



2017 VISION QUEST PROGRAM PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

We are looking forward to your participation! This 4-session program is designed to support full engagement in your personal, work and community life. Inspired by the work of cultural anthropologist Dr. Angeles Arrien, the program focuses on four archetypes: the Leader, Healer, Visionary and Teacher. Each archetype corresponds to a cardinal direction. Each direction contains a set of practices synthesized from worldwide shamanic traditions. The program is intended to deepen our knowledge and application of these practices. These tools are cross-cultural and can be applied in any environment where leadership, wellbeing, creativity and wisdom are valued.

The North: The Warrior

February 4/5 – Four Points Sheraton, Marin County, CA

“Show up and choose to be present.” Full engagement allows us to access the human resources of power, presence and communication.

The South: The Healer

April 22/23 – Four Points Sheraton, Marin County, CA

“Paying attention to what has heart and meaning” opens us up to the human resources of love, gratitude, acknowledgement and validation.

The East: The Visionary – Vision Quest

June 7 to 11 – Four Springs Retreat, Middletown, CA

The East (Summer) is devoted to vision and our life dream. The Vision Quest is a 5-day experience that includes 4 days and 4 nights supervised camping on the land – to fast, meditate, pray and envision a path with heart and meaning. A modified Vision Quest that takes place in a retreat room is also available.

The West: The Teacher

October 21/22 – Four Points Sheraton, Marin County, CA

“Being open to outcome, not attached to outcome” funds wisdom and objectivity.

Logistics — The North, The South and The West

February 4/5, April 22/23, October 21/22

Location: Four Points Sheraton San Rafael, 1010 Northgate Dr., San Rafael, CA 94903

Located in the center of Marin County, the hotel is a short drive (35 – 40 miles) from the San Francisco and Oakland Airports. It is surrounded by rolling hills, the scenic north coast, and Sonoma and Napa wine country. Parking is free. For maps and driving directions, please go to <http://www.fourpointssanrafael.com/directions>

For Shuttle Service from Airport: Airport Ride, 1-800-327-2024, is a private shuttle company that you can make arrangements with. Cost ranges from \$20 - \$30 from the San Francisco or Oakland Airport to the hotel.

Accommodation: The Four Points Sheraton is offering a special room rate for Four Directions participants ranging from \$189 - \$199/night plus taxes (depending on availability). Please phone 1-800-325-3535 or 415-479-8800 and speak to a reservationist. Identify yourself as a member of the Four Directions group to secure the group rate. You must reserve at least 35 days in advance of each session to obtain the special rate.

Program Hours & What to Bring: 9:30–4:30 on each day for February, April and October sessions. Lunch is included. (For June session see Vision Quest section.) Dress for the program is comfortable and casual. Please be sure to bring a yoga mat, blanket or towel for Journey Work, a 20-minute meditation that is central to the work. Please bring along a journal as well, for recording your insights.

Logistics — The East: Vision Quest

Wednesday June 7 to Sunday June 11

Information in this section includes:

- What is a Vision Quest
- Vision Quest Location & Directions
- Vision Quest Overview
- Preparing for Your Vision Quest
 - Supplies to assemble/What to bring
 - Should I Fast?
 - Camp gear practice run and physical prep at home
 - Mental preparation – The Four S's

What is a Vision Quest?

In the season of the Visionary, we will deepen our learning by having 5 days in a wilderness experience. Many indigenous cultures use the Vision Quest as a rite of passage into adulthood or for spiritual work. A Vision Quest puts us in direct contact with the spirits of land and place and with nature and all of its lessons. When we can get away from our fast-paced, demanding lives and slow down, sit still, and keep silence in nature, we can deepen learning, reflect and integrate, and process from the heart rather than the head.

The Four Directions Vision Quest may differ from other types of wilderness experiences you may have had or heard about. This will be a healing quest, not a test of your endurance. It is not like a regular camping trip either: there is no hiking, swimming, roasting marshmallows, or recreation. Instead, you will find a spot and stay put there the whole time. There will be support all around you, and attention has been paid to safety and security. A base camp crew will support you physically and take shifts so that someone is available around the clock if you need anything. The base camp crew also supports you spiritually, as they pray for each of you every hour while you are out on the land.

