

LESSON PLANS for **EARTH SHAMAN SCHOOL**

...when the student is ready,

a teacher shall appear.

-author unknown-

Aside from digging up little bits of magical trivia like this, we at the Earth Shaman School of Shamanism and Magic delve into the mysteries of religious and ceremonial magic...and we welcome you!

Whether you are a wiccan beginner or an advanced shamanic practitioner, we honor your wisdom and invite you to explore our site. We are a virtual school (which means we don't teach at any particular physical location) and our primary goal is to produce convenient, practical, hard-core magical and shamanic courses that offer you the information you need--without all the smoke and mirrors. While these topics have traditionally been shrouded by the "cloak and dagger" mentality, we strive to offer these materials in a straightforward, no-nonsense style.

Most of our courses cover basic techniques that every magician and shaman needs to know, including the four directions, elemental magic, magical tools, divination, tarot, spellwork, energy healing, psychic communication, out-of-body travel and psychic self-defense.

Briefly, the classes are broken down into three four-week sessions. The following books shall be used in the first two sections, John Matthew's, [The Celtic Shaman](#) and Michael Harner, [The Way of the Shaman](#). We will also refer to the book [In the Shadow of the Shaman](#) by Amber Wolfe, though this book is not a requirement for the course. We feel these three books give a good explanation on the many forms that shamanism takes today.

The first four-week section will cover theory. The second, healing. The third, practice. You will learn about totems, power animals, allies, healing modalities, dreams, journeywork, self-empowerment and self-awareness.

These lessons were first put online in 1999 at <http://www.geocities.com/athens/troy/7922/> and were written by Gordon Ireland and Wolfshadow (Cheryl Tracy). Putting Together a kind of Shamanism 101.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Earth Shamans School

As you know, the subject of this course is Shamanism but, we will touch on a lot more than that. Shamanism is a craft and a way of life, not a religion. It can be practiced anytime, anywhere because shamans work with their minds, bodies, and with whatever nature provides. The true nature of shamanism is that while you are learning the craft you heal yourself and, as you heal the self, you also heal others. Learning takes place everywhere; not just in the classroom but from friends, animals, books, spirit guides and life itself.

It is our hope to facilitate your learning process by giving you reading assignments from the text books and from sites on the web. The two required texts are: Michael Harner's *The Way of the Shaman* and John Matthews' *The Celtic Shaman*. You're reading assignments and any internet sites will be posted. Please read the assignment and direct any questions for discussion to the One List. You may also contact Strix with any issues, ideas, or problems.

FREQUENTY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The following general overview of shamanism is not intended to be the last word or the definitive work on this subject. Rather it is, as its title implies, intended to provide the participant or reader with a set of guidelines that will familiarize them with the general use of the terms shamanism, shaman and shamanic in the trends, study and practice of historic, traditional and contemporary shamanic experience. Particular attention should be paid to the use of qualifying words such as "may" or "usually" or "all". They indicate examples or tendencies and are not, in any way, intended to represent rigid standards. Please send comments to strix_d_emerys@mailcity.com(Strix d' Emerys).

SHAMANISM

What is a Shaman?

Before one can define or describe what a Shaman or shamanism is, certain terms need be defined such as ecstasy, traditional, and neo-shamans. It is also important to recognize that unlike most of the current neo-pagans groups, religions, and spiritual paths, Shamanism has stayed relatively unchanged through out time. This consistency is what has made shamanism it so popular.

What is Shamanic Ecstasy?

The term shamanic ecstasy was first used by eminent anthropologist Mircea Eliade in his book *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. The word ecstasy comes from the Greek word, ekstasis meaning to be placed outside, or to be placed. Ecstasy is a state of intense joy beyond rational thought.

Ecstasy as defined by Webster's dictionary is a complete state of joy. This definition as used by Tom Cowan, noted author of several books on shamanism is further elaborated on stating that ecstasy meant to literally "standing outside ones self" and that it was a form of a trance or state of consciousness which allows the shaman to journey. (Pocket Guide to Shamanism, page 110-111)

There are three main points of ecstasy and they are:

1. Shamanic Ecstasy
2. Prophetic Ecstasy

3. Mystical Ecstasy

Shamanic Ecstasy occurs while the Shaman is listening to the sound of a drum or other rhythmic beats. Ecstasy is a state of consciousness (SOC) which is entered for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To engage in soul retrieval
2. To guide the soul of the dead
3. To divine answers from the spirits in regards to future events
4. To add to his personal knowledge by associating with higher beings.

This then answers part of what is a shaman? A shaman is someone who enters into a state of "ecstasy" to assist in retrieving someone soul, guide the dead to their resting-place, to forecast the future, and to learn more.

Prophetic Ecstasy is a state that is entered to retrieve certain information in regards to future events. This is a form of Divination, or seership. The famous Greek seers of Delphi often used this form. John the Baptist would also enter into this form of ecstasy, often given to fits before predicating Biblical events. One of his most famous prophecies was foretelling the coming of Christ.

Mystical Ecstasy is a state that is entered to become closer with or to the Gods. They usually achieved this state by the use of mantras. Mystics tend to pursue greater levels of spiritual understanding. Yoga masters, Buddhist monks, and Christian mystics were known for the form of ecstasy.

Meditation, contemplation, visualization, and the spiritual concentration that is practiced by yogis and mystics can also reach ecstatic states. These are not associated with the extreme frenzy that is associated with Ecstasy, but are more like mystic trances. Though with most shamanic culture groups the use of drumming and other repetitive and rhythmic sounds to induce this the ecstatic state to which they make their out-of body journeys. (Drury and Tillett, page 28)

There are three distinct levels of ecstatic responses:

1. The physiological response: the body exhibits an involuntary response, a physical frenzy.
2. Emotional response: the emotions tend to run a gauntlet of feelings, fear, awe, passion, joy, etc.
3. Intuitive response: the mind and body have a blending, which allows for a greater awareness and expanded state of consciousness.

These states may all be achieved at the same time or at different periods of the ecstatic experience. In traditional shamanic ecstatic states the physiological is always present, the emotional may or may not be, and the intuitive is the primary means to the understanding of the ecstatic state. It should be noted that the state of ecstasy could be reached awake, or unawake. This is further defined as that the shaman can control his/her state of consciousness by entering into the ecstatic state at will, by physically, emotionally, and intuitively controlling it.

Ecstasy is not used with the modern or neo-shaman as it is with traditional shamanic groups. Many of the modern day shamans tend to use the less traditional methods and opt for the more "New Age" techniques of journeying. These are yoga, astral projection, and creative visualization to name a few. Though it should be noted that there are neo-shamans that do use the traditional method of "ecstasy."

What is a traditional shaman?

Besides someone who uses the ecstatic state, a traditional shaman is someone who is found in hunting and gathering societies. Or someone whom is currently associated with Aborigine group or is a member of. This includes too many to list, but, does include:

1. Native Americans
2. Australian Bushmen
3. Many of the African native tribes
4. South Americans
5. Central Americans
6. Eskimos
7. Many of the current tribes still existing in Siberia
8. Also many of the Oceanic peoples and Asian groups.

A traditional shaman usually will belong to one of the above listed groups and engage in traditional training, which is discussed further into this chapter. Very few traditional shamanic groups will train an "outsider," though some have.

What is a neo-shaman?

The modern neo-shaman is defined as those who practice the principles of Shamanism with out the benefit of community or tribal connection. This would cover those who participate in shamanic practices, but do not engage in the initiation practices and ways of learning the traditional shaman does. Though there are some neo-shamans that have and do.

So what is a shaman?

A Shaman, in all shamanic cultures, is portrayed primarily as a healer and a spiritual consultant for his/her community. Shamans often have many other roles in their communities: sorcerer, medicine man, priest, and psychiatrist, their primary role is to interact between the community and the spirit world. However, according to Mircea Eliade author of Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, not all shamans are sorcerers, medicine men, priests or psychiatrists. (Pages 3-4)

The Shaman is found primarily in Siberia, Central Asia, Asia, North, Central, and South America, Oceania, Indo-Europe, Australia, and Africa: actually almost every cultural group in the world has had some form of shamanism, including the Christians.

A shaman is a person who can enter the state of ecstasy at will, whether he/she is a traditional or neo-shaman.

What is Shamanism?

Shamanism is the oldest form of spiritual contact. As such Shamanism predates all known religions and might be the basis of which all religion was built upon, although shamanism itself is not a religion. Shamanism is set of religious-magical behaviors as defined by Eliade or the "magick of ecstasy." Shamanism is a set of beliefs and behaviors. This allows the shaman to shift consciousness at will to obtain information, heal, retrieve souls, or to seek for guidance from the ancestors. Shamanism has remained relatively unchanged over time. (Eliade, pages 2-6)

A primary feature of Shamanism is that it is usually found in hunting and gathering societies. This may be because those agriculture and urbanized societies were less aware of the need to integrate with nature as they were more or less designed around civilization centers and less dependent upon "nature's bounty." (Ember and Ember, pages 424-25)

Modern day shamanism has a more eclectic approach and is more in tune with the problems of the "modern world" while using the methodology of the "primitive world." According to Tom Cowan, author of Shamanism: As a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life, the modern American shaman "...draws upon what is best in our society while it reforms those areas harmful to the human spirit and the health of the planet." (Page 12)

Where does the word "Shaman" originate?

The word shaman is the English translation of the word saman, which is Tungus, and mean's "to know." The Tungus are an indigenous people of Altai Mountains in Siberia. The word shaman in Tungus designates the shamanic way of life, experiences and beliefs rather than a religion. There is some debate as to where the word saman may even have come from, Eliade devotes a chapter on that subject. It appears as if the word saman is a derivative of the Tibetan word for Buddhist monk, samana.

The word Shaman has since come to represent all those, outside of the original Siberian culture, who practice shaman like techniques. These include Witchdoctors, medicine men, Dreamwalker, and diviners. Although the shaman goes by many names in many cultures, it is a generally accepted term, to describe some one who fits the known description.

Though there is no universal Native American word for shaman: there never the less were shamans. According to John Swanton author of *Shamans and Priests: Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* "...priests worked for the entire tribe...shamans authority depended largely upon personal skill." (Page 522) The Ojibwa Native American Indian tribe did have jugglers of the "hidden truth" called jes' sakid. These jugglers were able to speak to gods and spirits and to heal. (Eliade, page 315) Eskimos also have a name for there shamans, angakok, they are also cable of flight and they journey to the Otherworld (the Sea). (Eliade, page 288)

In some African cultures, the shaman is a diviner, a person who is chosen by the ancestors to be a link between the living and the dead. The Igbo Tribe located in parts West Africa named their shaman's Dibia. (Primitive Worlds, page 117) John Matthews author of the *Celtic Shaman*, states that the Celtic Shamans are called Geilt, meaning madman or wild. (Page 4)

The South American tribe of the Araucanians has female shamans, called machi. (Eliade, pages 324-25) The Asians shamans, primarily those in Korea are called mudang, which usually refers to female shamans, while male shamans are called paksu.

The Oceanian Tribes, which ecompasses all of the south pacific islands and the continent of Australia have many names for their shamans: Andaman Islands name theirs oko-jumu, meaning dreamer. The Semang, call their shamans hala. A Malayan shaman is called lupa, someone that obtains a state of madness. Sumatra shaman means "the word" or sibaso. (Eliade, pages 337-374) In Australia they called their Dreamwalker, karadji, or clever men. (Godwin, page 106)

Whatever names or term that is used to describe a shaman it is important to note that a traditional shaman is not a person, but rather a job. Unlike many of the neo-shamans point of view, which treat shamanism as a way of life, a spiritual calling.

What role does "ecstasy" play in shamanism?

Shamanic ecstasy is used to shift the consciousness of the shaman into the higher or lower planes of existence. This shifting of consciousness allows the shaman to complete his/her "mission", whether that is healing, soul escorting, or visiting the ancestors. Ecstasy, or achieving it, also plays an important role in choosing the shaman. Being able to achieve this state at will is what makes a shaman a shaman. In other words, this state of consciousness is what defines a shaman.

Does one need to use drugs to reach ecstatic states?

No, it is not recommend that drugs be used to achieve ecstatic states. The use of drugs is primarily cultural in achieving the ecstatic state. The rhythmic beat of a drum, dancing,

and or fasting also allows the shaman to reach this ecstatic state.

However, the historical use of drugs by Siberian shamans is well documented. The Siberian shamans used a mushroom called psilocybin; this mushroom is noted for its psychedelic effects. The Native American Indians have been known to use peyote, while those in Central America marijuana and mescalito or mescaline, and South America use an hallucinogenic drink called natema. (Drury and Tillett, page 27-28) Celtic shamans are said to have sometimes used herbs such as bilberry to reach the ecstatic or desired state.

How do you become a shaman?

According to Mircea Eliade there are two primary ways of becoming a shaman. They are: hereditary, receiving the call, there are also two secondary ways, being appointed or choosing to do so of your own free will. These self-made shamans are considered less powerful than the former two. (Page 13)

Hereditary shaman means: literally to have a shaman in the family. This does not mean that your mother or father is a shaman, but any family member will do, living or dead, close member or many times removed. Hereditary shamans are found throughout most shamanic cultures, not including neo-shamans.

Extreme psychotic like episodes marks receiving the "call", usually appears to epileptic like and is often confused with epilepsy. This is not to be confused with a mental disorder. The "call" is a temporary unbalance that the shaman experiences, and is usually brought under control once he or she accepts the call. Refusing or delaying of the call can often amount in continuing of the mental unbalance and can result in a mental illness if it is avoided long enough. The call can also be marked by being attacked by an animal, struck by lightning or some other near death experience. It should be noted that "Call" is usually happens simultaneously to those who are also hereditary shamans but is not inclusive to.

Being appointed a shaman involves either the tribal shaman choosing an apprentice or the tribal leaders picking a youth who has demonstrated either some sort of epileptic fit, or a marketable difference in personality from other youths his/her age. This difference usually entails peculiar behavior: a seeker of solitude, absent-mindedness, sings in their sleep and other abnormalities.

A personal quest is making a conscious choice to become a shaman. Eliade states that this "self-made" shaman is considerably less powerful and less likely to be able to communicate at will with the spirits. (Page 13) This is the path that most modern neo-shamans follow.

How does one learn to become a shaman?

There are two traditional kinds of instruction a shaman receives and many forms a neo-shaman can use. The traditional methods as stated by Eliade are:

1. Ecstatic
2. Traditional

Receiving training by the ecstatic method is through visions and dreams. This instruction is given by previous ancestors, spirits and guides and involves an initiation in the Otherworld.

Traditional training is usually done by the current shaman, and if not available the tribal elders. The traditional training includes the names of spirits, history of the clan (tribe); herbalist and other needed to skills to become a successful shaman.

Neo-shamans engage in reading how-to books, attending weekend seminars, and joining shamanic schools. Neo-shamans can have an ecstatic experience and or receive the "call", though this is often not the case. They can however receive traditional training if they find the right teacher and are qualified to do so.

What does a shamanic initiation involve?

The shamanic initiation is two-fold; both in this world and in the next. This phenomenon takes place simultaneously. This initiation is part of the "call" that all traditional shamans receive. This is a very involved process that can, at times, result in death or permanent disabilities if not seen through.

A Siberian shamanic initiation, which includes the following Tribes: Tungus, Manchu, Yakut, Samoyed, Ostyak, and the Buryat, involved some sort of dismemberment and then having the organs replaced, usually with crystals, or other objects. There is also the public initiation which the master shaman and the members of the community would initiate the shaman thus publicly recognizing him or her as "shaman."

The initiatory dreams and visions of a Yakut shaman including dying in a ritual death that last three days. This "death" will include visions; dreams of being disremembered and then put back together. With the Yakut this will include the use of iron to join the parts. A bird transports the shaman to the other world and there it places the shaman on ripen branch of pine pitch, or in another version gives birth to the shaman on a branch of the world tree. (Eliade, pages 35-38)

The initiation among the Samoyed also features birds, trees and dismemberment. The Samoyed candidate also will encounter several divine figures, these being "the Lord of the Waters, the Lord of the Earth, the Lord of the Tree, and many others. The Lord of the Tree will give the shaman a branch from which he/she will make their drum. (Eliade, pages 38-43)

The Tungus, Buryat, Manchu and Ostyak include ritual dismemberment and resurrection. This dismemberment involves shamanic ancestors and sometimes-evil spirits will often torture the future shaman for days. (Eliade, pages 43-45) This is found in many other cultures also, including the Eskimos of Alaska, the tribes in Australia, Africa, and Native peoples of North and South America.

