

Need Some More Harmony In Your Life?

Have you ever wished your life had a sound track? Living in Telluride, Colorado, with a local radio station KOTO and a flurry of music festivals all summer, we just about do have a collective sound track.

But I have this fascination with a personal sound track, one that would include lilting melodies for hiking and even ominous organ chords when I am facing danger.

And then, a few years ago, I came across an article by Alan Cohen, author of “The Dragon Doesn’t Live Here Anymore.” In “They’re Singing Your Song,” which you can find on his website, alancohen.com, he writes about how “a certain African tribe” uses song in a miraculous way—to remind us who we really are.

As his story goes, the women in this tribe go out into the wilderness when they find out they are pregnant, praying and meditating until they channel that child’s unique song—the one that will ultimately express his or her purpose and path. The song that will be not only soundtrack but theme song.

After finding the song, the mother returns to the village and teaches it to the rest of the community, and in this way they are introduced to the new being. And in this way, they are able to engage with that child for the rest of his or her life.

The song is sung to the child at pivotal life points: birth, the beginning of education, the initiation into adulthood, marriage and at the death bed.

I was drawn to the story immediately, partly from personal experience. I know that the first thing my mother did when they laid me on her belly was to sing to me, and for my whole life, I have felt marked by that song. Though she didn’t go out into the wilderness to find it, she did sing it to me almost daily for many years, wrapping me in unconditional love: “How I love my pretty baby, sweet and cuddly pretty baby, how I love my pretty baby, honest to goodness I do.”

But Cohen’s story takes the theme song notion a step farther. He writes, “In the African tribe there is one other occasion upon which the villagers sing to the child. If at any time during his or her life, the person commits a crime or aberrant social act, the individual is called to the center of the village and the people in the community form a circle around them. Then they sing their song to them. The tribe recognizes that the correction for antisocial behavior is not punishment; it is love and the remembrance of identity. When you recognize your own song, you have no desire or need to do anything that would hurt another.”

Every time I try to share this part of the story with other people, it makes me cry. Every time. I think it’s because there is so much resonance in what he relates. As he says, “There is something inside each of us that knows we have a song, and we wish those we love would recognize it and

support us to sing it. ... How we all long to be loved, acknowledged, and accepted for who we are!"

Though I doubt the veracity of the story, suspicious, I suppose, because the tribe is unnamed and I have been unable to research my way into any such story, I still love it. It is true in that it resonates. And so, before my son was born, I went on a long walk to find his song, and did. And taught it to several women who sang it to him at his birth. And last week, I took a long walk until I found a song for the little girl about to arrive in our family, "Woodsie," as we're calling her for now.

Whether or not we have a song, we know when we are "in tune" with ourselves, our families, our communities and our environment. And I like the notion that the singing of a song can remind us of who we are. If our mother's didn't give us one, we can perhaps choose one ourselves. Come up with a lyric that suits who we want to be and then play it when we need to make important decisions. Or when we are scared. Or when we know we've done something out of key and need a little reminder of who we are.

To *remind*, of course, means to remember. The prefix *re-* in this case means "again." And the *mind*, as dictionary.com details, is "that part of a human being that thinks, feels, and wills, as contrasted with body."

When we mind our song, we are living in harmony.

As it is, when I try to sing my son his song, he says, "Mom. *Please* stop singing."

Sometimes we'd rather not hear our soundtrack. Sometimes the singer might be more annoying than helpful. Maybe someday my son will be grateful for the lyric that promises him "in your life you'll always have enough."

At least for now I can delight in the fact he says "please," music to my ears.

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Song for Woodsie

There are places you will go
that we will never go,
there are lessons you will learn
you can teach us.

There are mountains you will climb
and rivers you will find
and roads that you will take
where you will lead us.

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Word Woman

And everywhere you go
you will always know
you're surrounded by love and wonder.

and everywhere you are
you will always find
a place where beauty breathes

inside of you, outside of you
inside, outside.

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