Over the years, our experienced staff has supported thousands of people – many of whom have never camped overnight – to have a safe, deep and meaningful experience on the land. We encourage you to take this opportunity to spend time in solitude, on the land – to fast, meditate, pray and envision a path with heart and meaning. *However, if you cannot camp out on the land, a Modified Vision Quest, where participants spend their retreat time in a retreat room is also available. Space for Modified Vision Quest is limited so please let us know as soon as possible if you wish this option.*

Vision Quest Location & Directions

Four Springs Retreat, 14598 Sheveland Rd., Middletown, CA 95461

The Retreat is approx. 85 miles from San Francisco, just north of the Napa Valley near Middletown, CA. San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento Airports are all about two and half hours by car from Four Springs. The retreat is a sacred sanctuary recognized around the world as an inspirational setting for reflection, study and personal transformation. For more on Four Springs visit <http://www.foursprings.org>

- **For Driving Directions:** <http://www.foursprings.org/travel.htm>

Vision Quest Overview

Wednesday June 7

All participants should plan to arrive by **9 am**. Give yourself ample time so you do not have to rush. Upon arrival, there will be people to greet and direct you. Following a morning learning session and lunch, you will take your camping gear to the dream circle where you will set up your tent and we will walk the land. We will have dinner together and there will be an evening learning session that goes until 9:30 pm. At that time, you will be introduced to your Vision Quest partner(s). Everyone will camp together in the dream circle this first night. Modified Vision Questers will spend their retreat time in a retreat room.

Thursday June 8, Friday June 9, Saturday June 10

On Thursday, someone will come through the dream circle with a bell to wake you around 5:30 am. Take down your tent and pack up before you join the group for breakfast at 6:30 am. When breakfast is over, you will get your fasting solution and head out to set up your campsite for the next 3 days and 3 nights. Pick a place with some shade, level ground, and that is within your comfort zone. After you have your spot, you will meet your Vision Quest partner(s) and show each other your spots, and share your intentions for the Vision Quest. At this time you exchange gifts, and then return to your spot. The only time you will leave this spot until Sunday morning is the time you arrange to check in with your Vision Quest partner(s) on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Sunday June 11

In the morning, pack up your gear and return to the dream circle by 8:30 am. Stay in silence while you pack and return to the dream circle. You will meet with your Vision Quest partner(s) at the dining room, still in silence, to go to breakfast at 8:30 am. Once in the dining room, you may break your silence, but do not share your experience yet. After breakfast, we return to the teaching room and everyone shares their seeds of learning. Everyone will have important lessons to share. Be mindful about sharing only your seeds of learning, not stories about your experience so that everyone has a chance to speak. You will be asked to share your seeds of learning about self, relationships, and community or collective work. There will be a brunch served at 11 am and typically, we finish up around 4 pm. Take your time going home, because you will be in an altered state, in nature's rhythm.

When you get home

Take time to ease back into your usual routine. It may take you longer to get ready for work the next few days because you have slowed down your whole system. The Vision Quest will keep working you for a few days or weeks after you get home. Please don't share your Vision Quest experience with others until at least three people have commented about noticing some change in you. If your friends and family notice that you are calmer, more grounded, happier, more thoughtful, or any other change, then you may share your experience. Otherwise, the experience is for you to reflect on and integrate personally. Many people spend some time creating a vision quest integration tool...a collage, a poem, a piece of artwork of any kind. This creative work will help you integrate your experience and not forget the important lessons you were given.

Preparing for Your Vision Quest

On the Land: It is important to prepare well. Start assembling your gear at least 10 days prior to the Vision Quest. The table below lists some of the essential items you will need to bring. Other things to consider are fasting, your own health, your relationship to caffeine, and your confidence around setting up a tent and campsite.

