



GRACIOUS WILD

A Shamanic Journey with Hawks

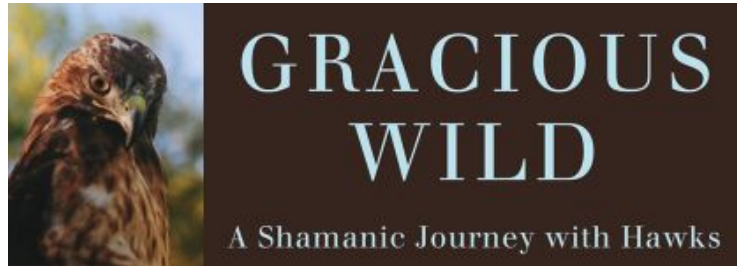
Stacey L. L. Couch



"A highly recommended, beautifully written story."
—Kay Kamala, *Journal of Contemporary Shamanism*

MEDIA KIT

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*A quest into the wild and important spirit messages
and soulful gifts gathered from animals while there...*

GRACIOUS WILD

A Shamanic Journey with Hawks

Stacey L.L. Couch

Gracious Wild is the story of Stacey Couch's incredible journey out of the mundane world of science and reason into the vast shamanic realms of creativity and inspiration. Readers travel on an intimate exploration of what happens when one woman allows the messengers of nature to guide her.

When wildlife biologist Stacey Couch undertakes a full-time role working and living alone on an island to care for endangered foxes in a captive breeding program, she has no idea that she will be forced to realize her own vulnerability. The isolation is an accidental vision quest that spurs a dramatic life change. Her guides in this process are a series of hawks.

For those of you wondering what birds of prey have to say to us, ***Gracious Wild*** is a powerful window into their world. These winged guides wrap your mind up in the mysteries they present, leading to a richer, more fulfilling life.

On many of her treks on the lonely island, Stacey finds herself accompanied by a stunning Northern Harrier Hawk. It isn't long before she discovers that the companion of her walks is nesting in view of her cabin. The visitations seem more than an accident as Stacey meets a host of hawks that fly across miles of ocean to take up residence next door. This is the first ever recording of harrier hawks nesting on the island. They seem to speak to her, to mirror her, to expand her in some way, to crack open the door between the life she was living and a spiritual gateway that she is only beginning to sense. The hawks help Stacey cultivate her own gift for finding grace in the everyday.

From the book:

"I was running from my own shadow, and through my fear; my shadow had the upper hand. This time I couldn't run. I had to solemnly live the nightmare. I relied on a grounding intuition that understood that this marsh, this fear, was only one portion of the island. If I could walk in, I could walk back out. There was no quicksand, no swallowing mud, only my annoying distaste for myself. The terrain changed. A gently sloping spine of ten-foot hills rose on both sides. Now my path was more defined. I looked up. A pair of piercing eyes stared back from a mysteriously dark, circular face. The hawk stood still, perched atop a bush, the shield of her cinnamon breast in full view. She wore a dark chocolate cape. *Is she a mirage or has she really allowed me to wander so close?* I felt a soft strand of hope spiral between us. The young harrier hawk looked like she had been standing there for cen-

turies, waiting for me to pass. The intimacy of the snug valley was consoling. Then she turned her dark face to something over the crest of the hill, opened her wings, and lifted away.

It is during her time watching the nesting hawks that Stacey's real quest begins – rousing life's biggest questions like “why am I here?”

Gracious Wild follows Stacey as she moves back to the mainland still soul lost and questioning. She volunteers at the Willow Brook Wildlife Rehab Center while figuring out what to do with her life. Serendipitously, Stacey is charged with the care of an injured Northern Harrier Hawk –the same species of hawk she'd known on the island. This elegant creature, named Thalia, becomes Stacey's first teacher.

Simultaneous to her volunteer work, Stacey begins consulting a gifted shamanic counselor, who introduces her to the shamanic journey trance. Stacey's new experiences in journey trance bring answers and guidance that have correlations in the visible world.

The relationship between the hawk and the woman, Stacey's growing ability to find answers to her soul's questions in shamanic trance, and Stacey's immersion in the natural and shamanic world began to create healing, expansion and a new found sense of joy. And once Thalia leaves the three-dimensional world behind, she becomes a powerful guide for Stacey in the shamanic world.

