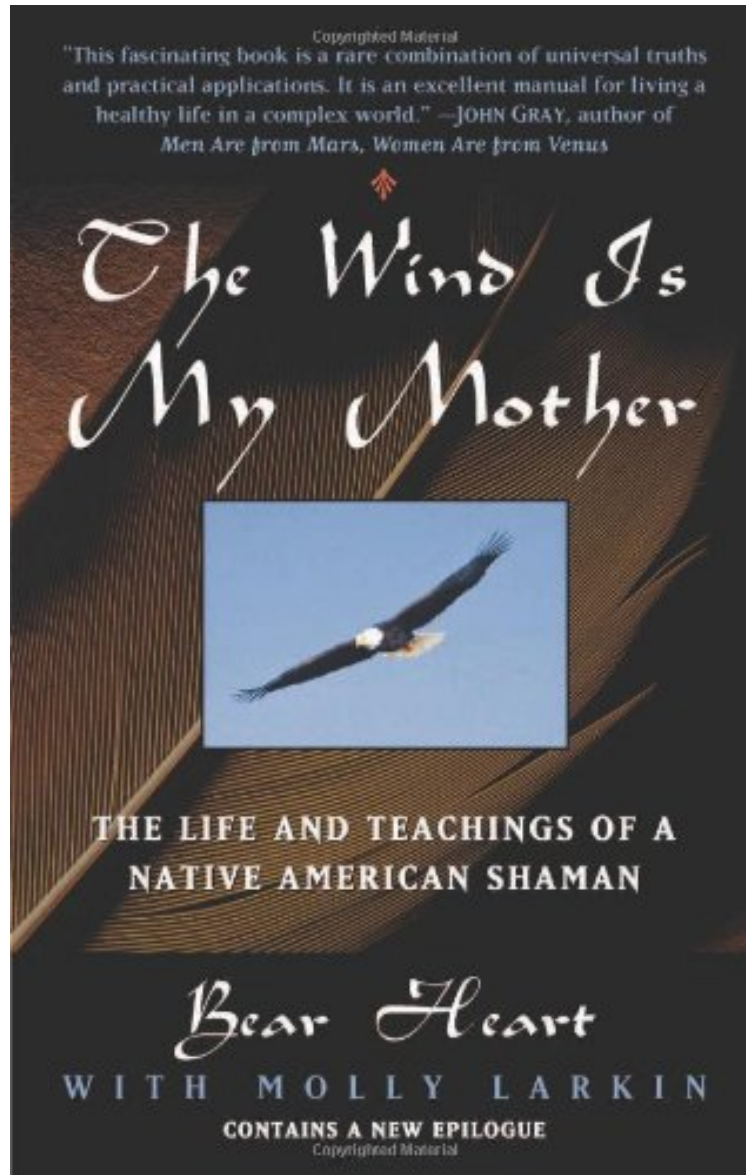


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## The Wind Is My Mother: The Life and Teachings of a Native American Shaman

*Bear Heart, Molly Larkin*

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**Bear Heart, Molly Larkin : The Wind Is My Mother: The Life and Teachings of a Native American Shaman** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wind Is My Mother: The Life and Teachings of a Native American Shaman:

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With eloquent simplicity, one of the world's last Native American Medicine Men demonstrates how traditional tribal wisdom can help us maintain spiritual and physical health in today's world.

From Publishers WeeklyBear Heart, a full-blooded Muskogee Creek Indian and one of the last "trained" Medicine Men, shares this knowledge, combining it with his more formal, graduate degree in psychology to build a bridge between Native American and modern spirituality. Categorized as an autobiography, the book is nevertheless constructed episodically rather than chronologically, resulting in a lack of fluidity that may distract some readers. The first section describes Bear Heart's family, their beliefs and the calling and training he received to be a medicine man. In the second section, great truths of Native American beliefs and Christianity find parallels. Section three further describes the relationship of human beings to each other, to nature and to the Great Being; the importance of the Sacred Pipe; and the purposes of vision quests. It concludes with this question: "The word 'memorial' does not indicate that someone has died. It symbolizes that someone has lived. What is going to be the living memorial that you're going to leave behind?" Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sThe life and healing practices of a Muskogee Creek medicine man who seems never to have met a disease he couldn't cure. A general reader must suspend disbelief and patiently endure grandfatherly lectures throughout this book, coauthored by Larkin, a white woman who experienced a spiritual rebirth under Bear Heart's tutelage. As a young disciple, Bear Heart underwent training rituals that included trooping through a nest of rattlesnakes and lying on an anthill. He also became adept in using traditional healing tools, including a wide repertoire of chants, an eagle feather upon which he blows when ministering to sick patients, the Sacred Pipe, and peyote, which only recently was legally permitted for use by practitioners of the Native American Church. In his long tenure as medicine man, Bear Heart claims to have cured earaches, tubercular-like illnesses, poisonings, and paralysis, often after Western medicine had failed. In addition, he was able to produce snow for a Colorado ski resort and cause choking fits from a distance in those with evil intentions. In the main, however, one can read this as a homily-filled discourse on leading a healthy and happy existence. Among his admonitions are to remain humble, have respect for elders, laugh frequently, be respectful of the natural environment, avoid blaming others for one's situation, and other tried-and-true strategies. The book is forever in danger of meandering into areas best left untouched, such as bear psychology ("Mostly they use telepathy to communicate") and anthropology ("It's possible that the Hebrews were here in North America first and then traveled

to Israel"), but the writers maintain such a consistently sincere tone that the uncritical reader readily forgives Bear Heart's leaps into the unknown. In sum, one can read this in lieu of spending an evening with a well-meaning but long-winded relative or use it, sparingly, as a resource for insight into traditional Native American practices. -- Copyright 1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. Captivating . . . it is as entertaining as the best novel, replete with stories both humorous and heartwarming, along with some fascinating revelations about Native American child-rearing, history and the world of the shaman. . . This is a compelling and important work -- it offers a rare glimpse into the training of a true shaman and a Native American view of their history with the Europeans. *The Wind Is My Mother* is practical, genuine and uplifting. -- HEALTH, Body-Mind-Spirit, April/May 1997 Inspiring. . . A charismatic storyteller, Bear Heart's autobiography is rich not only with the amazing accomplishments and wisdom of his life as a medicine man but also with the ages-old legends of his people. . . This book feels so good to read, to reflect upon, to practice. Simple advice for a more simplified life. -- *Evolving Woman*, May 1996