

My Incredible Journey to the Sacred Redwoods....

By Sofanya

One Story of the magical mystical synchronicities and perfect weaving that occurs when we recognize our Oneness with All that Is.

With each step, when followed with faith in the process, the Journey becomes increasingly fascinating and engaging. The point is that in a sense, in innocence, all roads lead to Home.

It had been five years since my divorce and I'd managed to manifest my longtime dream to live in a "real" live-work artist studio with high ceilings, skylights, a loft and large studio space below. My dream studio was in a warehouse building full of artists, writers, musicians and designers.

I was enclosed inside the warehouse so there were no windows. Like my dream studio envisioned though there were seventeen foot high skylights! It was a perfect place at a time when I needed to feel private and secluded in a womb like space.

I loved being there. Those five years were probably my most highly productive, with creativity in full throttle facing a whole new life to explore. I'd never before had to make my own decisions or been in a place where I was the only one judging me! I also had bills piling up in a drawer!

Months earlier I made a trek to LA to explore the possibility of finding an agent or rep. It was "Market Week" which I knew nothing about. I made my way to quite a few showrooms only to be treated in an unfriendly manner. I found out that since I was an artist they assumed I was trying to steal ideas! In a last ditch effort I went to one more showroom with an interesting name, "Screaming From L.A.!" I walked right to the back of the showroom to the two men dressed in fabulous and flamboyant clothes and told them I'm not even looking at the designs and was just seeking representation for my wearable art line called "Echoes". A few weeks later they visited my studio in Emeryville, bought several large sculpture paintings and asked me to send them samples of hand painted jackets and jewelry. My association with them brought me to their home and studio several times a year and that is how I discovered the land love of my life.... Big Sur! I traveled the stunning coast Hwy 1 as often as weather would permit and fell in love. Little did I know that I would someday blissfully reside in a redwood forest surrounded by beauty.

I'd already been married twice since age 17 and had two amazing sons who'd become wonderful young men.

This was the time I needed to discover my Self as a person in the big world.

I'd come into adult life with zero self worth or feeling capable of anything. Over time I'd experienced an ever growing realization of capabilities, self knowledge and love.

I had dreams and needed to find out if I could truly call myself an artist.

In this fifth year I'd become frustrated and restless to move, at times depressed about it.

I was not comfortable hearing occasional gunshots at nights and hearing wandering voices in the night outside my window. My young son stayed with me several days a week and I wanted him to be safe and not concerned getting in and out of my car.

One night I lay in my bed allowing my mind to wander. I knew it was close to time for a move. I had a few ideas but no money or wherewithal to make a move yet. Still I needed to allow thoughts about what my highest ideal for a living place might be like, dismissing any idea of practicality since I really had no savings or consistent income! So my mind wandered.

I began to imagine myself in a rustic cabin large enough for me to paint in it while very comfortable. It would have plenty of windows with a view of the forest and a nearby stream. I imagined I was secluded but not too far from other people because I'm pretty social and though love the idea of some level of seclusion I knew the balance is important. Soon I wasn't really just trying to think but I was actually lost in it and actually felt I was there. It went on with details and really just the feeling of being in it, surrounded by forest and could hear the stream nearby. When I went to sleep that night I began to feel my anxiety and depression lift. I came to a place of surrendering the idea of moving at all and knew that I would be guided when the time was right.

I was finally at peace with it.

The very next morning I decided to take a break and drive to Santa Cruz to visit my son. We had a really lovely evening and the following morning I sat in the yard with a view of mountains and ocean and a tree not far away. The branches of the tree made the shape of a woman's torso and through it the direction of Monterey and Carmel. I didn't have to get back for a couple of days and decided to head to Carmel to visit art galleries. I walked into one of my favorites and there I met the woman attending the gallery. We chatted and discovered that we both had the same last name through marriage. That wasn't such a big deal since we have a common name. We proceeded to discover that both of us grew up in Minnesota, I in St Paul and she in Mpls.

