

Gifts Of The Spirit

Cate Cavanagh



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As promised, for “Sis”

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Introduction

By Ceremonial Chief WhiteEagle

Creator made everything in order and created an order to everything. There is not one thing of his making that is not full of joy and positivity. Creator has also never created a single ugly thing. “Ugly” is a man made word used to discriminate and judge others. To accept the word ugly is to give in to negativity. Denial of the concept “ugly” is to surrender to the beauty of Creator. It is the same with the connotation many people have about the color black.

To many, the color black is negative and associated with evil. Think for a moment what this perception has created! If black is a negative thing, then all things not white are bad. Here is an illustration as to how prejudice can come about as a result of a perception. What would some people do if Creator came down tomorrow and turned out to be black? In the many cultures where the color black is positive and good, discovering a black Creator would not be devastating because they are not limited in how they view things. This example is to demonstrate how we have put Creator aside and allowed man to control us by fears, words and judgments.

This is not “the walk” as Native Tradition teaches. Spiritualists and Medicine People learn there is a reason for everything and things happen for a reason. But People become blocked spirits because of the times we live in and as a result of what we are taught as early as our childhood. These blockages become first a part us until they eventually define and become us completely. They take root from the within that is created from these teachings. One of these teachings

is fear. I say fear not fear but rather the one who feeds you fear and how they feed it to you. This modern time is perfect for teachings about fear.

Everyone feels vulnerable and insecure for one reason or another so it is easy to believe there is a reason to be afraid. The fears of today take us off Creator's path. Creator only asks us to walk a straight path that acknowledges all of the things in creation. Since Creator did not make fear; to walk on Creator's path is to walk on a path that has nothing to be afraid of because he will always meet your needs. That is Creator's great order. In these times we have forgotten Creator and tend to think we walk alone on our spiritual path but we are never alone. Creator is always with us as are our spirit guides and protections.

As everything man has touched turned into a profit to be gained, Creator's order has been altered. This order includes caring for another and stopping to pick up someone if he or she has fallen or is in need. People are now realizing the emptiness they feel from deep within and are beginning to search for spiritual solace. They will often ask for prayers or blessings. I have been asked for such prayers and blessings and my response is that I am no more qualified to bless someone or pray for someone than they are themselves for how can I put words to another man's need or heart? Creator would rather hear your own heart. If you can't find the words, ask for the words to be given to you and the minute you take that breath and ask Creator will give you the words you need to ask for yourself. Our asking Creator for help or for what we need must come from our spirit and the words will follow. If we are struggling spiritually and our spirit is distracted and cannot find words or connect with Creator, it is perfectly fine to say a prayer that expresses our heart until we can hear the words Creator will give us.

Ultimately, spirituality is learning your own truth, which is within you, not within me. Many have asked me about someone else's theories or ideas or books and I have told them "You ask me about another man's truth. How can I put words to a truth that comes not from within me? Go to the source. Ask that teacher or author to

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explain further.” I can only show someone a different outlook, perspective and way but in the end it is that person who chooses what can be used at that moment and what will be left behind. When I work with people whose spirits are troubled or lost, I work with them to help them find their own truth, not my truth. That is the way it should be in order for each person to reach his own individual potential. My goal for that person is to not to need my help anymore and for him to now know his own way by walking in his own truth.

A person who has found his truth has no need to ask anyone for a blessing or prayer. He can connect with Creator any place and anytime. Ask Creator’s blessing before any petition or work you do to meet your needs and as you are ready to receive, it will be given it to you.

Most people, when they begin to look at earth based belief systems, especially Native Tradition, want to begin at the top with say Buffalo or Eagle spirit when the same wisdom can be learned from a squirrel or an insect. The same truths of Buffalo and Eagle are within the smallest animal as well but this is a difficult concept because people think size and beauty are power. Creator’s wisdom took into consideration the climate and geographic locations of all animals and simply made knowledge available in everything created wherever it lived. Knowledge also exists in non-animal spirits. If one stops long enough to notice and to broaden the mind one can listen to how the wind speaks. It tells us it is going to rain by how the trees react when it touches them! Yet, to most people they only see a tree bending in the wind. A common spiritual mistake is to confuse size, ‘beauty’ and animation with importance. The Creator’s handiwork made all things equal- animals, insects, trees, dirt, rock, water and the winds. As we were given spirit, so were all these other things. The “lowest” of humans and anything else in creation is not “low” at all for they each have something to teach us and their spirits all have something to tell us. We just need to listen in order to learn that language and the lessons that come only from the spirit of all things.

When we are looking for answers, sometimes they do not come

in words but through nature and, as you compare and look, you can find the answer. This is a premise of Native Teaching as well as other Earth religions. But many people think it is best to start with larger animals that represent more power or strength. These people are preventing themselves from receiving their answers because they do not consider that an answer could come from an insect, toad, squirrel, plant or even a stone. The smallest of animals can offer answers as great as the largest and sometimes, as I said, answers come not from animals at all! Remember, everything has a spirit.

By necessity, many people live in the city and are in an environment where certain animals and spirits no longer reside. After dedicated and careful training, you can have your mind go to these places in spirit so that you can still learn the teachings of animals and nature.

