

Kevin - Devils Tower

Because when my voice left me there a bit and I quieted down, the weirdest thing is the biggest voice I started to hear was my own. What I came to think about as the whispers of my own soul, and I just started following what was calling to me. And so the whole experience for me, it's been really important to talk about it this way. My experience on the Northern Plains is not meant to be anybody else's experience. My experience at Pine Ridge or here at Devil's Tower is not meant to be anybody else's experience. It's just what happened to me. And it's just what I experienced. And for me, it was super authentic. And when I was done, I just decided to share that story. Not because anybody else should do what I did, but because everybody should listen to their own voice and follow it. And that path will take everybody someplace different, but it'll take everybody home to the places that are really speaking to you. (05:30-06:43)

When we go to those places that make us light up, that's when we give, each of us, the most back to the world. It's really about listening to your own voice, following your own voice and letting everybody else do the same, and completely letting go of right and wrong. (06:57-07:20)

Kevin: Holding it together by a thread here.

Interviewer: Is this what you expected, more or less?

Kevin: Yeah, I would say it is. Yeah. And I think you guys have done an awesome job by the way. You're going to have a great career. This is going to be a great film, and you're going to do big things. You guys are going to be great. I've already got, by the way, one great lead for you. Ted from Re-Member. He emailed me and he said, "I've got a project coming up and I want to talk to them about using them."

Interviewer: That's awesome. That's really cool. We're all in.

Jamie: I chatted with him, and he seemed really excited about it.

Interviewer: Yeah, we'd be all in on that. All right, Jamie, you're the director today.

Jamie: So you and I will talk, and you can look in my direction.

Interviewer: And maybe a little like you're talking above Jamie's hat.

Jamie: Yeah. Okay. I'll do my best to stand up when we're shooting. So I guess we can start with the fact that you had a pretty profound experience here. When it was the first time you visited and I believe you, you found a rock around here in the sun. Can you just elaborate on that and tell us that experience and what it meant to you and how that transformed your life after that visit, and that moment here at Devil's Tower?

01:24 **Kevin:** Yeah. That first experience here really took me by surprise. It was perhaps the second time I'd been on the Northern Plains, and I just was out here walking around the tower by myself. There was nobody else around, and I just started to lose myself in this place. It's a little bit tough to describe, but it's what I experienced. I had this feeling that I was almost floating along the trail. Like I kept looking down at my feet, and I knew I was walking, but it did feel like I was walking. And then I

hit this really big urge to lay down on this rock in the sun. And I closed my eyes, and it was like I was here, but I was everywhere at the same time. And I had this vision of there was this really bright light and it was coming towards me. And then I could see that it was figure, and then I could see that it was actually a buffalo, and that it was actually a white buffalo.

And this was before I even learned that the white buffalo is considered the most sacred animal one could see in Lakota society. And yeah, that whole experience when it ended I was like, well, how would I even talk about this? Because it was such a spiritual experience for me. And I remember confiding in my friend, Nick Tilson, when I got back home. Because I've not ever had an experience like that before, so I didn't really know how to talk about and what people would think. But Nick listened to me and he gave me the best answer. He said, "Kevin, that experience wasn't meant for anybody else, it was meant just for you. And for you it was real."

And that type of thinking really started to change the way I saw the world. I think we get so caught up in right and wrong when somebody says something. But what about a new paradigm where there really isn't a right or wrong? It's just someone's perspective or someone else's experience.

And that's really that whole idea of finding center in the land of Crazy Horse. What became the subtitle of my book. That for me was here. This was the center. It became symbolic for me, that it was here on that day, that something inside me tipped. And I really started to reconnect with myself on a deeper, more authentic level.

And so for me, whenever I see Devil's Tower or the Bears Dan, as the Lakota refer to it, I think about finding center. And when I think about, so that phrase 'finding center in the land of Crazy Horse', what does that mean to me to me? To me, it doesn't mean that anybody else would come here and have the same experience. It doesn't mean that anybody else would go to the Northern Plains or Pine Ridge and have the same experience. It's more about for me. What is your Pine Ridge? Where's that, where are those places that are calling to you and only to you and learning to tune in to those whispers. And to then be willing, even though it might not make sense to you in terms of what those whispers are saying, to be willing to follow those whispers.

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And when I was done, I just decided to share that story. Not because anybody else should do what I did, but because everybody should listen to their own voice and follow it. And that path will take everybody someplace different, but it'll take everybody home to the places that are really speaking to you. And I think when we go to those places that make our own soul light up, that make us have goosebumps, or lose track of time or not be able to sleep we're so excited. When we go to those places that make us light up, that's when we give, each of us, the most back to the world. It's really about listening to your own voice, following your own voice and letting everybody else do the same, and completely letting go of right and wrong.