

[00:00:03.930] - Speaker 2

Hi, Christopher. Thanks for joining us for this interview with or from the roots. Would you like to introduce yourself to begin?

[00:00:13.820] - Speaker 1

Yeah, sure. Hey, my name is Christopher Drummond, and I always struggle with defining myself in these kinds of ways. But I'm a writer and a poet and a co-founder of the organization, Remembering Earth, who we do wilderness-based rites of passage, mixing in with, I would say, depth psychology, principles, and creativity.

[00:00:43.150] - Speaker 2

Great. Thanks.

[00:00:44.350] - Speaker 1

Yeah.

[00:00:45.010] - Speaker 2

Would you like to tell us a little bit more about Remembering Earth and what you work on there?

[00:00:52.360] - Speaker 1

Yeah. We're located in Western North Carolina, on the lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee people. We came together through the... Ultimately, I think, the practice of the Vision Fast. We all participated with an organization called the Anemus Valley Institute, which is where a lot of us met and those are the ideas that brought us together. A lot of our work comes out of our experience with Anemus Valley, which is the vision-fast is a big part of it, and a lot of it is involving dreams and dream work, and it brings in the ideas of Carl Jung and other others who have been, I guess, prominent in the depth psychology tradition, but it's also based on work that's been tradition that's been happening for thousands of years.

[00:01:59.010] - Speaker 2

Right. Yeah.

[00:02:02.470] - Speaker 1

We look at how we can bring ourselves and the people that we're working with into a deeper connection with the land. Sometimes I feel like our elevator pitch is helping people fall more in love with the natural world and that it can be that simple because I think it's—with the word decolonization gets thrown around a lot. I think that what we feel is that it's through re-opening, re-developing the skills of awareness and opening the capacity to actually participate with the land and hear the land and feel deeply the land that is going to offer the wisdom that we need in these times.

[00:02:59.090] - Speaker 2

Very true. It's true. I like that. Would you like to tell us a little bit more about dream work and how working with our dreams can help us connect with mystery and ourselves?

[00:03:11.900] - Speaker 1

Yeah. Dream work, Dream work is a mystery in itself.

[00:03:17.950] - Speaker 2

I.

[00:03:22.090] - Speaker 1

Think there's so many different approaches, but again, it's something that seems to be found across and across time as an understanding that there's a lot of wisdom in the night world and the images that come through the psyche. You can look at that from a psychological perspective, but you can also look at that from a land-based perspective. Psychologically speaking, it's an evidence-based tool for seeing the wounds and the neuroses and the aspects of our relative human lives. Often there's often a picture of that being shown to us, and people have found great results of untangling aspects of their own psychology through dream. But then I think there's, to me, what's more interesting is the deeper levels of dreaming that we could call spiritual or mystical, where the possibility that you're dreaming with the land. There's so many stories that, especially when you're out there participating in a land-based ritual, the way that the dream world and the outer mirror of the land and the natural world start to almost bleed together in a way. It starts to feel like there's one conversation happening.

[00:04:55.280] - Speaker 2

Between.

[00:04:55.960] - Speaker 1

Hand and the night world and then your own self, which is just one little part, this much wider landscape inside. I think there's so much to say about dreams. There's the diabolic practices of dream yoga, which are about gaining lucidity inside your own dreamscape and moving forward to the place of unitive consciousness or the awareness that pervades all things. That was a practice of preparing for death in the tradition and is still practiced. Very cool.

[00:05:31.440] - Speaker 2

Yeah, I've definitely had that experience of the dreams and the land melding on an animus trip, yeah.

[00:05:42.370] - Speaker 1

There's just so much... The amount of synchronicities that I've had in my own dreams or just the clue of what the next right step is or thetic dreams, again, all of these have been shown across time and across

culture, years from different contexts. But it just... The more I learn and the more I work with my own dreams, the more obsessed I get as the central importance of them.

[00:06:15.780] - Speaker 2

Yeah, for sure. As the weather gets cooler, at least here, what are some ways you like to maintain a spiritual practice in the world?

[00:06:31.150] - Speaker 1

Well, I am from Montana. I think the cold has never been an impediment to going outside. I prefer it because the quiet, the silence of the mountains in winter, like mountains under a fresh snow, is one of the quietest experiences I've ever had. I love just hiking around, moving slow. I think it's a time when I really like to meditate more. I have a little meditation group that we're meeting on the mornings, Monday and Tuesday mornings and meditating for an hour together. There's something about everybody's got a blanket over them and just sitting in that space with other people and bringing your attention to the present moment. Dreams, for sure. I'm noticing now, as Winter is approaching a growing reemergence of my dream life and my interest in my dream life. With that comes journaling, just slow things for me. In the summer, there's a lot more outward activity. This winter, I'm also in school right now. I'm in graduate school for counseling, psychology, and really looking forward to being able to take a month and slow down. I would say reading too. Books are great spiritual practice.

[00:08:08.020] - Speaker 2

For sure. Can you tell us a little bit about your writing practice, how that has evolved and how it relates to your spiritual connection with the natural world?

