



Class 2 **Welcome back to the fun!**

I didn't put this in our first handout, but wanted you to have it here. Our game plan... our flexible plan.

Class 1- Learning to be your own shaman. We covered a lot of history and the shaman's role. We talked about using old ways in modern times in our own ways, with our own materials, using our strengths and meeting our purposes. We talked about Ethics and expectations. Finding your role, your strengths your path, your heart. Finding your connection, your direction through direct revelation. What is journeying- and we took Journey 1

2- Finding your medicine- spirit guides, animal teachers, power in nature, wisdom within. Grounding, connecting, creating sacred space. Finding or making your tools. Understanding the power of imagination, visualization and creativity in your work. Healing the past (some call this soul retrieval) - Journey 2

3- Healing in our world. – Healing the self, healing others, healing the world. Energy release, release of attachments (some call this cord cutting) and sacred reciprocity. Tools and techniques to help you find your power, your methods. Understanding who is doing the healing and how to encourage that in yourself and others. Healing drumming ceremony- Journey 3

4- Ceremony and ritual- Ceremony for yourself and as community service, 2 or more. Your role as a guide for yourself and your community. Guiding positive transformation in yourself and others. Guiding a journey- Singing, chanting, creative sound or art in healing- Journey 4

5- Nature visit and closing ceremony- We will wander, gather, sense and listen. Create our own ceremony, blessing all we've learned and drawing on each of our individual strengths. Group journey on the earth- asking confirmation of paths and direction for each of our future studies.- Sound journey , weather permitting, we'll seek a place to do this outdoors.

Finding your medicine

First a story, It's just sun-up on a hot July morning. I'm on a hill somewhere in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. I am alone with no food or water and have been sitting inside a 6 foot square area, cordoned off with string and tobacco tie offerings to the spirits for nearly 2 days. I have not slept... but I have dreamed. No, I wasn't lost or hurt. I was alone but was being watched over from afar, in spirit by my Uncle Alex. I was on Hamblecheya or vision quest on the Pine Ridge Reservation, home of the Ogalala Sioux tribe.

Several hours later, they came to collect me- all dirty, confused, hallucinating but happy. I was delivered back to the holy man of the tribe for sweat lodge ceremony, then I could clean up and sleep. I remember very little of the details of what I did after the quest but I do remember what the holy man said to me. He told me that I am always searching for my family or my tribe. I'm hoping to find my place, to find where I fit. Truth is, we are all one tribe and I am at home wherever I am.

That vision quest was nearly 30 years ago. Since then, I've believed that we here on this planet are one... the humans, the plants, the animals, the rocks- all here to help one another get along, to learn and grow into better beings. But I've watched the world be anything but one. More division, more anger, more greed, corruption. Little empathy and kindness from our leaders. And I wondered, what will it take for people to wake up, or to even want to wake up.

I searched for years to find the truth, the magic, the rule book. I was looking for someone to empower me. I was seeking an experience that showed me the way. I wanted the gifts I saw in others. If it helps you, there is no magic answer "out there." No other human can give you more than you already have within. You are already on the right path.

You're being here in class is a sign that you are seeking the next level. Maybe you're at a fork in your path. Maybe you're ready to graduate and bring your work more public. Maybe you're just here to really embrace believing in yourself. Good to all that. You are on the right path. Now let's wander further on to see what fun we'll all find on this path.



Where is your medicine? We've talked about this before, that I feel that it's most important that you understand that your true power is within you. You may want to study other traditions but emulating what they do in another time and place, with totally different needs, this is not necessarily your path to your medicine, your power. I share with you some ideas, some tools but the ultimate magic is already inside you.

Where are you magical? Grab your journal and make some notes. Is your magic in working with other women, with children, with animals, with plants, with music, with art? When do you most feel you? In the kitchen, in the library, in nature, in church, in large groups, alone? Where is your platform? How can you best help?

