



Honour and celebrate
being a woman with
Tanishka

As a teacher, writer and creator of the Red Tent movement, Tanishka has made an impact on women all around the world. Tanishka's teachings are all about celebrating being a women and honouring our natural cycle. She has a passion for the global sisterhood and would like each woman and girl to have access to a Red Tent so they can own their power and heal themselves. And in doing so, heal the world.

Could you tell us a little about yourself and the work you do?

"I teach ancient womens wisdom and sacred customs. And that's not just for women. The feminine is a polarity which is misunderstood and therefore not honoured in men as well as women. But women are mostly more receptive and hungry for that information. Especially at this time when so many women respond to an intuitive call to heal and empower themselves. And in doing that, we change the global landscape."

How does it change the world when women start healing themselves?

“Well, we’re all fractals of Gaia, a jigsaw piece in a picture.

When women see themselves through a patriarchal lens, which isn’t a balanced perspective, but the viewpoint of the wounded masculine, they expect themselves to live up to an ideal that’s not true. It’s not organic. It’s a distortion of the feminine. You know, these false ideals like, women should not have curves, with the exception of having huge boobs. Or women should not have stretchmarks, even if they’ve been through puberty or have given birth. Instead, we should look airbrushed at all times. Or that women should not get angry, not express their primal feminine. We’re expected to smile all the time instead of understanding we’re cyclic creatures whose moods fluctuate with the moon. When we see ourselves through an understanding of the true feminine, it changes the choices we make as we honour the cyclic nature of life and that creates a sustainable society. Because life is cyclic.”

So how does the moon influences us as women? How does that work?

“Well, I’m not a scientist, I’m an intuitive chanel. But my understanding is that the adult human body is made up of 65% of water. So if we understand the gravitational pull of the lunar phases has the ability to affect the rise and fall of the ocean tides, we understand then, that the moon’s fluctuations have a huge impact on us. Physically, we cycle. Our endocrine system, our hormones atune to the moon. So women who align with the moon, experience more balanced emotional states and less emotional eating or addictive compulsive behaviour. For instance; the dark phase of the moon, which is the lowest ebb has a bigger effect on women than it has on men. That’s why women are more prone to depression at dark moon, and can make limiting and dysfunctional choices. That’s why I teach women to recognise this and come together at that time to support each other in moonlodges / Red Tents. I’m very passionate about the global sisterhood all having access to that practice for our mental health, for our emotional stability and to support ourselves as the caretakers of our families and communities. Because the whole ‘divide and

conquer' Emperic way has impacted women; energetically, physically, mentally and emotionally. And I do believe that reinstating the moonlodge is the foundation of us living in alignment with the cycle of the moon so we're aligned with the feminine energy cycle. There are other cycles, such as the daily solar cycle, the seasonal cycle, the planetary transits, but the most fundamental thing for women is to align with the moon, first and foremost. That's our starting point to healing and empowering our feminine sense of self. Then women don't feel bad and give themselves a hard time for being moody and emotional. When we don't understand our feminine sensibilities, we see them as a weakness rather than a strength."

You mentioned the moonlodges and the Red Tent. I guess it's all about celebrating being a woman and womanhood, but how do you do that, in a practical way?

"I would say that the absolute main function of the Red Tent is that it's a practice for owning our shadow. The shadow consists of the aspects of ourselves that we haven't yet met, that we don't fully understand, that we may fear, judge or reject or feel deeply ashamed of. The Red Tent is held traditionally