[00:08:25.890] - Speaker 1

Yeah. Writing practice. I've been in a funny relationship with writing that it's something that I really never expected or be into, I mean, poetry or even just writing generally. I think when my consciousness started to get cracked open through various plant experiences or experiences of deep trauma, there was just this thread of meaning that I started to experience, and I started to get really interested in reading a lot and reading. I still remember one of the first really impactful books I read was by Ralph Waldo Emerson. This is his book of essays, Self-Reliance. He talked about essentially speaking your own truths and your own ideas and really claiming life that's living inside of you, or you're forced to take it second-hand. If you don't speak what's true for you, you'll have to hear it spoken back to you from somebody else. There was something like a permission giving at that time. I think at that time I was traveling around the world. I graduated college and there was just this growing of.

[00:10:00.170] - Speaker 1

Writing is something that brought me alive.

[00:10:02.540] - Speaker 2

I.

[00:10:03.970] - Speaker 1

Just started doing that. I started a blog and I would just write about my experiences. I had a degree in English literature, so there was some familiarity and I think it came naturally to me, but I just accidentally found my way into it as what you said is a spiritual practice.

[00:10:29.930] - Speaker 2

I.

[00:10:30.640] - Speaker 1

Think from there, the feeling started to become almost addictive of this recognition like, Oh, there's a fire growing in me as I said, this and... Then I started reading more books on it and taking courses and taking classes and writing articles. I think that it was a big part of my own healing too, moving through some really traumatic stuff that cracked me open, but that it took me at least five or six years to even move through the initial depression phases after that series of traumas that I experienced. As my spiritual path opened and as my values started to become more clear, it became a way of processing my experience. Then once there was a readiness of becoming visible, which is, in my opinion, a huge part of the healing path, is clarifying the meaning and making whatever reconciliations need to happen to step through a wounding experience. But for me, it was becoming visible through my words. That looked like using social media as a way.

[00:11:54.220] - Speaker 2

Of.

[00:11:54.880] - Speaker 1

That edge and saying something a little bit more honest or a little bit more vulnerable, and then starting to submit articles to free magazines around the place where I lived and then letters to the editor. My writing and spiritualized took on a more activist.

[00:12:10.250] - Speaker 2

Approach.

[00:12:12.520] - Speaker 1

Particularly in regards to climate. Every month writing my 300 words and sending it into the newspaper. As a practice, having to hone it down to 300 words, having to be very precise with my language, having to be really clear about what I'm saying, as clear as I could be. Then I can look back on those letters and the angst and the anger that was in them and chuckle, thankfully. It's pretty embarrassing. But just recognizing that as an important step of claiming something about who I am and letting other people see it because in our day-to-day social interactions, it can be really hard to feel like we're truly expressing

what we have to express, like the depths of our experience in the world. Then I taught it. I started teaching adult ed classes and I taught writing in Vietnam. I think all of the pieces, the land-based work, the spirituality, the writing have recently, in the past three years, I would say, been coming together as something like a central foundation to my life at this point, both doing it for myself and teaching it.

[00:13:38.440] - Speaker 2

Yeah. I love what you said about becoming visible. For me, that's definitely part of why I started writing. Just getting my voice out there.

[00:13:50.260] - Speaker 1

And.

[00:13:51.590] - Speaker 2

Being vulnerable, taking risks thing.

[00:13:54.130] - Speaker 1

I mean, it's terrifying.

[00:13:56.640] - Speaker 2

It is, yeah.

[00:13:57.840] - Speaker 1

I think, at least for me, my trauma was really relational and the feeling like I didn't deserve to speak. I didn't deserve to have voice. I couldn't find the courage in myself to even be visible at all, really writing about it, and road back to being able to at least see myself.

[00:14:19.110] - Speaker 2

Yeah, that really resonates with me. Feeding off of that, would you like to talk a little bit about your... I saw you have a new approach to the book coming out soon.

[00:14:31.380] - Speaker 1

Yeah. I guess that does feel like a really direct connection. The book is called Start Here, and it's a series of poems that span almost a decade of my life that I think, like I spoke to, my spiritual really began with trauma. It was through some really intense experiences and experiences of loss of community and friend, my best friend took his own life when I was 21. It was just such a jarring rupture that sent me on this path that it was this very clear demarcation that's common to initiatory practices of the ending of one life in the beginning of another. Around that time, one of the first pieces that shows up in the book is like a goodbye letter to him of this recognition that I have to... I had been multiple years of being really stuck in the grief and my own personal anxiety and depression, and this recognition like, I have to start seeking something.

Through that process, it spans traveling around the world and living at retreat centers and having more really challenging experiences, but which eventually culminates in me going on my first vision fast. Sometime around that, something about that practice cracked open this voice that started to come with more regularity.