I'm going to lead us on a meditative journey here, using sound. Take a few moments to open yourself. Maybe journey to your happy place, connect with people, places, beings that you feel guide you. What path might be your best to start or what is the path you're already dancing down?

Part of growing through our challenges is to begin to build our personal power. Learning to find then learn to trust our inner wisdom is a huge step in everyone's life. Your higher, wiser self is the only one who truly knows who you are and what you are called to do in this life. Sometimes our parents and schooling teach us to be compliant, cooperative and to fit into the system. Yes, those are helpful skills in society. But more important to each individual life is that encouragement to explore your passions, to dream about why you think you came here to this earth. Each of us gets our internal flame lit by different things. I'm talking about things we want to do, yes but also I'm talking about be-ing.

If you come to me to find wisdom about your path in life, my answer is flavored by who I truly am. When I want to find my true, most fulfilling life path, I don't want it scented by the essence of someone else's path. I listen to the opinions of others... that can be very helpful. But I must be able to sit quietly with me and listen deeply to the voice of my heart to make my final decisions. The sayings "trust your gut" or "follow your heart" are truly powerful. But first, you might need encouragement and practice to find and eventually to trust your inner/higher wisdom.

An important part of understanding "your medicine" is hearing that you do know what is best for you. This direction may not come from your busy brain but more from your heart or gut. You know, like no one else, what you should do to bring fruition to your life, to allow you to be the power that the world needs right now. You have an answer to help the world like no one else. The assistance you provide may clear a path for one other or thousands. It doesn't matter how many you help. What does matter is that your way of helping is unique and beautiful. You MUST learn to still yourself, listen to your higher self then confidently know that you can act on your intuitions.

Meditation taught me to pull my attention from my busy brain, which is desperately trying to solve my “problems” of life in the one right way. However, we all have had those ah-ha moments. We have said, “This might sound crazy but...” or “I don’t know where this idea came from but it just popped into my head” or “the solution came to me in my dreams last night.” This experience of intuition or knowing doesn’t come from thinking, thinking, thinking. It comes from calming the mind so your higher wisdom, your spirit self can speak. That voice comes from the heart, the gut and it knows the real you and your power.

One note! I call to you to look within your heart for higher direction. That direction will never call you to hurt yourself or others. I speak from a history of addiction so I know when I want to just get loaded and sleep a weekend away that I am not hooking into my higher self but my addictive past. Your unique powers, your unique skills to help the world are positive, uplifting, empowering and beautiful. See that strength in yourself then go rock the world.

Connecting with animals, trees, whatever is calling you

In our first class, I lightly touched on spirit animals and guides. You will meet them or have met them on your own as you journey. My focus in this whole class is to direct you first towards your own higher wisdom. That being said, it’s still interesting to hook into another. Humans are easy, we can ask them what they think. However, plants and animals are a bit different. I learned a sweet technique for that. Just wanted to share. Take a journey into a tree... or your dog... or an orchid on your windowsill.

Settle into a comfortable seat near your animal or plant friend you wish to connect to. You might play a drum or a rattle, play a recording of shamanic drumming or just put on some since meditation music. You’re not journeying so far in this practice to me so I’d don’t feel so deeply gone. Maybe this is lucid journeying or journeying light? Put your back against your tree or set you gaze gently on an animal and ask in your mind if you might join them. Asking permission is always a gentler introduction, it’s like finding the opening into the world you plan to journey too. Then I just have a conversation with my friend. Maybe tell them my concern or where I’m stumped. Then...listen. Just listen. Breathe gently and fully. Keep your mind in this moment and enjoy the company of this other being. I’m not sure always if the answer that comes is from my higher me or from the other. But communing with someone so different than you can feel just amazing. Especially trees... so strong, so patient, so clear. When you’re finished, thank them. Tell them you love them and look forward to chatting again. I can journey to my fav tree (which isn’t in this state) easily because we made such a strong connection in person.