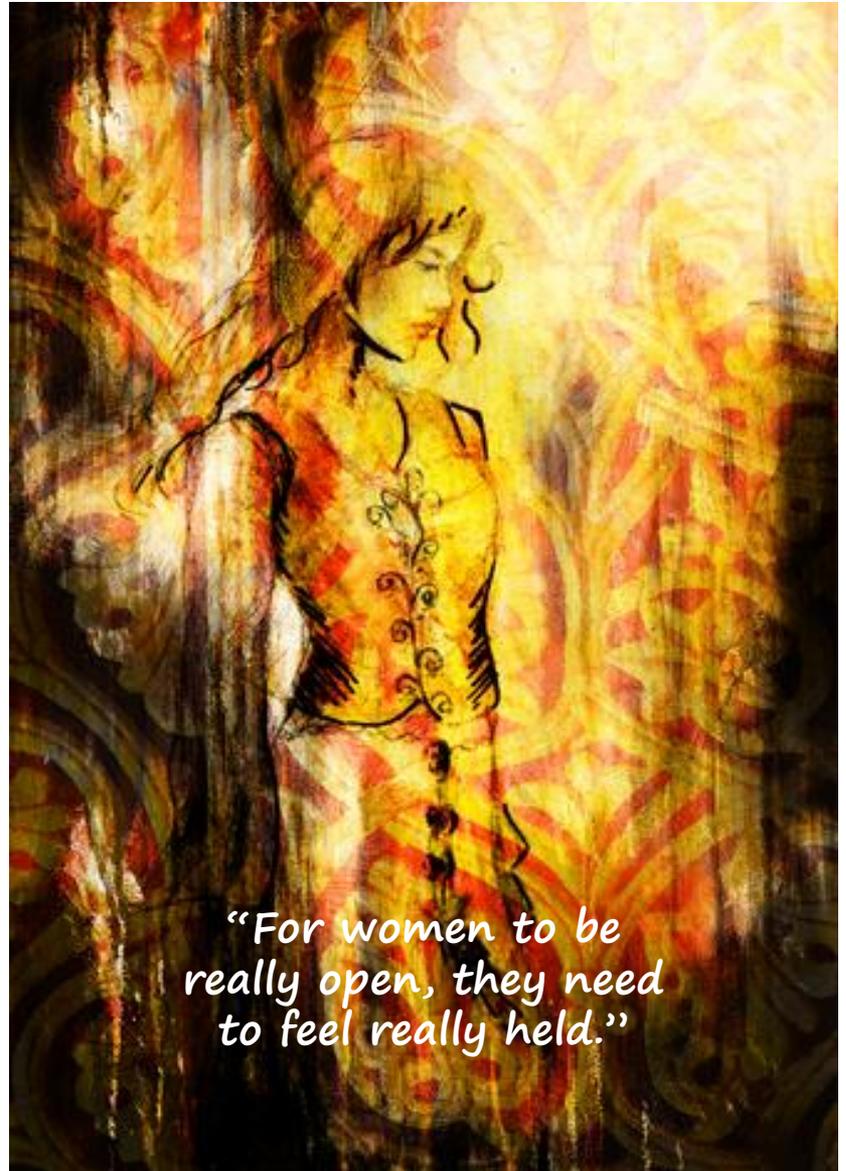
during the dark moon, as that's when our shadow surfaces. So it's a womb space where we retreat in sisterhood, knowing what we share will never be shared outside of the Red Tent. Because for women to really open, they need to feel really held. The practice of the Red Tent provides a strong container with defined boundaries, so whatever they share will never be used against them. When women start to let their social masks down and be truly authentic and own their shadow, that's when the magic happens. Moments like: "Oh, I see myself in that sister", and we develop compassion and acceptance for ourselves and each other. And through the practice of gathering, thirteen times a year, by the time we attain moonpause, when we stop our physical cycles, we have attained a depth of wisdom. Then we're honoured for our ability to hold & midwife others through their shadow. The more we develop acceptance of our own shadow, the more we can support our children through their shadow and our partners. The more we can be emotionally available to others without being triggered. It's depth that is then valued in a woman. Her inner power and substance. The more a woman has seen the shadow in herself the less she will judge others. And just to be in the presence of somebody you know

isn't going to judge you, allows what you judge in yourself to surface so it can be accepted and healed.