But Thalia was only the first of Stacey's treasured feathered companions in ***Gracious Wild***. Couch's powerful story continues with the arrival of Graccia, a gorgeous Red-Tailed Hawk, also in need of love and healing.

Graccia charms everyone from the start with her endless curiosity and carefree spirit. Stacey trains the red-tail how to work with people and Graccia, using love as the catalyst, shows her how to share the extraordinary. Together, they are able to forage friendships and open hearts.

Gracious Wild is a book for...

- Animal lovers, especially those who feel a kinship with hawks
- Spiritual seekers who want a first hand account of shamanism
- Nature enthusiasts who find that their encounters with wildlife escape explanation
- Journeyers on the healing path
- Anyone who is in a life transition looking to uncover meaning and purpose

Gracious Wild weaves Stacey's relationship with the hawks alongside her study of shamanism with a good deal of information included for those seeking more details about this spiritual path.

Within the pages of Gracious Wild, the reader will discover...

- How spending time in nature can open us up to the unseen realms
- How shamanism can bring about great healing and transformation
- What a shamanic journey trance looks and feels like
- The myriad ways that spirit animals communicate with us
- How being open to spirit messages from animals can provide life-changing guidance
- That it is easy for anyone of any descent to access shamanic wisdom in our modern-day culture

Gracious Wild teaches by example. It is one of those true healing stories that takes you out of the rational “how to” trap of the mind and into an instinctual experience that pervades all layers of being: body, mind,

heart and soul. In reading this story you will discover a new perspective on an old way, allowing you to dream your path to enlightenment.

Stacey's belief is, *"that wild animals are trying to speak and interact with us every day. To listen to them is to listen to that which is divine within each of us. Their calls mirror our own inner calling to a greater purpose."*

Gracious Wild: A Shamanic Journey with Hawks is priced at \$21.95 and available from Turning Stone Press, an imprint of Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC, as well as at www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com and booksellers nationwide.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stacey L. L. Couch, Certified Shamanic Practitioner, works as a publicist and journalist for Mother Nature. A pioneer at heart, she empowers people with the ability to explore life's big questions. She aims to show how to form a real connection with our own souls through the natural world. A life-long student of nature and mysticism, she has a biology degree in ecology and conservation as well as a 2-year shamanic practitioner certification. Her home on a 38-acre ranch is in Southwest Colorado. She offers shamanic healing and teaching services at www.wildgratitude.com.





Praise for *Gracious Wild: A Shamanic Journey with Hawks*

"*Gracious Wild* is a remarkable and heart opening story. Stacey Couch shows us how our relationship with nature and the wild creates a bridge between the seen and unseen worlds. This is such a beautifully written book that takes us into the deep mysteries inspiring us to create a deeper and more profound connection with the natural world."

- Sandra Ingerman, MA, author of *Soul Retrieval* and *Medicine for the Earth*

"This treasure is a must for all that love nature and are intrigued by the shamanic way of living, whether new or experienced. There is nothing I love more in reading a book than to enter into the adventure of a great story and find myself profoundly affected by depth of emotion and experiential wisdom. *Gracious Wild* does this and more in a provocative story that weaves together the raw beauty of nature, the fragility of life, the yearning of the wild, and the sacredness of Spirit through the author's insights, healing, and travels through dimensions and worlds most people know only in their dreams. **This exquisitely written book warmly touches hearts and gives flight to the soul,** while offering opportunities for healing and cathartic release. Don't be surprised if *Gracious Wild* moves you to tears and helps you experience some spontaneous healing of your own."

—Colleen Deatsman, author of *The Hollow Bone: A Field Guide to Shamanism* and *Seeing in the Dark: Claim Your Own Shamanic Power Now and in the Coming Age*

"*Gracious Wild* illuminates how our animal allies are ever-present and persistent teachers; constantly whispering encouragement for us to unfold into the magnificent beings that we humans have the potential to be. With the detail of true 'mouse energy', Stacey's writing brings the winged-ones to life: seeing the feathers' colors, imagining the breeze created by the flap of a raptor's wing, feeling the presence of the soul of each marvelous bird. **A beautifully crafted tale of one woman's journey of awakening to the power of the visible natural world,** as well as the unseen, non-ordinary world."