Sacred space

I think the most important thing I might be able to teach you is that in the shaman’s view, all is sacred. You are sacred. Any place you can be is sacred. The people you’re with are sacred. The air you breath, the water you drink, the animals, the plants, the stones... all sacred.

We don’t have to burn sage to make a space safe, or clear or clean, or holy. It is. It is our awareness that provides the clearing. It is honoring the value and wonder of all things that opens the doors to more. So take a deep breath with me. We are on holy ground. We are holy beings.

Don’t let my use of the word holy bother you. The word holy is defined as- sacred, consecrated, hallowed, sanctified, venerated, revered, divine, religious, blessed, dedicated, spiritual. Some of those words might echo from some religious teachings for you but join me for a moment in this grounding meditation and see if you can feel the holiness of our world.

Sacred reciprocity meditation- Sacred Reciprocity meditation- or a version of it is online at my resource site <http://www.ThisJourney.us>

Go to <https://www.thisjourney.us/energy-exchange-through-breathwork> You do have to sign in to make an account to view the resources there but there’s no cost except for some workshops and some new things that are coming. Sign up and at most, I’ll send you an email once a month with fun news.

So, in creating sacred space, our first step is to allow ourselves to remember and see the sacredness all around us. Beyond that, especially if we’re working with a group there are some ritual things we can do to help folks get onboard with us. We can do drumming, play music, burn herbs (smudging), we can read a poem, light some candles. I’m including the handout with the contents of my class on Ritual and Ceremony. Saves me a lot of retyping and we’ll use this also in month 4’s gathering.

Creating an altar

Just as in a church, an altar is a focal point. Our altar in this group is the table in the center. It allows our eyes to rest somewhere, to focus on something. You might find comfort in the candle or the stones that are our altar. I mentioned before that the cloth is an old weaving that I bought in Peru. It is sacred in its value and memories for me.

Group altar- creating that focal point if you have a group gathering or just a special time for yourself. Items that you might use-

Altar cloth any piece of fabric that resonates. I think of it as a hot ash catcher so I don’t use anything fragile but some people have lovely, delicate altar clothes. Do you.

Other items- stones, crystals, fresh flowers, water, food, scents, sticks, leaves, photos, candles written messages, book with readings, journals. Other ideas?

If you're working with a group, it's traditional that people might lay an item on the altar- a personal medicine bundle, a photo, a stone, a flower, a leaf or a crystal. These items are intended to be picked up by their owners after the ceremony.

Personal altar- if you don't do it yet, I encourage you to begin adding quiet time to your day. Choose a place or places where that happens. For me, it's at my desk at work. But I also will set up a more special altar more like what we have here for special ceremonies. At my desk, are stones and shells, I heat-resistant dish, some herbs, a lighter, a spray bottle of water. Sometimes my altar might be my coffee cup and a half burnt leaf of sage I lit blew out and laid on the top of my travel mug.

If you don't have an altar at home, start thinking about what belongs on yours. Don't make it complicated. Your altar can change and grow as you do. It also can change with the seasons, with your needs. Just rearrange and dust it regularly if it's a permanent set up.

Smudging- when we smudge, we are inviting the energies of plants to join and assist in our ceremony. Traditionally, the herbs are burned. Picture if you will an outdoor ceremony with a nice fire in the center of a circle. The participants can throw a handful of sage or tobacco on it and the smell wafts through the circle. If you've ever sat in a sweat lodge ceremony, the herb are burned on hot stones and the scent/energy fills the small enclosed space. Now, imagine a ceremony here in this room or in your home. Lighting a big wand of sage afire often isn't a good idea. I've never lit a whole wand except when I'm working outdoors. We have smoke alarms and people's lungs to consider. I was reminded in our last class by one of you that we can take a dried or fresh leaf and roll it between our fingers, crumbling it in the palm of our hands for a really controllable scent. Also consider essential oils as a fragrance option. Use only therapeutic grade oils and I don't recommend a diffuser, too much. I just put one drop of essential oil on a bit of paper towel and that scent carries through a room. If you choose to burn herbs, always have water nearby, a wet towel, a spray bottle of water.