Many people, as something begins to ring true, become impatient and reach for a level of spiritual experiences beyond their potential at that time. A person can be weighted down by trying to absorb too much too soon and the person who tries to keep what he is learning within himself can become saturated and unable to achieve higher levels later as he clings to his first sense of spirit for security. This is why we must even share what we learn.

Even how we look at color tells us something about our spiritual values. Colors play an important role in many belief systems and in healing. Look at how colors you wear change the mood within you and the feeling around you. I do not concern myself with style, especially concerning the matching of color, for style is nothing but a competition among people. It is a keeping up with those that have and do not share. Wearing colors known to bring joy to your spirit will automatically bring joy to others. Creator made all colors from the rainbow, which is why I call it the staircase to heaven. Wearing these colors made by the Creator on the body lifts the spirit upward. Your lifted spirit brings joy not only to you but also to others.

Try wearing all of the colors at the same time. Certainly someone will laugh and the one that laughs at someone because of color, design or style has surrendered to the creators of fashion and style. (These

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‘creators’ and their styles give no real meaning to life.) If I am laughed at because of the colors I wore and for my style, I see this as a positive thing. Because I was able to make them smile, their smile reflects MY truth, which is that my chosen colors will bring joy to people on some level, and they won’t even know it. My truth is rather ‘unique’, wouldn’t you say?

No more unique than yours could be discovered to be once you find it. As “Gifts of the Spirit” explores the unique perceptions of a cross section of belief systems, the spirit that is ready to open itself up to a broad and different awareness will be encouraged to further investigate individual truth, empowerment and spirituality.

Ceremonial Chief WhiteEagle
President
Sacred Circle of Stones, Ltd
Livingston Manor, NY

Don't

DON'T

look at me and decide who I am

DON'T

conclude I must be who you see
for coursing within me is the product
of a thousand lives and I am but
the genetic sum
of all that ever was
before me.

Perhaps I am even the same me
through a thousand lives,
a reinvented me or a me from genetic memory
you will never see anymore than you can hear the drums
of my tribal past within my hazel-green gaze
or the summer tan that hints at
something more than your eyes behold...

For the rage of those before me
and the sorrow-wails of those past before me

BEAT

like a wave upon a shoreline-

BEAT

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like the roar of my thousand lives.

So, before you presume you know me
and label me with traits of your
imaginings,

before you dare say anything-

DON'T

Prologue

Spirituality is not only the wave of a wand or the spoken incantation. Before one reaches this point, I hope the motivation for anyone seeking their spirituality is change. But change is not just a transformation of a situation or circumstance although surely that is a benefit. Change requires a life that patterns itself after a different way of thinking and a different way of “being.” The type of inner change that eventually transforms can only come about by a willingness to embark on a spiritual journey whose destination and timeframe can be very different than we could possibly imagine.

How does one describe a spiritual journey? How does one get to the beginning of it all? Everyone is different and so each spiritual beginning is equally unique. I call it a spiritual journey rather than a quest because the word quest implies a conscious desire to attain a level of spirituality. I can only speak for myself and of myself I can honestly say I was not on a quest. I am “gifted.” There was a time I denied these gifts, was terrified of them, of what I saw and of how I seemed to know things. On and off over the years, I actively walked away from my gifts only to always go back either because of problems for which there was no material solution or because I was pushed back by those guides around me. Being pushed by spirits is no fun matter. They can be a determined lot and I have come to realize that I have been pushed because I am supposed to achieve a certain spiritual aptitude in this lifetime. Many call it Karma. I say it is a

calling. As with all callings, there is great unrest if you go against the very thing that you are supposed to do. And yet now, I wonder how I ever survived before accepting my calling.

How many times have we taken one job over another because of more money when down deep inside we knew that other position would have been more rewarding? How long did we last? Probably not long because, for some of us, the priorities of that job conflicted with what was right for us. Others may stay on their jobs year after year and as a result appear much older or suffer from stress related medical conditions such as depression, chronic fatigue or nervousness. They are on a treadmill going nowhere in the area of personal growth or contentment. The same is true of a calling. Until we know what it is and follow it nothing feels right, stays right or is right.

I strongly believe that we all must BELIEVE IN SOMETHING. It personally does not matter to me what it is or to what belief system it belongs. But for me, I believe in those things the modern world calls superstition, wives tales and children's stories. I call it "majick." I use this spelling to differentiate my belief from the hocus-pocus flash of stage tricks. I do not consider "magic" real. It is entertainment. To me, Majick is real because it transformed my life and as a result, I found joy in realizing all those things I was taught to not believe in were very real. I don't believe there is only one way. There are many ways. It is in these many ways I traveled toward my own spiritual fulfillment.

I wanted a normal life. I grew up in a bicultural family. My mother is from Boriken, better known as Puerto Rico and my father was of Irish/English ancestry. Although work and living opportunities were difficult because of my mother's Caribbean ethnicity, color and time (the 1950s), I knew little of racism for I grew up in the impoverished multi-ethnic ghetto of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York. It was here, in this community that we were accepted.

Growing up with so little financially, I wanted financial security and to obtain the education that would be my tool. Instead, I encountered unbelievable hardship that had driven me to near

madness on more than one occasion. This was the reason I spent most of my life doubting the existence of a god. I had no concept whatsoever of the supernatural because my mother had never exposed me to the spiritual aspects of her culture at all which is called Espiritismo and Santeria. So, I had no other ‘springboard’ from which I could explore mysticism. I only knew Church doctrine and only learned to speak Spanish at my father’s insistence by taking it in school. Since my father did not speak Spanish, I was brought up in an English speaking environment. (I am now grateful for his persistence.)