—E.P.I.C. Magazine - Empowering People, Inspiring Community

"Stacey Couch's *Gracious Wild, A Shamanic Journey with Hawks* is a fascinating and tender account of her journey into healing which was aided and mentored by the intimate contact she shared with a series of venerable hawks along the way. **A highly recommended, beautifully written story of power and transformation:** a lens into a world not often seen or heard from." —Kay Kamala, editor for *A Journal of Contemporary Shamanism*

"Since ancient times shaman have worked with the spirits of nature and *Gracious Wild* is an excellent narrative of this work in contemporary society. An intimate and authentic account of one woman's journey from science to shamanism, *Gracious Wild* also offers fascinating insight into the world of hawks and

brings inspiration of how everyone can discover grace from the divine spirits of the natural world.” —June Kent, editor for *Indie Shaman Magazine*

“Simultaneously realistic and mystical, Gracious Wild weaves archetypal themes into the author’s personal connection with the proud yet wounded birds of prey who changed her life. **Stacey’s heart-warming, at times heart-wrenching narrative scintillates with possibilities the modern human mind normally embraces only in dreams.** Reading this soulful, beautifully-written book is a shamanic journey into nature’s wisdom of renewal, empowerment, compassion, and hope.” —Linda Kohanov, author of *The Tao of Equus, Riding between the Worlds, Way of the Horse, and Power of the Herd*

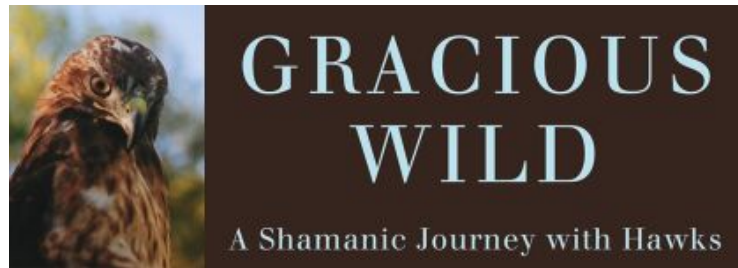
“Gracious Wild is extraordinary in how it shows the profound understanding and soul transformation that can come from inviting the mind to open to the natural world and to connect with it on a deep level. Stacey Couch beautifully describes her own journey and artfully weaves together her encounters in a way that accesses the draw our souls all feel to nature while also enrapturing our minds in the mystery. “ —Christa Mackinnon, psychologist, psychotherapist, counselor and author of *Shamanism and Spirituality in Therapeutic Practice*

“This is a uniquely passionate and powerful book that explores the deepest mysteries of connection within the expressive world of birds. The author’s personal journey is so well expressed to enlighten the messages available when we open to this sacred connection. **This book will assist the reader in transforming their everyday** relationships with creation. Inspiring us all to honor, listen and protect our messengers of the divine.” —Melisa Pearce author of *Touched by a Horse Inspirational Deck (Whispers from a Horse’s Heart)*

"Stacey shares the doors to her wild self in her book in an authentic manner. This is not a guidebook to shamanism, though she does provide a brief introduction and helpful resources. Instead, *Gracious Wild* is a woman's story of her spiritual journey. Her story is an inspiration for those of us looking to connect to our wild selves as well. It is told with love and honesty. **I can see women coming together to read Stacey's book, discussing all the doors it opens for exploration.** I can see how once you have read her book you won't see the wild animals around you in the same way." -Paola Suarez, *SageWoman Magazine*

"Our ancient ancestors understood that sacred Nature and her plants, animals and birds were masterful teacher-healers. *Gracious Wild* is the powerful story of one woman's profound healing in the company of hawks. These birds' timeless wisdom, connection between the Earth and the Sky, and fierce vitality guide the author to embody her soul's truth and step onto the shamanic path. **This book is a perfect accompaniment for anyone's healing journey.**" —Evelyn C. Rysdyk, author of *Spirit Walking: A Course in Shamanic Power*

“In a gripping memoir-narrative, Stacey Couch takes us on an unforgettable and seamless journey from the Dream World to the Real World, from the Scientific World to the Hawk World, from urbanity to wildness. Along the way, we become enthralled by the magic of synchronicity and the joy of spirit mirrors. **In the madness of this modern world that we live in, I found Gracious Wild to be a gentle oasis of joyous and uplifting sanity.**” —Jon Turk, author of *The Raven’s Gift: A Scientist, A Shaman, and their Remarkable Journey Through the Siberian Wilderness.*



Stacey L. L. Couch
Biography

Stacey Couch, CSP, CAC has dedicated her life to nurturing the sacred bond between humans and nature. She works as a publicist and journalist for Mother Nature, empowering people with the ability to form a real connection with their own souls.