Smudging in large ceremony or house clearing

You should do your smudging however works best for you but I found 2 challenges in using smudging in large groups or in clearing a building. One, how to burn a bit of this and a bit of that? Also how can I stop the smoke short of dumping my whole container in water. Enter... my little caldron. The caldron is a tiny cast iron pot with a lid, about 4 inches in diameter and 3.5 inches tall.

Mine has a little grate in the bottom that I had already. Not sure it's necessary. So the caldron has a lid so I can effectively stop burning as I wish.



Sometimes the lid will entire put out the fire but not always. The charcoal helps. So, I use these charcoal discs to create a longer burning little campfire in my caldron. I light it about 5-15 minutes before I want to work with it. Experiment before hand so you know how yours works. I light the disc and put it in the caldron uncovered. It doesn't look like it's burning but carefully put a hand over it and you'll feel the heat. In 5 minutes or so, you'll see the disk turning to white ash and you know it's ready. You can drop bits of this and that on that disk in the caldron and lovely blended scents emerge. Remember the bottom of the caldron can get hot. Some links follow so you can see what I use. Not everyone needs these. It was a game-changer for me when I found them.



I found mine years ago and paid too much for it. I found something similar on Amazon with a wooden base as it can get hot in your hand but this link is to a set of two. Note, within the past month, I saw this exact caldron (no wood base) at Aldi for \$4.99. Good luck. There are many other options, just want you to have an idea of what I showed you in class. https://www.amazon.com/Suttmin-Wooden-Seasoned-Casserole-Cocotte/dp/B0CN94S3QK/ref=sr_1_21
Charcoal- https://www.amazon.com/Charcoal-Tablets-Incense-Quick-Light/dp/B07S6HB1MJ/ref=sr_1_3

There are books and books on smudging. Here's a few ideas where to start.

- sage brings clearing, for change, letting go
- cedar offers a sense of protection
- sweetgrass brings a touch of the feminine, blessings of Mother Earth
- lavender is thought to invite spirits and healing (but for me... it feels overbearing)

Alternatives to burning things

I mentioned crumbling dry or fresh herbs in your hands. Essential oils also mentioned but remember that essential oils are very powerful medicines. I'll add some safety information here in case you're not trained to use them properly.

Other ideas, have fresh flowers in the room. Have a salt lamp in the room. Salt in a wonderful cleanser so adding salt to a spray bottle of water can be a safe and easy cleanser of space. Add 1 drop of essential oil if you wish but do that with care.

In all the work we do, we must first be considerate of others. Many people think lavender is the ultimate perfect scent for any occasion. I do not like it. A bit of dried lavender works for me but essential oils are just WAY too much for me. So ask your guests ahead of time about allergies and scent sensitivities. If you can't ask ahead, ask before you use any of these techniques. We're here to help, not make challenges for others.

Cautions in using essential oils

Essential oils are highly concentrated herbal oils, as much as 250 times stronger than dry herbs. Do NOT use essential oils or other herbal remedies if you have health conditions that might be sensitive to such use without consulting your physician. Physical conditions of particular concern include pregnancy, hypertension, diabetes, allergy, and epilepsy. Other medical conditions may also warrant concern. Do not use essential oils or other herbal preparations on small children without consulting a medical professional. Keep oils away from the eyes. (If you should get essential oils into the eyes, flush the eye with copious amounts of water and seek medical assistance.) Keep oils away from flames, plastics, and wooden surfaces. Never take essential oils internally unless under medical supervision. Full strength essential oils should never be used on skin without proper dilution in a carrier oil.

