

The Starfish Flute Project

Overtime and through the Bigger Game experience I have come to know my life purpose, which is “to nurture the human spirit through music”. It is, of course, my compelling purpose and as I began living into my purpose, my Bigger Game has truly defined who I have become.

My work at Cook Children’s Medical Center was inspired by Anita Kruse when she presented at the Expo. As she spoke of her Bigger Game of working with young medical patients to write and record songs, a seed was planted of a Bigger Game that was calling me.

I have known for almost 2 years that I had to find a way to return to music. One of the instruments that has been pivotal in my return is Native American Flute. A simple, inexpensive instrument that is relatively easy to play by most anyone that has some breath and a little dexterity. The word breath is what struck me. We have a neighbor/friend that is the head of pulmonary medicine at the hospital so I initiated a conversation around the possibilities of taking flutes into the patients and teaching them how to play as a way to help heal their spirits and their lungs.

Without hesitation, she introduced me to the head of the music department and the seed of an idea grew into a flower. I set up an appointment and from that first meeting, I knew I had found my “peeps”. The staff and volunteers are dedicated to the care and nurturing of every child and parent that comes their way and they welcomed me with open arms and minds. They are a great gathering of musicians, artists, therapist and medical professionals that share my passion for the healing power of music. I would say that the door has been opened but it is more like the flood gates have burst. So many creative ideas as to how we can co-create has me walking on air. The seed, now a flower, has blossomed.

After a number of recording sessions, I was asked to play a concert in the atrium of the facility and here is where things got really interesting. The format was simple. Set up in the foyer at noon and just play. There were no invited audience and although there were a few that stopped and listened for a while. Mostly I was just putting out into the space my music for a soothing effect in a chaotic environment. During a break, I was approached by a local news anchor. After she introduced herself, she complimented my playing and told me that the interview that had planned wasn’t going to happen and wanted to know if it would be alright with me if they just did the story on me instead. Wow, just like that, I went from playing for the pleasure it brings me and to those listening to a “Hometown Hero” on the evening news.

That’s what happened and what I believe about it is this. Once I found the essence of why I am in the world and showed up with an open heart without attachment to outcomes, the universe sent me an amazing affirmation that erased all doubts and allowed my light to shine to thousands.

I think Rick said it best “just like that”. I would add, when we show up as our best selves, on type and on purpose, magic happens.



Let me add a BIG shout out to Rick as his new book is about to be released. I would also like to thank him, from the bottom of my heart, for his work in the world and in my life.

Namaste,

Paul Smith