So whilst the Red Tent is often thought of as a menstrual hut, where women would gather when bleeding, that was one function. So regardless of whether women still cycle or not, all ages are welcomed to the Red Tent. These days, with so much artificial light, women are not cycling at the same time. So the focus is more on supporting each other to love the unlovable aspects of ourselves or what we perceive as unlovable."

Are the young girls welcome as well, before they get their period?

"Traditionally you are welcomed once you start cycling. For instance, my daughter is thirteen so when she started cycling she was brought to the women's circle. Our bodies initiate us and indicate when we are ready to sit with the women. This is when our training begins...of what it is to be a woman, and not just from your mother, but from many women. So instead of rebelling against what you don't like in your mother, but are inspired by many women. Having said that, I ended up creating a private mother-daughter circle for



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my daughter which is made up of teens and their mums, so it's more age appropriate. There are women whom I've trained that run Pink Tents for 'tweens' pre-teens. So it gives them a taste of what it means to come together in circle and take turns to share and hear a story that has an inspiring message in it, pull an oracle card or do simple ceremonies before entering the shadow work. Our bodies signal when we're ready for that. For once we start bleeding our emotional decents start to become deeper and darker."

So the Pink Tents prepare girls for the Red Tent and are more "light", while the Red Tents have more depth?

"Yes. But this is just my take on it. I don't know if traditionally there was such a thing such as a Pink Tent. It was an idea suggested by one of my students who has a daughter and wanted to create a circle for her and her friends. I think it's lovely. It gives them a taste of what it is to sit in circle. It's like when a child has never been to the theater or they've never been to the movies, they don't know the social etiquette. That when it starts, we are quiet, we listen. So if children don't grow up in an environment where they experience

sacred space, which is different to social space, they don't know how to behave in that environment. But it's not for everybody. I do believe it should be every girl's birth rite to have access, but there is such a thing as ritual abuse. In other words, making someone be a part of a ritual against their own free will. So I think it's important that, particularly in initiating girls into the Red Tent, we don't impose on them what we would have liked. Instead, we open up a conversation with our daughters and ask them what would they like to do that's special, to mark the start of their cycles and adapt to suit them. For instance, I took my daughter to a circle where all the women were at least 20 years older than her. And although it was okay for that one time, I realised this wasn't going to be as enjoyable for her as sitting in circle with her friends whom she knows. So we need to really tailor it so it doesn't end up being a bad experience they rebel against."

Here there aren't that many circles. Only two in our province. And I think that when I'd talk about this to my daughters friends they would look at me like "What is she talking about?" So what can you do with our daughters when it's hard to form a circle, they're shy about it, but you still want to celebrate?

"First of all, I think it's very important if we have daughters but we have still never personally recieved this birth rite of initiation into Women's Mysteries to go to or create a Red Tent circle, just for ourselves so we don't live through our daughters. I've run a number of menarche ceremonies (puberty rites of girls). Often the mothers who never recieved their birth rite would burst into tears at the realisation of what they didn't get which would impact their daughter' experience. I feel it's imporatnt mothers go to a Red Tent without their daughters so they can speak freely, without worrying about their daughters reaction to their own darker feeings and thoughts. So they can show up and only be accountable for themselves.

In terms of what women can do for their daughters, the primary thing is to model through how we treat ourselves when we're menstruating. For example, when you're bleeding, do you still push on and work a thirteen to fifteen hour push day instead of taking more time to rest? Give your daughters all the options, make them aware of cloth menstrual pads and other alternatives to the bleached

sanitary products which have pesticides, BPA and chlorine, that are detrimental to their bodies. Give your daughters awareness so they can make an informed choice. Encourage them, when at home, to use old cut up towels so they can pour their sacred life-giving moon flow as a libation on to their plants. I understand this suggestion can be very confronting, but it's very powerful as a practice to shift our psyche from perceiving our sacred blood as toxic, to instead seeing it as part of the circle of life, as something sacred that can be given back to the Earth to sustain life. Above all, educate them to be honouring of their need for rest and their internal process during their moontime.

