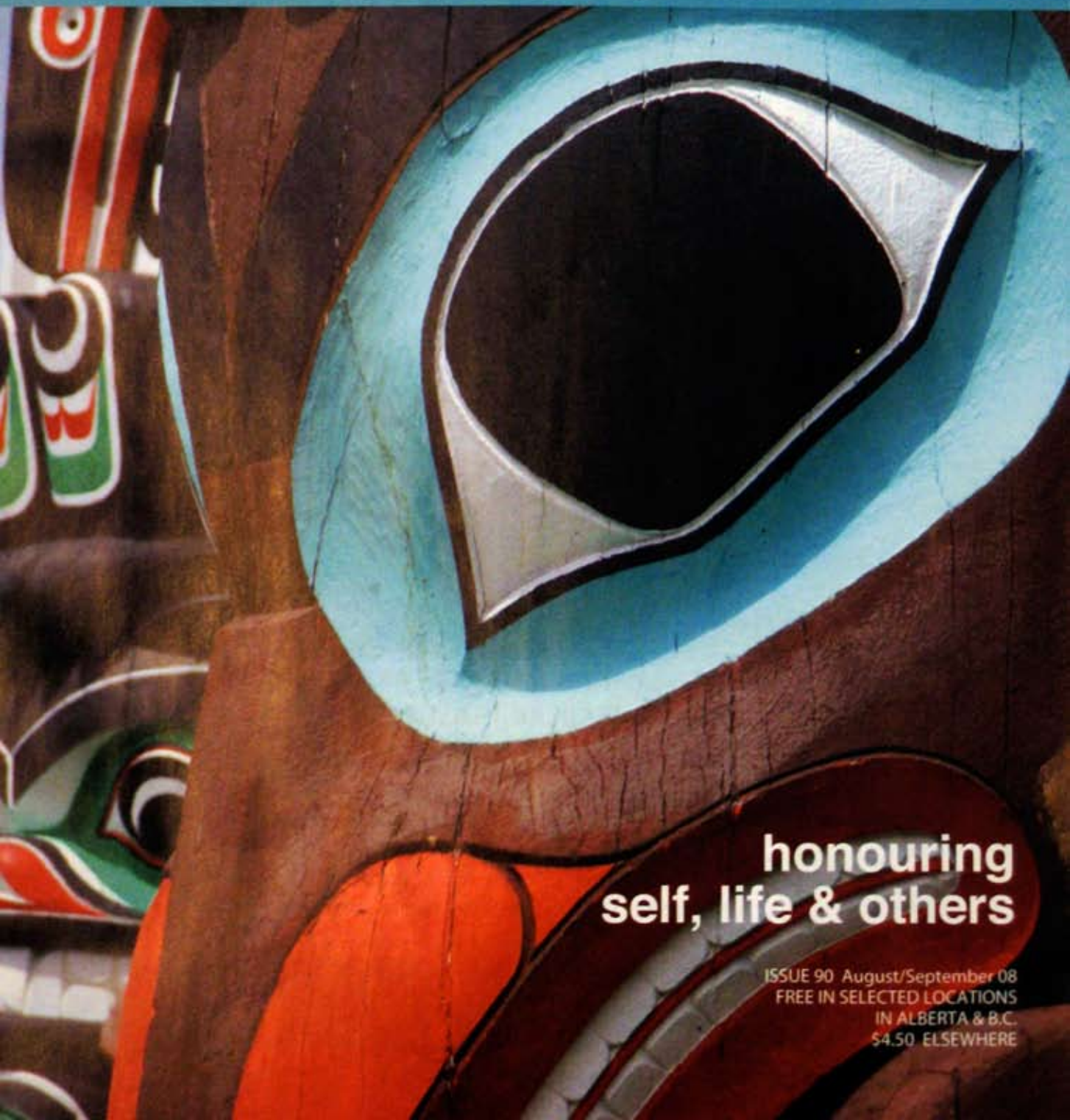


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THE EQUINE APOTHECARY™

By Sandra Wallin

Traditionally an apothecary has been thought of as a medical practitioner, a sage and healer who amalgamates wisdom to create just the right formula to soothe our ails. Today, in fields and stables across the country, we find ourselves in the company of modern day healers. Healers, who like their human counterparts, are able to assess the needs of each visitor, creating an experience or remedy to precisely match each unique set of conditions.

My horse Grace is such a healer. Chiron's her apprentice. I have watched Grace dispense her gifts with mastery, carrying a child with autism to a place of calm interconnection, teaching a bruised woman how to create and maintain healthy boundaries, evoking soothing tears after the death of a loved one, and breathing deeply into the recently diagnosed cancer.

The classic definition of healing is to make whole. The people my horses work with tell me they have never felt more whole, more connected, or more balanced than when in the company of a horse. In order to create this level of wholeness, horses utilize techniques that not only resonate with the soul and spirit, but with the heart, body and mind.

With benevolent integrity, they meet us where we are, detecting and reflecting our authentic needs. Teachers, healers, counsellors, friends. They honour us with unconditional acceptance and inspire us with a grace and a passion that in of itself is a catalyst for wellness.

My horses, their stories.

Robert and Freddy

shared in memory of my dear friend Freddy

It was a privilege to invite Robert, a young boy with autism, out to spend some time with the horses. We didn't know how he would respond but I had a good feeling. When Denean brought Robert into the arena, Freddy was all the way at the other end, craning his neck under the fence



to reach some tender dandelions. Robert began to vocalize and I wondered how Freddy would respond to the noise. In most circumstances, Freddy chooses food over just about anything, especially if that anything involves movement.

I turned my attention to Robert, running over in my mind what options we could offer him if Freddy chose to continue eating.

A moment later there was a nudge on my back. Freddy passed me and walked right up to Robert.

Rich silence filled the arena as Robert dropped his head to Freddy's face. They stood nose to nose, sharing breath and then as Robert lowered his head even further, Freddy touched his soft nose to the top of Robert's head, breathing long, deep breaths into Robert's crown. The pair stood like this for close to ten minutes. Then Robert stood tall and placed his hand on Freddy's shoulder, an intent connection we had not seen in our years of working with Robert.

Robert removed his hand and leaned back into Denean. She and I looked at each other with tears in our eyes. Freddy put his nose to my stomach and exhaled a long sigh. I whispered "Thank you my friend," as he turned and walked back to the dandelions, whose yellow goldness seemed to smile with delight...

Sandra Wallin is the founder of Chiron's Way, a registered clinical counsellor, and an Epona Approved Clinician. Her private practice near Vancouver, British Columbia integrates authentic leadership, the expressive arts and equine guided education. Sandra's clients range from middle school students to Microsoft executives as her unique skill set and professional training allow her to promote personal growth and professional development for people in all walks of life. The Equine Apothecary is her first book. www.chironsway.com

