



**Riding a Metaphysical Zip Line**  
**A Vision Quest Tale**  
**by**  
**Dan Ford**

I was marching up a well worn dirt pathway on a grassy hillside with the intention of getting some mild anaerobic exercise. I knew I was spending way too much time in the office and watching too much television at home. I also knew that I was becoming the ultimate couch potato and was heading outside to correct the problem.

The feeling of the sun on my face, arms and legs was wonderful and the fresh and crisp air that was available many miles outside the city was already doing wonders for my frame of mind.

After about an hour, at the pace I was trying to keep up with, I was running out of the solidly trodden pathway I was on and saw that the hillside was beginning to transform into a steeper mountainside full of boulders and alpine type shrubs and small trees. Part of me said that I should turn back but another part said to take

up the challenge. So, I kept trudging up the incline, occasionally looking back to see where I had been up to now, but mostly intent on where I was heading. Even this change of attitude was doing me good as I was feeling more invigorated by the second. My breathing was becoming labored, but it wasn't a problem yet.

I did begin to notice that there was a huge increase in sensory feelings that were affecting me the higher I went up the slope. I hadn't noticed the smells emanating from the hillside elements before this point in my journey and most importantly the fact that they were focused in a way that was now unique to me. Although all of the scents from the soil and vegetation were wafting across my body at the same time, they were somehow individual in a strange way and particularly if I were to pay attention to any particular one of those scents. I also noticed that not only was I more aware of each step I took and what kind of surface I was stepping on, but what each of the landing places for my foot felt like. I was also actually getting a bit stimulated experiencing the temperature changes that were affecting every area of my body as I moved up the mountainside. My eyesight actually seemed to be improving as well and I began to notice everything I saw with a greater brightness and clarity than I ever had experienced before. All of these special effects were wonderful and I considered the idea that I had been missing out on these heightened sensations because I had allowed myself to become lazy in the past. But I wasn't going to dwell on this and continued my trek up, over and around the boulders in my way.

The other sensation that began to affect me was that of time. I had absolutely no idea of how much time had passed since I started this journey. Nor did I really care. I could go on like this forever, or so it seemed while I was traversing the mountainside.

Soon, I was at the highest point on this particular mountaintop that I was climbing. It appeared to be the tallest peak in the entire range and a spectacular view was now spread out before me. It entered my mind that it was so very strange how important this view made me feel. I was not born to this environment, so nostalgia was not involved in what I was sensing. This fantastic emotion was provoked by something else and it was not something all that familiar to me. Perhaps it was just the beauty of nature itself. I was somehow beginning to understand that what I was seeing was created by the same force that created me and I was also beginning to understand that there may be a connection. This might be why almost everyone, including people who were born and raised in cities still often react in a similar admiring way when they experienced their immersion into nature. I now believed that there was a merging or connection between all of

creation that we cannot really see or sense unless the distractions of living in our particular experience is blocked to some degree.

As a greater understanding entered my mind, my consciousness started expanding to take in the surroundings to a greater extent than it had up to this point. It was hard to believe that everything I could see was getting sharper and brighter than it had been previously and that was saying something as I was already overwhelmed by those improvements to my perspectives. The view over the mountain range became more intense and when I glanced down towards the ground I was standing on, I could not only see the grass and plant leaves moving but I would actually see the individual leaf cells moving, or perhaps vibrating with life. And within the spaces between those leaves was even more life in the form of insects and other living organisms that I couldn't recognize. I was startled when a couple of rabbits joined me on the top of the escarpment that I was standing on. They were not afraid of me and I was totally enamored of them with both of us instinctively knowing that we were connected on a spiritual level. Then I looked upward into the sky and saw a Peregrine falcon gliding in slow lazy circles directly above me. I somehow projected my thoughts towards the falcon and suddenly connected with its consciousness. In some strange and wonderful manner, I understood that this bird was an individual being and it recognized that I had joined its existence in this particular time and space. And it welcomed me into that existence. I was suddenly the falcon and the falcon was me, with no loss of individuality for either of us. This was fantastic!

I was enjoying the aerial circles that the falcon and me were making, when the predator bird saw some prey a long distance away near the base of the mountain. I marveled at the clarity of this bird's eye view when the falcon decided to show me how one goes shopping for dinner when the opportunity arises. With a quick flip of his wings and tail feathers, we rocketed down the side of the mountain, gaining speed as we went along. Almost like a lightning bolt, the talons of my falcon friend were wrapped around and impaling a long black snake. With the snake in his claws, we quickly swooped back towards the top of the escarpment until a ledge was found where he could land and dine. I decided that he had earned the right to do that alone. I left him and found myself back on the top of the peak where I had so recently departed from.

I was still spiritually breathless over my experience of being partnered with the falcon for that short time. The rabbits were nuzzling my ankles in a nice gesture, so I leaned down and tickled both of them behind their ears. They enjoyed that and so did I.

With a considerable amount of arrogance on my part, I wondered if I could fly through the air without being carried by a falcon and decided to attempt it.

I was immediately airborne and gliding effortlessly downward towards the valley. I decided to stay close by the mountainside and brushed against the plantings that grew in this precarious location. When I did that I could not only feel the shrubbery but I could smell their fragrance as well as I went by it. I knew that I was not in a physical body while this flight was occurring, but I still felt the air rushing around me and the variations in temperature that was occurring as the altitude changed. I wasn't sure how this could be but soon figured it out that the essence of my spirit provided me with the abilities to mentally absorb stuff into my consciousness. I was having the sensations that I would have had if I had been in a physical form. I somehow knew that this was done in order for me to continue the learning experience. Learning was after all, the entire purpose of our existence and it didn't matter how I was going to acquire the lessons. I was beginning to understand this fact at this moment, even if I hadn't understood this truth before now.