Ok that was getting more interesting. We further pursued conversation and found that we had the exact same birthday... Christmas Eve! We also each had two sons, approximately the same ages! She had moved to Carmel not long before and had considered moving to Big Sur but Carmel was more her style.

After some roaming around and processing what just happened I checked out a few more galleries but got distracted by the pull to drive towards Big Sur and take some photos.

I had an account for my wearable art at Monique's Boutique so I stopped in to say hi and to check on my jackets and Cynthia was working. At some point she said "Sofanya you should check this place out....it would be perfect for you!"

I recall that moment in slow motion, her hand with pen moving gracefully in large circular motion writing down a phone number. It was a surreal moment I will never forget because it became a most pivotal moment. I called that number from the phone booth in Fernwood Resort where years later I owned an art gallery. (A story for another time.) I'd made an appointment for the following afternoon. There was only one room left at Fernwood that night....the tiny one in the corner. It felt like a magical palace to me and I was delighted and enchanted. That evening there was a band at Fernwood and I danced intensely which was a letting go and a healing from all that I'd been hanging onto and I felt absolutely and freely engaged with Life. That evening I'd met a third generation stone carver & mason, Ramone Byrne who became a dear friend. He helped me enormously in my move and taught me how to make a fire, showed me the closest magical beach where I discovered the "River of Lillies". That was a shift in consciousness forever and since then I've often found Calla Lillies appear in my art.

The next day I continued in a surreal state of consciousness....readying for my appointment to see the Dome House! As always the Coast Hwy on a sunny day was magnificent and I marveled at the beauty and the secrets I knew lay under the surface.

I made the right turn at Palo Colorado Canyon Road, as per my directions. Immediately I was enveloped inside a nurtured deeply peaceful recognition, a knowing I was already "Home". The curvy windy road alongside a babbling stream rushing around and over rocks and fallen branches was mystical and felt so familiar. I stopped countless times just to get out of the car and feel it up close. As the hobbit like dwelling appeared I thought to myself this is from a different world....one from my deepest Dreams that I didn't even begin to think really existed.

I pulled into the parking area and was greeted by a magical scene right out of a classical painting....the golden light beaming through the Redwoods and illuminating a mother and her infant as she sat on a log to nurse. She a robust young woman with long golden hair, a larger than life mother with a baby in equal proportion to her. It was a stunning scene that felt very much like a dream. All I could think was..... I must paint here!

She showed me up some creeky steps into the Dome House. I think it was late afternoon mid winter so it was quite dark inside as I entered. As I stood at the threshold I had some kind of recall of a time out of time, or a recurring dream. In my life I'd had recurring dreams of a country style house where I walked from the kitchen, down some stairs to an unlit, dark cavernous room where I couldn't see what was inside. Each time I dreamed this I'd take another step into the endless dark room and there I would begin to see different things, a painting on a wall, a piece of furniture and I would experience a little more courage each time, to take another step inside. I'd enter what felt a gigantic....very magical and mystical unending space. There were large windows all around the house with some light, and a set of wooden steps leading up to the loft. As I entered this magical dwelling I was filled with a feeling that I'd found my Home where I could live, love and thrive. I asked to please be considered for approval to live here. One month later I moved into my true domain, my castle, the geodesic Dome where I would live, work, share so much and live a life surrounded by nature and love of life. I agreed to a month to month and just hoped I would be accepted into this magical domain.

I headed home that afternoon in a dazed ecstasy with just a flicker of doubt. It was precisely that moment I noticed a sign on the right side of the road which I'd never seen before or since. It read in big block letters....
"A Good Move!" That was the confirmation I needed! The synchronicities and "coincidences" continued exponentially after that.

I'd put pen to paper to try to figure out how much money I'd need to make this move. My finances were dire. Somehow, I came to the conclusion I'd need \$7000 to get through to spring. I planned to move in on my birthday on Dec 24th as a big gift to myself! Two days later I got a call from my ex husband asking me to take him to the airport. He knew I probably didn't realize that after 5 years divorced he'd owe me \$10K for our house, he'd already loaned me \$3K so he still owed me \$7!!! Another magical moment of confirmation that YES I'm on the right track.

