

## Women's Moon Lodge Healing Retreats

### What is a Moon Lodge?

For many hundreds of years, our grandmothers and their grandmothers, generations of women before us, honored their monthly menstrual cycles by retreating into what the Native American women called the "Moon Lodge". The powerful pull of the moon upon the earth controls not only the ebb and flow of the ocean's tides, but also the ebb and flow of the menstrual blood. The Dark Moon began the women's entry into the Moon Lodge and as the New Moon appeared, many women congregated there.

There, women would gather monthly to reflect, share in each other's wisdom and experience, and rejuvenate themselves for the next monthly cycle of their lives. Women of child-bearing ages were cared for by the older aunts, mothers, and grandmothers. Children and families were attended to by those outside the Moon Lodge. Inside the Moon Lodge was a safe haven for women to relax and be themselves while sharing in the timeless wisdom handed down through the ages. Dreams were imagined, secrets were told, and all parts of the female creation were accepted without judgment. Women emerged after a few days in the Moon Lodge refreshed and invigorated by the time spent with their blood sisters. The daily needs of their families and the demands of life seemed a little easier. New ideas and creative energies born in the Moon Lodge were unleashed, benefiting all members of their communities. Young women wondered about the secrets of the Moon Lodge and looked forward with excitement to the time they would be able to enter. Their first menstrual cycle would be a grand celebration where they would be ushered into womanhood in a rite of passage they would never forget. They would pass this ceremony down to their daughters and grand-daughters. Women would be reminded of their created order as those who bring new life to the earth and nourish it to bear fruit. They would all celebrate in the joys of mothering and nurturing and teach each other the secrets to a long and healthy life.

Sadly, most of our modern day mothers have no remembrance of the Moon Lodge or even a celebration of the beginning of their entry into womanhood. By then, the most powerful force responsible for re-creating life on earth had become known as "The Curse". Women entered into an era where they began to disrespect their cycles and dislike their bodies' natural processes. PMS became an expected ailment requiring some sort of medical or over-the-counter treatment. It was the beginning of the end of women taking control over their own bodies. They no longer honored or respected the natural rhythms of life. The cost of losing this connection to how we were created has been increasing female health problems including infertility, birthing difficulties, sexual dysfunction, and depression.

### Creating Our Moon Lodge Experience

In an attempt to educate women about the importance of this sacred monthly ritual, I have created a quarterly Moon Lodge healing retreat for women of all ages. They coincide with the beginning of each season's New Moon as closely as possible. They are currently being held at Cape Disappointment State Park on the southern end of the Long Beach

Peninsula on the Washington coast. Accommodations are in heated Yurts, each with its own fire pit, within a block of the beach. The roar of the ocean can be heard from inside the Yurts. All meals, snacks, and refreshments are provided. Hot showers are available. Each season provides a unique background for the creative exercises designed to connect women to the heavens and the earth, to themselves, and to each other. The Moon Lodge is limited to 12 women in order to maintain intimacy. There is teaching time, reflective time, and creative time interspersed throughout each day. Check in is 4:00 PM the first day, and check-out is 1:00 PM on the third day. Activities are planned for all three days of the Moon Lodge experience. Cost is \$245.00 per person early bird special and \$295.00 after that. Moon Lodges typically fill up one season ahead of time. Many women decide to do all four seasons in a row, in order to glean the full experience. The schedule is posted under "Women's Classes". To register, please call 425-888-1670 or e-mail [agapechiro@msn.com](mailto:agapechiro@msn.com).

Although we may not be able to enter the Moon Lodge as often as we like, these retreats give you the wisdom and tools you need to create your own monthly Moon Lodge experiences, wherever you are in your life cycle. I hope to see you there soon. Please see the testimonies of some of the women who have attended the Autumn and Winter Moon Lodge retreats.

Dr. Leslie Bedell  
Moon glow sister