

Shadows and Water Wisdom

In 2016 I was initiated in the spirit name Reflective Hummingbird. Hmm... I liked that its sound suggested listening. It also reflected the spirit of water, Mayyim (Heb.) that appeared in my MKP Mission Statement, "I transform my limitations through the wisdom of water to create a more harmonious world." My congenital cerebral palsy led me to a lifetime of somatic awareness studies leading me to explore skiing, thirty years in Aikido (www.GreenerMediations.net/appliedaikido) dance, and a self-styled inner listening piano. (www.GreenerMediations.net/piano)

Several years ago I started swimming as rehab from a cardiac event, initially like it was a gym workout, until I realized how a sailboat cuts through water by its graceful shape not its power, and started studying swimming styles. I settled into doing crawl and back-stroke, switching in mid-lap. I lost momentum turning over until I focused on my buoyancy and discovered some continuity in the transition stroke. Soon the momentum encouraged me to turn continuously, which I learned to sustain as a spinning move; one day a woman said I swam like a playful otter, which stuck as my new spirit name.

In the midst of another swim, I found myself at the pool's end with the swimmer in the next lane, who remarked, "You swim like you do Aikido!" Not recognizing him, I asked, "Have we trained together?" No. Have you trained in Aikido?" No. "Observed?" No. "So how did you recognize my aiki-swimming?" He said, confidently, "I've read George Leonard's books." Hmm... this man learns well.

Years ago, after his premier filming of wild dolphins swimming with people and recorded music, the movie-maker invited a dozen associates of Larkspur's Devta Center for Body Awareness to join him on a schooner returning to the dolphins' dancing grounds in the Florida Keys. As we approached the harbor, he radioed ahead to have the captain arrange a dive boat to take our party out while the schooner was loaded. His movie had left him with a prideful attitude, like now he could walk on water, and that offended and embarrassed our captain (and harbormaster.) All the harbor men heard the radio exchange, and our cruise was abruptly cancelled. We reconnoitered in a motel that

night, and decided to salvage our shipwrecked adventure by renting two available dive-boats. The “hunt” was on.... After two days of traipsing through expected dolphin play-waters, we finally spotted a school of them some distance from our stern.

“Turn the boats around!” was the call; but when we got to their spot, they were gone. “They’re behind us, right where we were!” Again we reversed direction, and again they disappeared.... several times. “Are they toying with us?” “This is their territory....” Hmmm.....

Finally we just stopped and waited.... time passed, and folks got impatient. Then someone said, “I’m goin’ in,” and most of them did. Young Adam and I were slow to gear up, and he followed me in on the quiet side of the boat, away from the swimmers and where the dolphins were last seen. “Green!” shouted someone on the deck, “They’re headed your way!” I dove under, and at fifteen feet down in thirty feet of clear ocean water, they appeared --- at least a dozen, in a line, headed right at me!! My heart was pounding when they arrived; the water alive with clicking. As they passed, the two nearest me turned sideways, sliding by close, grinning from ear-to-ear, and then they were gone, and there was this silent stillness.

They weren’t seen again....

If you don’t think dolphins will mess with a man’s ego, watch this one upend a guy who appears to think that he can walk on water,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Uw3lyo6VMg>

Jerry Green / Playful Otter
Lead Elder Emeritus MKP NorCal