As a child, Stacey practiced energy medicine, read Clarissa Pinkola Estes, and studied power animals. She had the great fortune of being surrounded by a group of wise women, including her mother, that taught her new age spirituality as it emerged. In elementary school, Stacey was so alarmed to learn of the plight of endangered species that she decided then to become an environmental scientist. One Halloween, Stacey trick-or-treated through her middle-class suburban neighborhood as an environmental protestor. She convinced her landlocked fifth grade class to adopt a manatee.



So excited to start on the path, Stacey attended college biology courses before finishing high school. She spent her summers during college earning additional credits interning on seabird research projects and graduated early with honors in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology. Stacey's pioneering study on a Brandt's Cormorant colony was published in the scientific journal *Northwestern Naturalist*.

Stacey finally realized her dream of saving an endangered species in 2001 when hired to work on an island in an endangered fox captive breeding program. She didn't expect that her time alone on an abandoned island would cause her to question everything. The isolation was an accidental vision quest that spurred a complete life change. Stacey left the scientific field and went soul searching with the help of two hawks at a wildlife center and a gifted shamanic teacher. This story is covered in her first book, ***Gracious Wild: A Shamanic Journey with Hawks***.



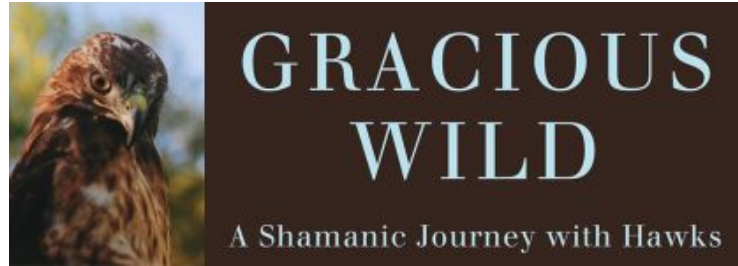
The answer to Stacey's search was a to complete two years of schooling at a Colorado State Certified Occupational School to earn the title of Certified Shamanic Practitioner (CSP). After graduating, she went to work for organizations that had the best interest of the planet at heart. She helped grow a horse rescue training and adoption program as well as a sustainable greenhouse manufacturing company.

In 2008, Stacey studied with the talented shamanic teacher

Sandra Ingerman to learn her exceptional *Medicine for the Earth* methods. Stacey is currently an ongoing student at CMED, the education institute founded by world renowned and bestselling author Carolyn Myss. CMED recently granted Stacey with the designation of a Certified Archetypal Consultant (CAC).

Today Stacey Couch owns Wild Gratitude LLC a shamanic practice that offers individual healing, spiritual consulting and workshops. Wild Gratitude is also website with a wellspring of information on animal symbolism. Decades of experience with wildlife, rescue animals, and spiritual studies creates Stacey's unique blend of rational and mystical perspectives. She makes the world of shamanism easily accessible to others. Stacey writes for a number of blogs including The Mindful Word and SageWoman. Her spirit animal interpretations and thought provoking writing can be found at www.wildgratitude.com.





On Air Introduction

Stacey Couch – devoted shamanic practitioner, naturalist, archetypal consultant, and author - has her calling in cultivating the sacred bond between humans and nature. She works as a publicist and journalist for the planet, empowering people with the ability to form a real connection with their own souls.

As an answer to her life-long yearning to help save endangered species, Stacey once accepted a position working on a lonely, abandoned island. Although she was there to help rescue a species of fox from the brink of extinction, it was a host of hawks that caught her attention. The encounter with these hawks was the start of the soul-searching quest that Stacey Couch writes about in her extraordinary memoir ***Gracious Wild: A Shamanic Journey with Hawks***.

