

*From the Introduction, by Penny Rosenwasser:*

“This book is about empowerment. It’s not one view, one approach, one answer. ‘The answer is that I have no answers,’ Lakota Harden reminds us. ‘That you have your own answer.’ I present this material hoping that it becomes, as Naomi Newman suggests, ‘the question that guides you...because the answers are the end of something, and the questions are the beginning of a process...’

Balance emerged as an unanticipated theme throughout these stories. Although empowerment is the goal, perhaps the process of finding and maintaining balance is the form. Framing it succinctly, Winona LaDuke says that ‘trying to change this society is very consuming...you have to always balance internal and external...My ability to face the big external challenges is totally affected by my ability to retain my own spiritual relationship to the earth...as well as my own integrity.’

‘The...challenge,’ posits Deena Metzger, ‘is to render this. To be available to bring the beauty...or...awareness through...To feel compassion on a regular basis. To strip myself down to wherever I have to go. To suffer whatever it is that I have to suffer, in order to know what I have to know. Not to be afraid of that, even though it hurts a lot. Or to be afraid and not let being afraid stop me...To find friends who support...[me] and understand what...[I’m] doing...And to hold onto love as a great passion. If you keep your eye on what you love, it’s like a mantra; if you keep your eye on what’s precious, the fear goes away.’”