Ammasalik Eskimos are attacked by animals and then devoured; new flesh will grow on their bones. For those of the Iglulik tribes, the current or master shaman will extract the soul from the candidate and examine to see if he/she is worthy. (Eliade, pages 58-62)

The Australian shaman believes that a supernatural being called the Nagatya opens the belly and places crystals within the body that give the shaman his magical powers. This usually takes place in a cave rather than a tree. There are several variants of the same scheme among the four major tribes in Australia, but all hold true to a ritual dismemberment. (Eliade, pages 45-50)

This ritual death and resurrection is found among many of the African tribes. The common theme among African tribes is the removal of the head and restoration of the brains to give the future shaman clearer vision to see the evil spirits. (Eliade, pages 55-58)

Among the native people of North and South America death and resurrection is also part of the initial initiation through dreams and visions. Though the use of hallucinatory drugs is more wide spread among the North and South Native Americans their experiences are too similar to the Siberian shaman to discount there visions as be simply drug induced. (Eliade, pages 53-55)

The Neo-shaman experiences this vision several ways. It is usually self induced, through fasting, meditation, sweat lodges, and the use of drugs. According to John Matthews author of the Celtic Shaman, the shaman will go through a process of "recovering (his/her) senses" by meditating and visiting the "cave of care" where one faces their own personal demons. The initiate seeks out neo-shamanism, and though valid to a certain degree, it lacks certain hereditary powers of a traditional shaman. (Matthews, pages 15-32)

The "true" initiation of shamans all have a common theme: Ritual dismemberment and replacement of organs either by spiritual means or with other matter i.e. crystals. According to Eliade there is a common theme among tribal shamanic initiations:

1. Time spent alone, away from the tribe, in wilderness
2. Being symbolically made to look like a corpse
3. Symbolic burial
4. Descent into the Otherworld
5. Self induced or drug induced trance
6. Period of training
7. Rites of passage and torture

Public initiation among the follows the true initiation follows the "true" initiation, though for tribal members it is not any less important. The initiation is performed after a period

of initial ecstatic experience or "true" initiation, and formal training with the current shaman. Public initiation is highly ritualistic, often involving physical pain and feats, and is witnessed by the tribe.

According to Eliade, the Tungus and Manchu both have a demonstration of physical feats correlated with mental discipline. The Tungus have the initiate physically climb up a rope, which represents the road to the sky; this ceremony usually lasts up to nine days. The Manchu have their future shamans either walk across a hot bed of coals or diving into holes cut into the ice, thus demonstrating their ability to control body temperature. This is also very similar to the Tibetan monks whom are sent in into the snow with wet sheets wrapped around their bodies and must heat themselves. According to Eliade the Manchu hardly ever use the bed of coals anymore and it is seen as a decline in shamanic powers.

The Yakut, Samoyed and Ostyak initiation is less physical and more of a celebration. The Yakut initiate, after climbing up a mountain or a hill, will be given vows he must repeat surrounded by nine chaste men (on his right) and chaste women (on his left). Among the Samoyed and Ostyak there is singing and dancing and feasting (nine pigs are slaughtered), usually followed by the initiate going into a state of ecstasy.

The Buryat initiation is more detailed and rather involved. First the initiate must be cleansed; this usually is done twice. Next, birch trees are arranged in the following order to be used. One of the birches is set up in the yurt or tents smoke hole. The others are set up away from the tent in the following order:

1. One is used to place offerings, such as wine. Ribbons representing good and bad spirits are also tied to the tree.
2. Another has a bell and a horse tied to it.
3. One is used for the initiate to climb; this is usually a stout birch.
4. Nine others, grouped in threes are tied with white rope and colored ribbons.
5. Nine more are used as stakes to which animals are sacrificed
6. Then they use larger birches to tie the bones (wrapped in straw) of the animals that were sacrificed to.

The actual initiation takes place with the initiate lying in a trance for 3 days, crawling out of the smoke hole and then celebrating his/her emergence as a shaman. The horse is symbolic in Siberian culture as transportation to the Gods, or the Otherworld. The number nine is significant in all of the rituals, the only given reason for this is the fact that there are nine layers of heaven in Siberian religion. One should also note that in each ritual, some sort of ascent, or climb heavenward was used.

This is public initiation by the tribe is also found in many other cultures, including the Eskimos of Alaska, the tribes in Australia, Africa, and Native peoples of North and South America.

Eskimos public initiation is less public, but nonetheless an initiation. The initiate will rub stones together awaiting an important event; this may go on for several seasons. During which he will change teachers at the end of each season, this allows for amore well-

rounded education. (Eliade, pages 58-62)

The Australian Bushmen initiation includes drinking of water that has crushed crystals; he is then led to a grave to begin his symbolic death. There is also ascent to the heavens with the use of a magical cord, and in some instances a rainbow bridge. The use of the entrance of a cave instead of a tree is one of the major differences in Australian shamans to others. (Eliade, pages 131-139)

African public initiation varies from tribe to tribe, though it generally follows the typical public initiation as established by other shamanic cultures: ritual death, resurrection and the climbing or ascent. This is followed by a demonstration of powers to the tribe and the current shaman along with whatever other abilities the tribe requires of its shaman.

Shamans of North and South America also have public initiations, though those of North America plains Indians involves certain degrees of physical tests along with a spirit quest or vision quest to prove one's worth to the tribe. Most, but not all, North American Native Indian tribes have some sort of ritual ascent along with the ritual death and resurrection. As with African tribes, North American Indian tribal customs vary.

South American Indian customs also vary to a degree somewhat, although intoxication by tobacco seems to be a common thread along with ritual seclusion. The Araucanians tribe also engages in a ritual ascent of a tree stripped of all its bark that is called a *rewe*.

The neo-shaman, depending upon which shamanic path he/she is following will also engage in a public "type" ceremony, though this is less public than the ceremony of the traditional shaman. This ceremony can involve a sweat lodge, public drumming circle or a vision quest, of which the neo-shaman will go on a weekend retreat with other neo-shamans.

As we can see there is a common thread throughout shamanic "public" initiations as there are in the "true" initiations:

1. The number nine is prevalent or a division of.
2. The ascent.
3. Ritual death and resurrection
4. A tree or a cave.

What is the role of a shaman?

Shamanic roles vary, according to Tom Cowan, author of the *Pocket Guide to Shamanism*, the roles or services of a shaman are: "...healing the spirit, herbal healing, body work, divination, dreamwork, soul-leading..." It should be noted that not every shaman does not perform the same services, nor is every shaman a healer of the spirit or body. (Pages 23-27) The actual roles of a shaman depends upon the shaman's natural gifts, some shamans are carpenters, medicine men, witch doctors, chiefs, warriors, and priests. The role is of less importance than the service a shaman provides.

Healing the spirit is the primary function of a shaman. This includes soul-extraction, soul-retrieval, and soul-restoration. Soul extraction involves the shaman extracting psychic darts that have infected the soul. This is usually an attack from someone who is attempting to harm, maim, or kill the person. The classic dart attack will include the person have pains where no wounds exist. This involves according to Michael Harner, author of *The Way of the Shaman*, a literal "sucking out" of the intrusion. This sucking out of the intrusions is done both psychically and mentally.

Soul-retrieval is the process by which the shaman retrieves pieces of the person lost soul. This is done by journeying to the spirit world and requesting assistance from the spirits, ancestor, and guides that dwell the Other World. These beings assist the shaman in discovering what is wrong with the person. Classic symptoms of a person in need of soul retrieval would be those suffering from:

1. A mental illness
2. Those abused as children
3. A feeling something is missing

This would entail the shaman to be able to discern what pieces are missing and to retrieve them. Soul-retrieval also could entail the shaman to go seek the missing pieces from whomever stole them and to do battle and retrieve the missing pieces.

Soul restoration is the literally restoring of ones soul. This occurs when a person is near death and his/her soul seeks to move on. This "death" could be the result of a physic attack or an accident from which the body has recovered physically, but not spiritually.

Herbal healing gives way to the notion that the shaman is a medicine man or witch doctor. Herbal healing is as old as man is. Its very roots goes back to when mankind first ventured forth from his/her caves and observed what the animals ate and didn't. Many of the hunting and gathering tribes had the ability to heal with plants indigenous to their area. This is one of the oldest forms of healing and was used in conjunction with spirit healing to hasten the patient to a speedy recovery.

Body work, hands on healing. This technique is still widely used today, though now they are Reiki masters, massage therapist, and chiropractors. A hand on healing is energy or spirit of the shaman working with the energy or spirit of the patient working together.

Divination is the means by which the shaman will foretell the future, locate hidden objects, and predicting the weather. This is done by a multiple amount of ways, and depends upon from which culture the shaman is from. Though the most common shamanic method is journeying to the Otherworld and requesting information from those that live there. It is been said that Jenghiz Khan used his shamans that way.

Dreamwork or dream interpretation is also another shamanic device to assist with healing. Shamans will listen to the dreamer's dream, sometime for several days, until they fully understand it. Then they will dream the dream themselves than interpret it.

Soul leading is another important function of a shaman. This is the process of which the shaman will escort the newly dead to their place in the Otherworld. This is done because the shaman who is familiar and a frequent visitor to the Otherworld will be able to find the "soul" its proper place.

Whatever role a shaman plays or services he/she renders it is important to note that not all shamans are healers, diviners, or herbalist. What a shaman is according to Eliade is a "master of the ecstatic." From which he/she receives the power to heal and divine.

Do shaman's shapeshift?

Yes, but not all shamans. Just like not all shamans are healers or religious leaders. Shapeshifting is not a primary ability that shamans possess. There are two types of Shapeshifting: changing your physical form to an animal; which is probably where the werewolf stories begin, this is called lycanthropy. Or changing you form in the astral plane to that of your power animal. Shamans are said to be able to do both. (Matthews, *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook* pages 56-58)

There is a third form that is less talked about, but more common. During certain rituals or ceremonies the participants have been known to be so enthralled during the drumming and dancing that they have taken on the characteristics of animals; have growled like a bear, bayed at the moon like a wolf and screamed like a eagle. All while acting out the physical aspects of the animal, walking on all fours, etc. This form of Shapeshifting is more common among the Native American population than other aborigine tribes. (Steiger, *Totems: The Transformative Power of Your Personal Animal Totem* page, 64-70)

What is the difference between a "black" and "white shaman"?

The primary difference according to Eliade is that the white shamans have relationships with the gods, the black shamans with spirits. Though most shamanic cultures the shaman has the ability to do both, and often does. As with other pagan religions and spiritual movements, it is the intent that marks the differences between the two. (Shamanism: *Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* pages 184-189)

What is the shamanic "Otherworld"?

The Siberian shamans have 9 levels of heaven. Australian shamans have this world and Dreamtime. African shamans have various shades of reality depending upon the tribe involved. Indo-European have three levels much like their Native American counterparts. These are the three most common levels Upper, Middle, and Lower. These are the levels from which the neo-shaman uses today. These worlds are located on the Tree of Life.

Upper World is located in the branches of the Tree of Life. It is a place where the spirits and gods reside. This is also known as the astral palace or temples. It is where the shaman divines the future, learns from his/her guides, and communicates with the dead.

The Lower World is located in the roots and is a very powerful place. It is where the dead resides and where lost information is retrieved. It is a place where the shaman learns what ails those he/she is treating.

Middle World is located in the trunk. It is the world of here and now. It is where the shaman answers questions for everyday problems.

How does one get to these other worlds?

Tunnels are the primary method of traveling to the Otherworld. These tunnels are located in the physical plane in caves and the base of trees. The tunnel that leads up goes to the Upper World, the one down, Lower World. Authors of the Secrets of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within You, Jose and Lena Stevens state that tunnels exist throughout, both on the physical and spiritual planes. The Stevens even go to say that there are also seven "inner" tunnels. These are reached by using the chakras. (Pages 157-173)

The chakras are located at seven points within the body:

1. The first tunnel is located at the sacrum or the base of the spine.
2. The second tunnel is located at the abdomen, just below the belly button.
3. The third tunnel is located at the solar plexus, just above the belly button.
4. The fourth tunnel is located at the chest, specifically the heart.
5. The fifth tunnel is located at the throat, but it also takes in the ears as well.
6. The sixth tunnel is located at the brow and eyes, also known as the third eye.
7. The seventh tunnel is located at the crown or the top of the head.

There are many tunnels from which a shaman can reach the Otherworld or spirit realm. Depending upon which culture from the shaman draws his/her powers.

What is journeying?

Journeying is leaving "this world" reality to enter the "Otherworld" while in the state of ecstasy. It is the actual traveling through the various levels of the Worlds: Siberian shamans have 9 levels and usually travel on the back of a goose or a horse. American Indians have 3 levels and travel in accompaniment with their totem guides. African shamans, depending upon the tribe have multiple layers of the Otherworld and travel with their ancestors. Each shamanic culture has its own version of exactly where and with whom they travel; though each shamanic culture does have some sort of journeying involved.

According to Tom Cowan when a shaman journeys he/she is letting their spirit leave their body to journey to the astral plane or spirit realm. There are many ways of obtaining this state of ecstasy, as was discussed with the question "What is Shamanic ecstasy?." This altered state of consciousness has many levels full awake, dreaming, and daydreaming. Though unlike drug induced or dreamed realities, shamanic journeying is intentional. (Pocket Guide to Shamanism pages 111-112)

What does the acronym SSC stand for?

SSC or shamanic state of consciousness is a term first used by Michael Harner, author of the Way of the Shaman. SSC is another term for the ecstatic or altered state of consciousness. According to Harner it involves both a trance state and a learned state of shamanic ways and of the Otherworld. During which the shaman must be aware of what is occurring and in control of the situation, much like lucid dreaming (which will be discussed in later chapters).

What is a guided journey?

A guided journey is a learning journey. It does not necessarily have to begin with the ecstatic state; often it can take place in deep sleep. A guided journey occurs when a spirit guide or animal guide (totem) takes control of the dream and "guides" you to where they want you. A guided journey is not always pleasant. This is where the shaman learns more about him/herself and grows into their powers, it is where they meet and grow to know their guides and spirit teachers.

What is a Guide?

A guide is a spirit helper and may appear to the shaman in many forms. Usually a guide will appear in the form of your own ancestral gods or a figure that is comfortable for the shaman. In some shamanic cultures the guide appears as an ancestor: African and Siberian shamans often have ancestors appear as spirit guides. Many shamanic cultures also have animal guides or totems.

Totems according to Brad Steiger author of Totems: The Transformative Power of Your Personal Animal Totem, a totem is animal, plant, or mineral that has special powers or meaning to the shaman. A totem has the power that is characterized by the object it represents. Example: If the totem is an owl, wisdom; oak tree, strength; crystal, healing and storage of energy. The power of a totem and what it represents also varies in the different shamanic cultures, so what one culture says does not necessarily mean it is the truth or will it apply to another.

Do shamans have rules?

Not in the sense of there being a rule book. Traditional shamans have a certain set of beliefs and behaviors to guide them as was discussed previously. Neo-shamans appear to be more rules orientated. According to the authors of *Secret of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within You* they're at least nineteen rules or beliefs and behaviors a shaman must follow. Though only ten will be discussed here:

1. The physical world works of a basic principles such as physics and it bound to them.
2. The spirit world or Otherworld is not bound to such inflexible laws.
3. That the spirit world is made up of many levels though those levels used by neo-shamans is Upper, Middle and Lower.
4. The Tree of Life allows the shaman entrance to those worlds.
5. That all is connected; the physical and the spirit world depend on each other for their respective existence.
6. That all power is connected to the Web of Life.
7. Shamans need to know how to enter the spirit world at will
8. That a shaman needs to know how to manipulate the tunnels to enter the spirit world.
9. Visualization and a creative imagination will assist in that endeavor.
10. Sweat lodges, dancing and drumming can assist your entrance to the Otherworld.

What is the purpose of drumming?

The use of a drum is very old; a drum was probably the very first musical instrument made. The drum assist the shaman to reach the state of ecstasy, by beating on the drum the shaman would put him/herself into a trance. Once entered into he/she would journey to the Otherworld than return, describing their travels with song accompanied by the drum. These drums were ornately painted, often with feathers or horsehair hang off the sides. A shamans drum is a very personal instrument.

What is a drumming circle?

According to Tom Cowan a drumming circle is a group of neo-shamans that meet and journey together. This is a shamanic support group and allows the neo-shaman to learn and grow with others. (Pocket Guide to Shamanism page 110)

Where can you go to learn to become a shaman?

There are many shamanic schools. Some of which teach through the mail others by attending retreats. There are no through the mail shaman classes that are recommended.

Though you can also find them in New Age magazines, such as:

The Kindred Spirit
Foxhole, Dartington, Totnes
Devon TQ9 6EB, England
Or fax: 01803 8665881

Or

Shaman's Drum
PO Box 97
Ashland, OR 97520
Call: (541) 552-0839

Though when dealing with teachers you can not see or have ready access to, you might as well buy a good book. Finding someone who will give your private lesson is another thing all together though. The best way would be to find a local drumming circle or supply shop for shamans and ask.

Shamanic workshops or retreats are one of the many ways the neo-shamans learn. There are many of them out there and some are less reputable then others. The better of them are listed here and they are:

Aloha International
PO box 665
Kilauea, HI 96754

Or

Foundation for Shamanic Studies
PO Box 1939
Mill Valley, CA 94942

Or

Tuatha D'e: The People of God
PO Box 12803 3rd Ave.
Edinburgh, EH8 9YY
Scotland

What are some good books to read on shamanism?

That would depend upon what you are looking for. If you are seeking books to learn how to be a shaman there are plenty out there, though the best in this category is by Michael Harner. If you want to learn about shamans and their history the best in that category is by Mircea Eliade.