Oddly enough, it was this disenchantment with faith that ultimately resulted in my becoming a person of unique faith and the firm belief that there are greater things than myself at work. They work in ways I may not understand all the time or even like, but they are there, here and all around us. I discovered the spirit realm as a result of daring to disclaim “God.” I opened myself up to exploring other phenomenon such ESP, voodoo, the Kaballah and Spiritualism. I learned very quickly that I could read tarot cards without even reading the instructions. I soon knew I knew things—but it scared me. I did not want to go any further. I was not on a quest. Over time, I knew people who had begun conscious quests. They often regretted starting because they were unprepared for the sudden uncontrolled impulses and information that assailed them. They were unprepared for the sudden onslaught of spirits needing or wanting to grow, help or play. I observed that an uneducated quest is a dangerous thing for there are many disciplines, realms and rules of which the novice seeker may be unaware. Unfortunately, the novice plays at Wicca/witchcraft, the Kaballah or worse, Satanism. In due time, the consequences of these dabblings make themselves known and often only a trained shaman or spiritualist can cleanse them of all that they have drawn to themselves in their ‘quest’.

For this reason, I have included a section on basic ‘rules’, attitudes and ethics for in any work done; the practitioner is responsible for any CONSEQUENCES that may befall another.

This is not a ‘how to book’. This is a thinking/rethinking book

for the principles of mysticism can help train any mind in improving itself by creating better realities just by thought and word. I submit New Age and pop psychology are nothing more than Old Age Truisms.

There is more practical and applied psychology and behavior modification in the Ancient Beliefs than many can even comprehend. Modern pharmacology owes its parentage to the Shamans (or medicine people), Druids and Chinese. Environmentalism has been pivotal to every earth and Pagan religion for as far back as we know. Modern medicine's enlightenment on the effects of stress reminds me of the Chi of Buddhism and the Charkas of Middle Eastern religion. So all that is considered new is really very, very old.

What many call superstition, I will dare to call Science. I call it science because over the eons, there are more or less standard results that can be expected if a practice is done properly. A friend and I often put a trademark on our work. Something almost impossible that would identify the outcome as a result of our work. My daughter needed a car desperately so she could go away to college. Mind you, she decided two weeks before the beginning of classes to apply and register (she is a last minute person). My husband and I had just bought property and had no extra resources to help out so, my friend and I decided we would cast a spell in which she would participate. This was on a Thursday. My daughter needed the car no later than Saturday so she could register it, insure it and be at the dorm by Tuesday. We put our trademark on the spell. She would have the means to get the car within TWO DAYS! Within two days, she received an unexpected gift of money and resources that enabled her to get the car, register it and insure it by Monday. By Tuesday, she drove off. Even I was amazed at what had happened.

Yet, this was merely cause and effect. For every action there is an equal reaction. Science. The cause was the motivation of urgency which enabled us to focus, picture, project, energize and accurately verbalize that which was desired into the energy field around us causing the reaction of the desired reality. There were no consequences because we knew how to cast protecting everyone from

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being affected by this spell, there was a genuine need with no malice of intent and the ability to accept the outcome even if it had not worked. (That is always the hard part.) It's great to have trust when you get what you want but will you trust all is for the best if you don't?

This is where the spirituality part comes in. It not enough to know what can be accomplished. We must also resign ourselves to the greater purpose when we do not get what we ask for. For now, we need to see how things can work for change.

I call this crafting.

Buddhism

I have always said that I could do anything if life did not get in the way. Life. That can be a tough one. Such as being a young widow with a child and no income. That was me at age 32.

My five-year-old daughter and I came home one day and found her father, age 34, dead from a brain aneurysm. For seven years prior we had struggled in poverty as he had been debilitatingly ill and despite hopes and prayers that he would regain some ability to be gainfully employed, he died. The strange thing was he knew was dying and so did I. Our spirits knew his path was quickly coming to an end. That was a long time ago and in retrospect the important thing is that we knew but did not want to listen. No one had suspected an aneurysm. The ailments he suffered from were not terminal just debilitating. After all the rage and sorrow and rebuilding, my spiritual path has taught me that I am affected by the suffering paths of others around me and of those I love just as much as I am affected by my own path. In fact, how I respond to the actions and events of others is pivotal to my spiritual growth.

And it is not personal.

But what do you do with the rage that must engulf us from time to time when life throws some hard realities our way? Rage is destructive and has destroyed families, friendships and lives. Rage can also destroy us. While rage is destroying us we have no control over our circumstances or ourselves. Rage is also powerful from a spirit point of view. Just stop a moment and think of the intensity of

rage. Your pulse races and heart races. Perhaps your head begins to pound and you begin to breathe heavily. Your body tenses and, if you have ever walked in on people in the middle of an argument or fight, haven't you noticed how the air just 'feels'?

Now think about when you meet someone new. Someone who makes you feel good when you think about him or her. You sigh more and breathe more deeply. You walk around daydreaming (even a little). You smile. All is well with the world. No one has ever said "You could cut the air with a knife" around someone like this. That is because caring is not harsh; it is soft.

