

## Do You Remember Your Song by Alan Cohen

When a woman in a certain African tribe knows she is pregnant, she goes out into the wilderness with a few friends and together they pray and meditate until they hear the song of the child. They recognize that every soul has its own vibration that expresses its unique flavor and purpose. Then the women attune to the song, they sing it out loud.

Then they return to the tribe and teach it to everyone else. When the child is born, the community gathers and sings the child's song to him or her.

Later, when the child enters education, the village gathers and chants the child's song. When the child passes through the initiation to adulthood, the people again come together and sing.

At the time of marriage, the person hears his or her song.

Finally, when the soul is about to pass from this world, the family and friends gather at the person's bed, just as they did at their birth, and they sing the person to the next life. In the African tribe there is one other occasion upon which the villagers sing to the child.

If at any time during his or her life, the person commits a crime or aberrant social act, the individual is called to the center of the village and the people in the community form a circle around them. Then they sing their song to them. The tribe recognizes that the correction for antisocial behaviour is not punishment; it is love and the remembrance of identity.

When you recognize your own song, you have no desire or need to do anything that would hurt another.

A friend is someone who knows your song and sings it to you when you have forgotten it. Those who love you are not fooled by mistakes you have made or dark images you hold about yourself. They remember your beauty when you feel ugly; your wholeness when you are broken; your innocence when you feel guilty; and your purpose when you are confused.

You may not have grown up in an African tribe that sings your song to you at crucial life transitions, but life is always reminding you when you are in tune with yourself and when you are not.

When you feel good, what you are doing matches your song, and when you feel awful, it doesn't. In the end, we shall all recognize our song and sing it well. You may feel a little warbly at the moment, but so have all the great singers. Just keep singing and you'll find your way home.