There were many more confirmations like this and they continue to this day. I've learned to silently give a prayer of gratitude each time I notice a "message" of affirmation, confirmation, inspiration. It happens each day then and now through people, words, simultaneous occurrences and many profound synchronicities that cannot be tabled "coincidences".

I've realized that if I am open, if I can be awake to the blessings and magic of life, then there is no end to the manifestation of the wonders blossoming along the journey. Each person has their own way of seeing, believing and of knowing.

The message I feel compelled to share with one and all is to allow yourself to trust your own vision, intuition, instinct and what lights you up inside. Pay attention to the talents and gifts you have. Trust the Process of Life itself. There is a bigger picture, a beautiful tapestry being woven. We can choose the colors and make the design with each breath.

Don't be afraid to follow your heart, your intuition. This will always lead you in the best way. Taking just one step in the direction of inspiration and the entire Universe opens up all the possibilities, in the measure for which you are ready.

When I got back to Emeryville, knowing I was going to move so soon I threw a party to announce my big move, give away and sell stuff and say goodbye to friends. Some thought I was crazy to leave when my art career seemed so promising there, others wished me well with envy.

A few weeks later, Ramon, my son Lance and a couple of others helped me stuff a big moving truck....,it reminded me of that show where they put the granny with rocking chair on top of a bulging truck loaded up.

I discovered that Sherwin Shayne, the man who'd lived here and along with some friends, built the Dome House in 1970. He ascended from his physical body on Dec 24, 1994, one year prior to my moving in, on my birthday, Christmas Eve. While looking at a photo of him years ago I felt a recognition, like Shayne & I were as one. It's hard to explain but I have always known that somehow he wanted me here, that we know each other on an ethereal level. I know that his spirit was instrumental in magnetizing me to this haven. Later I understood better that I have a purpose here. The personal directive to take care of this land, and to share with visitors has led me to grow spiritually, emotionally and become stronger physically.

Further back in history, prior to Shayne and long before the Dome House or any out buildings were built in it's present form, the property was known as Hoffman's Resort! Lou & Carabella Hoffman owned and operated the property from the 1920s-1946 . There was a cook house, a dining hall, a rec hall, and cabins for guests. Carabella was apparently an amazing cook and often prepared Sunday dinners for guests, loggers and locals. I perused the guest books which are protected at the Big Sur Historical Society where I saw glowing entries about the food, the peacefulness here and many said they couldn't wait to return. I can only imagine how difficult it must have been for these visitors to get here at that time. I'm immensely grateful for the day Mr Peterson drove in to find me on my deck of the Dome, bringing to me all sorts of photographs and the story about The Hoffmans. This was his family, his mother and grandmother. He was in some of the photos as a baby, along with his grandmother, who was Carabella's sister. There are many wonderful stories in the history of this property. I feel incredibly blessed to carry on, making new stories from sharing the beauty here with visitors, making new friends and helping to bring a little more peace to the world one visitor at a time.

Of course since that day I moved here in 1995 there have been many escapades, parties, painting classes. Of course there have been tough times, hard work, crazy eras, storms, fires & floods, joys, realizations, lessons learned. I've always felt the winds of grace gently nudging me to keep going and always remember my blessings. The trust that there is a "bigger picture" gets me through the more challenging times. I know when I take a step in the direction that lights me up inside.... I'm in the best place possible. The Path illuminates with opportunities, awakenings, magical occurrences complete with some challenges to grow from. There may be twists and turns but following inspiration leads the way. I've put to good use my very simple mantra, "Trust The Process".

Although my circumstances are different than yours, the reason I wanted to share this story is for the essence of it. Take notice of and honor those feelings inside that make you light up, inspire you, get you excited....and even if you are afraid to take a step in that direction, do it anyway.