HOW TO

Cowan, Tom Shamanism: As a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life, The Crossing Press
Freedom CA, 1996 ISBN# 0-89594-838-9

Harner, Michael The Way of the Shaman, Harper & Row NY, NY 1990 ISBN# 0-06-250373

Matthews, John The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook Element Books, Boston, MA 1992
ISBN# 1-85230-245-3

Stevens, Jose and Lena Stevens Secrets of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within
You Avon Books NY, NY 1988 ISBN# 0-380-75607-2

HISTORY OF

Campbell, Joseph Primitive Mythology: The Masks of God Penguin Books NY, NY 1987
ISBN# 0-14-00-4304-7

Eliade, Mircea Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy Princeton University Press,
Princeton University USA 1974 ISBN# 0-691-09827

RELATED BOOKS

Steiger, Brad Totems: The Transformative Power of Your Personal Animal Totem Harper
SanFrancisco, CA 1997 ISBN# 0-06-251425-3

Sun Bear, Wabun Wind, and Shawnodese Dreaming with the Wheel: How to Interpret
and Work with Your Dreams Using the Medicine Wheel Fireside NY, NY 1994 ISBN#
0-671-78416-1

LESSON ONE

Read the Introductions of both texts.
Visit the following site on mediation
MEDITATION

The Onelist discussion will focus on the following topics this week. A brief introduction of students and teachers so that we all get to know one another a little better. So tell us about yourself and why you joined the course. Voice any questions or concerns you may have to begin with.

Read thru the material below and answer the questions in a post to the list. What do you think Shamanism is?

These are some questions you need to ask your self.
What makes you different from others in your community?
What do you feel are the necessary ingredients to make a shaman?
What do shamans know that is different from others?
What do think being a shaman is?

A brief history

Shamans have always been the caretakers of their clan and/or village. Shamanism is one of the oldest spiritual societies in the world. Shamanic variations include: Celtic, Norse, American Indian, African, and Australian, just to name a few. You will find as you read and study more about them that they are all basically the same other than language differences.

The shaman's only real role is that of a healer. Naturally, they do more than that, but it is their primary function. Secondary roles are that of student, teacher, observer, and trickster... all bearing in mind that everything the shaman knows is geared towards healing the self, others, and the community. You Journey, seek totems and spirits, and you develop your mental, physical, psychic, and spiritual abilities to heal the self, others and your community. This is what we mean when we say that shamans are healers.

Shamans have a very rich spiritual, psychological, cultural, and practical heritage. We are only going to present a small part of it in thirteen weeks. Shamanism is the intentional effort to develop a relationship with your personal helping spirits by journeying into the realms where they dwell. The reason one seeks to develop this ongoing relationship is to increase personal power and healing ability by gaining their knowledge and understanding.

Shamanism is a way of perceiving the very nature of the universe. We are the world's caretakers. We take care of our families, our clan, our village, our community, and the world which has gifted us with all we need for life. We are pro-active in protecting the rights of others and all inhabitants of the Earth.

Shamans work in both the spiritual world, which we will discuss later, and nature, i.e. herbs, animals, minerals, etc. You will, in the process of this course, learn how to work with the earth's energy. (You will not learn to control it but to work with it) Shamans ask, they do not take. We learn to work with the spirit world and nature; we do not demand anything; we ask for assistance.

Some of the things you will learn are:

How to communicate with the spirits.
How to communicate with nature.
How to understand people.
And how to laugh at yourself.

To develop these abilities you will have to face certain things about yourself. Doing this is called going to the Cave of Care. This is where you face your darkest fears and deal with them and this is the object of the self-work that shamans do. Because the only way to grow, move forward, and to put the past to rest, is by dealing with it. To do this requires the ability to mediate and visual.

Meditation and Visualization both take practice. You have been given an excellent site for mediation so now let's talk about about visualization. Practice the following exercise this week. The more you practice, the better you'll get. And the more success you'll have with future assignments.

Exercise One

Close your eyes & relax
Explore your surroundings with your senses
Touch something, then imagine it till you get it perfect.
Smell something, then recreate it in your mind.
Hear something, your child's voice, and create it in your mind.
Attempt to involve all 3 senses at once

Exercise Two

Choose a fruit
Close your eyes
Feel it
Smell it
Eat it
Focus on the sense of taste and recreate it in your mind.

Exercise Three

Choose an object
Look at it
Touch it
Set it down
Close your eyes

Recreate the object by focusing on the details.

Now imagine changing the object

Exercise Four

Exploring memory

Give yourself 15 seconds to recall an unpleasant memory. Pay close attention to how you feel and how your body reacts. Do the same with a pleasant memory. This is to show you how you can control your emotions. One second you felt angry, depressed, upset, the next happy, relaxed, etc. All it takes is a shift of focus which is what the four exercises involve. It is what shamans do shift their focus and into the next realm.

Study these exercises. Practice them. Write down your experiences.

LESSON TWO

Required reading for week is: Celtic Shaman, pages 15-21: The Way of the Shaman, pages 135-141. Visit the following site on HEALING. The class shall be about healing yourself.

As you may have noticed this section is about you, and how you deal with yourself and how to heal yourself. It is important that you deal with these issues; even if you weren't studying shamanism you would still need to learn how to do this.

OK, to finish up with your reading we have added 3 more exercises.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 is designed to change your outlook on things and to show you what your actual outlook is.

Example: My personal outlook is if it don't kill you then it will only make you stronger, I have learned this because I have had several life experiences, not all good, but all a learning experiences. I could have chose to look at them as my life sucks, or OK don't want to do this again. However, I chose the latter, because if I never traveled the path I did, I might not be right here right now.

1: Make a list of your current beliefs.

2: Next to them list the opposite.

Example: life is good--life sucks.

I can't do this--I can do anything.

Read over your list.

Are you a negative or positive person?

What can you do to change the negatives beliefs you have? Discuss this in e-group

Excercise2

Changing your habits.

Habits are both good and bad. Brushing your teeth everyday is a good habit. Not showering everyday is a bad habit. It is important that you recognize your habits as being both good and bad. It is part of your personality, part of you. You need to decide what it is about you that you don't like or need to change. This might be one of the hardest things you do. But remember you can teach an old dog new tricks.

1: Make a list of your habits/routines.

2: Look for patterns.

3: Find the humor in your habits--do not judge them.

4: Identify a alternative course of action.

5: Try it out.

Remember it takes a long time to change habits and to create new ones do not lose patience. Stay the course. Dicuss this is e-group.

Exercise 3

Relationships can be the most difficult aspect of your life to sort through. Relationships are a very influential part of your life. The relationship you have with your family can be very difficult if they do not understand what you are doing with your life. You need to understand that you can not change them anymore then they can change you. Nor should you want them to change. It is best to come to some sort of compromise in regards to this. Such as, In the way that some families have agreed to never talk politics or religions. It is very important that you understand how relationships affect your energy flows. It is also important you understand your relationships. This exercise is designed to help you rate your current relationships and to see them for what they are. After that it is up to u to decide what to do with them.

- 1: Make a list of your close personal relationships, this includes, but not excluded to spouse, children, parents, siblings, close friends, co-workers, boss, etc.
- 2: Check off the ones that raise doubt in your mind.
- 3: List the positive and negative features of this relationship---the ones you checked off.
- 4: Decide how you want to deal with them. Remember we are not telling you to end difficult relationships--just showing you how they effect you. Dicuss in e-group.

The Basic Truths of Shamanism

Basic Truth ONE

All power comes from within.

Everything has power and all power is equal. Just the levels of which the person can control the power makes it look like some are stronger then others. Power comes from authenticity this means you must have faith or trust in your own authority/ability. In other words be confident. Read the shape of being in the Celtic Shaman (page 22).

Basic Truth TWO

Everything is relative and connected.

In other words, cause and effect. You can not do anything with out it affecting something. Positive thoughts and energy have positive results. Negative thoughts and energy destroy positive results. Example: If u attempt to control a force of nature/spirit world. They will rebel nothing likes to be controled. Attempting to control the weather in your area may give you the results you wanted. But, someplace else on the planet the weather is not doing what it was suppose to do!. Because you changed it. You need to learn to work as an equal partner with all. Man, nature, and the spirits, all are connected for we all are all made of "star stuff"

Basic Truth THREE

The world, all 3 of them, Upper, Middle, and lower (read about then on page 35-36 in Celtic shaman) is what you make it. This reflects upon your ability to use your power to understand that there no limits to what you can do. In other words the shaman that says I can do this is the one that can.

Basic Truth FOUR

Effectiveness is the yardstick of truth.

If you make it happen then it is the truth and just because you couldn't make it happen doesn't mean that it can't happen. Just means you may not have found the right solution as of yet. Do not get down on yourself just because you have not yet accomplished something

The aspects of Balance.

There are 4 aspects of balance. These are mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. You need to learn to live a balanced life. This means do not go overboard in any area of your life for long periods of time. At times tunnel vision can be an asset, but only for the duration of the need. You need not only to learn how to be balanced, but how to balance those you are healing. Shamans heal all aspects of the individual.

The mental is how we process energy.

Shamans need to understand how the person intakes information and how certain information affects the person. Criticize someone too much and all they hear is that they are a failure. Tell them that they are doing better because of the results you see, and they will assist you in helping themselves heal even faster.

The physical.

Reflects how we take care of ourselves. Do not take any of the following personally. For I have no way of knowing if any of what I am about to say resembles you in any way, these are generalizations to make a point. If someone drinks or does drugs all the time they show very little regard for their health and for those who care about them. Same goes with those who smoke or eat too much etc. A healthy body allows the Shaman the strength to journey. You may be thinking I journey with my mind, which is true, but all is connected-- everything affects everything. Takes a lot out of a person to heal. Think about it.

Emotional

Is how we react to others. We all let others affect how we react, though we are the ones in control of how we react. First impressions are a good example: most know right away if they like someone or not. But what most don't think about is why don't we like them? Need to look at the why's. You will usually see yourself in there someplace.

Spiritual

Is the understanding that the soul/spirit has needs as strong as the rest of your other aspects. Spirituality is living in harmony with the 4 points of the medicine wheel, which represents your physical life, as well as your spirit's life. It is balancing the whole. Besides being your soul is also your need to fulfill a basic human need believing in something greater than us. It also everything we believe without any labels.

LESSON THREE

Required reading for this week is: Celtic Shaman, pages 33-44: The Way of the Shaman, pages 20-30, Visit the following site on MEDICINE WHEELS. This class shall cover sacred circles, holidays, and medicine wheels.

This weeks lesson will be about the circle or the medicine wheel. What you have read is the Celtic point of view on the circle now we will discuss the American Indian Version, the medicine wheel. As was stated in the first class all shamans share very basic elements that with slight differences. The circle/wheel is one of them. All pagans religions have made use of the circle since the beginning of time, Stonehenge is but one of many examples.

Those who walk the shaman path use the circle, the circle itself represents many things. The circle is humankind's greatest symbol of perfection and wholeness its shape itself speaks of unity and completion--ever flowing, life, death, and life again--never ending. It reminds us that there are no such thing as past or future, beginning or ending in the spirit realm, that in there all things are now.

The medicine wheel is a entrance way to the spirit world to other dimensions and times. It is where medicine power is raised because the circle is special and powerful. One note is that it is important all we do in there be positive. Taking in the law of cause and effect.

Exercise 1

Take a pencil and paper and draw a circle, marking the four points of the compass, make the circle big enough to add a lot of notes.

Divide the circle into 4. These 4 areas or points are represented by four spirit beings.

These beings make themselves known to the shaman through the language of dreams.

The beings I use or were given to me may or not be the same for you. So if that is the case please insert your own.

Spirit of the east is represented by the eagle it brings illumination and enlightenment.

The spirit of the south is the wolf; it is the power of finding out, intuitions.

The west is the bear is strength and introspection, self-examination.

The north is the owl, renewal and there clarity of intent.

On the wheel, North is the direction of receiving its polarity is the South direction is giving. West is the direction of holding and its polarity is the East direction of deterring. Please discuss your own personal spirit representatives in the egroup class.

The wheel as it represents the constitution of the human.

The center is the soul through which the conscious entity expresses itself life after life through a physical body=west: through emotions=south: through the mind=north: and through the driving energy of the spirit=east. All of which characterizes the personality. So we are back to aspect of balance; the most balanced way to use our energies is to determine with the spirit, receive with the mind, give with emotions hold with the body.

Components of the wheel.

You will find similarities here also. Which shows that 25,000 years, that all of humankind pretty much had been on the same page when it came to spiritual matters. Which unfortunately is not the case today.

EAST Totem; is the eagle

Element; air

Color; yellow

Kingdom; human

Quality; illumination

Human aspect; spirit

Manifestation; art and writing

Time; momentary

Heavenly body; sun

Season; spring

The farsighted place

SOUTH

Totem; wolf

Element; fire

Color; red

Kingdom; animal

Quality; finding out

Human aspect; emotions

Manifestation; journeying

Time; past

Heavenly body; moon

Season; summer

The close to place

WEST

Totem; bear

Element; water

Color; blue

Kingdom; plant

Quality; strength, introspection

Human aspect; physical body

Manifestation; healing

Time; present

Heavenly body; stars

Season; fall

The looks with in place

NORTH

Totem; owl

Element; earth

Color; green
Kingdom; mineral
Quality; knowledge and wisdom
Human aspect; mind
Manifestation; philosophy
Time; future
Heavenly body; earth
Season; winter
The place of knowledge

Opening a Circle

It is actually very easy and simple to open a circle or create a medicine wheel. The more simple the ceremony the quicker you get to the healing. A circle or wheel is not an actual circle or at least it doesn't have to be. It is a space you create with your mind though it might also and can be a physical space. The problem I have with the use of a physical space is that it often contains your self expression and limits you.

Here is a quick exercise take a blank piece of paper make 3 rows of equally spaced dots so you have 3 columns and three rows equaling nine dots connect them with one line. Take a minute and try it.

The circle can be open with a staff, Athame, sword or your finger. OR JUST YOUR MIND. It is always good to use a few words when you do this. Here is one I use it is simple and quick. As I said you could spend a lot of wasted time opening a circle, in the meantime the person you are working with isn't getting any better. Think about it!!

Remember this is one of many opening ceremonies, use whatever makes you comfortable.

Facing east;
Spirit of the east where light comes from and element of air enlighten me.
Facing south;
Spirit of the south where the sun is the strongest, and element of fire, let me seek.
Facing west;
Spirit of the west where the sunsets and element of water give me strength.
Facing north;
Spirit of the north where the sun rests and element of earth give me knowledge.

And you are done with the opening. You close by facing each direction starting with the north going counter clockwise and giving thanks to the various spirits for their help.

Although this may seem very simplistic, it is in accordance with the cosmic law that all energy follows thought, if your intent is pure, you do not need to convince the spirits with as long drawn out ceremony. You can not impress them so who are you impressing?????? Discuss your own personal circle openings with the class.

FOUR Shamanic Talents

They are simply derived from the principles we discussed last week.

- 1: Seeing; the world is what you think it is. There are no limits.
- 2: Focusing; from where energy flows all attention goes and now is that moment.
- 3: Empowering; all power comes from within.
- 4: Dreamweaving; from the effectiveness is measured in truth.

LESSON FOUR

Required Reading: Celtic Shaman, pages 51-57; The Way of the Shaman, page 16-19, 57-65 AND <http://www.angelfire.com/ok/bobbiesues/pg8mwNINE.html>

THE LESSON

"Ask the animals,
and they will teach you,
or the birds of the air,
and they will tell you,
or speak to the earth,
and it will teach you,
or the fish of the sea,
and they will inform you."

Job 12:7-8

One of the most effective methods of drawing upon the power of ancient wisdom is to regain awareness that you are one again. Falling into the pattern of nature and that you are living in harmony with all creatures.

Among shamans, the totems represent the physical form of one's spirit helper, guardian, and/or guide.

Identifying Your Totem:

1. Which animal/plant/mineral has always fascinated you?
2. What animal do you see the most often in nature?
3. Which animal frightened you the most, often it is your fear that you need to come to terms with.
4. What animal do you dream of frequently.

The following question will help you form a mental picture and link with your totem:

- a. what is its color?
- b. size
- c. shape
- d. what are its behaviors
- e. where is it from, which direction does it favor: north, south, east, or west
- f. when is it most often seen, during the day or night
- g. what sounds does it make?
- h. what are its survival techniques?

Nature offers animal, plant, and minerals as capable guides for all things contain spirit. Granted, it may not seem cool to you to have plant or a rock as a spirit guide, but they are just as powerful and knowledgeable as an animal.

The web of power applies to all elements of nature. By understanding how this power works you may tap into resources that you may not have imagined possible.

From a shamanic perspective communicating with these spirits has one basic requirement: respect. This is the key to all effective communication.

The spirit in rocks vibrates at a particular frequency. This is especially true for gemstones. As healers it is important that you understand the significance of the power of rock, and all elements, in aides to healing.

Remember, when working with rocks that they are long lived and are used to experiencing life at a slower pace. Be patient.