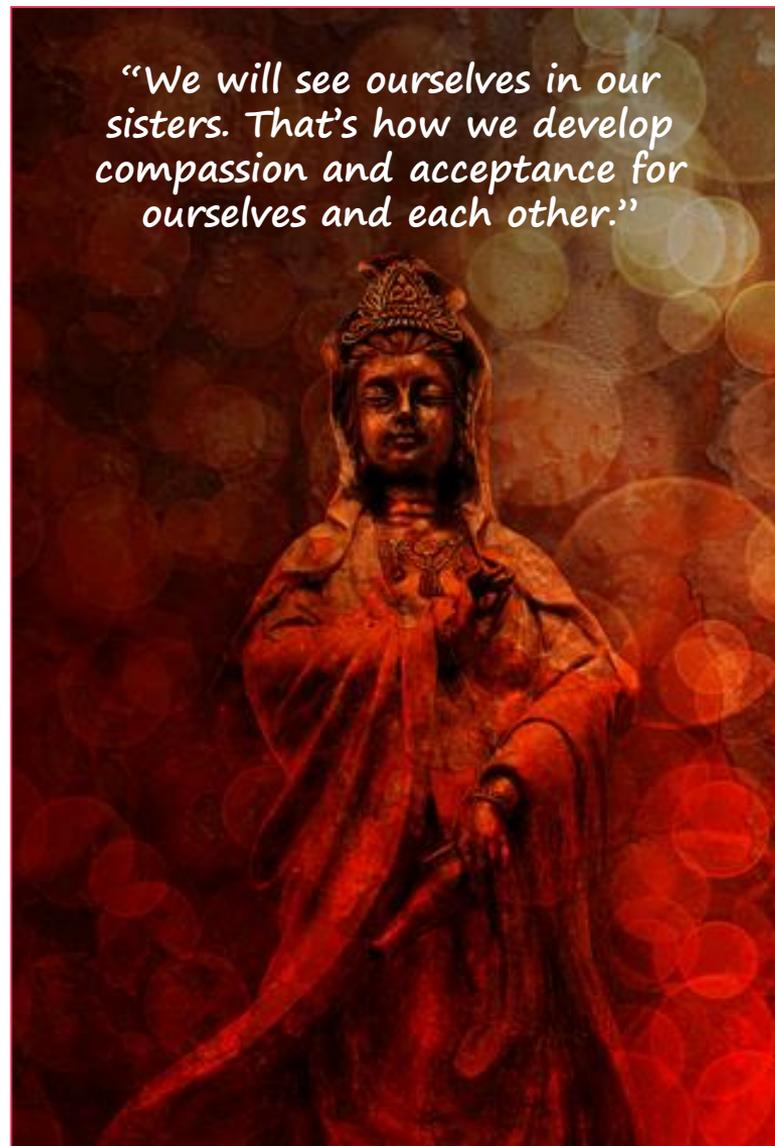
You know, In Neolithic times all the women used their sacred blood to consencreate healing amulets and mark burial mounds as it was considered a magical elixir. We've come such a long way from how it was once revered. Now in all the TV ads for pads, menstrual blood is shown as blue! It's like they can't even show the color red , it's too powerfull.

That sends a message that what is most deeply intimate within my body and my cyclic process, is too shameful to be seen or uttered in society, then I, at my deepest core, am also shameful and unacceptable. So I must become something other than who I naturally am. I must adopt a persona that is acceptable, not primal, not authentic, not wild. I must be doll-like, a 'good girl'."

How did you get on this path? How did you learn all this?

