

Sue Kenney is a pilgrim, author, inspirational speaker, workshop designer and facilitator. Her first book, *My Camino*, is the true story of her 780 kilometer walk across the north of Spain in the winter, alone. While on this walk she had the opportunity to face many fears including her biggest fear; getting to know who she really was and discovering her life's purpose.

While she was walking the Camino her fears looked different. She felt safe on the Camino and was therefore able to face and work through them. After she had faced her fears about falling off a mountain and never being found, being attacked by wild dogs or being robbed by strange men, she found that another fear had been barricaded behind all the others. The fear of facing herself, who she was and what she was meant to do during her life; what her true purpose was. She believed philosophically and understood intellectually the theory of living ones life from a place of love but she found she couldn't do it; something was missing. She had lost the ability to love herself. *My Camino* is the story of her journey back to self-love.

Upon her return from Spain she began telling her stories and experiences about walking the Camino. She found the guests at a Christmas party waiting for her arrival and then listening with rapt attention as she related her experiences. It was at this point that she realized she was a storyteller in the true sense of the word, and that she was meant to inspire people with her voice.

One of the stories Sue tells is about the Sorrow Stones. She met a pilgrim along her walk that told her if she picked up a stone she could put her sorrow into it then put the stone back on the ground and leave some of the sorrow behind. She did this throughout her pilgrimage. She put sorrow into the stones for herself, her children and her family. By the end of the journey she felt she left the burdens of her sorrow behind. She met the pilgrim again and he told her that the stones worked because she believed in them. Sue now uses the stones as a teaching tool. She teaches the idea that if you have an intention, meaning you believe in something, you can put it into a stone and the possibility of it coming true becomes stronger. Then the stone becomes a reminder of your intention, it becomes something tangible that you can touch and hold that brings you back with awareness to focus on your intention. This has proven to be incredibly powerful to many people.

Sue is a gold medal world-class rower. She started rowing initially as a way to release her anger when her younger sister was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Much like the sorrow stones, she felt if she could release her anger into the water through the oar, she would be much more present for her sister for the time they had left together. Sue now teaches a workshop based on the discipline of rowing called *Planning to Win*. It's about taking yourself to another level using the discipline of rowing in every aspect of life. When you row you basically do one stroke over and over again. Although it takes about 250 movements to complete one stroke it is only possible to notice about 25 and focus on five. So it's about finding what's important and focusing on that. Then there's the boat, which typically holds eight people. Each person having a different role and each being dependent on the others to keep the boat going forward quickly and smoothly. Also there's the idea of training every day, which is a transferable skill. If you want to be good

at something you have to do it every day with intent. Sue no longer questions this process she has seen it work so consistently.

In 2004 Sue took a second trip, this time on the Portuguese route of the Camino. Before she left a native friend of hers had a dream that Sue was to take a feather on her journey and give it to someone from a different country and then that person would in turn give it to another person from another country. When she first started out Sue thought it was her job to choose the person to give the feather to. She came to the realization that she was not in control of the eagle feather and that if she opened herself up the person who should get the feather would come to her. She has written a second book about this journey and the lesson that we self-select where we are in life. This book is called *The Journey of the Eagle Feather* and is now in the editing stage.

Last October Sue led a group of five women of different ages and backgrounds on a 240 km pilgrimage. Along with the group was a camera crew who filmed their journey. The footage obtained on this trip will be edited into a documentary that will be released in 2006. When asked how the women were chosen to be in the group Sue replied that they chose themselves, she didn't choose them. She related an important lesson that she had learned on the Camino and that was that you never walk past a pilgrim in need. Initially a woman who had breast cancer and wanted to walk the Camino had approached her about making the trip. She had exhausted all other avenues and felt Sue was her only hope to be able to go. Sue agreed to take her but in the end she was unable to go. Meanwhile many other people had expressed an interest in making the trip. Only the five women committed and completed the pilgrimage.

The walking pilgrimages have led Sue to a primal discovery. There is a correlation between walking and creativity. Before the Camino, Sue was not a writer and she believes that she was able to write her book because her creativity was released during her pilgrimage. In researching this concept she discovered that Beethoven was paid by three Austrian businessmen to walk every day because they knew his music was better if he walked. It is also known that Woodsworth wrote his poetry either after or while he was walking. Sue would like to create a Foundation that pays artists to walk to become more creative. Ultimately, more creativity would lead to better solutions to the world's problems.

It is important to Sue Kenney that people understand that her way is not the only way. You don't have to walk the Camino in Spain, not everyone can. The Camino is right here. Everyone is already on a walk; each person is on his or her own journey. It is a metaphor for going forward in life. One is always walking, always living, always on a journey. Sue's purpose is to inspire people to be on life's walk with intention and consciousness and self-love.

Sue Kenney's book, *My Camino* is available at independent bookstores, Chapters, Indigo and on her website www.suekenney.ca. Her CD, *Stone by Stone Meditative Storytelling*, is also available on her website.