Exercise:

1. Sit down with a rock, mineral, or gemstone. Study it carefully, then close your eyes and ask it these questions:

What are your specific properties?

Is there something you want to tell me?

May I have your permission to work with you?

Ask it for help.

Thank its spirit.

Plants, like rocks, have frequencies, which can help you. In every culture shamans have gotten to know plant spirits and their properties in order to work with the spirit to heal. To become acquainted with a plant's spirit you need to exercise a great deal of patience. They, like the rock, experience life at a slower pace than we do.

Exercise:

choose a plant.

Study its appearance.

Close your eyes and allow yourself to sense the plant.

Ask it for a message, then listen with all your senses, not just your ears.

Thank the plant.

Power animals can assist you in all kinds of ways. They are not static beings and they like to learn and be challenged. Just like you like to help someone in need, so do they. But remember that they, like you, also like to be treated with kindness and respect. If you don't, can't, or won't, they will simply refuse to work with you.

Exercise:

relax and close your eyes.

Visualize a landscape within your imagination and go there.

Ask for an animal to enter the landscape.

Ask the animal about it's qualities, powers, lessons, and abilities.

Thank it and watch it fade from your mental screen.

Allow another animal to enter the scene.

Repeat the questions.

Notice if one particular animal comes more frequently than any other.

Shape shifting:

In shamanism Shape shifting is an important skill. Not only will the shaman shift to meld with his personal totem, but also that of other creatures. This allows the shaman to gain a wide variety of experiences and perspectives — a gift that is important in problem solving. For example, how would a bear, mouse, or fox, solve the problem of a locked door? None of them would have the same answer, but each of them would present a solution, thus giving you three possible answers. You would choose which answer to apply.

There are three types of Shape shifting:

1. Changing your body in the spirit/astral realms.
2. changing your physical body in the material level.
3. Inwardly melding with an object/creature.

We're going to discuss the third one in more depth.

In order to learn to do this you need to learn the object's habits.

What does it eat?

How does it live?

How does it feed?

How does it hunt?

What are the noises it makes?

Learn everything you can about the object/creature.

After completing your study:

find a quiet place.

Close your eyes.

Visualize the animal.

Imagine the animal entering you.

Visualize your hand and body parts changing into those of the creature/object.

Be the animal for several moments.

Think like it.

Feel like it.

Move like it.

When you are done, thank the animal and slowly change yourself back to your normal body.

Give thanks.

Familiar:

A familiar is not the same as a totem or power animal. Many modern witches have animal familiar — usually cats, which are their magickal helpers. They believe that the familiar has psychic abilities which makes them ideal partners in magick. Reportedly, familiar are sensitive to psychic vibrations and are able to enter full magick circles without disturbing the vibrations. They often act as guardians, since they sense negative energies and thus

can warn the witch.

LESSON FIVE

Read: Way of the Shaman, pages 115-136 & Celtic Shaman, pages 16-17

The Lesson:

Shamanic healing is a spiritual and medical practice based upon the belief that all healing includes a spiritual dimension. Shamans enter altered states of consciousness to communicate with other realms of reality. The shaman's journey is to help the patient or community to rediscover their connection to nature and spirit.

Shamanic medicine is a tradition dating back 25000 years. The shaman is responsible for the health of the individual as well as the community. This is a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual balance. Shamans are the ritual leader, herbalist, and mediator between the community and the spirit world. The spiritual healing methods of shamanic are now receiving increased and significant attention in our culture, because shamanic healing affects the energy field of a person.

To better understand how a shaman heals it is important to understand some of the fundamental concepts of what shamanism is. It is a specific set of methodologies for accessing the spirit or energy field of anything or anyone. The shaman heals by working unseen/inner/spiritual reality to create changes, which in turn create changes in see/physical/everyday reality.

The essential perspective of the shaman is:

1. Everything is alive. Everything has spirit and awareness.
2. Energy and matter are the same. Everything is vibration. Everything that exists is an energy system within a greater energy system.
3. Everything that exists is connected to everything else in a web of energy or life.
4. Unseen/inner/spiritual reality affects visible reality.

Working within this system of perceptions, the shaman strives to create balance and harmony of the spirit. This can be focused on the individual or the community. This also can be applied to anything that exists.

What distinguishes the shaman from other types of healer are his methods. The journeying, or shamanic state of consciousness, allows the shaman to send out their consciousness to obtain information from the spirit world. This information is retrieved and used for further insight or healing. Example: a shaman might assist in healing a broken bone by opening up an increased energy flow to that area, or help a person half from an emotional depression by restoring energy lost as a result of a traumatic even.

By using shamanic practices a wide spectrum of healing is possible. Traditional shaman healing is done by journeying to the beat of a drum or rattle to visit a teacher/spirit/totem for guidance or wisdom. Shamanic healing takes place in many forms, depending on what

the spirits recommend. This can include plant and mineral spirit medicine, through ancestral memories, soul retrieval; extraction and soul escorting.

Shamans employ many different healing methods besides those acquired during journeying, these are herbs, visualization, and hands on, use of aroma, gemstones, and basic psychology. The shaman will use their lore of nature along with the ability they have to read auras and apply the knowledge of chakras to heal. The shaman understand the necessity to use both nature and spirit in healing. All of the above used in any combination may be used, along with journeying to heal. All depends upon the situation.

Plant and gem spirit medicine:

The exercise that was used in the beginning of the class is to use to do this. The shaman words directly with the spirit of the plant or mineral to assist in healing. The healer must ask the spirit if they can be used to heal certain illnesses with certain people. The shaman must be willing to personalize and individualize treatments. Both the healer and the patient must be willing to work in a spirit of humility and gratitude, acknowledging dependence and partnership with non-human elements.

Healing through Ancestral Memories: This includes ancestral spirits and reincarnated memories. There are spirits who have gone on before who have evolved to the point that they no longer need to be incarnated. These ancestral spirits have a vast source of knowledge and power. They are what keep the shaman connected to his/her roots. Reincarnated memories also can assist the shaman as do present body memories. If you have done something before that was successful, you will attempt to repeat it the same way, or if you have done something wrong you, hopefully, will not repeat the performance.

Soul Retrieval:

One of the primary service performed by the shaman is soul retrieval. The search to recover and restore a person's vital essence that was stolen or lost, from the Shamanic point of view, physical and emotional illness, as well as misfortune, are due to the loss of personal power or life force, the diminution of spirit that keeps us strong and alive. Soul retrievals are intended to retrieve the soul parts that were lost. Each piece has its own characteristic that once reintegrated enhance our own capacities in that area.

Bring back this lost part is not a quick fix; the shaman then needs to work with the person to help them restore their balance. Putting the soul back is only the first step in restoring one's self. For instance, if a soul piece were stolen from us as a child that has the quality of love, we may grow up with a closed heart, making it difficult to show or give love. With the return of the missing quality our heart is healed and we now are able to begin to learn how to love..This is not easy; learning to change ways of a life time, but with patience and understanding the shaman can help others to learn how to change.

Extractions:

Since the Shamanic theory of health and illness focuses on personal power, illness results when a person's spiritual power is diminished somehow or when a person loses spiritual power or soul. The illness moves into the gap in the person's life force, bringing patterns of energy that are harmful for the individual. Extraction is the healing method in which a shaman locates a harmful spiritual intrusion in a sick person's body and removes it.

An intrusion is something like an infection, which affects the spirit. Extractions can be done with the hand or mouth, sometimes with a power object, such as a gemstone. For most shamanic healers, the extraction process usually involves going into the Shamanic State of Consciousness and summoning one's spirit guide and building up personal power in order to confront the intrusion. The shaman finds the location of the intrusion in the body by seeing, hearing, and/or feeling it. The actual extraction can involve sucking directly on the skin, through the clothing, or with hands cupped over the appropriate area. When the intrusion is removed, it is put in a neutral place, such as a body of water where it will dissipate back into the universe.

Soul Escorting:

Shaman's help souls cross over to the other side because they know the terrain of the spirit world and may have even journeyed through the realms where the dead pass. They also know how to find lost souls and bring them back or escort them to their places.

In summary, the practices of shamanism involves making conscious connection with that which is spirit or life that which is sacred — all things. Healing can be accomplished through this connection by working directly to create greater balance and harmony of energy and spirit, and bringing back to the ordinary world awareness from the spirit world.

To do healing works of any kind a shaman will typically journey to the spiritual cause of problems. A particular problem of everyday life might have very different spiritual causes. In other words, illness that looks exactly the same symptomatically in two different people might be the manifestation of different underlying situations. In one person, depression and fatigue can be caused from a spiritual injury to the heart; while the same symptoms might be caused from excessive worry in another.

And once the shaman gains understanding of the illness, he/she has a variety of ways of healing it.

But the primitive magician, the Medicine man, or the Shaman is not only a sick man; he is, above all else, a sick man who has succeeded in curing himself.

LESSON SIX

Reading: Celtic Shaman: chapter 7

Way of Shaman: chapter 7

Last week we had a brief overview of shamanic healing. The next two lessons focus on giving you more in depth information which you'll be able to apply to your life and practices. It is important to state at the onset of this lesson that healing abilities are NOT gifts given to the special few. They are skills which ANYONE can learn and use.

Shamanic medicine or healing techniques are energetic modalities which based on the quantum physics theory of the Holographic Universe which very basically states:

1. All is energy

2. All energy emanates from One Source
3. All energy is therefore connected.
4. Separation is an illusion.
5. Each piece of the whole contains the whole.

Shamanic healing, as in all types of holistic healing, works with the relationships between the body, mind, and spirit, or mind, energy, and matter.

The following material is taken from the Spiritwalker Realms' site. If you have visited it yet, you might. There is a lot of information there which can be applied to the course.

First some definitions:

Vibrational: refers to subtle, electromagnetic energy which has varying frequencies and amplitudes.

Newtonian Reality: This theory sees the world as a mechanism and man as a machine controlled by the brain and nervous system computer. **Einsteinian Reality** This theory sees all matter as an expression of energy fields that interface with physical and cellular systems.

Quantum Physics: A science that does experiments in high energy particle physics which reveals that, at the particle level, all matter is energy.

Wholism or Holism: A healing modality which aims to treat the whole person - body, mind, and spirit - by treating the multidimensional system. A vibrational medicine which attempts to heal the physical body by integrating and balancing the higher energetic systems which create the physical, cellular patterns of manifestation.

Etheric Body: A type of holographic, magnetic grid which communicates with the electrically based matter and cells of the physical body.

According to Newtonian Reality the universe is mechanical and humans are machines. Within this view Traditional medicine works to fix systems or replace 'parts' when the body machine breaks down, much like a Plummer or mechanic does. There is one question that the Newtonian model of reality fails to answer and that is: what is the vital force that animates the 'machinery' of man's living systems?

To answer that question we must turn to Quantum Physics and Einstein. Experiments in high energy particle physics and Einstein's $E=Mc^2$ prove that energy and matter are both vibrational fields that interact with the physical and cellular systems. This means that all matter (you, me, a tree, a rock, a planet) IS energy and is effected BY energy.

Energy, therefore, is the vital force that animates man's living systems. What is this energy?

Metaphysically, man's energy is known as the etheric body which has various levels that oscillate or vibrate at particular frequencies, or vibratory rates. This vibration rate is either harmonious and balanced or inharmonious and imbalanced. These two states result in health or illness.

In 1940 Harold Burr found that baby salamanders possessed an energy field that was roughly the size and shape that the adult animal would be. The energy field contained an electrical axis which aligned with the brain and spinal cord and originated in the unfertilized egg of the developing salamander. He also discovered that seedlings possess an energy field that looks like the adult plant. And, in the same year, S. Kirlian developed electrographic techniques which could translate Burr's findings into a visual medium where one could actually see the electrical corona or 'aura' of living organism. Both men found that disease caused noticeable changes in color, size, and shape of the aura.

These findings support the theory that the etheric body, or energy field, exists and contributes to the expression of the physical body. These findings also support Einstein and ancient Eastern belief systems that consider the human body to be a complex network of interwoven energy fields that are nourished and organized by subtle energetic systems which co-ordinate the life force within the body magnetically and electrically. Thus, if diseases can be detected at the etheric level, they can also be prevented before the illness reaches the physical body.

What are diseases then?

Physical diseases are the result of an imbalance or abnormal frequency shift within the body's subtle energy system. Such energy shifts are affected by emotions, nutrition, environment, and spiritual.

How is the etheric or energetic body accessed in order to promote health?

Let's define health as a total balance between the body, mind, and spirit. Vibrational medicine uses subtle or electromagnetic energy to balance or harmonize the body's energy fields in order to prevent or correct a physical manifestation of these etheric imbalances. This corrective vibratory frequency is directed into the body via the multidimensional anatomy which consists of meridians, chakras, and nadis, which are connected to the body's electrical system and correspond to the various layers of the etheric body.

The Chinese gave us a map of over 20 basic energy pathways or meridians, that make a complete circuit in the body within 24 hours. These pathways are all interconnected (gee, there's a surprise!) There are also several hundred acu-point entry-ways or windows that allow us direct access to these energy flows. And India gave us the 7 chakra system; chakras are also interconnected. These systems outline the paths and centers and reveal how they correlate to body organs, glands, emotional states, and consciousness. Here's the key: when the PATHWAYS are open energy flows easily and grants health, emotional balance, mental clarity, and spiritual well being. When the pathways are blocked there are problems and/or disease.

That is the end of the dry material. It gets easier from here on in.

Now let's take a look at the seven chakras and learn how we might use them in healing work.

The root or base chakra governs understanding the physical plane, fight or flight response, adrenal glands, kidneys, and the spinal column. Often is associated with the body, movement, and tactile senses. It relates to the will to live and supplies the body with physical vitality. Its color is red. To go here you might move your attention to the base of your spine, or the center of the area you're sitting on! Visualize a round, spinning vortex that is red and slide your awareness into it. Here you might gather information on your fears or the way you handle living on the physical plane.

Some Questions for self-examination:

1. What belief patterns did you inherit from your family?
2. Which of those belief patterns that still have authority in your thinking can you acknowledge are no longer valid?
3. What superstitions do you have?
4. Do you have a personal code of honor?
5. Have you ever compromised it?
6. Do you have any unfinished business with your family members?
7. If you're now raising your own family, list the qualities you'd like your child to inherit from you.

8. What tribal or family traditions and/or rituals do you continue to use in your family?
The sexual chakra (ovaries in women, the testes in men) governs creativity, attitudes in relationships, sex and reproduction. Often relates to the sensuality and sense emotions. Its color is orange. Slide your mind in thru an orange doorway. You might find out about love-life problems, sexual malfunctions, and ideas about child rearing here.

Questions for Self-examination:

1. How do you define creativity?
2. Do you follow through on your creative impulses?
3. Are you comfortable with your sexuality?
4. Do you keep your word?
5. Do you have an impression of the Source as a force that exerts justice in your life?
6. Are you a controlling person?
7. Does money have authority over you?
8. How often do survival fears dictate you choices?

The Solar Plexus is the feeling center. It governs the pancreas, liver, spleen, stomach, gall bladder, and some aspects of the nervous system. It is the clearing house for emotional sensitivities and issues about personal power. Often associated with intuition and is a good place to learn about identity within the universe, how we connect to others, and how we take care of ourselves. Its color is yellow. Again, use the color as a doorway.

Questions for self-examination:

1. Do you like yourself?
2. Are you honest?
3. Are you critical of others?
4. Are you able to admit it when you're wrong?
5. Do you need the approval of others?

6. Do you consider yourself strong or weak?
7. Do you respect yourself?
8. Are you afraid of responsibility?

The heart Chakra governs the thyroid, heart, blood, circulatory system, and influences the immune and endocrine systems. Here we find all aspects of love. Related to love. Its color is green, but some have pink here.

Questions for self-examination:

1. What emotional memories do you still need to heal?
2. What relationships in your life require healing?
3. Do you ever use your emotional wounds to control others?
4. Have you ever allowed yourself to be controlled by the emotional wounds of another?
5. What fears do you have about becoming emotionally healthy?
6. Do you associate emotional health with no longer needing an intimate relationship?
7. What is your understanding of forgiveness?
8. Who are the people you have yet to forgive and what prevents you from letting go of the pain you associate with them?

The throat chakra governs lungs, vocal chords, bronchial apparatus and metabolism. It is the center for expression, communication, and judgment. associated with hearing, tasting, and smelling. Relates strongly to giving and receiving, as well as with speaking our personal truth. Its color is blue.

Questions for self-examination:

1. What is your definition of strong willed?
2. Who are the people who have control over your will power and why?
3. Do you seek to control others?
4. Are you able to express yourself honestly and openly when you need to?
5. Are you able to sense when you are receiving guidance to act upon?
6. Do you trust guidance that has no 'proof' of the outcome attached to it?
7. What fears do you have associated with divine guidance?
8. Do you bargain with yourself in situations in which you know you need to change but you continually postpone taking action?

The Third Eye center, pituitary, governs lower brain and nervous system, ears, nose, and left eye. From, or through here we have access to information about our Spiritual Nature and psychism. Associated with sight. Relates to conceptual understanding and carrying out ideas in step by step process to accomplish them. Its color is indigo, but in some cases favors violet.

