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One with the Herd: A Spiritual Journey

Liz Mitten Ryan
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“We are all on a journey to discover our dreams, or life’s dream for us. The only way we can know if the fit is right is to try it on,” writes the author. Nationally acclaimed wildlife painter, writer, and horse breeder/trainer Liz Mitten Ryan decided seven years ago to leave city life and its comforts and conveniences, as well as a thriving career, to build her dream life on a remote 320-acre ranch in British Columbia. With her husband, an architect, she endured the early months of their first winter in a tent, while her herd of eleven horses adjusted to their new freedom to roam the meadows, forests, and lakes just as a wild herd would, returning to the barn only when they desired human company and support.

Applying skills learned in the Parelli Natural Horsemanship System, the author taught her horses gently, with freedom and play. Soon she was able to communicate her intentions using mental images, and found that this method brought an even faster response. She found that when the self is forgotten in communion with the horse and the relationship is based on love, respect, and trust, communication becomes mutual and fluent. She discovered the “elusive connection, a bond that transcends our current belief systems…animals can teach us the path to spirit because they live there, and if we allow them to contribute to the conversation, they will invite us to experience the ultimate communion in being one with the herd.” Now a skilled horse communicator, Mitten Ryan devotes her life to understanding and transmitting the messages she receives from the horses and continues her painting, writing, and conservation work. She was British Columbia Wildlife Artist of the Year in 1993 and 1995, Ducks Unlimited Canadian National Artist for the years 1995-98, and Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp winner in 1998.

Liz Mitten Ryan has found fulfillment in sharing the mystery of life with her horses, making their needs her primary concern. In return, the horses have admitted her into their society, taught her their language, and given her their message, which she channels to the world: “Man has dreamed a strange dream of evil, which exists only in the human mind. He must awake from this dream, and listen to the truth.”

Filled with original poetry, journal entries, and paintings created during daily life on the Gateway 2 Ranch, *One with the Herd* is an intimate record of a woman’s journey into a world most of humankind abandoned long ago: a world of “peace so profound, that you can feel the heartbeat, and breathe in unison with the earth.”
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