I decided to will my essence back up into the air before I hit the bottom of the valley even though I knew I couldn't be squashed by any impact. It was a great sense of freedom to think about going somewhere and to have it happen immediately. I was soon flying along side of the falcon again, but he didn't appear to recognize me this time around, so I left his side and skimmed along the top of the forest that stretched between the mountain top I was physically on and the one a few miles to the South.

No one would ever be able to convince me that this was not a real happening. The sights, sounds, smells and feelings were all far more intense and real than my everyday sensations offered. I even had the ability to go from location to location instantly or delayed as my mind dictated.

As I traveled from mountain top to mountain top at a leisurely pace, I felt that I was on a metaphysical zip line. I had experienced zip lines in a physical state and this was far better. As I approached the next mountain peak, I saw a family of deer grazing on some shrubbery and decided to stop and visit them. As I landed and then walked over to them, they seemed to acknowledge my presence, but didn't spook at all. They continued to eat but occasionally glanced in my direction. I wanted to pet them and wondered what they would do if I tried and so I did. Each of my non-physical caresses seemed to bring about a demonstration of approval

from each deer but no overt physical response. I realized that they were appreciative of my demonstration of admiration but were reacting more on an internal rather than external basis. I don't know how I knew this but I was convinced of the simple fact that spirit to spirit interaction was possible between all living species. When I decided to leave these lovely creatures, I could sense that they were somewhat sorry to see me go from their subtle glances in my direction.

I continued my journey through the forest and noticed everything along the way and was awed by all of the elements that nature was composed of. Eventually I came upon a young couple walking hand in hand through the wooded area. It was obvious that they were in love. As I moved close to them in spirit, I could feel the love and affection radiating from each other outward towards me. I absorbed it and was filled to the brink with the essence of their love. It was wonderful to know that their affection towards each other was also infectious to those around them and this fact informed me that I was acquiring the sensation of becoming significantly empathic while in a spiritual mode. I vowed that I would work on accentuating and keeping these capabilities when I returned to a physical state. I didn't really want to leave these two people that were sharing their love with anyone who cared to receive it but I also didn't want to waste this precious time of having a special communion with nature and decided to move on.

As I flew into a grassy knoll at the base of a hillside, I came across some butterflies that had targeted a clump of lavender. I shared the butterflies love for this fragrant flower and so I stopped to see if I could also immerse myself within the beauty and fragrance of this plant. I began to wonder what the difference was between what I was experiencing with this lavender and what the butterflies were experiencing and suddenly I was absorbed into the spirit of one of these butterflies. I was mesmerized by the sheer magnificence of the now gigantic flower parts. The colors of the flower petals were a brilliant purple and the fragrance was beyond anything that I have ever experienced in my human form. Both of these features were absolutely addictive to the butterfly and that addiction led them to rapidly move from flower to flower in order to obtain the nectar and pollen. If anyone was to have to have a limited life experience, this would be an acceptable one.

As the butterfly that I was joined with fluttered away from the lavender, it saw a stream just a short distance away and decided that it would like a drink of the water at it's shallow edge. I was amazed at the reality of a butterfly sipping at the cool water, but became alarmed when I saw the head of a fish moving into the shallows and it was obvious that it saw us as an opportunity to have a snack. The

butterfly saw this as well and took off in a flash, while I decided to leap into the spirit of the trout.

What a difference it was to now be an aquatic life form after having been a airborne creature that moved from flower to flower, but I instinctively knew that both were valid and wonderful creations of nature. My new host quickly decided that his to-be snack was gone and began to move outward into the flow of the stream. This, like all of the other experiences I had had being a guest in another life form was fantastic. The cold water surrounding this fish was not just enveloping it but supporting the fish as well. As the trout drew water into it mouth and through it's gills, the oxygen that was extracted was life affirming and could be described as delicious. As the tail of the trout swung back and forth the fish moved with and sometimes against the stream's current. Then quite suddenly the fish saw another smaller fish in a vulnerable position between two rocks and he lunged toward it and with a single gulp swallowed the smaller fish whole. Yum! I was learning fast that although the fishes life experience was a lot more limited than my human one, it was viable and important to the overall operation of all life within this earthly experience. I knew that this was an important consideration that I had not really been cognizant of during my life to this point. While I was pondering these concepts, my host wriggled out of the place between the rocks and headed into the main current of the stream. Then all of a sudden, for a split second my existence went dark and I quickly realized that I was in the stomach of a much larger fish. Yuck!

I quickly leaped out of that aquatic environment and headed upward out of the water and into the air. I had immediate thoughts that I should be covered with residue from a fish stomach but then I also knew that I was and would remain a pristine clean entity. I had learned another lesson from nature. You could be alive in your fantastic world one microsecond and then projected into another equally fantastic existence the next microsecond. The creator of our reality had a great idea when creating this existence. I would have to learn to appreciate it and live it to the fullest.

But I knew that this particular existence was not what I had been assigned to and I was just a guest here in this unique new world of the spirit and not a permanent resident. At last not yet, so I decided to get back to where I belonged. The problem, if it was to be considered one, was where do I go now that I have found out that I am more than I thought I was. It was also obvious to me now that there were no limits to this new state of mind and body and I could proceed anywhere, anytime I wanted.

And so, I returned to my body still standing on the high cliff of the mountain I had climbed earlier in the day. I was immediately there and still scratching the little rabbits at my feet behind their ears. They still appreciated the gesture, but realizing that I was back to being earth bound again, they decided to hop off to wherever they lived.

I looked at them with a broad smile on my face and started my trek back down the mountainside. I would never be the same person that came up this slope and I felt that this was a good thing. I was very happy and very content with my new knowledge. I only had to figure out the best way I could keep what I had found in my mind from this point forward.

