



Excited to see the children

It was time for Paul and I to leave Hood River and pick up the children at the appointed time at Multnomah Falls. I was excited! It had been since the Breitenbush retreat that we had seen each other. Then we had no idea we would ever see each other again. By now Andrew was 9, Angela was 7 and Christopher was 4 years old.



At Breitenbush - Christopher, Paul, Andrew, Twinkel and Angela

Multnomah Falls is a waterfall located in the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon. Spanning two tiers on basalt cliffs, it is the tallest waterfall in the state of Oregon at 620 ft. (189 m) in height. The falls are located half way between Hood River and Portland. Paul was awarded full custody of the three children since the previous summer and every other weekend the kids were going to their mom in Portland. It was spring break when I arrived. Andrew, Angela and Christopher had spend the first half of their vacation at their mom's and the second half they were going to be with us. Multnomah Falls was the exchange place where the children were switched between the parents.



I love children and have worked with them my whole life. The fact that Paul had three children was a natural plus to me. It was the loving and respectful way that Paul was interacting with his children that had caught my attention. That quality was very attractive to me.



I had no expectations towards the children. I see children as powerful souls who are here to create their own life and realities. They are teachers to me. I feel humbled in the presence of children. I believe that the more we allow them to be their authentic selves, the more they can blossom and express themselves as their souls had intended. I also believe that clear and healthy boundaries need to be set. When the boundaries are consistent both parties know how to live together and what to expect.

I was also curious to meet their mom, Paula. I was aware that this situation of our meeting and handing over her three children to another woman may be very challenging and possibly deeply painful. I was putting myself in her place. What would I do if the father of my children would start a relationship with a much younger woman from another culture? Even though it was Paula's decision to leave the relationship, the fact that Paul was already considering another relationship could stir up judgments and deep feelings of hurt. I could empathize with that.

Andrew and Angela were already out of the car and walking towards us. Little four year old Christopher was tightly clinging to his mom's hand. She urged him to let go and walk away. He let go of her hand and immediately ran quickly towards me. He grabbed my hand and turned around facing away from all of us. I could feel he needed someone to hold on to. I gently acknowledged his presence and told him I was happy to be here with him.

We were all happy to be together again. It was a nice sunny and warm day and before getting in the car we decided to walk towards Multnomah falls. Christopher held on to my hand for a while. We walked together in the stream and everyone had fun. It was the perfect way to reconnect and start our journey together!



The next morning the Westside Fire Department in Hood River Valley was holding their annual fund-raiser breakfast. That was my first sense of the Hood River community. It was the perfect thing for us five to do together.



After breakfast the children, Beauregard, the dog and I ventured into the family cherry and pear orchards. It was April 17, 1999 and the cherry trees were in full bloom. First, the children took me on an adventure. Later Paul and I went on a walk by ourselves. We both could feel the powerful force of nature

vibrating through the blossoms. We could feel the symphonic vibrations of the blossoms accompanied by the buzzing of the busy bees. A very powerful experience. Nature at its best!



The five of us coming together felt natural and effortless. Each of us could be ourselves and we beautifully found our connection together. Everything felt spontaneous and at peace. I loved our interactions together. The children were very sweet and very open towards me. We had a great time.

One evening I did a meditation and asked for clarity and answers around our relationship and future together. First I saw a path in front of me in my mind's eye. As I was walking towards it, an Angel guide appeared and motivated me to step onto the path. As I stepped onto the path, a man stepped onto the path at the same time. The message I received was, "This is my path, and the man also stepping onto my path is my partner." In that moment I knew our paths were meant to merge together. It was another confirmation that our relationship was divinely guided and meant to be. I still didn't know how it all would move forward. All five of us were just in the moment exploring

together.



The biggest challenge for me was the food issue. I decided to make spaghetti for the children and realized very quickly that I needed to let go of all expectations around food and eating habits. What I made was not the same as what they were used to, even as simple as spaghetti. I assumed this would be the perfect comfort food to make for the kids. They weren't as excited as I thought they would be. It had nothing to do with the kids. They were very open to new things. It was me and my conditioned habits and expectations. It was also frustrating to me that even if I made something exactly as I did in Belgium, the ingredients didn't taste the same because they came from different soil. From all the differences I encountered my biggest challenge was the differences in food and the habits around making and eating food.

Once the children were back home with us, Paul and I were feeling more and more grounded together. We also explored our physical connection and sexuality. Once in a while our minds wondered if the age difference between us could create a

challenge. The heart always responded quick with a power that stopped those wondering thoughts. Our connection felt natural and meant to be.



April 20, 1999 was my last full day in Hood River before my return to Belgium the next day. It was also the first school day after Spring break. I enjoyed getting up, getting the children ready and then dropping them off at the school. The school environment in Hood River was completely different than my own elementary school experience in Belgium. In the US it felt much more spontaneous and open. The parents were always welcome to visit the class. I never had experienced that in Belgium that parents could attend the class at any time if they wanted to.

The teachers were more open and relaxed and there were less rules and regulation than what I remembered from my own childhood class room experiences. I was very surprised to notice that children do not have to attend school until age 6. Some children were attending kindergarten at age 5. To me that felt much more natural and healthy than my own experience. I went

to school at age two and a half for half a day and at age 3 I was attending a full day at school. Indoctrination into the system starts very early in Belgium. And I didn't like it!

Andrew and Angela were at school and Christopher went to daycare. I was accompanying Paul who was teaching a T'ai Chi class in Hood River. I brought some books to read. I noticed that Paul was an excellent T'ai Chi teacher. He was very centered in himself and totally in his power. Wonderful to see.

