



# **The Straight Path of the Spirit: Ancestral Wisdom and Healing Traditions in Fiji**

*Richard Katz Ph.D.*

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The inspiring story of one man's exploration of indigenous healing in a culture fighting to preserve its spiritual health.

- A firsthand account of a little-known healing tradition.
- A dramatic story of self-transformation by a well-respected Harvard-educated anthropologist.

In the late 1970s Richard Katz, a clinical psychologist trained in anthropology, spent two years living in a remote island community in Fiji, hoping to record the practices of its healers. At the foundation of their healing, he discovered, was the concept of the straight path, a journey through life whose truth is revealed only to the extent that it is searched for with honesty and faith. It is a way of healing that in its very essence is a way of living, a path that emphasizes the spiritual dimensions of health and the relevance of these to the community. But while interviewing healers at work, Katz was drawn into an increasingly suspenseful drama. Unexplained deaths, rumors and suspicions, and the intrusion of a zealous evangelist rocked the village and soon revealed to the author the dangerous alternative to the straight path: the misuse of power that some call witchcraft.

*The Straight Path of the Spirit* is an engrossing story of indigenous healers and a dramatic account of cultures in collision. Through the story of his own self-transformation, Katz reveals not only those aspects of life essential for the Fijians as they struggle to hold onto their identity, but also what is of importance to all of us who seek to retain our humanity.

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