Questions for self-examination:

1. What beliefs do you have that cause you interpret the actions of others in a negative way?
2. What negative behavioral patterns continually surface in your relationships with others?
3. What attitudes do you have that dis-empower you?

4. What beliefs do you continue to accept that you know are not true?
5. Do you give yourself excuses for behaving in negative ways?
6. Can you recall instances in which you were confronted with a more profound level of truth than you were used to hearing and found the experience intimidating?
7. Are you comfortable thinking about your life in impersonal terms?
8. Are frightened of the changes that might occur in your life, would you openly embrace a conscious lifestyle?

The Crown chakra externalizes as the pineal gland. It governs the upper brain and right eye. Here is one's direct connection to the Source. Here is Oneness and integration and spiritually evolving. Associated with direct knowing. Related to the integration of personality with spirituality. Its color is violet, but sometimes can be crystalline white.

Questions for self-examination:

1. What questions have you sought guidance with during meditation and moments of prayer?
2. What answers to these questions would you most fear?
3. Do you bargain with the Source?
4. Are you devoted to a particular spiritual path?
5. Do you believe that your "god" is more authentic than the divine in other spiritual traditions?
6. Are you waiting for 'god' to send you an explanation for your painful experiences?
7. How would your life change if 'god' suddenly decided to answer your questions?
8. What spiritual truths are you aware of that you do not live by?

With this information, and a little imagination on your part, you will be able to learn a great deal about your self.

Here are a few sites to go to where you can learn more about the chakras and energetics.

Shamanic Healing

Reiki:

BOOKS:

The Psychic Healing Book- Amy Wallace

Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom- Christiane Northrup

Soul Healing-Goldberg

Accepting Your Power to Heal-Kreiger

Therapeutic Touch- Kreiger

Psychic Development for Beginners- Hewitt

Kahuna Healing- King

Mastering Your Innerself- King

LESSON SEVEN

Reading: Celtic Shaman; review chapter three
Way of shaman: review chapter four
Sites to visit: <http://www.geocities.com/~animalspirits>

The Lesson:

Note: This lesson applies to ALL types of Allies.

What is an Ally? According to Jamie Sams' teachings Allies are 'medicine' and medicine is defined as "anything that improves one relationship to the Great Mystery and to all life" and "anything which brings personal power, strength, and understanding" to the body, mind, and/or soul.

When speaking of our Animal Allies, Sams says that animals exhibit habit patterns that relay messages of healing to anyone astute enough to observe their lessons on how to live. In other words, Allies are our support system, friends, and teachers and they provide us with information on how to connect with the self, nature, and with spirit.

Many people are familiar with the concept of shamans working with plants, animals, and gemstones as teachers and guides. It was discussed in an earlier lesson, you might review it. Ally is a good word since it denotes that there is a relationship between the shaman and the ally. This relationship comes from practicing increasing our awareness so that it expands to include the vibrational frequencies of other life forms. Native traditions refer to this relationship as Respect. How does one cultivate a relationship with seemingly inanimate objects or with creatures incapable of speech? Willingness, effort, intent, and practice are the keys.

In an earlier lesson we established that all matter is made up of energy forms or patterns which interact within themselves and outside of themselves. (Sort of like the push-pull form a chat rooms.) As you progress through your studies your level of awareness will expand to include things you barely noticed before...thing which suddenly become important teachers in your life.

Learning to work with Allies is simple as long as you make the effort and are willing to do a little work. Some people are blessed with instant understanding of the lessons offered by an Ally, but most of us have to work at it. Fortunately, the work is pretty fun!

Sometimes an Ally will come to you in ways so clear that you KNOW it is a creature that you must work with. (Penny's tree for instance!) And Allies aren't secretive about wanting to work with you. You probably already have things lying around the house which are huge clues about the Allies which want to work with you. Wander around your home and look at some the nic nacs, pictures, statuettes, and items which you've decorated with. Why did you collect them? What do they represent or reflect about life to you? What is your favorite climate? What sorts of animals and plants grow there? What places in nature make you feel deeply connected to the All? Did you have an imaginary friend as a child? What was it? These are all valid clues about the totemic or ally possibilities that you need to further investigate.

Another way of learning about your Allies is through your dreams, synchronistic events, gifts, and feelings.

Once you've identified a possible Ally, immerse yourself in it. Learn everything you can about its history, uses, location, shape, color, texture, habits, etc. Collect pictures, bric-a-brac, posters, or statuettes and place them about your space. Welcome the energies of that animal, plant, or gem stone into your life. Really get to know it and when you've finished the study, prepare to meet it in a meditation.

Set up a time when you will be undisturbed; take a visual representation of the Ally with you. Relax, slow your breathing down, and clear your mind as best you can. Then put up a mental screen in your mind's eye and invite the Ally to come to you.

It will.

Once it appears, notice if there are any feelings coursing through your body. Chills. Goose bumps. Anxiety. Allow yourself to get comfortable with the image on your mental screen. That done, see yourself stepping onto the screen with the creature. Of course, if you're able to astrally project into this place, all the better! Now observe the creature and involve as many of your senses as you can in the process. Notice anything and everything.

For instance, did the blank mental screen suddenly become a place in nature? Are there colors? Sounds? Scents?

Greet the Ally respectfully. Thank it for coming. Then ask it what lessons it has come to help you with and how you might best learn them. Then simply be with the creature and wait for the answer.

Don't get frustrated if nothing much happens at first. Stick with it. Any skill takes time to develop and you are actually exercising several issues at once: communication, trust, openness, and sensory expansion, just to name a few! So don't rush it or get flustered.

When you are through, thank the creature or object and see it fade from the mental screen in your mind. Then return to your normal waking consciousness and write down any impressions you had.

After this exercise be sure to pay attention to any dream, feelings, intuitions, etc. You will likely begin receiving information in a variety of ways to confirm whatever impressions you received in the meeting.

Once you've established a connection what do you do?

In your research of the creature or object you will, hopefully, have noticed some aspect about it that relates to your life in some way; perhaps to a particular problem that you've had for ages. Using Bear for an example, the research would reveal a lot about its characteristics, and habits. You would learn that the Bear is related to lessons about

introspection and healing and that he stores up fat for its long winter sleep in a cave which it retires to after the hectic fall season of gathering food. The realization might strike you, as you think about this, that you have a habit of working your tail off but never take time for a break in between projects. The lesson might be one of simply learning to take a break. Or it might be one of learning to use your energies more efficiently.

See how it works?

Working with allies is simple work because the energies involved are basic needs and impulses.

After establishing the basic relation with the Ally you can move on to the deeper lessons. There is a trick that nearly all Allies use when working with humans: they move from simple to difficult in respect for human frailty and limitations. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. If your personality type is hard-headed then the Ally that works with you will adjust itself to that system's requirement for effective communication.

Know that after you've recognized and formally accepted an Ally, you have a great friend and teacher. If you have problems in life, you can turn to that Ally for guidance. If an Ally doesn't work well with the energies of that particular problem, it will turn you to another Ally that does. Your first Ally acts as your pass-port into working with all other Allies from all three kingdoms: animal, mineral, plant. And THAT is very important in shamanic work.

Book to Read:

When Elephants Weep - Mason and MaCarthy
anything by Cynthia Moss

LESSON EIGHT

Disclaimer: This information is shared with the understanding that you accept complete responsibility for your own health and well-being. You have a unique body. The action of every remedy is unique. Health care is full of variables. The result of any treatment suggested herein cannot always be anticipated and never guaranteed. The owner of this list, the mentor, teachers, and webmasters are not responsible for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any remedies, procedures, or preparations. Consult your inner guidance, knowledgeable friends, and trained healer in addition to the words written here.

The Lesson: Herbalism

Herbology is the knowledge and study of herbs.

Herbs are powerful medicines and a source of vitamins and nutrition. They are available everywhere and are generally cheaper than prescription medicines. They can be used to treat almost any imaginable disease or illness.

Fact: The major pharmaceutical companies derive 75% of all patented prescription drugs from herbs.

Herbs can be taken alone or in combinations and they all contain one or more of the following:

1. Vitamins and minerals; elements required for metabolic function
2. Tannins; compounds which cause proteins in the blood to coagulate.
3. Enzymes: essential for biochemical functions.
4. Essential oils: Aromatic essences.
5. Bitters: compounds that stimulate the appetite and which have a bitter flavor.
6. Alkaloids: organic compounds that are often extracted from plants and distilled to provide many of our prescription drugs.

The use of herbs as medicine predates humans as animals are known to seek out and eat specific plants when they are ill.

Are herbs safe?

Generally, they are considered to be safe but remember that they are medicines and should be treated as such. Test things before you buy into the wholesale. Allergic reactions can be fatal.

Learning to work with herbs involves a great deal of study, even if you happen to have a closet full of Plant Allies. Not only must you learn the basics of herbal use and preparation, but also how to identify plants, plant properties, and how they work together before you can use them properly. Herbs can be used as teas, broths, capsules, extracts, compresses, poultices, oils, syrups, ointments, liniments, and baths. They can also be used in aroma-therapy.

Fact: We are totally dependent the plant kingdom for the oxygen we breath.

Herbal medicine has been meeting people's health and nutritional needs for centuries. They are readily available and effective in disease prevention, healing, energy, creativity, work, love, birth, death, regeneration, meditation, and survival.

Herbal Safety:

1. Never take the identity of an herb for granted. Many herbs look alike, but have hugely different effects.
2. If you are sensitive to drugs, aged, or known to have allergic reactions then start with low dosages unless instructed by a professional otherwise.
3. If you experience stomach upset, nausea, headache, or any ill effects after taking an herb discontinue use to see if symptoms subside. If they do, don't take that herb.
4. Pregnant and nursing women, as well as young children, shouldn't take herbs in

medicinal doses unless directed by a physician.

Harvesting Herbs:

When harvesting plants, look for the Grandmother plant, the plant that looks larger, older, and more vibrant than the rest. Speak to her. Tell her your desire to harvest and why. Traditionally an offering is left...a stone, a strand of hair, a poem or song, in exchange for the plant you take.

Only harvest plants which are not threatened or endangered and make sure that the plants are a safe distance from traffic fumes. Only harvest plants that you are absolutely certain about; do not chance being poisoned.

Do not take all of any one plant from a site, remember the next generation.

Plants have specific rhythms and life cycles. This means that their medicine is stronger or weaker, depending on where it is in its cycle. Lunar calendars should be consulted if you wish to harvest a plant by its cycle.

Leaves, flowers, stems, twigs, and fruits are best gathered between the new and full moons.

Leaves and flowers are strongest when collected on clear, sunny days in the morning after the dew has dried.

Look for leaves and flowers that are vibrant. Avoid bruised, discolored, or insect ridden plants.

Barks are best collected in the early spring when the buds are swelling, but before the leaves unfold. Or, alternately, in the fall as the leaves are dropping.

Prune branches from trees or shrubs, then scrape the bark from these branches with a sharp pocket knife. This way the mother plant is not harmed.

Collect seeds in the autumn.

To dry herbs properly you need a warm area with good air circulation, without direct sunlight. Herbs not dried enough, or too close together will mold. Store the herbs, once dried, in glass jars or brown paper bags with the herb's name and date harvested.

Dried leaves and flowers hold medicinal properties for a year. Roots and tree barks for two years.

Herbal Preparations:

Herbal Teas: the most basic form of using herbs. Used in this way herbs are easily

absorbed by the body. The boiling water releases herbal potency and provides a flushing action ideal for removing toxic waste from the body. Teas are mild and the effects subtle.

Infusion: An herb soaked in water and taken when the desired potency is reached.

Decoction: An herb simmered under low heat until desired potency is achieved and taken or applied once cool. Usually using roots, seeds, and barks.

Wash: External application of a cooled tea.

Poultice: a moist paste made from plant material that has been beaten to a pulp and/or soaked in warm water. Applied externally. Often wrapped and covered with a cloth.

Tincture: Alcohol, water, or glycerine are poured over a jar filled with fresh plant matter. Leave an inch of space or so at the top, cover tightly, shake bottle, label and date. Vodka, brandy, or vinegar may be used. Store in dark place for two to six weeks, shaking daily. After allotted time, strain plant matter through a cheese cloth, pour liquid in glass container, cover, and label.

Some Books to read:

The Secret Life of Plants - Tompkins

Rainforest in Your Kitchen - Teitel

Tom Brown's Field Guide to Wild and Medicinal Plants - Tom Brown

The Way of Herbs - Tierra

Encyclopedia of Herbs - Cunningham

Complete Book of Herbs - Bremness

Herbal Medicine - Buckman

Medicine Grove - Cruden

Healing Wise - Weed

LESSON NINE

Lesson Nine: Introduction to Journey Techniques

Lesson Plan

Week Nine

Section Three

Required Reading:

Celtic Shaman, pages 83-92

Way of the Shaman, pages 30-32

Visit the following site on Journeying:

The Lesson:

"Do not lie in ignorance like a corpse; enter the natural sphere of unwavering attentiveness. Recognize your dreams and transform illusion into luminosity. Do not

sleep like an animal. Do the practice, which mixes sleep and reality."

What do we mean by saying journeying? When speaking shamanically most have heard of an out of body experience or something similar. Well journeying is something like that. When one does journey work one is letting the spirit temporarily leave the body to interact with the spirit real, or the astral plane. Many types of meditations are also journey. All journeys have specific purposes.

The way that one lets the spirit leave the body is by intentionally changing their state of conscious awareness. The common states of consciousness are full waking consciousness and the dream state, but there are many levels between these states. With practice and intent one learns to enter those states at will.

What is day dreaming?

Many times during the day one finds oneself daydreaming. It is distinctly different from full awareness although it borders closely to being awake. The mind is aware of its physical surroundings, but is not fully present; part of the awareness has slipped between the levels of awareness into the realms of dreams and spirit. Imagery flows through the minds eyes. One sees symbols, has revelations, and receives messages.

This is done through the imagination which is a vehicle that your Higher Self, or Soul can use to communicate with you. Think of your imagination as an interpreter of the Realms.

Many people disregard their imagination as being nothing of importance. And sometimes that can be the case, but generally there is a lot more to it. In some ways you create what you see within your imagination, but what you see isn't as important as what the message behind what you're seeing is.

Many daydreams are just your subconscious mind trying to tell you something — maybe the solution to a problem that's been troubling you. The hardest thing is for people to trust their imagination. Many people see or imagine something great only to tell themselves it is just another silly fantasy. The trick to using daydreams is to figure out the symbolism. Misinterpretation can cause frustration and mistrust of your dreams. Don't get upset at your brain. Instead, learn to listen more clearly. Learning to KNOW when to listen and really hearing what is being said are the two most difficult aspects of journey work, or any psychic work for that matter. Your subconscious is the receptor of information and the navigator of the astral and spiritual realms. So learn how it works and how to use it.

During daydreams things like 'what ifs' always pop up. For example: what if I won the lottery? This is a sort of escapism and a way of leaving the mundane world. They do have their purpose; most are very relaxing and enjoyable. Premonitions often come through this way and are missed due to the abstract form that they take.

Exercise:

Find a painting.

Focus on it closely, examining all the details.

Close your eyes and picture it in your mind.
Turn it around in your mind. Make it move.
Practice this until you can hold the exact image in your mind.

Dreaming is Journeying:

Another state of conscious is the dream. Generally you are barely aware of your surroundings when dreaming; the separation between full consciousness is much deeper in this state than when merely day dreaming and one's connection to the astral levels is stronger. Messages from the spirits, journeying outside the body, and communication are all more developed in this state. During the fall asleep period much of the dreams are sorting out the days events and storing them away for future reference. After that the mind starts going into the astral levels to explore. You generally become immersed in the Other worldly levels as consciousness shuts down and the subconscious takes control.

The state of deep sleep is the goal for most experienced journey workers who practice retaining an alert state of mind as they enter this state. The subconscious will freely navigate on its own if the conscious mind shut down. If you can control this subconscious mind by keeping your conscious one alert you will be able to move through and bring back whatever you experience. You can also physically communicate with other people during the dream time.

Lucid dreams are what happens when the conscious mind suddenly reactivate during deep sleep and finds itself in unfamiliar surrounds that seem totally real. It assumes that the new surrounding are real and controls things as it would in the mundane world. Completely unaware that it is not in the physical realm. You can learn to do this intentionally, and it is good practice to have a specific goal in mind when you do.

To learn this skills it is recommended that you go to bed with a clear head, no alcohol or drugs. Before laying down to go to sleep spend a few minutes relaxing and clearing your mind of the day's activities. When you are calm, state a goal, and then go to sleep.

Meditation, regular exercise, and general good health care help also.

Keep a dream journal. Keep a pen and paper or recorder by the bed. Write everything that you remember; and as you write you will remember more.

Dream Practice:

One of the first ways is to establish a conscious rapport with your dreaming self by learning to recall dreams. Although some people have no trouble remembering dreams, for others it takes considerable effort. When you wake from a dream, write it down. If you remember nothing, then write down the first thing that pops in your head.

Without trying to analyze the dreams, look for patterns and recurring images.

