



Closing the Circle

By Chip Richards

The following is an account of what happened on the 33rd and final day of the 2008 Peace in the Water vigil, as I 'closed the circle' in simple ceremony at Wategos beach in Byron Bay, Australia. To me, this was a perfect culmination of a powerful month and a profound glimpse at the power of our interconnectedness with each other ... with Cetaceans ... and with this magnificent ocean of life...

JULY 2, 2008 – Wategos Beach, Byron Bay Australia

Today I went to Wategos Beach to close the circle of the 2008 Peace in the Water vigil. It has been a very powerful 33 days, full of many synchronistic events, alignments and experiences for all. There is still a mighty road ahead and much to do (and be), but the past month has revealed to us more than ever the power of our unified energy when we come together for the good of all. The whales have given us this incredible opportunity to experience our interconnectedness and the vital role we each play in creating our world ... And today at the beach, they revealed this in a way that will stay with me for a long time...

We've been with many different people throughout the past month, but it happened to be that I was alone today as I arrived at Wategos. This special little bay and its rocky headland is the most easterly point of the entire continent of Australia. It is an ancient ceremonial gathering place for the Bundjalong People and it has a perfect view of the migration trail of the Southern Hemisphere Humpback Whales — who are currently making their annual journey up from Antarctica to their breeding and birthing grounds in the tropics. It had been a busy day and I had almost missed my window of winter daylight, but when I rounded the bend arriving at the beach, the very

first thing I saw was a humpback calf splashing breaching on the horizon... I felt instantly grateful that I had come... Reminding me once again, that it is ALWAYS worth the journey.

I came with the simple intention of drawing a big sand mandala and then watching the tide come in and take it out to sea -- along with my prayerful intentions for PEACE in the WATER. The drawing changes slightly every time I do it, but it almost always includes a few key elements – A large image of THE SEED OF LIFE (an ancient sacred symbol of seven interwoven circles), which is normally encircled by life sized drawing of a MOTHER and BABY HUMPBACK WHALE. Sometimes the image includes dolphins, sometimes humans, sometimes words... I have drawn variations of this mandala

hundreds of times in the past few years, on beaches all around the world, and with it always seems to come some special moment, insight or experience. Today was no exception...



I found a great drawing stick and a huge slab of smooth wet sand to carve my drawing into, then I set about my task... As I drew the circles of the SEED of LIFE and the lines of two whales into the sand, I found myself reflecting on the past month and the Peace in the Water vigil ... It can be difficult to gauge the impact of a journey of this nature, particularly in the

beginning – as we take our first steps in faith toward a greater vision. I found myself wondering how to really gauge the effectiveness of the last month and how best to direct our energies moving forward... I finished the drawing of the mother and baby whale circling around the sacred symbol and then paused, wondering if it was enough... Wondering for a moment if my message would reach its intended recipients today... And then suddenly, as if on cue, I heard a young guy yell out to his friends, "Oh - my - God!!! Did you see that?!!"

I turned and looked behind me just in time to see a HUGE adult humpback breach fully out of the water!! BABOOOM!! There were two of them, adult and calf (just like in my drawing) and they were so close to the shore that I could barely believe it was deep enough for her to breach. It was actually the closest I've ever been to a breaching whale... and I was standing on the sand!! I stood in awe (wishing I could use "the force" to call my camera to me from the seat of my car) along with many others on the beach, as the pair stayed there in the bay for several



minutes, breaching repeatedly with unfathomable grace and power... Twelve times in total. **WE ARE HERE.**

Then they slowly moved back out to sea... the crowd of breathless, inspired people slowly dissolved back into their sunset walks and picnics... and I went back to my drawing, feeling like one of my questions had been answered loud and clear.



Several minutes later, back at the mandala, I found myself I drawing a pod of dolphins and humans swimming together out from the center of the picture, with rays of a huge sun spreading out across the beach... I smiled at the thought of what might happen next ... And moments later, once again I was brilliantly surprised.

Again I heard a voice from behind me — this time it was from a six year old girl, who was walking past with her dad. She tiptoed on

the spaces between lines of the drawing, taking it all in, then she focused on the SEED of LIFE in the center and she said, "What's that?" I crouched down and told her, "It's an ancient symbol called the Seed of Life." She flashed a mysterious sort of grin and simply said, "I thought so."

Then, as her dad wandered up the beach talking on his cell phone, this little girl, whose name was Pearl, proceeded to play, dance, jump, cartwheel and hop all around my mandala. She drew whales and dolphins of her own and then herself riding them. She pulled me into a game of hopscotch in the middle of the Seed, she drew heart shaped eyes on all the whales and taught me how to do a "dolphin clap". We took some pictures together and then she said, "Have fun in the water!" and bolted off up the beach. I watched her join the middle of two different family soccer games (neither of which were her own) and take part in an Israeli tour group picnic — before finally catching up with her dad.



As Pearl disappeared, I looked at the trail of bewildered, enchanted strangers in her wake and I realized that this little six year old girl had just given me and everyone on this beach a wonderful lesson in the way of Cetacea ... weaving a trail a of light, joy and unconditional connection with each step she took. She had stomped my mandala into the sand and then she brought it to life

with her own bright essence as she skipped up the beach... revealing the most important step for all of us wishing to bring PEACE to the WATER and JOY on Planet Earth... **WE MUST SIMPLY BE IT... and BRING IT WITH US WHEREVER WE GO.**



I went for a swim, and when I came out of the water, the mandala and its intentions were gone ... effortlessly claimed by the rising tide. As I watch the sun set... I feel grateful for answering the call today... Grateful for the incredibly powerful call and response exchange with the magnificent Mother Humpback and her calf... Grateful for the human-dolphin 'Pearl' who swam circles of magic around my drawing and all the way up the beach... And grateful to be on this path with so many around the world committed (each in their own way) to bringing PEACE to the Water and to this precious planet.

