

Book Review

***The Seat of the Soul*, by Gary Zukav published 1989 (this edition 2014), reviewed by Charlie, UK, December 12th 2019**

I was first introduced to Gary Zukav's work through Oprah Winfrey's *Super Soul Conversation* podcasts. From here, we knew this was something we needed to incorporate into our ranch culture. Gary Zukav's definition of spiritual partners – two or more individuals committed as equals to each other's spiritual growth – fitted exactly with our definition of community partners. Gary Zukav's *Spiritual Partnership* book looked like essential reading material for us at the ranch, but before we could fully understand all Zukav's concepts, we needed to read his original book, *The Seat of the Soul*, as a baseline for understanding the concepts of equality, authentic power, our place in the universe and choosing love.

Zukav starts *The Seat of the Soul* by introducing us to the difference between five-sensory and multi-sensory human beings. Currently the majority of humans are five-sensory, perceiving the world only through what they can see, hear, smell, taste or feel, however now more people are starting to awaken to the knowledge that there is more. This evolution is something you must create by and for yourself, no one else can awaken it within you, this is your challenge, to develop a greater consciousness, to choose love no matter what is happening internally or in the environment around you.

Do you ever have knowledge of the world around you which you cannot adequately explain through your five senses alone? Do you just *know* something but have no way to explain how you know this? If you are purely a five-sensory human, this information will seem nonsensical to you. But this is multi-sensory perception or intuition, or what you might term a gut feeling or instinct, and when you evolve as a multi-sensory human, you can consciously understand this much better. You can use this knowledge to develop yourself and perceive the world more strongly. You can understand this comes from outside yourself, from a higher wisdom.

Authentic power comes from an understanding of more than the five senses. When we are consciously aware of more, we become more in tune to the world and the wider universe. We recognize the energy of the soul and seek to align ourselves with its desires of harmony, love and compassion. Aligning your personality with this is the path to authentic empowerment, it is the understanding that every experience is an opportunity and a choice to live as your soul wants to. As a species, we are evolving away from seeking external power towards authentic power.

We experience this at the ranch as we strive to be a part of the bigger picture concept, of being intimately connected to the natural world around us, to learn from it and grow with it. We seek to empower more people than only ourselves as we guide others or lead by example. We are all equals at the ranch, everyone supports and teaches everyone else, no one is superior or inferior to anyone else.

At the ranch, we are committed to conservation of the wilderness around us, we strive to support each other with our positive culture. Everyone is an equal, we are not superior or inferior to any one else.

The book goes on to discuss karma, the balance created through the law of motion that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. If you act in anger, an angry response answers you. If you act from love and compassion, you will receive love and compassion in turn. This might not be an instant response, the intention you put into the world through your actions is returned to you by the universe. And when you understand this, you react to events without judgment, you don't take it personally, you understand this is creating balance. When you accept this, you will experience more joy and less experiences of anger or judgment.

This is seen at the ranch as we act in compassion and support for others. The balance or return for this is we create a culture and community where everyone commits to acting in kindness also. The more we put in, the more this is returned to us, strengthening our culture, creating a cycle of perpetual motion as we in turn are encouraged and challenged to better ourselves through the actions and intentions of the others in our community.

The Seat of the Soul also discusses emotional awareness and the purpose of emotions. All emotions, both positive and negative provide you important information, about yourself and your environment. Acknowledging, experiencing and understanding these emotions and why they are arising will guide you onto greater understanding. When you act from your heart, from your emotions, you can choose to act from the loving parts of yourself, you can move from unconscious control by fearful emotions to choosing consciously to act from love. This empowers you as you are in control of yourself and are now in a position to impact the world.

We see this at the ranch, as we face challenges and share successes which allow us to experience a full range of emotions and learn more about ourselves as we feel this. Once we are aware of these emotions, we can choose to act from love and create a stronger ranch community.

Zukav urges us to choose the Light, the intentions of love and compassion, to develop this in all of us. We also have the power of choice, to choose responsibly, to choose love. And we must be responsible for the consequences of our choices, the negative consequences not only the positive. If you choose unconsciously, you will act unconsciously but you will still have to be responsible for your actions, even if you did not know what the effect would be. However, if you choose consciously, you can better access the consequences and determine if you are willing to accept them. If you are not willing to do so, you will choose not to create an action which will generate that result.

This is also true of our lives at the ranch. When making a decision, we need to know all the variables and the likely consequences, especially when there are other people or our horses involved who could be impacted. We hold ourselves and each other accountable and responsible for our actions and accept the consequences. We consciously choose our actions and therefore understand the consequences.

Once we join with others who are committed to developing themselves as we are and we all acknowledge each other as equals, we can become spiritual partners. This is different from a friendship, where people seek to comfort and create joy together. Spiritual partners will explore difficult questions together, support each other to develop on their transformational journeys and hold each other accountable for doing so.

This is a central part of our ranch community, where we hold each other accountable to grow and evolve, to strive to be our best selves. We are able to discuss all topics with our spiritual partners, even those which could risk the relationship, as we understand we are seeking to develop ourselves and support each other to do so. We can't take questions personally when we understand we are working together to better ourselves, the community and the bigger picture.

This book is essential for all of us at the ranch and to share with you through Trails to Empowerment as we embark on our transformational journeys to experience personal growth. We take responsibility for our own actions and hold ourselves accountable for the consequences. We are all equals who act with love, support and compassion for each other. And we do not act alone, we are deeply connected to each other and the world around us. We act consciously and continuously seek to grow and understand. This is a life long journey which we commit to with our spiritual partners beside us.