If there is a recurring dream or symbol then examine it more carefully. This is usually the spirit's way of getting your attention to focus on a subject that will be important for you to work with.

Earlier cultures believed that divine messengers came to us in dreams and one of the services that shamans performed was to translate these messages. This is called re-dreaming and meant that the dreamer retold his dream twenty-two times.

Next the shaman asks clarifying questions meant to help the dreamer recall details. These are not interpretive questions, but merely questions aimed at filling in any blanks spots.

Then the shamans ask interpretive questions meant to focus the dreamer on the message of the dream; these usually involve feelings and thoughts on the dream images.

Working with spirit guides in dreams:

Recall your dream, then summon your guide, and travel back into the dream. Once there you can communicate with anything and everything that was within the dream. So ask the images what they mean, what they're message is. Then ask your guide what the images represent. Three good questions to ask are:

- 1.why is this in my dream?
- 2.what gift or advice does it have for me?
- 3.Does a thing represent something else?

From your reading you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What are dreams?
- Where do they come from?
- Why do we dream?
- Why are dreams important?
- What are warning dreams?
- What are inspirational dreams?

Note: Notes for the next three lessons:

In the next three lessons we are going to take three specific journeys. Hopefully, you've been doing the exercises as we go along, and maybe you have some experience with meditation and/or guided reveries. That will makes these classes a breeze. The real purpose of these classes is so that you'll gain experience with the way journeys feel.

It's important that you realize that an out-of-body experiences isn't always what happens on a journey. That usually comes with experience. More often than not, your journeys will be reveries or will awaken you in dreams (lucid dreams).

Does this mean your journeys are ineffective or 'made up'? Nope. Spirit gains access to your conscious mind via your imagination and feelings. The only way you'll learn to trust the input from this 'work' is to do it. And that is what these next lessons are about.

The first one will introduce you to an Inner Worldly place. We will use this place as a learning haven so feel free to go there as often as you like. Look around. Explore. Find the hidden things...they are in there. Talk to the elements you see. If you don't see, then practice learning which of your senses do work in journeys.

Draw the place and/or the elements which you see. Think about them before you go to sleep and see if you can visit the place in your dreams. Experiment. And then share what you experience. For the next three weeks the majority of our talk will be about what happened in the journeys. What gave you trouble. What was easy; what scared you.....everything. By the time the classes end you will leave with an entry way to the Inner Worlds that is all your own; a sacred place that will serve as your 'between the worlds' place to start your journeys and continue with your shamanic studies.

LESSON TEN

Journey One

Practice

Class One

In this section we'll be dealing with practice, by that I mean that we'll be trying to put some experience under your belt so that you can actually do some of the things we've talked about so far in the course. At this point it's important that you start to enhance your self confidence so that you can use and apply the material covered earlier in the course.

One of the most intimate qualities of shamanism, no matter what its tradition, is the Journey. A teacher or practitioner can tell you things, explain how they work and all that, but YOU are the one that needs to apply that knowledge. Without the practical application of the theory shamanism is useless.

Try to do these journeys a few times during the week that we are covering it. Once a day would be ideal, but at least three times during the week, before we move onto the next one, will do if you are pressed for time. Do keep a notebook and do pay close attention to your feelings because they are your best teachers. Sometimes your head will get in the way, causing you to doubt things....you'll wonder if it's real or if you're making it up....try to keep those doubts pushed to one side and focus on the way the exercise makes you feel instead. The practice of writing down your journeys will help you keep track of them, of

repetitive symbols, and your progress. Think of your journal work as the ritual part of the program; it's a way of solidifying the experiences, and honoring their importance. Your subconscious and Otherworldly beings like it when you show this sort of respect; it lends them validity within your normal reality; providing you with another door to use in shamanic work and studies.

Don't be afraid to adapt an exercise so that it fits with your personal belief system. If something doesn't work, an image for instance, try something else. Play. Experiment. Enjoy yourself. Most people will tell you to follow a bunch of rules; We are telling you that the only rules are the ones that you make up as you go. You can't know what the rules are until you try, what's true for me might not be true for you. Shamanism is about self-empowerment and the only way to do that is to try things out.

We are not going to use any of the traditional tools for this section. For instance, we don't require you to drum during your journey, or to put yourself into total darkness by covering your eyes. We want to show you that you can do a journey any time and any place and that the only tools you really need are: Intent, Desire, Will power, and a goal. Later, in your own studies, you can try some of the traditional things out and gain a familiarity with them and how they work, and then you can decide if you need to incorporate them into your practice.

The chief goal of this section is to familiarize you with the levels of reality that you interact with on a daily basis and to expand your world view to be a little broader than it was before. Also, to give you experiences to fall back on. And to show you that you can do this work safely, easily, and get results.

Try to approach this section with an open mind and simply let whatever happens, happen. Look at each exercise as if it is an adventure in consciousness. And if you have to have expectations, then expect to learn, have fun, and heal.

This first class is going to serve as an introduction to journeys and how they feel and work. You will be given an entire guided visualization. Read through it several times, until you are familiar with the flow of the imagery and know what is expected. Once you're comfortable with that relax, read the journey, and simply hold that double mindedness where you can read and see things happening in your mind too. (If this proves difficult have someone read it to you, or read it into a cassette and do it that way.) Take as long as you need with each element. Move around in the place and practice getting as many of your senses as possible involved.

In this beginning journey we are going to meet your guide, see your animal helper, and learn a little something about the medicine wheel.

Remember that not everyone will see things clearly, some of you might hear or feel things more than you see them. This isn't important. Just remember everything that you see, hear, or feel. From this moment on in the class I want you to relax, forget the notes. Leave your Mr. Spock brain at the door. Don't worry you'll remember everything you need to,

everything that is important. In certain places a question is asked, don't stop the meditation to write the answer down, just remember it.

As you are reading this journey go slow. Focus on what you are reading one line at a time. Pretend you can hear a voice softly talking you through this journey and keep a small space open in your awareness for any pictures or images that might move forward in your mind.

Relax your shoulders, breath a little slower and easier. We have all the time that we need. Everything is perfect. For a moment, just focus on relaxing your neck and shoulders.

Put both feet on the floor. And breath a little slower and easier. Do that for a few seconds.

(Wait about 30 seconds)

Our minds are wonderful tools. You can read these words and another part of your brain, your imagination, can fill with images and sounds and scents. Some times as people approach this level of mental relaxation they sigh and sort of sink down in their bodies as if they're wrapped in a nice fluffy comforter. All cozy and warm and safe.

Pretend that there is another set of eyes in the back of your mind. This set of eyes has been closed in sleep for a long, long time. They're opening up right now. They're waking up and as those eyes open they see the walls of a huge cave surrounding them Take a moment and see this cave.

(Wait about 30 seconds here)

This cave is huge. There are crystals embedded into the walls and ceiling. A brightly burning torch is set into one wall and it's light flickers and reflects off of all the lovely crystals. You know that this is a magickal cave. You can feel its power thrumming and humming thru your feet. Energy is all around you and you look around curious about what is in this cave.

There are shelves cut into the walls. Some are lined with books. Others have strange looking things on the shelves.... a drum, a rattle made from what looks like a turtle's shell, a medicine bag with brightly colored bead work, feathers, bowls, and small pieces of crystals.

Toward the back of the cave a sleeping bag is laid out. There's a small fire burning not too far away from it. And on that fire something is cooking. Walk over to it and bend down. You see that a stew is what is cooking and you suddenly want to taste it. Picking up the ladle that lies next to the fire, you scoop out a little stew and bring it to your lips.

It's warm and wonderful and brings a smile to your lips as that warmth spreads through your body. Calmness fills your being and you relax a little more, enjoying the cave and curious about what else might be in here. You see a small bundle of plants at your feet and know that you are supposed to throw them onto the fire. You pick them up, toss them

into the flames and stand up as their smoke rises before you. Then you hold out your arms and turn in the wafting smoke letting the scent of sweet white sage enfold you.

As you finish turning, you realize that there is an opening in the front of the cave that you hadn't noticed before. You walk toward it then realize that while there is an opening there, it is blocked by a smoke filled mirror. You reach your fingers forward and lay them gingerly on the mirror. As you do you very clearly hear this question: Do you want to see your guide?

At first you're a little startled, then you nod, thinking: yes. I would like to see my guide very much.

As if in response the surface of the mirror shifts and turns and ripples. Something is in there....something you can almost see. You focus all your attention on the mirror and what is moving within its smokey glass. And in a moment the glass begins to clear. The foggy image comes into view and at first you can't tell whether its an animal or human or plant. Then the image clears.

Remember what you see.

Ask it for a word that you can use to attune to its energies. What word does it give you? Remember what the word is.

Beyond the guide is a seasonal scene. What season do you see? Remember what season it is.

In the far distance you can see the outline of an animal gazing toward you. What animal do you see? Remember what animal it is.

Now, step back from the mirror. Immediately the smoke returns and you can no longer see anything. Go back to the fire, then lie down on the sleeping bag. Take one last look around the cave, then allow your new eyes to slowly close. Count to ten then begin wiggling your toes.

Come to full awareness. Get up and walk around. Fetch something to eat or drink. Then do your journal work and think about what you will share with the class.

LESSON ELEVEN

Lesson 11: Journey Two

Ok. In this class we're going to do another journey. We're going to go back to the cave and, well, we're going to have a look around at what lies beyond the cave. Is everyone up for that? Many of the words will be the same in this and each of our journeys; the reason is to get you familiar with the procedure and to free up that part of your brain that is filled with expectations. We're just keeping it busy while you take a journey.

Remember how it worked last week? That wasn't so bad right? We're going to do something similar and we're going to get started right now.

From this moment on relax. Don't worry, you'll remember everything you need to, everything that is important. In certain places a question will be asked, don't write the answer down, just remember it.

Now try to focus on what you are reading one line at a time.

Pretend you can hear a voice softly talking you through this journey and keep a small space open in your awareness for any pictures or images that might move forward in your mind. Relax your shoulders, breath a little slower and easier. We have all the time that we need. Everything is perfect.

For a moment, just focus on relaxing your neck and shoulders.

Put both feet on the floor.

And breath a little slower and easier.

Do that for a few seconds.

(Wait about 30 seconds)

Our minds are wonderful tools. You can read these words and another part of your brain, your imagination, can fill with images and sounds and scents. Some times as people approach this level of mental relaxation they sigh and sort of sink down in their bodies as if they're wrapped in a nice fluffy comforter. All cozy and warm and safe.

Remember that extra set of eyes in the back of your mind? We're going to use those again. So relax. Breath slower. And now let those extra eyes, those magickal eyes open up again. Open them and, once more you see that the walls a huge cave surrounding you. You are lying on the sleeping bag, warm and toasty because the fire is burning not far away from where you are lying.

Take a moment and look at the fire and crystal lined cave walls.

(Wait about 30 seconds here)

Once more you are surprised by how large this cave is. How warm and cozy you feel within it. You run your eyes over the walls and you see that there are many crystals embedded in the walls and you like the way the light dances off of them.

(Wait a few sec. here)

Sit up and notice that, just like the last time you were here, something is cooking on the fire. It smells wonderful, but this time a small earthen cup has been lain out for you.

Beside the cup is a note that says: Healing Drink: good for what ails you. Pick up the cup and see that it is filled with a glowing fluid.

What color is it?

Wait a few sec.

Remember the color.

Curious and thirsty you lift the cup to your lips and, before you realize it, you've emptied the cup.

The liquid spreads thru your body slowly. Slowly.....And then you realize that one part of your body is warmer than any other part of your body. It's as if the liquid in the cup had moved to just this one part of your body and is now warming that part up.

What part of your body is the liquid effecting?

Wait a few sec.

Remember the answer.

Put your hand or hands on this part of your body for a moment. Feel the warmth there. Know that you are healing from this second on.

Just as you did last week you see a small bundle of sage at your feet and know that you are supposed to throw it onto the fire. You pick it up, toss it into the flames and stand up as the smoke rises before you. Then you hold out your arms and turn in the wafting smoke letting the scent of sweet white sage enfold you.

As you finish turning, you realize that the torches are still lit and that the shelves you noticed last week are still there. You walk to one of the shelves and see several gemstones lining one. There are seven stones on one shelf: black, green, yellow, purple, pink, blue, and white. They are all lovely but one glows a little more than the others and really attracts your attention.

Which stone calls to you?

Wait a few sec. here.

Pick up that stone and hold it to your third eye. That's the spot just above and between your eyes. For a second, as the stone touches your skin, one of your senses more than any of the others seems strongest.

Is it scent, hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, or feeling?

Remember which sense it is.

Keep the rock with you now, as you move to the cave's entrance. There is no mirror there this time. But some leaves are hanging down in front of the entrance.

What kind of leaves are they?

Remember this.

You duck under the leaves and look out of the cave.

What time of day is it?

Remember this.

What season is it?

Remember this.

Now step out into the opening, must beyond the hanging leaves and look around. You are surprised to see that you are on a hill, that the cave is actually cut into the root system of a huge tree. You look up and up but cannot see the top of the tree. You turn and before are four paths. Each path goes in a different direction and, as you follow the path with your eyes you actually see the landscape change. One path, made of stones the color of blue leads to the sea, another path lined with white leads to snow capped mountains, another path is lined with leaves of all different colors and leads to a huge wild forest, and the last path, made of beach sand, leads a desert. From here you can walk any one of those four directional paths and reach the realm safely and securely. One of the paths seems brighter than the others, as if it is calling to you. It seems more familiar.

Which path summons you?

Remember this.

Another of the paths seems darker and somehow frightening. You have a hard time even looking at this path. Which path is darker?

Now take one last look around then go back into the cave. The leaves fall back into place behind you. The scent of sage once more fills you with ease and relaxation. Return to the sleeping bag, lie down, and close your eyes. Wait for a count of ten then wiggle your toes and stretch.

Go eat. Jog. Do your journal work. Eat something.

In this journey you gathered a lot of material about yourself. The color of the fluid in the cup was what you need more of. The color of the stone you picked is the energy that attracts you. The body part that the drink effected needs attention or healing. The sense

that activated was your strongest spiritual sense, best for journeys and psychic work. The tree is one of your medicine helpers. The time of day is where you are at right now on the wheel of life. The path that was bright is the work of your soul calling you. And the path that was dark is the work you have been refusing to do; your fears and areas where you are stuck.

With this information you can research what the different things mean, the tree, colors, direction, etc, and discover where you are in life and what you need to do to get further along on the path of your life's quest.

A very simple exercise delivered all this information into your hands and you needed no one and nothing, but your own mind and an openness to receive. That is empowerment!

LESSON TWELVE

Lesson 12: Journey three:

Class Three:

This week is our last journey and, in light of that fact, it is an important journey. In this lesson you will find your special inner Retreat; this will act as your doorway to the other realms in all your future journeys.

Meditation:

Relax.

Put both of your feet on the floor.

Let your shoulders and neck relax.

Take a nice slow breath in thru your nose, then let it out through your mouth.

Breath slower and easier.

Remember your secret eyes, the ones we've been using for the past two weeks. Let them open and see that you are in the cave.

Something seems different this time. You can't quite put your finger on it, but it feels different somehow.

Sit up and look around. Crystals are still embedded in the cave's walls and ceiling. The torch is lit and its fire reflects off of the crystals. From you sit on the sleeping bag you can see the shelves cut into the walls. The fire is burning and there is a small bundle of sage, as usual.

Pick it up and toss it into the flames.

As the smoke rises you stand, hold out your arms and turn in the wafting smoke letting the scent of sweet white sage enfold you and cleanse your aura and energetic systems.

Now walk to the entry way of the cave and step out.

The four paths are before, just as they were last week. A gentle breeze caresses your face and you smile and relax a little more.

A bird flies over head and you look up, watching it glide on the air currents.

What kind of bird is it?

The bird turns and circles directly over you now. Ask the bird which directional path you should begin your journeys on.

Do that now.

The bird flies lower and lower then streaks off following one of the paths and vanishes.

Which path did the bird take?

A sound comes from behind you and you turn back to cave curious. It begins to glimmer oddly. Light fills it making you have to squint as you look at the sudden brightness. You know something magickal and important is happening and feel a little excited. You step back a little from the cave and, as you do, the cave begins to change shape.

From somewhere deep in your soul you hear a soft, gentle voice. It says:

This is your magical Retreat. Yours and yours alone. What would be the most perfect shape for your Retreat to have?

As soon as you hear the question you know the answer.

A picture forms clearly in your mind's eye. And as soon as you see that dream place in your mind, it begins to form before you. Replacing the cave with the perfect place for you and you alone.

For some of you another cave might take shape. For others a lovely cottage takes shape. Whatever takes form around you, know that it is your magickal place. A place that contains absolutely everything you have ever dreamed of, wondered about, or longed for. It is the place of perfection for you. A secret haven where you can come to dream or heal or play or to just rest.

What shape has formed around you?

Is it closer to one of the paths than to any of the others?

Does it seem to have a time period?

Does it have a season?

Is it completely finished or are there things that you can see which need to be done?

Is there a garden?

Are there animals?

Smells?