The difference in energy generated is obvious. No good has ever come out of rage. When we cannot release our rage in a healthy manner, that is stress. Stress has been related to medical conditions such as high blood pressure, stroke and heart attack. Rage can affect the metabolism causing fluctuations in blood sugar levels and digestive problems.

When people think of Buddhism, many think of it as a passive religion. You sit, eat nuts, walk the countryside and do not concern yourself with the troubles of the world. It seems like a blasé and easy way to go about one's life. But Buddhism is one of the hardest belief systems to follow because its goal is to master the self. To try to understand this, let us look at the challenges of Buddhism. Buddhism accepts four principles called the FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS which state suffering simply is, suffering is the result of attachment to desires or wants or needs, suffering stops when our attachments to what we want stop and freedom from suffering can be found within the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path is a list of traits that, if acquired, will alleviate our sorrow, pain and suffering. These traits are: Right View (or perspective), Right Thought (correcting what we perceive as true into truth), Right Speech (mindful talking or clear communication), Right Action (doing what is right and just when called upon), Right Livelihood (making a living that does not involve the suffering of people or animals or is dishonest), Right Effort (not hesitating to work as hard as you have to), Right Mindfulness (being aware of what really matters) and Right

Contemplation (gratitude, joy, desire to do right rather than wrong).

Now, we all want to run out and work on these don't we? As you can see, these are not easy characteristics to acquire.

We do not, however, have to remove ourselves from the world in order to benefit from this blueprint. But, we would benefit from the self-discipline we can learn if we were to apply these principles to our everyday life. I think we would all be better people. After all, to be human is to evolve!

If you look at these traits you can see how they do not leave much room for rage. Since they require so much work, there would be no time for rage. Within the practice of these disciplines, we can learn to live better, wholesome and more compassionate lives.

Meditation to a Buddhist is to annihilate the self for it is this self that is the root of our anguish. Once this is accomplished we can then connect with the greater, uniting force of which we are a part and be filled, like a cup, with this force. This greater force nurtures and refreshes and keeps one mindful of the joy and freedom found in detachment. To meditate in this manner, at the very least, is a refreshing respite from daily woes, stress and yes, rage.

To Buddha, anger and rage make us everything an enemy could want: an enemy would want us to be ugly (have you ever really seen a raging person look attractive?), sleepless (I cannot sleep if I am angry), stupid (ever said a dumb thing in anger?) and ineffective (haven't you ever made a wrong decision just because you were angry?).

Mastering these precepts can help us focus as we explore the shifting in perception so essential to spiritual development. I have found obtaining different values is a key factor in obtaining or regaining our spirit power as is developing appreciation for the things we have and creating our own peace within ourselves. The discipline of Buddhism can be used in any other school of spirituality.

Integral to Buddhism is the observation of animals and nature as found in the literature and poems. So integral were these observations, schools of self-defense have been fashioned after the behaviors of animals in Asia as martial arts. It is interesting to note that Yoga

utilizes exercises fashioned after the movements of animals as well.

As we explore other areas I consider mystical, we will see how important animals and nature are to earth based practitioners. But one thing is certain. Utilizing the working values Buddhism offers can enable us to, if nothing else regroup our thoughts, priorities and purposes when the need arises regardless or whether or not we practice any “craft.”

Since we will be looking at various ways in which we can begin to THINK DIFFERENTLY and the rationale behind it, mental discipline such as that acquired in Buddhism is a powerful tool. I find the Buddhist outline of how to live one’s life beautifully simple and logical.

Actively working through the Eightfold path, especially Right Contemplation, can provide the self with discipline so necessary to achieve corrective and correct thought as we honestly assess our reality and work on changing it.

Native Teaching

The Creator (Great Spirit) created all things—the universe, the stars, planets, suns, moons, our earth, the mountains, oceans, rivers, streams, rocks, all plants, animals and human life. In short the Creator made all things. In the Introduction, you may have noticed Ceremonial Chief WhiteEagle referred to that which many call God as “Creator.” The phrase “He” was not used because of the Native view that the Creator might be female. As a Native American, WhiteEagle holds the view that the masculine attributes most ascribe to God is rooted in Western European theology. In Buddhism, we see that an enlightened spirit or soul that achieves the status of being a Buddha can be either female or male. It is interesting to note that not all belief systems assume the Godhead (or Creator) is male. Even in the Kabbalah of Judaism, angels and God are believed to have both male and female characteristics.

As with other Earth-Based beliefs, the role of animals and their spirits is intrinsic to Native tradition. Wrongly referred to as animal worship in this aspect, Animism relies on studying animals, their behaviors and traits as indicators for survival, wisdom and spiritual guidance. In nomadic times, especially in geographic areas where winters could be harsh, anticipation and preparedness was essential to survival. Astronomers used the position of the constellations. But to tribal societies, knowing when to prepare for scarcity in resources was a matter of observing the changing coats of animals and their migratory patterns. Animals were the best weather predictors and

indigenous people knew this.