“When I was around twenty-four I went and stayed at my friend’s aunt’s house. It was a hexagonal cottage with a thatched roof and I found a book on witchcraft. It said that witches traditionally called their ‘familiars’, often cats ‘wilkins’. As a child I had called my cat, ‘Little Pussy Wilkin’. That spurred me on to find a coven so I could learn more. But in 1994 I couldn’t find any books on witchcraft and whilst one of the girls I waitressed with was in a coven, she said it was closed so I couldn’t join, so I created my own women’s circle. I just followed my intuition. Eventually I did find an old book and other women who identified as witches but everything really shifted for me when I got down on my knees when I was 26 and said to the Universe: “If you want me to be a woman, send me some fucking role models!”. Within a couple of weeks, my whole life changed. I ended up moving and living up in the mountains and was initiated into Women’s Mysteries at a Goddess weekend workshop that was facilitated by Jen Powell. Then she took me under her wing and mentored me. I instantly recognised this was a path I had known and lived thousands of years ago. It started flooding back. At the time I was living in a little hut on top of an underground lake, which was great for intuitively downloading information so that’s where I wrote my first book.”

“We will see ourselves in our sisters. That’s how we develop compassion and acceptance for ourselves and each other.”



So you were remembering things, instead of learning?

“Yes, that’s the feminine way. Through inner knowing. Gnosis”

So you lived completely cut off from the rest of society?

“Yes, initially for a year as the hut was solar-powered and it didn’t have enough power to run a computer or television. So the blessing in that was I had no exposure to the media for a year and no EMF’s (electro-magnetic frequency pollution) so my environment was clear for my intuition. I recognized it immediately as a vision quest, a sabbatical so I embraced it.

I did have some contact with the outside world. For instance, I remember going to my friend’s farm the day when lady Di had died. To see the media at full tilt was overwhelming. When you’ve been without the media for so long and you see it again, it looks even more manufactured than it did before. We need to be discerning, not only of what we take in, but also the sources through which we receive our information.”

Who is the Wild Woman to you?

“What a beautiful question. The wild is the part of us that is instinctual. That is connected to our Earth Mother as a living, breathing organism. It is the part of us which is 100 % authentic and knows if we compromise our authentic truth it will play out in our body. I know her as Lilith, Kali, Sekhmet, Oya. She has many names and as an archetype she governs our base energy center. If that energy center is closed, we don’t have access to our deep primal power as a woman. And if we don’t have access to that aspect, we can’t speak up when we’re in danger. We can’t access appropriate anger when a boundary has been crossed. So we need to befriend our wildness and have deep reverence for how important she is within our psyche. In doing so, we educate our partners and our children how to dance with the wild woman rather than fear or deny her by scapegoating her as inappropriate.”

You just finished writing your new book. Can you tell us what it is about?

“It’s called *The Goddess*, and it will be released on the 6th of June, 2017. So 6:6 which I think is quite lovely since 6 is the number sacred to Aphrodite. It’s my first book for Hay House. It will also be released with an online Goddess course for women.

I wrote this book, not just for women who are just beginning their journey to discover their sacred feminine, but for women who have been walking the path for years. It's accessible but with substance. I speak about the mystery of the ancient Goddess civilizations and what happened to them and the customs we are now reviving in order to balance the Earth. I speak about the three priestess paths of initiation. So for any women who has, for example, suffered from depression, they'll find it incredibly empowering to reframe that by seeing it as a part of feminine initiation, part of our 'getting of wisdom'. I also speak about the Red Tent and the role it plays in a healthy society.

Every day I sat down to write this book I would ask to be a clear channel for what the Goddess wanted to speak to the global sisterhood. I'm really excited! Each book is a creative child that births through you. You even labor with them! I even had back pain in the final week of birthing the manuscript and my girlfriends brought food, it really was like birthing a child. (laughs) So it really is a labor of love and I'm excited to share it!"

At the 13th of februari the Red Tent course will start again. Registration is open now for early birds who will receive a discount. Please go to www.starofishtar.com/redtent

Interview: Marieke de Boer

www.hetwildewijf.nl

