

## THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CHICKEN

I believe spiritual messages take many forms. Lately, my higher power, the great spirit, the loving energy of the universe, has been speaking to me through chickens. Yes, chickens.

In 2001, my husband and I decided to buy land south of Houston. With some surprise, raising chickens for fresh eggs, became a requirement of the “right place.” Happily, our new farm included a chicken house and eleven hens.



During the years between buying our acreage and planting our hearts and dreams deep into its soil, life happened. In 2004, an unforeseen, life-altering disability prevented me from returning to the workforce and made my life seemingly unrecognizable.

Weeks, months and now years of redesigning my life have passed. Very difficult times for which we were totally unprepared. Times of belief and disbelief, trust and betrayal. Times of hope followed by frustration, then renewed tenacity and endurance. Times of deep reflection and deep despair. Home alone, I repeatedly sought solace from my new treasured, feathered, daytime friends, our chickens. They were always there, always good listeners.

I now believe talking with the chickens, or attending the Church of the Holy Chicken, as I call it, can soften the deepest wounds, lessen the deepest sorrows and foster the deepest insights. Through the hours of “chicken yard sermons” some beliefs have strengthened and some hatched anew.

I believe colorful, free-range eggs make enchanting, heart-warming gifts, interrupting chaotic, impersonal life in a city of four million people. I also value giving credit where credit is due, taking all egg compliments back to “The Girls” who laid them.

My belief that true friendships are based on trust, compassion and respect, and not on race, gender and in this case, species, has been deeply reinforced. Although sharing food is a good way to start a friendship, I've learned that chickens will follow anyone with food. It should not be mistaken for friendship, but eating from or flying onto your hand should.

I believe more passionately than ever that we, all sentient creations, are more alike than different. Watching the perpetual cycle of mother hens raising their chicks, I believe the protective love mothers have for their babies is among the greatest forces of the universe. Being a human mother who befriends chicken mothers, I now believe motherhood is a divine feminine energy capable of uniting all mothers, irrespective of life form. It is a universal gift we all share.

I believe the interdependent web of life is more infinitely magnificent than I will ever comprehend. It's full of miracles beyond my capacity for perceiving them. I believe myself to be as miraculous and unique as the rest of creation, yet individually I am, as we all are, also quite insignificant and redundant in the context of all eternity, timelessness and life never ending.

Yes, I believe in lessons learned at the Church of the Holy Chicken. Gratefully and willingly, I will return to listen and learn again and again.