In Native culture, belief in the afterlife was an absolute and because a place among the honored dead was sought, certain moralities and responsibilities were necessary to achieve this outcome. Native American beliefs are complex in observances but very basic in honoring the Earth Mother from whom nourishment and life flow as well as the animals who willingly sacrifice themselves so mankind can survive. To eat of the kill without honoring the nobility and sacrifice of the animal was to be ungrateful. In acknowledgement of the spirit of the animal, it was thanked and asked to bless the hunter with his knowledge, wisdom and prowess.

If an animal appeared, there was a guided message being delivered. If solution for a problem was sought and an animal showed up, somewhere within the characteristics of that animal lay the answers.

Specism, or the belief that animals are not on the same level as man, is founded in Western European orthodox religion. This claim is based on the Old Testament in which God gave dominion over animals to man. But, man was also made the caretaker in the Garden of Eden and indigenous peoples have held onto this responsibility. "What is a man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected," said Chief Seattle (Suquamish tribe, North America). Contemporary religions often claim animal have no souls. Tell that to a witch (Wiccan), Native American, Hindu, Buddhist or Spiritualist. Many years ago when a beloved puppy got frightened in a storm and ran away for three days, I was frantic. I asked animal spirits to find her and take us to her. On the third night, I 'awoke' and went to my window and saw three huge hounds. In my mind I told them to go and find her. They promptly took off down the road. These were dogs I could see THROUGH! When I turned around to go back to bed, I saw myself sleeping on the bed. I walked over and lay back down into myself and then woke up knowing we would find our puppy. The next morning I told my husband "You will find her today." Within three hours he did.

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Instead of astrological signs, Native Americans belong to clans assigned them based on when they were born. They have totem spirits that guide them through life, assist them in dreamtime and protect them. I have always found myself teaching in my professions regardless of the actual field. When I began studying Native Tradition, I discovered my life teacher is Wolf. Wolf is the totem teaching spirit and guide to the forest and those he guides, by destiny, are supposed to teach! Very interesting.

Native Americans never picked the first flower or fruit they saw because it could have been the last of its kind. They were cautious what they hunted and fished and when. They always returned to the earth a portion of their harvest in thanks. These offerings in essence were composts that nurtured the earth. Was this silly superstition or guided ecology?

Because honor was so important and caring for the tribe as a unit so essential, greatness was not measured just by what one possessed as a result of bravery, prowess or battle. Greatness was measured by who among the elderly and sick you cared for and how much of your possessions you would give away to someone who needed it more. Nothing given was ever taken back. The term “Indian Giver” as a description of someone who takes back gifts is totally false. I am greatly complimented if someone calls me an Indian giver!

Chief Frank WhiteEagle, Ceremonial Chief, as my teacher (for which I am very grateful) has been an example, over and over again, of generosity of spirit. (Please refer to the introduction he wrote for *Gifts of the Spirit*). He has gifted whole rooms of his own furniture to less fortunate people because “Creator will replace it for me.” As with Buddhism, Native beliefs focus on being able to relinquish one’s attachment to material things.

Let us consider an excerpt from the Hindu wisdom found in the Tirrukkural 25: 241-242 which states, “Among the wealthy, compassionate men claim the richest wealth for material wealth is possessed by contemptible men. Find and follow the good path and be ruled by compassion. For if the various ways are examined compassion will prove the means to liberation.” Here we see how

three older systems (Native Teaching, Buddhism and Hinduism) hold fast that spiritual enlightenment and freedom from the agony of desiring material things result in a contentment that greedy and callous people can never experience. Certainly the priorities of the Native tradition are very different from what we are accustomed to in western society, especially in modern terms, but Native tradition (compare with “Right Contemplation”) enabled Native Americans to live in peace and harmony with Nature and for the benefit of their tribe.

Because Native religion was so sorely misunderstood, maligned and ridiculed, it remained **ILLEGAL UNTIL 1987 HERE IN THE UNITED STATES**. Apparently freedom of religion applied only to “correct religions.”

When I first began exploring Native Animal Medicine many years ago, I was in a very difficult place emotionally. My life had taken some stressful turns (again) so my mind was in a constant state of unrest, anxiety and mental exhaustion. One evening, out of desperation, I attempted meditating for the first time. I recall lying in bed trying to focus on deep rhythmic breathing and relaxing. All I could feel was the fretful impulse to jump up. I was so tense, my breathing was shallow and my pulse was pounding. But I was determined for I was suddenly aware of how stressed out I was. I was unable to even lie quietly without wanting to just jump up and move around.

After what seemed like forever, I forced my self to breathe in deeply through my nose and out slowly through my mouth without interrupting the flow of my breathing. (There is more on meditative or reflective breathing later). Unable to keep my mind from flitting from thought to thought and worry to worry, I made myself think of blackness. It was the only way to stop my mental restlessness! Finally, I relaxed. Images of animals began to run through my mind. I had to stop myself from thinking about what I saw or adding my own pictures to the images. I finally just began to observe and allowed the images to pass by and then away until I was asleep. When I awoke the next morning, I felt rested for the first time in months and my mood was much calmer. I knew I had discovered something. As I made this my

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nightly practice it became easier to do and I began to feel the benefits of these meditations. I was thinking clearer, able to not take upsets personally and to concentrate better. I began to find peace within myself. This peace was the beginning of the reclamation of my spirit power which would take years to realize.

