem. It could be words that are spoken or read. If a paragraph from a book inspires you, try coming back to this when you are doubting yourself; and if it lifts you up and convicts you again, take this as a sign. If you read the words and doubt still

fills you, maybe it is time to pray to ensure you are still on track. You may choose not to have a sign but have angel cards that you consult for guidance. Choose something that feels right to you. I now have two signs that guide me: one I chose for myself, my majestic eagle, and the other was chosen for me, a feather.



While strolling the tranquil streets of Katoomba one lazy weekend, browsing through quaint shops and enjoying the lack of agenda, I perused through a card stand of a cute little cottage transformed into a nick-knack boutique. I was opening cards and giggling to myself at the punch lines and quirky messages enclosed. I read the front of one card and opened it, smiling, ready to be amused, as a tiny white feather gently fell before me, delicately swaying in the breeze until it landed at my feet. At first, I thought this was a part of the cards punchline. However, when I read the inside tagline, there was no connection. I continued my lazy saunter to the other side of the street where I stumbled across a natural health store. Always an interest to me, so I meandered in. There was a clairvoyant in the back area of the shop. She asked me, 'Do you see feathers?'

I was astonished at this question as moments ago, I would have answered no; but having just sighted one in such a peculiar way on the other side of the street, I responded, 'Actually, I just did. It fell out of a card across the road as I was reading it.'

As the lady smiled gently at me, she informed me that this was how my son that passed away communicated with me. Wow! I was amazed at all that had transpired in my quiet reflective day. I found another feather inside my room later that day and now have a little collection of feathers that sit on my vanity. All of which came to me in bizarre ways. I do not follow birds and pluck their feathers or find them in obvious places such as under trees, their presence is always unexpected. The week of the anniversary of my son's passing, I found two unique feathers in my home. One was an opaque green with splashes of white, which was resting beside my bed. I discovered it as I was crying, sitting on the edge of my bed, allowing the pain of my loss of Braith run through me. He was letting me know he was with me. The other I found in my family room while playing with Banjo; this was also days before Braith's anniversary and moments after Banjo had advised me he too wanted to find feathers — I believe this one was for him.

My eagle lets me know I am on the right path, and my feathers reassure me I have my son with me through all my ups and downs

along the journey. My signs give me confidence and fill my heart with love and conviction of my purpose. When we find our purpose, and have a deep faith to follow it, we don't necessarily stay completely focused and confident for the entire journey. I doubt even the likes of the most powerful and persuasive leaders of all time were unswayed from their path at least momentarily.

Doubt and fear are normal; choose to observe these as they crop up and come back to prayer or guidance before jumping off your bandwagon into a sea of despair. Come back to your dark side journal and read over your words, your passions, values and beliefs. Talk to your rock; tell them your concerns. In some cases, words spoken are enough. We guide ourselves back by churning out the muster of thoughts that have been holding us back. Other times, we need feedback and reassurance.

Find your purpose, find your path and trust that you are an important part of the story of life. I would be lost without you, your community needs you and your soul needs you to be strong. We are in this together. You have a purpose, and it is magical.

HAPPY HABITS:

- Practise your purpose reflection/prayer until you feel convicted of your path.
- Use your dark side journal to write down your vision or draw your feelings that you experience during your purpose prayer.
- Do the passion test and align your actions with your heart's desire. Look at changes you can make to ensure you spend more time doing things that excite you and keep you running toward your new values and beliefs.
- Revisit your purpose as often as you need. Daily would be best.
- Use signs and words to get you back on track when doubt worms its way back in.