

White Horses

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In a small group mandala session, one participant returned to feelings of fear, even after sharing a vision of riding a white Unicorn to safety. This person had already overcome substantial challenges in her life, yet fears persisted.

I know my fears persist and get unexpectedly triggered. I also know that my fears often seem the greatest just before they vanish. Often, the closer that I am to a goal, the larger the fear that appears. At peril of life and limb, the false self has a heyday telling me that I can't or that I won't.



The law of attraction seems to always have a shadow large enough to test the magnitude of the success that is in sight. And, I'm slowly learning to recognize the patterns more quickly. Now, I tell myself success stories – metaphorical stories from former successes in facing my fears.

As I looked at her mandala and saw her white Unicorn, I recalled one of nature's lessons for me as a symbol for dissolving fears. In white water canoeing, there is a wave condition that looks very threatening. In fact, to the experienced river rat, it is a sign of eminent success and safety.

After a series of difficult and often dangerous water conditions, you reach a point at which the elevation drop levels out and calm water can be seen in the distance. By this time, however, the adrenalin is pumping, the palms are sweaty, the energy is dropping, and right ahead are standing waves that seem sure to swamp the canoe.

New river-runners tend to discount the conditions that they have already surmounted and generally become quite fearful and certain that this will be the end.

Yet, most come through safely and learn that this particular wave is not as threatening as most. It is simply the last in a long line, so it seems greater. There are no rock or snags creating this wave. It is produced by fast moving water running into slow moving water at the point of grade change in the riverbed.

Yes, you will sometimes take on a little unwanted water, but these are pussy cats compared to the hero's journey in the class three or class fours that you've already navigated.

By now you have guessed what these waves are called – White Horses. Like a white Unicorn, they can be a symbol of safety and freedom from fear. How many times have you stopped short of a goal even after the most difficult aspects have been navigated?

In running rivers, you learn that the goal is to go slightly faster or slightly slower than the speed of the current. If you move at the speed of the current, the river will take you to where it is going, not to where you want to go. So it can be safer and more productive to take charge and proact rather than react. As with most forces, they can be used to our advantage. Even in the swiftest current, if you turn upstream at an angle, the force of the stream coming at you will “ferry” you directly across the current. You'll just glide safely across to the side you've pointed your canoe.

I usually pay attention to nature as her lessons translate to living life with more harmony and less fear. So mount your white Unicorns and conquer your White Horses. It's much more romantic and heroic than being stuck in fear.