It is strange to consider that resolving issues can occur when we think about them the least hence eliminating their importance to us. Native tradition emphasizes acceptance of one's circumstance in a given moment in order for guidance to be able to present itself. As we obtain freedom from upset and develop values that reflect our "selves" less and less, we diminish the power our problems and worries have over us, making us more powerful over them. If we are having a bad day but can focus on the purification and cleansing gifts of frog spirit or detach ourselves from our anger and fear, that day then becomes our day for it does not claim our spirit.

Wicca

This a good place to begin talking about spirit power which I will describe as that good, happy, on-top-of-the world feeling we all experience as children when we built sand castles or played in the year's first snow. It is a feeling of feeling fully the experience of good moments such as passing that tough exam or getting that job or promotion. It is feeling like life is okay after all. It is the way we should feel all the time, but we don't. If you think of a day or event that went perfectly and that was totally enjoyable and fulfilling this is what spirit power feels like to some degree or another. Curling up on a beach or on your porch under the relaxing warmth of the sun is what spirit power can feel like. Imagine taking these moments wonderful feelings and linking them into a long chain that adds up to a lifetime and you will begin to realize what your true nature is supposed to be and how you might aim to feel. Spirit power is also feeling invigorated and regenerated with the knowledge that you did a job well done.

This is how I feel when I have cast a spell, done a spiritual job to help someone or helped someone in need. It is a feeling of being rewarded and you did nothing to obtain it. Spirit power is feeling this way even when everything in your life gives you no reason to feel any of this at all. By today's standards and values to feel this way ALL THE TIME is called being euphoric. There are abnormal ideations in grandiosity and other diagnosis that warrant medication or therapy to balance out unrealistic happiness as well to assist

clinically depressed people but, organic mental and physical disorders aside, is there any reason for us not to strive to feel as good we can whenever we can? When life gets in the way or we experience a situation of our creation (we will be looking at this concept), claiming our spirit power can enable us to take charge, be creative problem solvers and maintain trust in the face of whatever our problems may be.

The therapeutic setting can also be an effective tool in helping us understand our motivations, our needs and goals. The cognitive school of psychotherapy focuses on applied changes that can be made to help people break unproductive or negative patterns. This can be of great help while expanding spirituality. As for us, we will see how our own thought process contributes to our problems and realities, how rethinking and actively taking action to bring about our desired changes (through a 'work', meditation or prayer) is akin to the cognitive approach mentioned above, only much older.

Wicca's origins come from the early people of Europe. It too is an earth religion in that it observes the cycles of the seasons, respects nature and actively connects animals with the deities of Wicca, usually in celebration of the fertilizing and birthing cycles of the earth. For this reason, Wicca is one of many earth religions that honor a God and Goddess as co-creator. Wiccan commemorations serve as reminders that as the earth and nature renew themselves through every change of season, so do people. Here too, planting and harvesting play a pivotal role in survival and renewal. There are disciplines and rituals to Wicca that do not have to involve a Goddess creator at all. These practices help the practitioner clearly focus in order to complete a work (or spell) toward a desired goal.

First and foremost it must be made clear that Wicca can include Witchcraft or natural healing.

Not Satanism.

Witchcraft.

Witchcraft or Wicca is not a Judeo-Christian belief system. The aspects of Wicca that I personally enjoy is the control one can begin to exert over one's life by casting a spell (putting strong, exact energy

into a wish or hope). The tools can be the element of earth, water, fire, and or/and air. The tools can also be herbs to treat a condition, a liniment for pain or to purge one of negative forces. The energy sent out through thoughts and chants (words) creates a new chain of energies that will eventually “catch up” and surpass the energies that have previously created the problem challenging us. Although there are no “sins,” there is a strict moral code of conduct. I follow one Wiccan path that is against hurting anyone nor can any work result in harm. This insures making the success of their spells contingent on “being correct for all” and “harming none.” Wiccans know all too well how quickly the burden of responsibility falls upon them if anyone or their path is interfered with as a result of crafting a spell without consideration for possible repercussions. No one should be forced to think or act contrary to their nature. When we discuss Spiritualism, you will see how important choice is to spiritual growth on our path to enlightenment.

There are powerful times for working wishes—a woman’s menses, the full moon, solstices and equinoxes. There are tools to alleviate negative energies that we all have in our home such as water, salt and spices. These are the gifts with we can work with that the earth provides in plenty. Wiccans, like Native medicine men, have a tradition in botanical knowledge of plants and herbs for which they were sought for creating liniments and tonics. They also knew how to use toxic plants for medicinal purposes, such as belladonna.

Many people laugh at the concept that negative energy causes tension, disharmony and ill fortune. Yet it seems negative forces and spirits (imps and demons) are far more believable when it comes to “luck” because in the deepest recesses of the mind, people fear the supernatural. What seems to be more difficult is accepting the possibility that someone’s thoughts against another or themselves (self-criticism) could produce certain outcomes. So let’s just look at the very scientific fact of energy itself. Namely, it is accepted that energy is never destroyed merely CONVERTED. This very rule illustrates how any energy, even that created within the Electrochemical magnetism of the brain exists. Integral to any spell or healing

by a shaman, witch or spiritualist is the power of the practitioner's thoughts to envision, see and even taste that which is being called into being. Likewise any fear, doubt of cursing of our luck is also the creation of energies that will **CONVERT** circumstances into that reality. We don't just do this to ourselves, we do this to each other every time we hate, envy or wish misfortune on someone. The difficult thing about Wicca or any mystical practice is that we must accept that every 'bad spell' we have thoughtlessly wished (Wrong Contemplation) must play itself out before we can harvest the benefits of the newer realities we work toward creating.