Supplies to assemble and bring	Why I need it
Tent, Sleeping Bag, Towel 2 tarps or ground clothes Therma rest camp mattress Sunshade	One tarp under your tent, one inside to keep you drier and to sit on during the day outside your tent. A blow up mattress cushions impact of hard ground. If your tent does not have a flap that you can extend as a sun or rain shade during the day, you might want to bring an umbrella or extra tarp to protect you from the sun.
Stakes and a hammer/mallet	Its often windy on this land, and the ground is very dry and hard. You need metal stakes and a hammer to pound them in with. Metal stakes will secure your tent better in high winds than plastic stakes.
2 containers for water (including a 25 oz container for fasting solution)	One for mixing the fasting solution, if you choose to use it; one for plain water for drinking and washing up. There will be water stations nearby, so you do not need large containers. You can bring empty ones and fill them up there.
A trowel, toilet paper, moist wipes	You will dig your own latrine near your campsite
Clothing - layers Toothbrush, toothpaste Other minimal items needed	Dress in layers. The temperature varies greatly this time of year. It can be very hot during the day and quite chilly at night. Bring rain gear just in case.
Hat, Sunscreen Mosquito repellent Ben's Insect & Tick repellent	For obvious reasons! Detailed information on how to prevent tick and other insect bites and ways to deal with sun and heat will be provided and discussed at the weekend sessions prior to your time on the land.
A 40 foot rope	If you are afraid of snakes, you can make a circle around your campsite with a rope. Snakes do not like to cross over a rope.
Technu or similar poison oak product	There is poison oak all over the land. If you are exposed, immediately rinse the area with technu and come to base camp to shower.
Flashlight and extra batteries	It gets pretty dark at night!
A watch or clock with alarm	You will meet with your Vision Quest partners to check in once a day and need to return on Sunday in time for breakfast. It's easy to lose track of time so set an alarm.
2 gender-neutral gifts	You will have 1 or 2 Vision Quest partners. Please bring a gift to share; not something that you purchase, but an item in your possession that you would like to share. You might even choose something precious to you as an exercise in letting go. The point is to find gifts that have meaning to you.
A journal and writing utensils	A Vision Quest is not the time to write the great American novel, but bring along a journal to record the thoughts you do not want to forget.
Optional: camp chair, rattle, drum, food	If sitting on the ground is hard for you, bring a small camp chair for your comfort.

Please do not bring candles, matches, lighters, magnifying glasses, crystals, or other objects that can spark fires. No open flames are allowed on the land because of the fire hazard.

Should I Fast?

Give some thought to whether you will fast or not. If you have any health conditions or take medications that might be affected by fasting, check with your doctor first. This is a self-care healing Vision Quest, not a test of your endurance, so do not fast unless you are healthy enough and really want to. Some people do a partial fast, with the master cleanser and fruit, protein bars, or other easy to pack and carry food items. Master cleanser is a solution of pure maple syrup, lemon juice, and cayenne pepper that is added to your drinking water. If you cannot decide, just bring along some food. You can always choose not to eat it.

Camp Gear Practice Run and Physical Prep at Home

If you do not camp much or have a new tent, please practice setting up your campsite prior to arriving on the land. There will be people to help you the first day, but it is far better to practice and feel sufficient in your abilities to set up your own tent. In addition, if you are a heavy caffeine drinker, think about whether you want to start weaning yourself off of caffeine (that will take 3-4 weeks before the Vision Quest), or use chocolate covered coffee beans during the Vision Quest.

Mental Preparation – The Four S's

You will get the most out of your vision quest experience if you consider the three S's ahead of time and practice them to the best of your ability during the Vision Quest. They are powerful tools for self-reflection and integration. Consider which ones might be the most challenging for you, and what strategies you might use while on the land if you feel challenged.

Silence: When you still the outside voice, the inner chatterbox voices also begin to quiet down and you will hear the wisdom voice. The sounds of nature will become more apparent and have messages for you. Silence is golden! Keep in mind that others are nearby, and that any sounds you make (chanting, singing, talking to others) may disturb someone else's Vision Quest. Rattling and drumming are permitted between the hours of 8 am and 8 pm, but please do it quietly and be mindful that not everyone will appreciate the extra sounds.

Stillness: Once you find your campsite, you will remain there except for the pre-arranged time when you meet with your Vision Quest partners. Please try to stay within 20 feet of your tent, because wandering about will also disturb other participant's Vision Quest experience. We spend so much of our day in motion, that it is a gift to be able to settle in one spot and stay there.

Solitude: This time is for you, to be spent in your own reflection and deep inner work. If you are near other people, try to arrange your tent opening or day camp set up facing away from your neighbors so everyone can feel some degree of solitude.

Setting Intentions: At the end of the Vision Quest, on Sunday morning and afternoon, we will share our seeds of learning. To prepare yourself, think about this question prior to going on the land:
What is the heart of my learning this year in relationship to my self, my one-to-one relationships, and my group, community, or collective work?

We will be helping you to prepare for your time on the land and supporting you to integrate your experience and learning in each of The Four Directions sessions leading up to and following the Vision Quest. Please feel free to contact Ellie Trainer at (905) 830-4475 or email elinor@extraordinaryconversations.com if you have questions or need additional information at this time. I'm looking forward to our journey together!

Best,
Patrick O'Neill