Oils to avoid in pregnancy. Some think all oils should be avoided in first trimester- Aniseed, Basil, Birch, Camphor, Caraway, Cinnamon, Clary sage, Fennel, Hyssop, Mugwort, Parsley seed or leaf, Pennyroyal, Sage, Tansy, Tarragon, Thuja, Wintergreen, Wormwood

Oils to avoid around dogs- Cinnamon, citrus, clove, eucalyptus, peppermint, pine, sweet birch, tea tree (melaleuca), wintergreen, ylang ylang, anise, garlic, juniper, yarrow, hyssop, lemongrass, oregano, lavender, rosemary, sandalwood, sassafras, thyme

Oils to avoid with cats- cinnamon, lavender, clove, ylang ylang, eucalyptus, birch, thyme, citrus, oregano, pennyroyal, peppermint,, pine, frankincense, rosemary, geranium, juniper, rose, spearmint.

The \ lists aren't supposed to be used as a definitive authority. I more want to make the impression that essential oils aren't some nice thing to use without knowledge. They are very concentrated which makes them effective when used properly and potentially harmful if used with no knowledge.

Well, there's your mini-aromatherapy workshop. In doing healing work, it's important that you know how to do no harm. Essential oils are marketed with very little safety data so just wanted you to know. A drop on the corner of a paper towel is generally fine. A diffuser running all day can be way too much. **Onward.**



Sacred Objects

Johnathan Z. Smith was an American historian of religions. He suggested that nothing is sacred in itself but things become sacred as they relate to the purposes or needs of the society. To Smith, an object becomes sacred as we view it in a special way.

First, sacred objects can be very different to each of us. I'm going to share some traditional approaches to sacred objects but honestly, your grandma's recipe for gingerbread might be THE sacred object for your family's sacred holiday ceremony. Don't do what I say. Learn from what I show you and apply it in your way to your work.

A sacred bundle

In many traditions, the shaman (and all members of the tribe actually) carry a medicine bundle. What's in that magical thing? Well, I'll show you mine in class but it's a really personal thing. Easiest to say, it contains objects that are sacred to you, things that empower or remind you of wonder. Common items are rocks, shells, beads, herbs, crystals but also photos, a piece of jewelry, a piece of fabric. There could be an item gifted to you from someone dear or someone who is a mentor or example to you. Maybe some written message, an affirmation, a poem. It's personal. In some native traditions, the bundle sometimes includes herbs medicines, things that enable them to provide their service. A bit like the old time doctors bag, perhaps.



The bundle is a choice, not a necessity. Mine changes. When I traveled to Peru recently, I knew I'd be traveling light, hiking a lot. But I also knew in that tradition, a bundle was part of ceremonies. I took just my small leather pouch with some stones that remind me of my power places. I also carried some extras to gift.



Other traditional tools

Drum- leading a group on a journey requires a drum or a recording of drumming. Having a drum is lovely. Some shaman's feel this is their most important tool. Traditionally, it is a native american style hand drum that is used. Often the shaman made the drum or it was made for them. However, I don't generally use that kind of drum, for a variety of reasons. Mostly, my drum is often outside, in the car, in the rain, in the bottom of a bag. I like a nice durable drum that travels well. So my drum isn't made of natural materials. I do have natural materials in some of my drums but I don't generally take those guys outdoors as they don't like rain, humidity, heat, cold. Check AngelLight's drum inventory. If you're interested in making your own drum, there is a wonderful drum maker

in our area who offers workshops sometimes. You can find Sean Mizer, [Strong Heart Drum Warriors on Facebook.](https://www.facebook.com/strong.heart.warriors.2024) <https://www.facebook.com/strong.heart.warriors.2024>

