

# Journey of the Salmon

We begin far to the North, in the pristine mountain streams surrounded by madrones and manzanitas and round gray boulders with unnaturally smooth, alabaster-like surfaces.

In this sanctuary, the salmon come to life, born out of the eggs left in these cool streams. Like the salmon, we gather to create a sanctuary, a pool where we can come together to bond and share our stories.

When the time is right, the salmon begin their journey downstream. Growing with every little rivulet and fin-stroke, we learn that each new estuary that might seem like a turning-away from the path, or a period of stasis, is completely necessary in

order for us to have accumulated the skills and stature that we need in order to make it through the challenges ahead of us. We dive into the flow of our journey and experiment with new identities, ideas, and ways of doing things.

Once the salmon reach the delta, this period of experimentation takes on a more urgent timbre. As waves and waves of unbreatheable salt water merge with the sweet fresh waters of the rivers, they find themselves in a place of intense transformation. Their bodies change rapidly in order to prepare them for the next chapter of their lives, preparing them to go out into the deep darkness of the ocean's depths. We learn to understand cycles, to investigate how our bodies transform and grow, and how to navigate the tricky brackish waters of transition.

The ocean is a place of mystery. No one really knows where the salmon go, or what they do, as the undertake the long journey across thousands of miles of uncharted sea sand. This is a time of testing, of self-sufficiency and empowerment. We delve into the shadows and the unseen, learning to trust ourselves and our intuition. And, in doing so, we begin to hear a call from far away, yet one that is also from deep within ourselves. It grows and grows within us until it becomes impossible to ignore. We turn and follow the song of our destiny, of the legacy of

our ancestors, of our own hearts.

The song continues to lead us, mile after mile, back to the rivers from which we came. As we return to our communi-

ties, we bring with us the lessons and nourishment of the ocean, all that was once thought to have been lost downstream. We return abundance to the wider community of bears, madrone and manzanita trees, people, osprey, and the river herself. We find ways to engage our fully empowered selves into the healing of the earth.

We swim unerringly through the labyrinth of streams and rivulets, upstream and over dams. We return to our true homes — whether it is the place of our birth or a place in our heart -- and take the steps that we need in order to leave a legacy of healing and connection to the circle of life for future generations.

*by Riyana for Teen Earth Magic 2009*

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