



Community Spirit

Raelene Byrne and Jeremy Donovan are well known locally and overseas for their amazing healing work but they also know a lot about creating community bliss.

Raelene and Jeremy believe in the importance of community to promote health on all levels and the power it has to connect others and create a space for growth, learning and healing.

Raelene says, "We need people around us to share our lives with. We need family, and friends. It's hard to do everything by ourselves. I really like the saying, 'No Man is an Island.' She says this generation is now at a point where they want to feel a sense of belonging and be part of a tribe.

Interestingly, Jeremy descends from both the Kuku Yalanji tribe of Far Northern Queensland and the Gumbayngirr tribe of Northern New South Wales. He says, "Our community is the strength of us. I wouldn't have been able to achieve what I have in life if it wasn't for the strength that my community has provided. I believe that humans were born to interact and integrate but over time we have created so much separation, where we don't even know our next door neighbour anymore."

Some of the many effects of being disconnected from the community are feeling isolated, lonely and even depressed. Jeremy says, "There is a huge displacement and people are feeling disconnected from their origins, so they are searching for identity but they are creating an identity which is not really based on who they really are and they

may be looking for a quick fix. But identity and community can't be bought, you have to seek and when you seek you can be directed back to the truth of who you are through community."

Part of their mission is to take people on a journey so they can connect with themselves and others and also experience traditional indigenous culture. Jeremy says there are so many similarities he sees with indigenous communities overseas and with his community in far north Queensland. "I feel that the door is always open to indigenous communities all around the world and I feel an automatic understanding and bond," he says.

Raelene and Jeremy are also passionate about uniting the community on a local level. They facilitate a meditation group each month on the Sunshine Coast which attracts a wide range of men, women and children. Raelene says, "When we begin to remember ourselves as integral parts of community, the breath and spirit of co-operation awakens. As a person moves towards their destiny, their purpose, the community offers support. The old paradigm of 'competition' can not exist when we connect through our hearts and work together in community." Jeremy adds, "Whether it's the meditation, guided tours we run overseas or if I'm taking people back to community in far north Queensland, it gives people an opportunity to form a bond, building bridges to create a tribe and extend those branches of their community."

Raelene and Jeremy recently conducted a guided, sacred tour to Arizona which was very inspiring and moving. Raelene says, "We were invited onto the Navajo reservation to participate in a traditional sweat lodge. The elders who came to sit with us had never met anyone off the reservation before, so it was a very deep and humbling experience. They came as an honouring of the work we do. The connection to the community on Tuba City reservation came about through an encounter last year and a relationship has grown between the Navajo and Jeremy and I. They will always invite our groups onto their land in respect and reverence any time we venture to their country," says Raelene.

Jeremy was also very moved by the experience of love and cooperation. He says, "The Elders barely spoke English so to sit there and hold each other's hands, shows the strength of unity. When we don't look for the glorified and tokenised, we find the people. And when you find the people, all you have to do is open your heart and see each other."

Raelene is an internationally renowned healer, spiritual coach, workshop facilitator, writer and speaker. Jeremy is recognised around the world as one of Australia's finest aboriginal performers, artists and keynote speakers. He is a widely acclaimed healer and one of the leading indigenous didgeridoo players in Australia.

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