[00:16:22.210] - Speaker 1

I had been writing a lot up to that point and I knew that it was part of my calling. But that vision-fast opened the door to this voice that comes in very distinct ways. From that, that was maybe four and a half years ago or something. From that point on, there's just been this distinct feeling of poetry as it shows up in my body. It was just an accident that I just started tending to them and realizing this is what that feeling is. Stop what I'm doing. Write it down. At a certain point, I looked back and realized I have 50, 60 poems compiled in Google Doc and a lot of people that I love and whose opinions I respect telling me that they were good enough to put into a book, which is the edgy part about it is when it's your own poetry, you don't actually know. I don't actually know. Sometimes I'm like, That feels very true, which to me is often the barometer from my own writing. I'm like, If this is true, then I'm willing to put it out there, regardless of what people might think about it. But yeah, there was that all of the imposter syndrome and all of the baggage that I had internalized about what poetry is and what that means.

[00:17:57.900] - Speaker 1

But yes, so working through all of that, I've now put it together and gotten it formatted. I carved four block prints for each of the sections, which feels really cool, adding my own visual artistry to it. At this point, I just feel really excited. I mean, it feels like a true rite of passage to put this out into the world, close an intense chapter that has basically spanned most of my adulthood, and to step into a new level of visibility with the clarity that I have about who I've become.

[00:18:41.110] - Speaker 2

That's great. Is there some more folks can preorder the book?

[00:18:48.130] - Speaker 1

Yeah, it's available on my website, which is www.Christifer.Com.

[00:18:56.130] - Speaker 2

Okay. Cool.

[00:18:59.040] - Speaker 1

Yeah.

[00:18:59.360] - Speaker 2

Then I just wanted to ask, what or who is inspiring you at this moment? Can be anyone, anything. Just what's inspiring you?

[00:19:14.140] - Speaker 1

That's.

[00:19:15.020] - Speaker 2

What I think.

[00:19:19.730] - Speaker 1

Such an interesting question. Just given where we're at in the world right now and what's going on in the world, I think sometimes I... Yeah, just the idea of inspiration is taking on new meanings for me. I think that the people that are inspiring me are people that are really turning to look at what's going on, particularly around the systems of domination that we're living in and the ongoing collapse that we're undergoing. So there's the Deep Adaptation Network.

[00:20:03.600] - Speaker 2

You.

[00:20:05.660] - Speaker 1

Know about them?

[00:20:06.220] - Speaker 2

Yeah, I know about them, yeah.

[00:20:08.460] - Speaker 1

Yeah, I think they're inspiring me because they're really having the conversation.

[00:20:15.170] - Speaker 2

I'd.

[00:20:16.190] - Speaker 1

Say the conversation because I think it's this elephant in the room.

[00:20:20.800] - Speaker 2

All.

[00:20:21.300] - Speaker 1

The time that no one wants to talk about, which is like we're living through a mass extinction event and collapse of our systems. That feels inspiring. I would say the Emergence.

[00:20:39.080] - Speaker 2

Network.

[00:20:40.100] - Speaker 1

Spearheaded by Bio Kormelophe, they're doing really cool beauty making work, that they're not turning away from collapse, but they're emphasizing connection and beauty. It's even in their name, the Emergence Network.

[00:20:58.170] - Speaker 2

They are.

[00:20:58.860] - Speaker 1

The idea that spontaneous new expressions of life and potentially even unthought of solutions can emerge through resonance and through action. I've been in some of their online containers and really gotten a lot out of them. Those are two places. Then the work of Stephen Herod Buneer, I just read his last book. As you know, the writing class is based on his book about language. But all of his work focuses on this opening up of the felt sense to be in soulful communion with the world, which we might call animism. He breaks it down in this very beautiful way of looking at the sensory gating inside and how we can actually build a practice of cross-species communication.

[00:21:59.000] - Speaker 1

Yeah. Those three are feeling alive for me right now.

[00:22:06.070] - Speaker 2

Are you familiar with Dark Mountain?

[00:22:08.680] - Speaker 1

Yeah, I love Dark Mountain.

[00:22:10.240] - Speaker 2

Yeah, they're similar to Deep Adaptation, but with a creative spin, so I like them a lot.

[00:22:16.620] - Speaker 1

Yeah, and their standard for their art and their writing is really high. I think they do a lot of really good work.

[00:22:22.600] - Speaker 2

Yeah. I subscribe to their physical print.

[00:22:28.090] - Speaker 1

Book.

[00:22:28.780] - Speaker 2

And I love getting it.

[00:22:29.900] - Speaker 1

Yeah, definitely. And Emergenes Magazine also.

[00:22:33.750] - Speaker 2

Yeah, it's a good one too.

[00:22:36.130] - Speaker 1

Is.

[00:22:39.110] - Speaker 2

There anything else you'd like to add before we end our conversation?

[00:22:46.100] - Speaker 1

No, I guess just a moment of silence.

[00:23:02.520] - Speaker 2

Okay.

[00:23:06.750] - Speaker 1

Well.

[00:23:11.480] - Speaker 2

Thank you so much for sharing with the Wilder community about what you do and your writing and all that. I'm sure people will find it very interesting. Thanks again. Have a good rest of your day.

[00:23:29.700] - Speaker 1

Yeah, thank you so much for doing this.

[00:23:31.430] - Speaker 2

Yeah.