Even though I knew I had to go back to Belgium the next day I felt completely at peace within myself. I enjoyed every moment of being in Hood River with Paul and the children and I also was at peace knowing that I would be flying back to Belgium and continue my life there. Everything felt perfect, all of it.

How do we move forward from this point on we asked ourselves? We didn't really know. Paul came up with a suggestion. "What if we go tent camping for two weeks when the school is out for the summer. Being on the road with kids and dog will give us a good sense of how we do together," he said. I thought that was a brilliant idea. Let's do a pressure test we said. Camping out in tents with the five of us in the woods will be a great test. I knew that if we were meant to be together it would become very clear under these circumstances. A deal was made. I would come back the beginning of June and we would pack our bags, tents, kids and dog and go on our next adventure.

We also decided to call Frank Coppieters in Portland and share



with him how we were doing and ask him a few questions about his own experience. He was a Belgian who had married an American and was living in the US. Maybe he had some idea's or tips on how to move forward.

On the phone we told Frank that we had a great time together that week. We also shared about the pressure test we decided to embark upon. "That is a great idea!", he said. He mentioned that if we decided that we wanted to be in relationship together and live here in the US, we would need to get married. The only way he said to legally live in the US as an American/Belgian couple is through marriage. This will provide a green card which is the only way to legally have permission to live full time in the USA.

I had not thought about the details of that. We were still testing the waters, figuring out how we did together as a couple and as a family of five. Everyone's feelings and thoughts were important on this journey. The many synchronicities we encountered had for sure been Divine intervention at play. We were aware of that. But on a personality level, as a boots on the ground daily life experience, we had no idea how all of this would play out. The children had in our opinion as much a say in this as we did. This was a five person relationship and everyone had to be okay with it.

So far we all had an enjoyable time together. That was for sure a good sign. We sensed that with all that had happened since our Breitenbush experience the summer before that most likely we were ready to make the decision to spend our lives together. But

we wanted to explore each other a little bit more. The ultimate pressure test would give us a more complete sense if we were meant to be or not to be together. All of us agreed to go for it. Summer break was only six weeks away. Soon, time would tell!



Mieke's Voice 2021©Mieke Benton  
starshowerusa@startmail.com

Sharing permitted  
With a simple email let me know if you like  
to be added or removed from this list  
or like to receive an email will all  
previous episodes on PDF

#### Mieke's Voice - Part 1

Week 1 - Introduction - My early life  
Week 2 - A Rough Start  
Week 3 - Vision  
Week 4 - History Lesson  
Week 5 - Bookstore Cecilia  
Week 6 - Invisible Hand  
Week 7 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 1 - My parents Anny & Hugo  
Week 8 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 2 - My brother Jeroen  
Week 9 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 3 - My sister Kathleen  
Week 10 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 4 - Something about myself, Mieke  
Week 11 - Encounters with extraterrestrials  
Week 12 - The Movie E.T. - The Extra -Terrestrial  
Week 13 - What happens after the body dies?

#### Mieke's Voice - Part 2

Week 14 - Introduction - Relationships  
Week 15 - Expressing my authentic nature  
Week 16 - Sexuality - part 1 - Unity  
Week 17 - Sexuality - part 2 - Separation  
Week 18 - Sexuality - part 3 - Menstruation

Week 19 - Intimate Relationships  
Week 20 - America - part 1 - Newspaper Article  
Week 21 - America - part 2 - Stepping into a movie  
Week 22 - Another taste of freedom as a college student  
Week 23 - Riding the waves, both high and low  
Week 24 - A Holistic approach to healing  
Week 25 - Overnight resident counselor in a high school  
Week 26 - Mieke the younger in action - Part 1  
Week 27 - Mieke the younger in action - Part 2  
Week 28 - Totem Initiation  
Week 29 - Extra Freedom and Independence  
Week 30 - First Wake-up call  
Week 31 - Second Wake-up call  
Week 32 - Home Ter Linde

#### Mieke's Voice - Part 3

Week 33 - Introduction - Learning to Love myself  
Week 34 - My last cigarette!  
Week 35 - I know there is somebody out there!  
Week 36 - Center Gea - The Power of Sound  
Week 37 - Moroccan Flavors  
Week 38 - Nightly Procedure

#### Mieke's Voice - Part 4

Week 39 - Introduction - Our paths coming together  
Week 40 - Special Announcement in Center Gea  
Week 41 - Meeting Frank Coppieters  
Week 42 - Portland Bridges and Dinner  
Week 43 - Belgians and Americans meet  
Week 44 - From Luxury into the Forest  
Week 45 - Hot Springs and Sweat Lodge  
Week 46 - Divine Inspired Rendezvous  
Week 47 - Dancing around the Galaxy  
Week 48 - To Eat or Not to Eat  
Week 49 - Mount Hood is calling  
Week 50 - Tamanawas Falls  
Week 51 - Paul's Dilemma - confiding with Jane  
Week 52 - Drumming Circle  
Week 53 - Quest for Understanding!  
Week 54 - Oneness Experience

#### Mieke's Voice - Part 5

Week 55 - Introduction - Return to my life in Belgium  
Week 56 - September 3rd 1999 - My 28th Birthday  
Week 57 - Quitting my job  
Week 58 - Mother Meera  
Week 59 - Reiki Initiation  
Week 60 - Turning Point  
Week 61 - Informing my parents  
Week 62 - House on fire

#### Mieke's Voice - Part 6

Week 63 - Introduction - Testing the Waters  
Week 64 - Excited to see the children!