

# THE SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

## Nomadic wisdom for our changing times

with Alan Heeks and Cordelia Prescott

### Allanton Peace Sanctuary, near Dumfries

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015

These times invite us to raise our resilience in order to nourish our wellbeing. New role models and guidance from great teachers can help us deepen our spiritual roots.

*The spiritual wisdom of the desert, its prophets, and the Bedouin nomads who still live there, can teach us a lot about wellbeing and resilience amid great uncertainty. This retreat explores original teachings on this theme from the Christian, Islamic and Jewish traditions, and from modern-day nomads in the Tunisian Sahara.*



This weekend offers supportive space for fresh insights and reflection on your life and the wider world. Following a desert retreat sequence of - opening, deepening within, and connecting with others, we will explore such themes. Following a desert retreat sequence of opening, deepening within, and connecting with others, we will explore such themes as cultivating inner peace, expanding around stress, and connecting with others in positive trust.

This is a rare chance to experience and embody this wisdom, through methods handed down from when it was first given: such as walking meditation, body prayer and movement and sound mantras and chants in the original language.

## How do we find the spiritual roots of resilience?

There's plenty of research to show that people who feel a higher sense of purpose, who have a spiritual path, who pray or meditate, on average feel more wellbeing, and handle challenges more easily. But you can't plug these features into your life like a phone app, so how can you evolve



Alan with Bedouin guides

them and find a way that suits you?

One place to start is great teachers like

Jesus, Muhammad and the Sufi poet Rumi. The best way I've found to access this wisdom is the work of Neil Douglas Klotz, who not only re-translates from the original language, but teaches spiritual practices used at the time, such as song, sound mantras, sacred movement, and walking meditation, which help to experience and embody them.

All of this has given me a very different, living sense of what Jesus and others can teach us about resilience. Here's an example: the third Beatitude. In King James this reads, Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Neil's translation is: Healthy are those who have softened what is rigid within; they shall be gifted with the fruitfulness of the earth.

A related source of my roots of resilience is what I've learned from semi-nomadic Bedouin in the Sahara. Since 2001, I have led twelve retreat groups in the Tunisian Sahara, travelling on foot and on camel with Bedouin guides.

If you want a role model of how to be happy with no control over your environment, and few material possessions, the Bedouin are an inspiring one. As they often told me, "You may be rich in possessions, but we are rich in our community".

Alan Heeks

Some of the spiritual roots of resilience in the desert and nomadic teachings include:

- Seeing divinity as the unity of spirit in all life, not as a patriarch.
- Valuing community as a source of support, stability and wisdom.
- Deep contact with nature to provide nourishment and guidance.
- Valuing such qualities as patience, trust and giving and receiving blessings, as a better way of meeting challenges positively.



A community that's part of your spiritual roots is harder to find in Britain than the Sahara, but we will aim to create this in our weekend group. Sharing songs, food, stories, and your doubts on the journey, can all help this process.



**Alan Heeks:** Alan has been leading personal and spiritual development groups for over 20 years, creating a supportive space where people can find their own insights through deeper connection with spirit and nature. He is passionate about organic growth and natural resilience, growing from creating three land-based learning centres, including Hazel Hill, the 70-acre woodland retreat centre near Salisbury.

Since 1992, Alan has been a student of Neil Douglas Klotz's pioneering work exploring middle eastern spiritual teachings in their original language. Alan has also led 12 retreat groups in the Tunisian Sahara with semi-nomadic Bedouin guides, and has written 2 books on aspects of resilience. See more at [www.living-organically.com](http://www.living-organically.com)



**Cordelia Prescott:** Cordelia is an experienced group leader, musician and healer with a long standing interest in environmental issues, sustainability and Permaculture. She has trained in classical music and various forms of spiritual healing, and has studied for many years with Neil Douglas Klotz and other leading teachers. Cordelia leads a range of retreats and other groups, including some in Southern Morocco.

### Allanton Peace Sanctuary



Allanton is a beautiful retreat centre with spacious grounds in a rural location near Dumfries, easily

reached from Central Scotland, Northern England and elsewhere.

Allanton Sanctuary is the European Sanctuary of the World Peace Prayer Society. The Society was founded in 1955 by the Japanese teacher, philosopher and poet, Masahisa Goi (1916 – 1980) who dedicated his life to peace and

humanity. A meeting place of the heart, bringing together people of all faiths and cultures. [www.worldpeace-uk.org](http://www.worldpeace-uk.org)

### Timings

7pm Friday to 4pm Sunday

### Cost

£185 including food and accommodation. Concessionary price £145, reduced rates for camping and non-residential.

### Bookings and Info

contact Cordelia on [jilanicordelia@gmail.com](mailto:jilanicordelia@gmail.com) or 07966 451534