Fan- when smudging by burning or any other method, traditionally a shaman might use a fan. This is something you can make or you can use one nice big feather to do the job. Angel Light Center has some gorgeous fans right now. A note for you feather lovers, be very careful what kind of feathers you use in your sacred items that are seen publicly. "Many Wisconsin residents do not realize collecting feathers, nests or eggs which have fallen out of trees is illegal. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Eagle Protection Act make it illegal to possess feathers from more than 800 species of birds. These federal laws prohibit the possession, use, transport, barter, import, export and sale of any bald eagle, golden eagle and other protected native species, alive or dead, including feathers, nests, eggs or any part of the bird." I'm not totally sure about Wisconsin but in Ohio I was told any feather, even common song birds, crows and seagulls are not legal to possess. Turkey feathers are legal as generally are birds kept as poultry by farmers (turkey, pheasant, duck, goose, pea hens). It is also legal to purchase feathers. Check and see what you can buy for crafts? Just wanted you to be aware.



Staff- Norse shamans use scepters or a staff. Some native American tribes use a pole with banners as a flag marking site of a ceremony. African and Aboriginal traditions often use long staffs to dance with. I like to decorate unusual pieces of wood that I find to bring nature indoors.

Rattles or a bell- Some traditions use a rattle with or instead of a drum for journeying. In Peru, bells were used to call in the spirits. Any sort of rattles, rainsticks, marachas... get creative. I have some rattles I made from bison horns, filled with semi precious stones as noise makers. I did see a horn rattle once but my take is made up. If you're looking for a family project or a children's project, a container filled with seeds or unpopped corn might make fun rattles.

Crystals, stones, of course- I might have mentioned this before but when I studied with the Lakota, many years ago, the holy man who led our ceremonies always called the heated stones "the stone people." He said they were the oldest and the strongest people so they must be very wise. In sweat lodge, the stones were addressed as were the people in attendance and the spirits.

Smudging tools- are also considered your tools or medicine. So the container you burn in, your fan, your herbs all part of your medicine.

It is common to see people burning herbs in a shell. I'm not sure about its heat resistance or flammability but some people love them. If you choose that, you might want to keep sand in the bottom of it to insulate the shell a bit and your hand holding the shell.

The power of creativity and imagination

As we experienced last month in our first journey, there is a lot of imagination called for in this work. Sometimes we think of imagination as being something a child might do but the power of imagination goes well beyond the games of a child. By definition, imagination is the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses. Similar: imaginative faculty, creative power, mind's eye, interest, fascination, attention, passion, curiosity. Imagination includes the ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful.

Think of the role the shaman played in community. He or she or they were alert, looking ahead. They paid attention to the mental, physical and spiritual states of the community. They had to look for new solutions, solving problems of their people with what nature provided. They kept the spirits of the community healthy, the people encouraged and purposeful.

So lies your job as you walk along this path. First to watch over you- body, mind and spirit. You know that sometimes we seek help outside of ourselves and often consult the wisdom within. As you create your role in life, especially in these transformative times, your imagination is paramount. The world is changing and seeking new ways, new tools, new sources of inspiration. Each of you is not here to mimic what a traditional shaman in ancient times did. But I believe you are here with similar "whys" for seeking more in life. Don't ever doubt the power of your creativity and your imagination. Allow it to run freely as a child might when you're seeking new ideas. Don't doubt yourself if for some reason, you feel strongly that your grandma's frying pan is a sacred object to you. Of course it can be. And try to practice to not doubt yourself as you journey within. Remember the line that we all struggle with... "am I just making all this up." Oh yes, you are and the world is in desperate need of all of us to start making new things up, new paths, new ideas, new ways to encourage one another and not just numb ourselves to get through another day. Your imagination is going to get a lovely workout in today's updated version of what traditionally might have been called "soul retrieval."



Healing the past (soul retrieval)

In traditional shamanism, there is a ceremony of soul retrieval. The concept is that during stressful/traumatic times in our lives, a piece of us gets left behind. A shaman journeys back or leads you on a journey back to retrieve this missing piece. It's a lovely ceremony. I don't teach it.