Scents?

Step inside your Retreat now. What is the first thing you see?

What has the campfire become? A fireplace? A stove?

Is there one room or many?

Are there things that you cannot see yet, but feel or know are there?

What kind of furniture is there?

Are there plants, or drying herbs?

What did the shelves become?

What is one them?

What are the floors made of? Are there rugs?

Are there windows of any kind? Walk to one and look out. What do you see?

Where is the mirror?

Are there pictures or books?

Dishes or tools?

What has the sleeping bag become?

I'm going to be quiet while you explore this place for a few minutes.

Ok. Look around.

Remember all that you see.

Know that you can come to this place any time. During astral projection. Meditations. Journeys. Or while dreaming. From this personal place you can access any otherworld level, do ritual, study, work with your guides, or anything that you can imagine! It is a sacred place and you must take care of it. Honor it. Visit it. Or it will cease to be.

Bless the place in your own way, whether that is with a smile or a prayer or whatever. Give thanks.

Now closer your inner eyes. Exhale slowly and deeply. Count from ten to one:

ten
nine
eight
seven
six
five
four
three
two
one

Now wiggle your toes and stretch.

Go eat. Journal work. You should, by now, know the routine!

The Lessons are over!

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SOMETHING EXTRA

ON SHAMANISM **By GORDON IRELAND**

PART 1

"To the uninitiated and inexperienced the wind is the wind, a rock a rock, and tree is just a source of lumber or shade; water is for drinking and washing, animals are fleshed-covered bones, and humans are flesh, blood, thoughts and feelings. Take them apart and all you find is smaller pieces of them. Take them down to the atomic level and, viola, they are mostly space (or spirit). They are particles that are really waves or vise versa. At this level, chaos begins to reign for the physicist, but not for the shaman... From the shamanic point of view, there is spirit within all wind, within all rocks and earth, within all plants and trees, water, animals, humans, and every other form of life both animate and inanimate."

-Jose and Lena Stevens-

On Shamanism is a two-part series discussing the many facets of shamanism, Part One will strive to inform the reader of what a shaman is and how one becomes a shaman? Part Two will explain the actual abilities the shaman possesses and how they are put to use. On Shamanism: Part One, covers the nature of shamanism. It is attempt to define what a shaman and shamanism is; the various aspects of ecstasy; the difference between traditional shamanism and neo-shamanism and how a shaman is initiated and trained. This text will show that shamanism is not a neo-shamanic spiritual calling, but rather a

job. Which is not taken lightly or at times even asked for, but a job nonetheless.

On Shamanism is a general study of shamanism and is not intended to be the definitive work on this subject. As its title implies, it is intended to provide the reader with a set of principles that will familiarize them with the general use of the terms shamanism, shaman, trends, study and the practice of both traditional and neo-shamans. Attention should be paid to the use of words such as "may" or "usually" or "all". They indicate examples or tendencies and are not, in any way, intended to represent rigid standards.

A Shaman in most shamanic cultures is portrayed primarily as a healer and a spiritual consultant for his/her community. Although shamans have many other roles in their communities: sorcerer, medicine man, priest, and psychiatrist, their primary role is to interact between the community and the spirit world. However, according to Mircea Eliade author of *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, while some shamans may have more than one role, not all are sorcerers, medicine men, priests or psychiatrists. (Pages 3-4)

The modern neo-shaman is defined as those who practice the principles of shamanism with out the benefit of community or tribal connection. This would cover those who participate in shamanic practices, but do not engage the ecstasy that the more traditional shaman would engage in.

Shamanism predates all known religions and might be the basis of which all religion was built upon, although shamanism itself is not a religion. Shamanism is a set of beliefs and behaviors. These beliefs and behaviors is what allows the shaman to shift consciousness to obtain information, heal, retrieve souls, or seek for guidance from the ancestors. Traditional shamanism has remained relatively unchanged over time. (Eliade, pages 2-6) A primary feature of Shamanism is that it usually is found in hunting and gathering societies. This may be because those agriculture societies were less aware of the need to integrate with nature as they were more or less designed around civilization centers and less dependent upon "natures bounty." (Ember and Ember, pages 424-25)

Modern day shamanism has a more eclectic approach and is more in tune with the problems of the "modern world" while using the methodology of the "primitive world." According to Tom Cowan, author of *Shamanism: As a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life*, the modern American shaman "...draws upon what is best in our society while it reforms those areas harmful to the human spirit and the health of the planet." (Page 12) The word shaman is the English translation of the word saman, which is Tungus, and mean's "to know." The Tungus are an indigenous people of Altai Mountains in Siberia. The word shaman in Tungus designates the shamanic way of life, experiences and beliefs rather than a religion. There is some debate as to where the word saman may even have come from; Eliade devotes a chapter on that subject. It appears as if the word saman may be a derivative of the Tibetan word for a Buddhist monk, samana.

Though there is no universal Native American word for shaman: there were nevertheless shamans. According to John Swanton author of *Shamans and Priests: Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* "...priests worked for the entire tribe...shamans

authority depended largely upon personal skill." (Page 522) The Ojibwa Native American Indian tribe did have jugglers of the "hidden truth" called jes' sakid. These jugglers were able to speak to gods, spirits, and heal. (Eliade, page 315) Eskimos named their shamans, angakok, they also claim to be capable of flight and they journey to the Otherworld (the Sea). (Eliade, page 288)

In some African cultures, the shaman is a diviner, a person who is chosen by the ancestors to be a link between the living and the dead. The Igbo Tribe located in parts of West Africa named their shaman's Dibia. (Primitive Worlds, page 117) John Matthews author of the Celtic Shaman, states that the Celtic Shamans are called Geilt, meaning madman, wild, or file, meaning poets. (Page 4)

The South American tribe of the Araucanians has female shamans, called machi. (Eliade, pages 324-25) The Asians shamans, primarily those in Korea are called mudang, which usually refers to female shamans, while male shamans are called paksu. In Australia they called their Dreamwalkers, karadji, or clever men. (Godwin, page 106)

The Oceanian Tribes, which encompasses all of the South Pacific Islands have many names for their shamans: Andaman Islands name theirs oko-jumu, meaning dreamer. The Semang, call their shamans hala. A Malayan shaman is called lupa, someone that obtains a state of madness. Sumatra shaman means "the word" or sibaso. (Eliade, pages 337-374) The word Shaman has since come to represent all those outside of the Siberian culture, who practice shaman like techniques. These include Witchdoctors, medicine men, Dreamwalkers, and diviners. Although the shaman goes by many names in many cultures, it is a generally accepted term, to describe some one who fits the known description. Whatever names or term that is used to describe a shaman it is important to note that a shaman is not a person, but rather a job.

The term "shamanic ecstasy" was first used by the eminent anthropologist Mircea Eliade in his book Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. The word ecstasy comes from the Greek word, ekstasis meaning to be placed outside, or to be placed. Ecstasy is a state of intense joy beyond rational thought. There are three main points of ecstasy and they are:

1. Shamanic Ecstasy. 2. Prophetic Ecstasy. 3. Mystical Ecstasy

Shamanic Ecstasy occurs while the Shaman is listening to the sound of a drum or other rhythmic sounds. Ecstasy is a state of consciousness (SOC) which is entered for one or more of the following reasons:

To engage in soul retrieval

To guide the soul of the dead

To divine answers from the spirits in regards to future events

To add to his personal knowledge by associating with higher beings.

Prophetic Ecstasy is a state that is entered to retrieve certain information in regards to future events. This is a form of Divination, or seership. The famous Greek seers of Delphi often used this form. John the Baptist is a prime example of this form of ecstasy, often given to fits before predicting Biblical events.

Mystical Ecstasy is a state that is entered to become closer with or to the Gods. They usually achieved this state by the use of mantras. Mystics tend to pursue greater levels of spiritual understanding. Yoga masters, Buddhist monks, and Christian mystics were known for the form of ecstasy.

Ecstasy may be experienced unaided, or as a result of the use of: hallucinogenic, alcohol, dancing, sexual orgies, sexual abstinence, self-inflicted torture and similar means. Meditation, contemplation and the spiritual concentration that is practiced by yogis and mystics can also be used to reach the spirit world. These are not associated with the extreme frenzy that is associated with the former group but are more like mystic trances. (Drury and Tillett, page 28)

There are three distinct levels of ecstatic responses:

1. The physiological response: the body exhibits an involuntary response, a physical frenzy.
2. Emotional response: the emotions tend to run a gauntlet of feelings, fear, awe, passion, and joy, etc.
3. Intuitive response: the mind and body have a blending, which allows for a greater awareness and expanded state of consciousness.

These states may all be achieved at the same time or at different periods of the ecstatic experience. In traditional shamanic ecstatic states the physiological is always present, the emotional may or may not be, and the intuitive is the primary means to the understanding of the ecstatic state. It should be noted that the state of ecstasy is reached awake, or unawake.

Ecstasy is not used with the modern or neo-shaman as it is with traditional shamanic groups. Modern day shamans tend to use the less traditional methods and opt for the more "New Age" techniques of journeying. These are yoga, astral projection, and creative visualization to name a few. However this type of journeying is neither as effective nor as "real" as traditional shamanic journeying.

Shamanic ecstasy is used to shift the consciousness of the shaman into the higher or lower planes of existence. This shifting of consciousness allows the shaman to complete his/her "mission", whether that is healing, soul escorting, or visiting the ancestors. Ecstasy, or achieving it, also plays an important role in choosing the shaman. Being able to achieve this state at will is what makes a shaman a shaman. In other words, if the person who is chosen by the tribe or appoints him/herself to become a shaman and cannot reach the "ecstatic state" they will be "un-chosen" by the tribe and/or shunned by them. The use of drugs is primarily cultural in achieving the ecstatic state. Historical use of drugs by Siberian shamans is well documented. The Siberian shamans used a mushroom called psilocybin; this mushroom is noted for its psychedelic effects. The Native American Indians have been known to use peyote, while those in Central America use marijuana and mescalito or mescaline, and some South American tribes use a hallucinogenic drink called natema. (Drury and Tillett, page 27-28) Celtic shamans are said to have sometimes used herbs such as bilberry to reach the ecstatic or desired state.

According to Mircea Eliade there are two primary ways of becoming a shaman. They are hereditary or receiving the call. There are also two secondary ways, being appointed or choosing to do so of your own free will. These self-made shamans are considered less

powerful than the former two. (Page 13)

Hereditary shaman means: literally to have a shaman in the family. This does not mean that your mother or father is a shaman, but any family member will do, living or dead, close member or many times removed. Hereditary shamans are found throughout most shamanic cultures, not including neo-shamans.

Extreme psychotic like episodes marks receiving the "call", usually epileptic appearing and is often confused with epilepsy This is not to be confused with a mental disorder. The "call" is a temporary unbalance that the shaman experiences, and is usually brought under control once he or she accepts the call. Refusing or delaying of the call can often amount in continuing of the mental unbalance and can result in a permanent mental illness if it is avoided long enough. The call can also be marked by being attacked by an animal, struck by lightning or some other near death experience.

Being appointed a shaman involves either the current tribal shaman choosing a apprentice or the tribal leaders picking a youth who has demonstrated either some sort of epileptic fit, or a marketable difference in personality from other youths his/her age. This difference usually entails peculiar behavior: a seeker of solitude, absent-mindedness, sings in their sleep and other abnormalities.

A personal quest is making a conscious choice to become a shaman. Eliade states that this "self-made" shaman is considerably less powerful and less likely to be able to communicate at will with the spirits. (Page 13) This is the path that most modern neo-shamans follow.

There are two traditional kinds of instruction a shaman receives and many forms a neo-shaman can use. The traditional methods as stated by Eliade are:

1. Ecstatic 2. Traditional

Receiving training by the ecstatic method is through visions and dreams. This instruction is given by previous ancestors, spirits and guides and involves an initiation in the Otherworld.

Traditional training is usually done by the current shaman, and if not available the tribal elders. The traditional training includes the names of spirits, history of the clan (tribe); herbalist and other needed to skills to become a successful shaman.

Neo-shamanic training involves reading how-to books, attending weekend seminars, and joining shamanic schools. Neo-shamans can have an ecstatic experience and or receive the "call", though this is often not the case. They can however receive traditional training if they find the right teacher and are qualified to do so.

The shamanic initiation is achieved both in this world and in the next. This phenomenon takes place simultaneously. This initiation is part of the "call" that all traditional shamans receive. This is a very involved process that can, at times, result in death or permanent disabilities if not seen through.

A Siberian shamanic initiation, which includes the following Tribes: Tungus, Manchu, Yakut, Samoyed, Ostyak, and the Buryat, involves some sort of dismemberment and then having the organs replaced, usually with crystals, or other objects. There is also the public initiation which the current of shaman and the members of the community would initiate the shaman thus publicly recognizing him or her as "shaman."

The initiatory dreams and visions of a Yakut shaman including dying in a ritual death that last three days. This "death" will include visions; dreams of being disremembered and then put back together. With the Yakut this will include the use of iron to join the parts. A bird then transports the shaman to the other world and there it places the shaman on ripen branch of pine pitch, or in another version gives birth to the shaman on a branch of the world tree. (Eliade, pages 35-38)

The initiation among the Samoyed also features birds, trees and dismemberment. The Samoyed candidate also will encounter several divine figures, these being "the Lord of the Waters, the Lord of the Earth, the Lord of the Tree, and many others. The Lord of the Tree will give the shaman a branch from which he/she will make their drum. (Eliade, pages 38-43)

The Tungus, Buryat, Manchu and Ostyak include ritual dismemberment and resurrection. This dismemberment involves shamanic ancestors and sometimes-evil spirits will often torture the future shaman for days. (Eliade, pages 43-45) This is found in many other cultures also, including the Eskimos of Alaska, the tribes in Australia, Africa, and Native peoples of North and South America.

Ammasalik Eskimos are attacked by animals are devoured, then new flesh will grow back on their bones. For those of the Iglulik tribes, the current or master shaman will extract the soul from the candidate and examine to see if he/she is worthy. (Eliade, pages 58-62) The Australian shaman believes that a supernatural being called the Nagatya opens the belly and places crystals within the body that will give the shaman his magical powers. This usually takes place in a cave rather than a tree. There are several variants of the same scheme among the four major tribes in Australia, but all hold true to a ritual dismemberment. (Eliade, pages 45-50)

This ritual death and resurrection is found among many of the African tribes. The common theme among African tribes is the removal of the head and restoration of the brains to give the future shaman clearer vision to see the evil spirits. (Eliade, pages 55-58) Among the native people of North and South America death and resurrection is also part of the initial initiation through dreams and visions. Though the use of hallucinatory drugs is more wide spread among the North and South Native Americans their experiences are too similar to the Siberian shaman to discount there visions as being simply drug induced. (Eliade, pages 53-55)

. The Neo-shaman experiences this vision several ways. It is usually self induced, through fasting, meditation, sweat lodges, and the use of drugs. According to John Matthews author of the Celtic Shaman, the shaman will go through a process of "recovering (his/her) senses" by meditating and visiting the "cave of care" where one faces their own

personal demons. Neo-shamanism is sought out and though valid to a certain degree, it lacks certain hereditary powers of a traditional shaman. (Matthews, pages 15-32)

The "true" initiation of shamans all have a common theme: Ritual dismemberment and replacement of organs either by spiritual means or with other matter i.e. Crystals.

According to Eliade there is a common theme among tribal shamanic initiations:

Time spent alone, away from the tribe, in the wilderness

Being symbolically made to look like a corpse

Symbolic funeral

Descent into the Otherworld

Self induced or drug induced trance

Period of training

Rites of passage or torture

Public initiation is performed after a period of initial ecstatic experience or "true" initiation, and formal training with the current shaman. Public initiation is highly ritualistic, often involving physical pain and feats, and is witnessed by the tribe.

According to Eliade, the Tungus and Manchu both have a demonstration of physical feats correlated with mental discipline. The Tungus have the initiate physically climb up a rope, which represents the road to the sky; this ceremony usually lasts up to nine days. The Manchu have their future shamans either walk across a hot bed of coals or diving into holes cut into the ice, thus demonstrating their ability to control body temperature. This is also very similar to the Tibetan monks whom are sent in into the snow with wet sheets wrapped around their bodies and must heat themselves. According to Eliade the Manchu hardly ever use the bed of coals anymore and it is seen as a decline in shamanic powers.

The Yakut, Samoyed and Ostyak initiation is less physical and more of a celebration. The Yakut initiate, after climbing up a mountain or a hill, will be given vows he must repeat surrounded by nine chaste men (on his right) and chaste women (on his left). Among the Samoyed and Ostyak there is singing and dancing and feasting (nine pigs are slaughtered), usually followed by the initiate going into a state of ecstasy.

The Buryat initiation is more detailed and rather involved. First the initiate must be cleansed; this usually is done twice. Next, birch trees are arranged in the following order to be used. One of the birches is set up in the yurt or tents smoke hole. The others are set up away from the tent in the following order:

1. One is used to place offerings, such as wine. Ribbons representing good and bad spirits are also tied to the tree.
2. Another has a bell and a horse tied to it.
3. One is used for the initiate to climb; this is usually a stout birch.
4. Nine others, grouped in threes are tied with white rope and colored ribbons.
5. Nine more are used as stakes to which animals are sacrificed.
6. Then they use larger birches to tie the bones (wrapped in straw) of the animals that were sacrificed to.

