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Wild to Civil & Back The Bone Woman's Journey

The Bone Woman Sheds A Civilized World

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The Bone Woman & Her Journey From Corporate Yuppie Back to her Inner Wild Root

By Lucinda Bakken White

When I was a child, *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling was my favorite story. The Kipling tale spoke to me in many ways. I was captivated by the animals who came to life with human characteristics and personalities, and I eagerly absorbed the moral of every story. In my mind I, too, was a nature child raised by a wolf pack — of humans. I resonated strongly with the character Mowgli, and *The Jungle Book* myth became an emblem for my life's journey. It subconsciously taught me the laws of the jungle and how to survive in a civilized world.

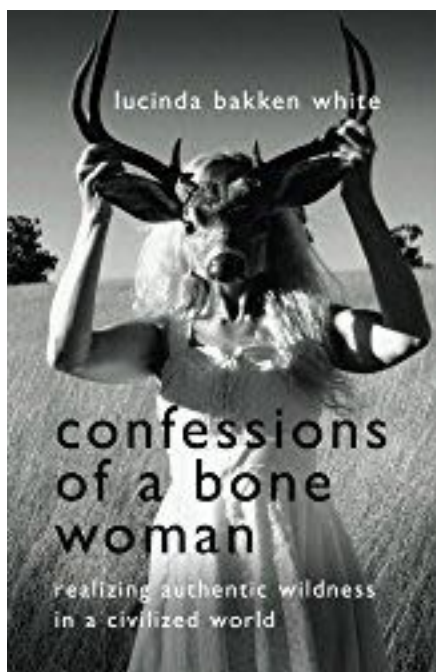
My parents were twenty when they married and I was born. Two years later, they separated. After that, I only saw my father on a few brief occasions. For most of the '60s, in an era when divorce was not common, I lived alone with my mother. If she had hardships finishing her college degree, establishing a career, and providing for me, I was unaware of them. She did not burden me with her problems and left me to my childhood bliss. Wild, unencumbered by expectations, and free to be myself, I was deeply connected to all aspects of nature. My soul was alive and engaged with a myriad of magical kingdoms.

Our lifestyle was small-town and simple, thriving on a currency of heart. Nature was a life-force that vigorously pumped ruby-red blood through my veins. Near a lake's shore I swam, pretended to be an amphibian and connected with frogs. Soft-eyed and heartfelt, communicating but wordless, we dipped below the surface and glided in harmony like mermaids through a forest of lily pads.

Then suddenly, when I was 11, my mother remarried and my life changed dramatically. A good man, my new father legally adopted me and parented me as if I were his own flesh and blood. I was blessed when he gifted me with a traditional nuclear family, tangible wealth, elite opportunities, and prestige. Although my new assets looked great on paper, the assimilation was rough. Turned 180 degrees away from the ways of my previous community and lifestyle, I struggled to learn and adapt to the rules of my new father's kingdom. Sometimes he explicitly told me what to do, how to look, and how to behave. Other times I was left alone, learning how to survive through keen observation and trial and error. For the next 15 years I was predominantly influenced by a masculine view of womanhood.

Once a carefree, soulful, curly-haired nature child, I learned how to starve myself skinny on diets, subdue my spontaneous nature, and iron my wild hair straight in order to fit in and belong. By the time I was 24 I had shaped myself into the mold of a yuppie with advanced degrees, a big job and a fancy car. I knew the promise. It echoed throughout the media and surrounding culture: If you are pretty, thin, rich, and accomplished — with tangible evidence to prove it — you will be happy and loved. Skilled and accomplished I had worked hard to achieve the American Dream. I had done everything my father and the surrounding culture told me to do. Unfortunately, I was miserable. And I could not understand why.

No one I knew could relate to my despair, not my friends nor my parents. Whenever I tried to talk about intimate, honest feelings the responses were something like this: “You are so lucky. I don’t feel sorry for you! You have everything. You are tall, blonde, and pretty. You have money and a good job. You have a family. Get over it and stop feeling sorry for yourself.” I knew it was true. I was lucky and blessed. But that made me feel worse. I found myself wondering how I could possibly be sad. There must be something wrong with me, I thought. Feeling confused, barren and disheartened, I quit my prestigious job at age 27, and spiraled into a suicidal depression.



For the next three decades I methodically worked to reclaim my inner wildness. My gateway (as unexpected as it may sound) was through animal bones because bones represent the parts of us that never die. As I began spending more and more time deeply

connecting with nature and collecting bones, I reconnected with parts of myself I had left behind in my childhood. Enlivened, I began to study with renowned spiritual experts. I created a large **biointensive garden**. I traveled the world on wild adventures from tracking wolves in Michigan to shadowing Bushmen in Africa. Once I redeemed the full expression of my original self, I turned my childhood wound into a gift. Today, I am living my life's highest purpose by guiding women on similar journeys to re-connect with their inner essence and realize authentic wildness in a civilized world.

About The Author



Lucinda Bakken White (The Bone Woman) is the author of the memoir *Confessions of a Bone Woman: Realizing Authentic Wildness in a Civilized World*. White is also an Inner Wildness Guide, helping women through the process of self-discovery and personal transformation. For more information visit <http://lucindabakkenwhite.com/> and connect with her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Goodreads](#).