I have seen too often that in our modern world, we don't need one big wave of a magic wand to change ourselves. We need to do work and repeat it again and again. We need to build new neural pathways and strengthen our positive habits and beliefs. I also cannot fathom that our soul get torn away from us and we can't reach it again. It is true that during trauma, when we cannot process the events around us, or don't wish to, that part of us and our memory may hide. But no one takes our energy away. It just becomes disconnected or our association to an experience leaves us with an impression that is false. What we're retrieving is perspective and redefining the past.

As an alternative, I do teach a Toltec tradition of recapitulation. The Toltecs were contemporaries of the Maya and predecessors of the Aztecs civilization. They lived from 900 CE to the mid-1100s CE. They had a very advanced civilization and were located in Central Mexico. The basic premise of Toltec shamanism is that we live in a dream of distortion, hiding our true angelic nature and that same nature in others. This term recapitulation was shared in modern times through the writings of Carlos Castaneda from his teacher, nagual (male shaman in this tradition) Don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian shaman who lived in the Sonoran desert, Mexico. Castaneda wrote in the 1960-70s. This tradition is also taught in *The Four Agreements: A Practical guide to Personal Freedom* by Don Miguel Ruiz, also of Mexican lineage. His book was published in 1997. I am teaching the technique as described in *The Lost Art of Heart Navigation- A Modern Shaman's Field Guide* by Jeff D. Nixa. I prefer sharing this practice as it leaves the power to change in your hands. It allows you to address events as they arise or as you wish to and to take time to repeat, relearn and affirm yourself in your chosen, more positive perspective.

"Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." — C.G. Jung



Recapitulation- The goal here is to find a way, a tool to help us recall life details, to clearly see the wounding events of the past, then change the emotional damage that resulted.

As we do this work, I'd like us to just read over The Four Agreements from Don Ruiz

- The first agreement- be impeccable with your word
- The second- don't take anything personally
- The third agreement- don't make assumptions
- The fourth agreement- always do your best.

These agreements are important because as we work on old issues, we can tend to carry with them some old emotions. These agreements call up our adult behaviors and always serve me as a good reminder. As we begin recapitulation, our goal is to heal ourselves. Placing blame or ugliness isn't part of this. We're not resolving anyone of actions taken, we are releasing our own pain. That's an internal job. We can't release our pain by blaming and attacking. We're sitting down with the first aid kit, looking at our injury, cleaning it up and putting a bandaid on it so the healing can begin. **We are also taking the role of the observer as we wander through the past. Step back from re-experiencing it all.**

Step 1- Identify old agreements/ events. In the full work of recapitulation, you can review all events of your life. That's a lot and I'm assuming you all have done some work about old issues or traumas. So we're foreshortening this to allow the practice to fit our timeline, while giving you a skill you might use anytime for yourself.

- In the full practice, you would draw a time line of your entire life from birth to present in 5 year increments. On the time line, list places you lived, places you hang out during that segment of life. Write down main friends, enemies, lovers, neighbors, co-workers, neighbors etc. Then, in the full practice, you would list experiences in each of those 5 year segments that you feel shaped you, hurt you or gave you false beliefs about yourself.

- Look at the time line and choose 1 experience that hurt you. Again, as in all these practices, as you learn a new one, don't pick your biggest, baddest memory and go at that first thing.

- We are doing an abbreviated version of the full practice. Rather than write the full time line, I find it much more effective to pick out an incident that is bothering me and work on it. Write down exactly what the person said or did, what happened that caused the harm. Remember to stand as the observer of the experience. It is not necessary to relive it. Write down your emotional response to it. Now consider the

whole incident and find a belief or, in Ruiz' terms, an agreement that came from this experience. Write down any personal belief about yourself that came from this incident. Some examples might be, I am not good enough. I am not smart. Men cannot be trusted. The person who hurt me is a jerk. Take an index card and write that belief on one side of it. Set the card aside.