Kay Kamala, editor for *A Journal of Contemporary Shamanism* calls ***Gracious Wild***, "A highly recommended, beautifully written story of power and transformation."

Stacey Couch is a published scientific author and has a degree in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology. After years of working in the field as a professional wildlife biologist, Stacey turned to matters of the soul and became an avid student of spiritual healing and wisdom, taking a special interest in shamanism because of its nature-centric approach. She's studied, most notably, with well-known author and shamanic teacher Sandra Ingerman. Couch is also an ongoing student of the CMED education institute, founded by world-renowned author Caroline Myss. Stacey is fortunate to count over a dozen of other gifted healing practitioners as her teachers.

Stacey Couch is both a Certified Shamanic Practitioner and a Certified Archetypal Consultant. She embraces all walks of life and is well versed in many spiritual traditions. Pair this with her extensive expertise in animal biology and behavior and you have a powerful combination of rational and mystical perspectives.

Stacey is the founder of Wild Gratitude a shamanic practice that offers individual healing, spiritual consulting and workshops. Wild Gratitude is also an online resource with a wellspring of information on animal symbolism. Learn more at www.wildgratitude.com



Media Questions

1. What is Gracious Wild about?
2. What inspired you to write the book?
3. At the start of Gracious Wild you were living on an island alone. What was that like?
4. How might other people benefit from time alone in nature?
5. Over the course of the story, you switch careers from being a scientist to training to be a shamanic practitioner, how was this transition for you?
6. What was missing for you in your career as a wildlife biologist that left you looking for more?
 - a. Why the move to alternative healing?
 - b. What was it that drew you to shamanism?
7. What time period of your life does the book cover?
8. You seem fairly young to have had all the unique life experiences you had. How have you packed all of this in?
9. How did you get into handling and training hawks? Tell us about the work you did.
10. Why do you think so many people are attracted to hawks?
11. What do hawks symbolize?
12. One of the last chapters, "The Mouthpiece", tells the story of a badly injured hawk that brought you a somber message. Would you be willing to share that story and the message with the listeners?
13. There are two hawks in particular that were your teachers in the book. What were Thalia and Graccia (pronounced "GRAH-shuh") like?
14. You share in the chapter entitled "On Healing Wounds" that you couldn't find the encounters that fulfilled you in the human world, but that you received what you needed in relationships with animals. Can you tell us more about that?
15. You share the story of a sexual assault that happened to you when you were in high school. How did you get the courage to share that story in writing?
16. What are people sharing that they've gained from reading Gracious Wild?
17. You share how certain animals show up over and over again in your waking life and in dreams. What is synchronicity and how important is synchronicity to the story?

18. You talk about Gracious Wild as a "teaching through story", but most people don't have the chance to live on an island alone or train red-tailed hawks. How would you suggest that people access the same healing power that you have?
19. You reference a "shamanic journey". What is that and how does it appear in the book?
20. What sets shamanism apart from other healing modalities?
21. How can listeners learn more about shamanism?
22. You are now a shamanic practitioner and teacher. Tell us about Wild Gratitude and what it means to you.
23. How are you helping others with Wild Gratitude?
24. Where can someone get a copy of your book, Gracious Wild?



Promoting

Book

Gracious Wild: A Shamanic Journey with Hawks

(Turning Stone Press, 2013)

Available at booksellers nationwide, www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com

Free Resources

Wild Gratitude's Spirit Animal Library

A growing collection of articles on the guidance and symbolism of different animals

What is my Spirit Animal? ebook

Download on www.wildgratitude.com homepage

Shamanic Services

One-on-One Private Healing Sessions by Phone

Stacey Couch goes on a shamanic journey for you to discover the spirit animals and guides who are coming forward to help. She conducts a soul retrieval to find parts of you that have been lost due to trauma. You will connect with your gifts and feel like finally you are able to live your full potential. Contact info@wildgratitude.com or 970-903-7180 to schedule an appointment.

Shamanic Journey Workshops

Learn how to go on your own shamanic journeys to receive valuable guidance and support from your guides. Schedule available at www.wildgratitude.com

Spirit Animal Workshops

Explore your relationships with spirit animals and understand the messages they are bringing at a level much deeper than you could ever imagine. Schedule available at www.wildgratitude.com