



Welcome back to class! Last month we played with healing the self, healing others, healing the world. Energy release, and sacred reciprocity. Understanding who is doing the healing and how to encourage that in yourself and others. And we played with drums. Any unfinished business or questions from that?

#### *Class 4*      **Ceremony and ritual**

Ceremony and ritual 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

**Ceremony and Ritual-** I have just included the handout from my workshop on this topic rather than do a lot of cut and pasting. So, at the back of this handout is that handout.

#### **Being the guide**

Once again, I'm here reminding you we don't live in ancient times and we don't have an established role as the leader or the head of anything but ourselves. Tread softly when planning ceremony and ritual that include others. For ourselves, no limits... just be safe, don't get naked in public and have fun. I'm kind of kidding and kind of not. 🙄🙄

Personal ceremonies can include pausing with your first morning beverage to affirm yourself, to read something inspirational, to breathe deeply, to visualize an amazing day, week, year, lifetime. Sometimes, when my brain hurts and all I want to do is cry- first I do cry. I go to bed, pull the covers over my head and cry. Then I get up and go make sound or take a walk in the woods. Those are my best ritual things to make good vibes and shift my gears to something good. You might want to workout, read, hike, dance, laugh, create, meditate, pet your fur friend... whatever helps you. I consider those things rituals because in my mind, that word makes the actions more important. "I have a ritual for that!" I have a solution or I can take action.

There will be other times when an occasion arises or you dream up some way to create ceremony and ritual for others. If it makes sense, let others in on the planning and be so careful to plan from the heart and not from the busy brain.

### **Guiding a journey**

Last month, we explored how you drum to lead others on a journey. Some of you might feel totally comfortable to do that now, and others are concerned that you're not strong, steady, skilled enough. You are fine to lead a journey. Your drumming should have variations in rhythm, just keep your goal at 4 beats per second. There are free metronome apps that can help you remember what 4 beats per second sounds like. Don't try practicing with them... or maybe I should say, I can't practice to them as they make me feel very inconsistent... which I am but I don't want to play that way long. It's frustrating. My metronome app is called Pulse.

Explore recorded drumming tracks on Youtube and other sources. Search for Sandra Ingerman, a knowledgeable and much beloved shamanic practices instructor. Here's a link to one of her recordings. She plays a bit faster than I do. Note: perfection isn't required. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDYv09xtN0k>

### **Beyond drumming**

how do you explain journeying to a group of first time journeyer? In the last handout is a dialogue of what to tell them. But what if you have a group of friends that you want to practice on but they know nothing about shamanism? You might suggest that it's a form of meditation, which is true. It's a sort of drum meditation, where the drum keeps your mind in this moment and not obsessing about worry or whatever. You can explain briefly how this is an ancient practice but you're doing a more modern version. If the group might be open to your sharing about the shamanic journeying tradition, go for it. But I have often used just the drum, along with some healing sound music in the background and called it sound meditation. People have lovely reactions to that. Sometimes it's best to keep things simple. Let the rhythm of the drum entrain their brain down to theta and they will rest, or dream, or imagine or float on a cloud or journey. Allow these practices to find their way to fit into your community, help your needs and work with the resources you have available.

### **Another trip into sacred objects.**

I had imagined we might do some sort of art project or sound experience together. But these deers kept pushing me so we're going to explore the art of making a sacred object. Now we've talked about this before-with stones and sticks and anything you might want. But I thought it might help to explore my process for all this then you can figure out how you want to approach this idea.

So I have a deer antler in my collection of energy tools. I found the antler somewhere a long time ago. One night I was looking through some amethysts and there was a broken one in the lot. It stood out to me for some reason... I often see broken things as healers. "Coincidentally" that antler caught my eye on the shelf and of course the two fit together. So without doing much study, I just knew this was something I wanted to create. Now you are not seeing it in its first configuration and who knows what it might morph into down the road..

### **Deer as totems, or guides**

First, I'm sure you understand that there can be many attributes credited to different plants, animals, spirits etc, Google is ready to tell you many things that seem in opposition. In general, antlers symbolize renewal, personal growth, and connection to nature due to the deer's natural cycle of shedding and regrowing their antlers each year; representing letting go of the old and embracing new beginnings, often associated with spiritual development and transformation.

Let's turn to our own higher wisdom. Right now, I'm having a lot of fun with a set of oracle cards called "Wild Messengers." No, don't run out and buy it unless it's speaking to you too. There are bazillions of these decks. Right now I'm vibing with this one so am including its description of a Hart, a 5 year or older male red deer.

I have a long history with deer, as they're very common in Ohio where I grew up. Maybe they're common everywhere. I've always loved their quiet presence. They seem to be saying to me, "I'm here if you need me but don't move too fast or get too close." I can understand that energy. I'm sort of the same. haha

So the deck holds the hart as the symbol of integration, so seemed appropriate for you. You've learned so much in the past months and each of you will integrate the info and practices we've explored in our own ways. This is the invocation from the hart from the "Wild Messengers" book  
"It's not the time to make a quick move or leap ahead. Hart, I call upon your keen ability to stay still and listen during this sacred pause. I have just emerged from a powerful time of change and awareness. I have been tempered and forged in the fires of transformation

May my intuition sharpen as I await signs and synchronicities to signal my next move. It's a time of fertile silence, where it's best to hold what I know ( and who I am becoming) close to my heart; else I risk diffusing the energy and insight gained."

We may do these in class or it might be another take home and do this when you wish sort of project. But there's some ideas that might inspire you on the next page.





