

# Alexandra Wilson

## Social Justice and Deep Adaptation

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It would be an immense joy to contribute what I have come to understand in recent years about power, privilege, poverty and the need for restitution.

### Death

I work with the dying (soul midwife, death doula, psychopomp... call me what you will) and I have been involved in social and ecological justice all my life as my parents were also social justice advocates. In recent years I set up a training school for “End-of-Life doulas,” and in doing so we invoke Death as our teacher; I am not the teacher; I know less than nothing about death; but I hold space for what Death has to teach us; and I have gone in less than two years from starting small to being in high demand globally for this experience I offer.

Remarkably and surprisingly, the invocation of Death as a teacher has catapulted me ever deeper into social justice. If I believe in a Good Death at all; then I have to believe in a Good Death as a right for all; not just the privileged few who have the luxury of dying of old age in a hospice or palliative setting. And where is a Good Death most apparently lacking? Where injustices intersect. Black women 5 times more likely to die in childbirth in UK today than white women. Black youth more likely to die in the streets or in prison. The global south most likely to burn as a result of exploitation of land. Countries such as DR Congo being amongst the richest in the world for natural resources with the poorest people.

### White Supremacy

This inquiry of my own has brought together two major threads of my own personal destiny; one is the social justice that I address above and also my passion for healing ancestral trauma. Why did the white european go and colonise more than half the world; exploit both land and people as resources; decimate indigenous cultures? What gave rise to capitalism, colonialism and so-called “white supremacy”? Hunger. But not the legitimate type of hunger that comes from not having food and is sated with a meal. A deep soul hunger “hole in the soul” that was simultaneously the cause and effect of our own severance from our indigenous ways of being; in right relationship with the Land

and other beings. It was this same soul sickness that led to the persecution and holocaust of our wise women and healers “the witches.” It was the same soul sickness that led to delusions of “*power over*” and of wealth which was never enough, which led us to acquire more and more.

The spiritual deficit at the heart of White Europe and all her descendents is still deeply at work today. The first response most people of white european descent seem to have to Deep Adaptation is to prep for an apocalypse by moving somewhere else to where they are; by starting now to think about forming “community”; by stockpiling, spending, investing in things. These patterns of colonialism and consumerism are not the way; they cannot be the way. We have to start by being part of the community we are in; not starting new ones with cherry-picked associates. Being with Land and the other-than-human beings where we are; not colonising new territory again. Sharing what resources there are equitably rather than stockpiling for ourselves.

*Adaptation is for all or it is for none of us. We simply cannot adapt in isolation.*

## Spiritual Consciousness

And this brings me to my next point; the question of rising of spiritual consciousness. Many believe it is possible to achieve consciousness or some standard of enlightenment through personal growth and development. I do not. I believe this is Ego and selfishness and hierarchical in nature.

There must come a point in the evolution of consciousness where one breaks down the idea that you, personally, are going to ascend to some height of greatness; realising that those that have the opportunity to do “the inner work” are the most privileged on this planet. So if by dint of being so safe from persecution, threat or disease that you can self-realise what you are essentially buying into is White Supremacy once more. Because the vast majority of people on this planet without the resources to embark on inner spiritual growth are not white of skin; and if you choose to believe that you are spiritually superior because you have had the privilege to process your trauma and grieve then you are a hairsbreadth away from neo-nazi-ism.

*Evolution of Consciousness is for all or it is for none of us. We cannot awaken spiritually in isolation.*

## Grief and Trauma

If you have the privilege to process your trauma and grieve, then I believe we are duty bound to do as much as we can collectively – to collectively heal trauma and collectively grieve. It can be about the self no longer.

So; where does this lead me? It leads me to see that just as I would sit with a dying person and hold space for them to process their story; their loves, their losses, their regrets; their fears (and support them where I can to make restitution for harm done; to forgive and be forgiven before death). I see this as what is most desperately needed NOW for this iteration of humanity; for this civilisation and for the planet as whole.

We are dying. And we need to take stock of what harm has been done but most importantly what harm is still being done today by us. We need to speak the truths of the vast and irreconcilable harm done through colonialism, capitalism and so-called white supremacy. We cannot “make it right” but we can stop denying it. We can take action today to stand up and be counted: boots on the street, backs against the wall, risking our individual existence for the collective.

I for one cannot bear it any longer to keen the “Sorrows of the World” alone. In two years I have brought 75 people through the preparation course and we have spoken the truths of the harms done both to and by our ancestors; both to and by us today. And we have lamented, we have keened, we have released the pent up shadows of our own denial; we have left the places and spaces we have worked in lighter and clearer and more healed. But we are so few.

*The importance of Grief in healing the unhealable cannot be overstated. (Healing is not the same as fixing or curing.)*

## The End of Alienation

This is my stance. This is the ground from which I come. We MUST, in order to adapt to the absolute reality of this palliative phase of our civilisation, we must take inventory of our privileges and show humility in the face of the grief it unleashes. We must support each other to do this and not burden the already oppressed with our fragile white guilt and self serving hand wringing. We must unite and together hear the Truth without guilt but with full responsibility. We must start to appreciate what we have now and stop wanting more. We must start to embrace our neighbours now and not seek to find others. We must start to commune in grief more, not isolate ourselves behind computer screens. We must stand barefoot on the land and keen; we must stand in the streets

and give our battle cries on behalf of those who have not voice. And we must do all of this not for thanks, praise or a pat on the back, but because our Soul requires it of us. The Soul of our humanity needs us all to Midwife. And we need to midwife each other.

There is talk on the PDA forum on Facebook about the need for the group to be more diverse; to recruit folk to make it more inclusive. This is a White Thinking Paradigm. As if making something appear more diverse makes it more inclusive. Diversity is the measure of a group's inclusivity. If a group organically forms itself and it is predominantly white skinned then it will not be a "safe space" for many black, brown, people of colour, indigenous folk. Just inviting them in is to invite them in to feel isolated, marginalised, abused, denied. It ticks our boxes, makes us feel better; but the reality is that to be able to deeply adapt is a privilege in and of itself.

We, in this group, are but the earliest risers of the slumbering masses of privileged that continue to live as if our house is not on fire; in our bunkers; built on graveyards by slave workers. If we want to lead the way for our fellow privileged folks then we had better start by being honest about that privilege.

This is not simple. I am a poor white British person; borne of Irish and Welsh and Scottish heritage in England. My ancestors were oppressed; but I still have privilege borne of being raised in a country made rich by oppressing others (I had a standard of education, health and social policy that facilitated me to be a free thinker).

I cannot simply lament the victim within me, or the persecutor; to be whole I have to lament both, inhabit both – let the other see the other. I can trace my Hunger both to the ancestral trauma of my predecessors fleeing the Irish "famine" (holocaust) as I can that same soul sickness of being white and losing my indigenous connections. None of this "work" must trouble the oppressed today – for I gain nothing in healing myself but staying quiet in the face of social injustice. There must be safe space for us to heal ourselves in parallel to – not before – clear social action that upholds the voices of the previously silenced.

I do not come with clear answers; but a very clear lens through which I would like to invite people to look. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak and be heard and to challenge and to inspire, to be challenged and to be inspired.

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