Step 2- Shift perspective. Consider the other person's heart and mind. Try to state the other's point of view, then write it down. You are the observer of the situation. You might consider taking the position of the devil's advocate here, meaning you might try to choose to see the incident from several perspectives that you might not have considered before. How might that person have been wounded in their life. We're not making you wrong and them right. Just analyzing then choosing to forgive that person. Forgiveness does not mean they are innocent, it doesn't mean forgetting the harm, it doesn't mean that you're magically happy. You are not saying they deserve to be forgiven. What you are doing is releasing yourself from the old bondage and pain. You're laying it down to walk away from this old story of you. We're closing the book on the old story so we might write a new one.

Step 3- You, now freed from the power this old incident held over you are going to release is old belief, this old agreement. Attach that index card to a stick. Decorate that stick as a talisman if you wish, painting it, writing on it, Attaching any of the old energy you want to this stick. Then make a sacred fire (in barbecue or fire pit outdoors and burn it completely. If outdoor fires are tough where you live, I just write my additional junk feelings on that index card, tear it into small pieces and burn it in my smudge pot. In class we're going to use wish paper so as not to make a giant smoke cloud in the class room. However you do it, you are destroying the old story. Take the ashes from burning and bury them or scatter them. Release the old.

Step 4. Once the old is gone, write out the new belief on a fresh card. This isn't about writing a generic affirmation, "I am a good person." Rather you are rebutting the old agreement. Examples from Jeff Nixa's book

Old	New
I cannot trust Bob and must avoid him to be safe.	I am a power filled person. I can so wherever I want, when I want.
I should not speak my mind, it makes people mad.	I speak my truth with confidence and clarity whenever it serves me.

Keep your new agreement cards handy. I keep mine in the front of my journey. Read them regularly. You are building a new habit, retraining your brain to see that the old is truly gone and this new agreement is taking its place.

Journey to the middle world.

Last month we journeyed to the lower world. You are welcome to journey there again if you wish.

As a review- all these categories are fluid depending on your imagination, expectations and beliefs. I don't meet angels in the upper world but I don't seek that sort of thing out. I do meet ethereal beings and aliens. Who knows. Sliding from one world to another happens. Just relax and enjoy the journey.

Lower world- we journey downward, generally into nature, sometimes underwater! It's a place of earthy appetites, subconscious values. Here we might be spirit guides or spirit animals.

Middle world- You're wandering this life, your life, in your current role but imagine the veil between the seen and the unseen is gone. You might see elemental beings (fairies and such) or have heightened intuition or psychic powers

Upper world- we float, fly or take an elevator upward. Here we're more in a spirit world, a higher realm, you might meet spirit guides, ancestors or angels.

As always, first set an intention for your journey. Settle in to a comfortable place. Allow your attention to rest on your breath, your safe little nest, your intention. To journey into the middle world, we are still seeking an opening but here it comes more like walking through a door, pushing through a veil, slipping behind a curtain. Allow the drum to settle you down. When you get stuck or lost, think of your intention and listen to the drum. Relax and enjoy. When the drum beat shifts, it's time to come back. Thank anyone you visited with and find your way back here. When you're back in the body fully, grab your journal and make some notes and your visions will float away like last night's dreams.

Homework for next time.

1. Continue to explore your medicine. Take a piece of driftwood home and ponder if it wants to be some representation of the sacred. You don't have to add to it before next class but if you want to, go for it. Add paint, writing, Ties on cords, ribbon, fur, fabric. Lace or hot glue a crystal? Or just enjoy it in it's natural state.
2. Consider if you have or want to start building a sacred bundle of your own. If you're crafty, you might want to fashion a pouch, or find a piece of fabric you can fold your mementos into. Or a small box. Nothing has to be done before next class, just consider it all.
3. Practice recapitulation by choosing another event and also by repeating your new agreement. Be gentle with yourself.
4. Next month we'll learn healing drumming. Bring your drum if you have one. Do not buy one just for this unless you feel moved to. I can bring plenty of drums so you can try different kinds.

Have fun!

suni