We can, however, find our circumstances more balanced as we begin to feel the results of an improving situation while we wait for whatever is negative to play itself out. Although I have seen works yield immediate results, many works take time to become effective and the average person grows impatient. It takes a special person, someone who is willing to work hard to develop difficult changes in perception and values, to see beyond immediate gratification and realize that lifelong 'hexes' are not undone overnight. Working any of these disciplines requires a firm trust that regardless of losing our job, or getting seriously ill or losing a loved one that there is a grander purpose at play. It takes a special person, despite sorrow and despair, to be able to accept that the spiritual path we are each on is often unrevealed to us. It takes an especially special person to know all the aptitude and skill and trust in the world does not always spare us the hardship and tragedy that might befall us. After all, there is the mindset, doubts and fears of those around us, including those we love, that impact on their existence and ultimately on ours.

To get through our painful experiences with our trust in tact requires spirit power. We looked at what it feels like; and in this book we will look at how to get it. But, first let's see how we lose it. Let's say you have a new supervisor at work who is anxious to increase productivity to impress the bosses. Increasing productivity is a good thing. We all need to work, produce and be efficient and effective (Right Livelihood). This should be done because it is fulfilling to do a job well. The supervisor, however, wants praise,

attention, more promotions and more money (attachment to the material). To spur you into action, the supervisor stands over you while you do your work, constantly asks when your report will be ready and does not rate you well on some aspects of your job evaluation.

We will feel two things. Firstly, we will resent the supervisor for being such a demeaning presence, especially if we know our job and have never failed in our responsibility (anger). We will begin to not want to be at work and we may begin to worry about losing our job. We might lose sleep. Before we know it, we've changed into something we were not before. We have changed because we have begun to believe the opinions someone else has of us. Stop right there. Despite all the reasons there are to understandably go through these changes, it does not matter. You have lost your spirit. Without your spirit power, you will continue to feel this way. How can you feel like a kid on the beach building sandcastles when you are letting yourself be terrified of losing your job? How can you do your job well when you are exhausted due to lack of sleep? These inconsistencies cannot coexist harmoniously. It is against nature.

The issue should be where is your trust for it is this that allows you to know that as you move through this experience new tools are created for another time, another coupe. If you cannot hold onto this trust, your belief system is not working or rather, you are not working it. Even if you participate in a religion, you are not working it if your trust in an Almighty cannot overcome your fear. For reasons we will discuss in Spiritualism, our path may not lend itself to great comfort, success or wealth. In which case, does it pay to fret and worry? Perhaps we need to focus, day by day, on what we had that day—food, shelter, family and friends. The truth is it is not the liking all of our experiences that gives us spirit power. It's what we DO as a result of these experiences that gives us spirit power. Will we organize that food drive whether or not we keep our job? In all of the 'schools' it is pivotal for us to determine whether or not we trust that as we have our needs (as opposed to wants) met today, there is no reason for them not to be met tomorrow.

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As you read through this book, hopefully you will begin to see how you have allowed yourself to lose your spirit power and begin to realize how you can reclaim it. By familiarizing yourself with Spirituality as it is and not how others PERCEIVE IT, you might be able to begin to walk on your own true path. You may even learn how to make your own cup! (Chapter 10)

Spiritualism

Although I consider every belief system we are exploring Spiritualism, certain themes demand a section all to themselves such as karma, reincarnation, choice and destiny and the topic of “Hell.”

To an outsider, these themes may seem like an avoidance mechanism for not taking life by the horns and wielding your own destiny. Everyone is entitled to their opinion but these outsiders have a conclusion that implies this is an easy- way- out philosophy that takes away responsibility for one’s actions. My truth is that all spiritual disciplines require the utmost dedication to taking responsibility for your life and destiny because, as you will see, nothing is fixed except for a few choice-driven exceptions. If we are experiencing “bad” karma, the Hindus believe something good or meaningful can result, called “Dharma.” The realization that this change can be made many call “revelation.” I like the word miracle.

Unlike some mediums who believe everything is on a predestined time line, I believe choice must be that mysterious ingredient in the mix called our lives or why even bother striving toward anything at all? Since what is fixed and what is not is often not known, with proper thought, effort and action I believe we all have an option for a miracle the moment we decide that one is possible and that we want it. As a spiritualist, I believe it does not matter whether this revelation or miracle happens because of prayer, a spell or because we had our cards read. Somewhere we made a choice and moved energy in the direction that can show us our spirit power. This option

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for choice is available to us because the Creator and the universe did not deliberately create us to give us sorrow or worry.