The actual initiation takes place with the initiate lying in a trance for 3 days, crawling out of the smoke hole and then celebrating his/her emergence as a shaman. The horse is symbolic in Siberian culture as transportation to the Gods, or the Otherworld. The number nine is significant in all of the rituals, the only given reason for this is the fact that there are nine layers of heaven in Siberian religion. One should also note that in each ritual, some sort of ascent, or climb heavenward was used.

This is public initiation by the tribe is also found in many other cultures, including the Eskimos of Alaska, the tribes in Australia, Africa, and Native peoples of North and South America.

Eskimos public initiation is less public, but nonetheless an initiation. The initiate will rub stones together awaiting an important event; this may go on for several seasons. During which he will change teachers at the end of each season, this allows for a better education. (Eliade, pages 58-62)

The Australian Bushmen initiation includes drinking of water that has crushed crystals; he is then lead to a grave or cave to begin his symbolic death. There is also assent to the heavens with the use of a magical cord, and in some instances a rainbow bridge. The use of the entrance of a cave instead of tree is one of the major differences in Australian shamans to others. (Eliade, pages 131-139)

African public initiation varies from tribe to tribe, though it generally follows the typical public initiation as established by other shamanic cultures: ritual death, resurrection and the climbing or ascent. This is followed by a demonstration of powers to the tribe and or current shaman along with whatever other abilities the tribe requires of its shaman.

Shamans of North and South America also have public initiations, though those of North America plains Indians involves certain degrees of physical tests along with a spirit quest or vision quest to prove ones worth to the tribe. Most, but not all, North American Native Indian tribes have some sort of ritual ascent along with the ritual death and resurrection. As with African tribes, North American Indian tribal customs vary. South American Indian customs also vary to a degree somewhat, although intoxication by tobacco seems to be a common thread along with ritual seclusion. The Araucanians tribe also engages in a ritual ascent of a tree stripped of all its bark that is called a *rewé*.

The neo-shaman, depending upon which shamanic path he/she is following will also engage in a public "type" ceremony, though this is less public than the ceremony of the traditional shaman. This ceremony can involve a sweat lodge, public drumming circle or a vision quest, of which the neo-shaman will go on a weekend retreat with other neo-shamans. As we can see there is a common thread throughout shamanic "public" initiations as there are in the "true" initiations:

1. The number nine is prevalent or a division of.
2. Some sort of assent.
3. Ritual death and resurrection

In conclusion we can attempt to define a shaman as one "who knows." A traditional

Shaman as one whom follows the ecstatic path and who can claim hereditary powers. Neo-shaman as someone who has a more eclectic approaches and is more in tune with the problems of the "modern world" while using the methodology of the "primitive world." That shamanism is practice of the ecstatic experience and has certain beliefs and behaviors that qualify it as such. We have also covered the various words and their meanings describing what a shaman is, and have concluded that the word shaman comes from the Tungus language, saman, and that this word may possibly originate from the Tibetan word for a Buddhist monk, samana.

We have also discovered that almost every known culture in the world has had a shaman, whether they name their shaman Witchdoctors, medicine man, or priest. Also that no matter what name a shaman may go by, being a shaman is a job description, one not always wanted or asked for, but a job nonetheless.

We have learn there are three main points of the ecstatic experience and this state of consciousness is where the shaman receives his/her Otherworld training and do all of their work. The ecstatic state of consciousness is used for soul retrieval, guiding the dead, divining answers and adding to the shaman's personal knowledge. We know understand that ecstasy can be reached by many differing methods, though the primary method involves some sort of rhythmic sounds, usually drums.

There are also two main features of that distinguish how one can become a shaman, hereditary and receiving the call. Also that there are two secondary being chosen by the tribe and self-selection. That refusing to become a shaman can result in mental illness and possible death. It was also stated that shamanic training take place both in this world (traditional methods) and the spirit world (ecstatic methods). Shamanic initiations are also both public and ecstatic.

What we can take from On Shamanism: Part One is that shamanism and shamans are universal in both their nature and practice. That it no matter the name you choose to call yourself as long as you hold to the basic principles and beliefs of a shaman, then you are one.

PART 2

"...Aboriginal medicine-men, so far from being rogues, charlatans or ignoramuses, are men of high degree: that is men who have taken a degree in secret life beyond that taken by most adult males--a step which implies discipline, mental training, courage and perseverance...they are men of respected, and often outstanding, personality...they are of immense social significance, the psychological health of the group largely depending on faith in their powers...the various psychic powers attributed to them must not be too readily dismissed as mere primitive magic and 'make believe,' for many of them have specialized in the working of the human mind, and in the influence of mind on body and of mind on mind..." -A.P. Elkin-

This is the second in a two-part series discussing the many facets of shamanism, Part one discussed what a shaman is and how one becomes a shaman. In this essay I will discuss

the actual abilities the shaman possesses and how they are used.

In this paper I will attempt to define what a shaman does—specifically the various aspects of journeywork, the differences between traditional shamans and neo-shamans healing techniques. I will attempt to show that shamanism is not merely spiritual calling, but also a job, which is not to be taken lightly.

This is a general study of shamanism and is not intended to be a definitive work on this subject. It is intended to familiarize the reader with the general use of the terms shamanism, shaman, and the trends, studies and the practices of both traditional and neo-shamans. This essay provides examples and tendencies and is not, in any way, intended to portray rigid standards.

Shamans have been portrayed primarily as healers and spiritual consultants for their communities, shamanic roles vary, according to Tom Cowan, the roles or services of a shaman are: "...healing the spirit, herbal healing, body work, divination, dreamwork, soul-leading...." Their primary role, however is to interact between the community and the spirit world (Pages 23-27). According to Mircea Eliade author, while some shamans may have more than one role, not all are sorcerers, medicine men, priests or psychiatrists (Pages 3-4). The actual roles of a shaman depends upon his/her natural gifts, some shamans are carpenters, medicine men, witch doctors, chiefs, warriors, priests and keeper of tribal traditions. It should be noted that not every shaman does not perform the same services, nor is every shaman a healer of the spirit or body.

Not all shamans are "light and love" as presented by the neo-shamanic point of view. Shamans are caretakers of their tribes and as such will do whatever it takes to protect their communities. Shamans have been known to kill other shamans, hunt witches, and battle evil spirits. Shamans, unlike other neo-pagan groups, do not live by a rede, and are not limited by a golden rule. They will attack in an offensive manner rather than take a defensive position. In other words shamans, unlike others, will intentionally, maim physically, hurt physically, or even kill to protect themselves and their communities, and they will do so without waiting to be attacked first.

Healing the spirit is the primary function of a shaman. This includes soul-extraction, soul-retrieval, and soul-restoration. Soul extraction involves the shaman extracting psychic darts that have infected the soul. These darts are sent usually and attack by someone attempting to harm, maim, or even kill the person—they can even be self-inflicted. The classic dart attacks will include the person have pains where no wounds exist. These wounds while physic in nature stress guilt and manifest them physically, such as intense back pain, sharp pains in the abdomen, and other non-diagnosable diseases. Extraction involves according to Michael Harner, a literal "sucking out" of the intrusion. This sucking out of the intrusions is done both psychically and mentally (Pages 120-123).

Soul-retrieval is literally retrieving pieces of the person lost soul. Classic symptoms of a person in need of soul retrieval would be those suffering from:

A mental illness

Those abused as children

A feeling something is missing

This process involves journeying to the Other World and requesting assistance from the spirits, ancestor, and guides that dwell there. These beings assist the shaman in discovering what is wrong with the person, by enabling him/her to discern what pieces are missing and to retrieve them. Soul-retrieval also could include the shaman to go seek the missing pieces from whoever stole them and do battle with the thief and retrieve the missing pieces.

Soul restoration is the literally restoring of ones soul. This occurs when a person is near death and his/her soul seeks to move on. This "death" could be the result of a physic attack or an accident from which the body has recovered physically, but not spiritually. This includes those who are comatose and whose soul may be lost. This involves the shaman to literally go the Other World, seek the lost soul and return it to the body. This process generally will bring the aforementioned person out of his/her coma.

Soul leading is another important function of the shaman. Playing the role of the psychopomp, whereby the shaman will escort the newly dead to their place in the Other World. The shaman being a familiar and thus a frequent visitor to the Other World will be able to find the "soul" its proper place.

Other methods of healing include the use of herbs. Herbal healing is as old as humankind is, and it's one of the oldest forms of healing known. Many of the hunting and gathering tribes had the ability to heal with plants indigenous to their area. This is one of the oldest forms of healing and was used in conjunction with spirit healing to hasten the patient to a speedy recovery.

Body work or hands on healing, is still widely used today, in such therapies as Reiki, massage, and chiropractic. Such a healing involves the energy of the shaman working in conjunction with the energy of the patient working together.

Divination is the means by which the shaman counsels, locates hidden objects, and predicts the weather. There are many ways to divine, and the method used will depend upon from which culture the shaman is a part of. The most common shamanic method of divining is by journeying to the Other World and requesting information from those that dwell there. It is been said that Jenghiz Khan used his shamans in this way.

Dream interpretation is also another shamanic device to assist with healing. The shamans will listen to the dreamer's dream, sometime for several days, until he/she fully understands it. Then they dream the dream themselves and interpret it. This method of dream interpretation gives the shaman insight from both his/her perspective plus that of the original dreamer, thus allowing for and accurate interpretation.

Whatever role a shaman plays or services he/she renders it is important to note that not all shamans are healers, diviners, or herbalist. What a shaman is according to Eliade is a "master of the ecstatic" and it is this ecstasy that he/she receives the power to heal and divine (Page 4). (Ecstatic as defined in On Shamanism: Part One)

Another function of the traditional shaman is as a preserver of ancient traditions: by having ancestral spirits as teachers and guides we preserve a continuous line of tradition and collected shamanic experience from the earliest time. Even though many of the ancestors were not shamans they are motivated by a need to serve their people and certain ancestral spirits will associate with shamans for lifetime after lifetime.

Other abilities that shamans possess are journeying, shapeshifting, and working with Guides. Shamans or shamanism as discussed in *On Shamanism: Part One* is found in nearly all cultures. It is a calling, not a religious choice. Some other traditions have claim to some of the shamanic abilities; they do not achieve these abilities through the traditional shamanic "ecstasy." Traditional shamans do not pick up a drum and fly off into the Other World, ecstatic work is actually used on a limited basis. Most of shamanic work is low level work.

In low level work, the shaman wears ordinary clothing, does invocations, makes offerings of sacred smoke, and may go into trance even without a drum. There is a merging with the spirits at certain times in the ritual that can be just as profound as in a drum-driven journey but the attitude of the shaman is more quiet and controlled, and often these techniques are adequate for what needs to be done.

When more potent spiritual forces are needed, or the spirits otherwise direct, the shaman may put on the journeying costume and drum until he/she achieves an ecstatic state, and will go wherever the spirits guides him/her.

When a shaman journeys he/she is letting their spirit leave the body to travel to the astral plane or spirit realm. There are many ways of obtaining this, as I discussed part one. This altered state of consciousness has many levels: full awake, dreaming, daydreaming, etc. Unlike drug induced or non-lucid dreamed realities, shamanic journeying is intentional (*A Pocket Guide to Shamanism*, pages 111-112).

Author Michael Harner calls the ability to achieve SSC (Shamanic State of Consciousness) for the ecstatic or altered state of consciousness. This involves both a trance state and a learned state shamanic ways and of the Other World. While in this state the shaman must be aware of what is occurring and in control of the situation, much like lucid dreaming (*The Way of the Shaman*, page xix).

When the shaman reaches SSC he/she moves or travels to the Other World. The Other World is where the traditional shamanic healing occurs, soul work is done and the shaman can converse with the spirit guides. The Other World is different in appearance at least to each culture, but the work done there is basically the same regardless of culture. Journeying is leaving this world reality to enter the Other World while in the state of ecstasy. It is the actual traveling through the various levels of the Worlds-Siberian shamans have 9 levels and usually travel on the back of a goose or a horse. Some American Indian Tribes have 3 levels and travel in accompaniment with their totem guides. African shamans, depending upon the tribe have multiple layers of the Otherworld and travel with their ancestors. Each shamanic culture has its own version of

exactly where and with whom they travel.

The Siberian shamans have 9 levels of heaven. Australian shamans have this world and Dreamtime. African shamans have various shades of reality depending upon the tribe involved. Indo-European have three levels much like their Native American counterparts. These are the three most common levels Upper, Middle, and Lower. These are the levels from which the neo-shaman uses today. These worlds are located on the Tree of Life. Upper World is located in the branches of the Tree of Life. It is a place where the spirits and gods reside. This is also known as the astral palace or temples. It where the shaman divines the future, learns from his/her guides, and communicates with the dead.

The Lower World is located in the roots and is a very powerful place. It is where the dead resides and where lost information is retrieved. It is a place where the shaman learns what ails those he/she is treating.

Middle World is located in the trunk. It is the world of here and now. It is where the shaman answers questions for everyday problems.

A guided journey is a learning journey. It does not necessarily have to begin with the ecstatic state; often it can take place in deep sleep. A guided journey occurs when a spirit guide or animal guide (totem) takes control of the dream and "guides" you to where they want you. A guided journey is not always pleasant. This is where the shaman learns more about him/herself and grows into their powers, it is where they meet and grow to know their guides and spirit teachers.

A guide is a spirit helper and may appear to the shaman in many forms. Usually a guide will appear in the form of your own ancestral gods or a figure that is comfortable for the shaman. In some shamanic cultures the guide appears as an ancestor: African and Siberian shamans often have ancestors appear as spirit guides. Many shamanic cultures also have animal guides or totems.

Totems according to Brad Steiger author of Totems: The Transformative Power of Your Personal Animal Totem, a totem is animal, plant, or mineral that has special powers or meaning to the shaman. A totem has the power that is characterized by the object it represents. Example: If the totem is an owl, wisdom; oak tree, strength; crystal, healing and storage of energy. The power of a totem and what it represents also varies in the different shamanic cultures, so what one culture says does not necessarily mean it is the truth or will it apply to another.

Tunnels are one method of traveling to the Otherworld. Located in the physical plane in caves and the base of trees. There are many tunnels from which a shaman can reach the Otherworld or spirit Realm. Depending upon which culture from the shaman draws his/her powers. Jose and Lena Stevens claim that these tunnels are located both on the physical and spiritual planes. The Stevens claim there are also seven "inner" (or those located in the body) tunnels as well. These are reached by using the chakras. (Pg. 157-173)

The chakras are located at seven points within the body:

Located at the sacrum or the base of the spine.

2. Located at the abdomen, just below the belly button.

3. Located at the solar plexus, just above the belly button.

4. Located at the chest, specifically the heart.

5. Located at the throat, but it also takes in the ears as well.

Located at the brow and eyes, also known as the third eye.

Located at the crown or the top of the head.

There are two types of shapeshifting:

1. Changing your human form to an animal form (which is probably where the were-stories begin).

2. Changing astral form to that of a power animal. Power animals are similar to totems, but are used as required, for whatever particular power that animal possesses. .

Shamans are said to be able to do both. (Matthews, *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook* pages 56-58)

There is a third form of shapeshifting that is less talked about, but more common. During certain rituals or ceremonies participants have become so enthralled during the drumming and dancing that they take on the characteristics of animals; and growl like a bear; bay at the moon like wolves; scream like eagles; all while acting out the physical aspects of the animals; walking on all fours, etc. This is more common among the Native American population than other aborigine tribes all around the world. (Steiger, page, 64-70).

Shapeshifting for the neo-shamans is primarily that of a personal transformation. That being, neo-shamans will use creative visualization to take on characteristics of the animal or totem whose qualities the neo-shaman finds desirable. Thus adding the totem strengths to their own.

Many, of the modern psycho-therapeutic methods have their roots in shamanism, because they do, neo-shamans often explain their journeys as an "inner " journey to the unconscious or the "higher self." This explanation is based on the neo-shaman point of view and while generally refers to traditional shamanic journey and may it appearance use several similar techniques, is no way the same. Neo-shamanism does not allow for actual Otherworld journeys and this will hamper their abilities to heal others. While creative visualization is not to be taken lightly it is more for personal healing and growth and in no way should be misconstrued as actual traditional shamanic journeywork. From the traditional shamans point of view the Otherworld exists as a parallel world, totally independent of this one. Thus, existing independent of our minds. The traditional shaman knows that each living thing has a soul, and that by journeying to these spirits will be able to communicate with them.

Just like not all shamans are healers or religious leaders. Shapeshifting is not a primary ability that shamans possess.

In conclusion, we see that the shaman is not only a voyager into the Otherworld, but a healer as well. The traditional shaman wears several hats, literally. As opposed to the neo-shaman who is unable to engage in true ecstatic work and is more or less doing a form of

personal inner journey work using creative visualization, rather than actually journeying to the Otherworld.

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