We need to be mindful that as ‘groups’ tend to share lifetimes and each being in that group has his or her own spiritual path, the challenges each has really have absolutely nothing to do with the other. With some insight, some within the group may begin similar paths of enlightenment at about the same time in a lifetime. Others may always feel at odds with others and suffer disharmony as part of their path. Our path is determined by what we are supposed to learn. I have learned that one of my life lessons is supposed to be trust. I am supposed to trust that no matter how bad things look, things work out at the last minute and final hour. I have had more last minute rescues than I could begin to describe (but I did share a few in “Gifts”). I was supposed to live moment to moment when my survival was at greatest risk. I was to do it with grace and trust. Getting rescued like this has been VERY STRESSFUL but I have come to see that this is trademark of my protections and guides. When you consider Spiritualism, stop and think about certain “signatures” that precede better moments in your life. It could have been sudden sunshine in the midst of a storm, seeing a particular bird, hearing a particular phrase or just getting a “feeling.” If this is your path, knowing how to decipher things like these will help you a great deal.

When one prays or works clear focus, exactness, mindfulness and power must go into what we are attempting to achieve yet, we must maintain some degree of detachment or the work will become more important than the ethic and we will have become enslaved to our needs, as Buddhism warns. The best of intentions, carelessly cast can leave us with a karmic debt that could have been avoided. Although, we can obtain the spirit power to alter our circumstances, we must also remain mindful that we do have a life path, that to some degree, will not be altered. Since we do not know what that may be, we must remain respectful to the degree to which our destiny may indeed be fixed. Simply put, Karma is payment for past errors or noble work. Most people have come to associate the word with bad luck. Karma, despite what many may think, is not random.

Somewhere along the line we put an ‘effort’ into our own Karma. If you recall in the topic of energy conversion we looked at how we affect such conversion by our deed, our thoughts, our words or CHOICE. Our deeds are what we actively do. It is not a matter of just lying and then being discovered for our lies, although this is good example of karma.

It is a matter of the choices we make. Who did we decide to marry? Who did we decided to leave? Did we relocate? What did we choose as our livelihood? The result of these choices is karma.

What if, when we were still spirit-fluff, we decided we needed to learn a new experience as a challenge to our soul’s muscle? What if at that time, we realized we may not have been good people in our past life and chose to pay our debt? What if we decided to pay that debt in the NEXT LIFETIME rather than wait until further down the line? We have then selected a life theme. (We could have also chosen success because we want a ‘vacation’ from spiritual growth or a reward for much spirituality learned.) But, let’s stay with paying our “debt.” We may have chosen illness, poverty or an untimely death. What would be the purpose of this type of exercise? To see how fixed and resolved our true selves can be in unknowing lifetimes and to determine whether or not we have learned to master our spirit power.

Many people believe that the goal of the soul is to join the godhead (the universe, the Creator, Heaven). This theme is in Hinduism, Buddhism and others. What would be the purpose of this joining? To be part of the Creator, Divine healing and nurturing, the power of the divine which most call God, and ultimately creation itself. If we look at the perfection of the earth, mankind’s interference aside, it is perfect. It functions on it own, heals itself and regenerates itself. Even climatic cataclysms are all part of healing.

The same can be said for the universe. Therefore, must not we, as spiritual forces, aim to perfect energy management in our ultimate goal of joining “God” to better perpetuate this power? Cannot mastering the molding of a lifetime be a worthwhile exercise? So, although we all may have a karmic debt, if mastering our lifetime is

the goal and mastering means creating or recreating a preferred reality, fully actualizing a life's potential will take a lot of work. It will take work to alter our circumstances materially or spiritually. So, even before we look at how spirits can help us or guide us, we need to look at what we need to do to enhance ourselves spiritually first.

This type of work is not passive nor is it easy. Just because this is my belief does not mean I like my own conclusions. My own Right Contemplation has been sorely challenged over and over and over again with recurring themes. But, I must take responsibility for the fact that these themes are recurring, either because I pre-selected these themes as my life pattern or I simply have not mastered my own spirit in certain areas. The ironic thing is, gifted people tend to be left to flail within their own life path more than people would think. After all, we know better, we are supposed to DO better. So for all the guidance I may have given my own clients, I still have my own themes to grapple with just like anybody else. My calling is to teach and to help, if asked. That does not necessarily give me easy answers. What it does give me however is TRUST. Trust that wherever I am, it is where I am supposed to be and like it or not, it is the correct product of my own choices. Can the whole world be wrong? Can every religion's sub-culture of the mystical be that off base? The New Testament refers to Judas being seen after his death and it recounts how Jesus exorcised "demons" (mischievous spirits?). The Qu'ran states "The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare his glory!" (17:44).

The Kabbalah of Judaism cites that there are seven heavens and seven earths as well. Are we to presume that these realms are vacant?

Ancient mystics all espoused the existence of many levels of spiritual dimensions. The Catholic Church has Heaven, Limbo, Purgatory and Hell. Some Buddhists believe in, Bardo, an in between place where the wisdom of the departing soul is challenged and could be mislead to different realms of terror, ignorance or a better and improved life on the spiritual realm or the material one. Deities/spirits have the succinct role of luring the soul to the best of their delusionary ability whereby challenging what the soul has truly

learned. To the Buddhist, prayers for the deceased, others and oneself help everyone in avoiding spiritual pitfalls along the path of spiritual progression. Similarly, Catholics pray for the souls in Purgatory so that they may gain entrance into Heaven.

Regardless of what it is called, can everyone be wrong or has everyone, over time and geographic location and isolation been touched by the spiritualistic wisdom that is the innate gift of the spirit?

Some Jews believe that the soul is eternal. It is made not just from God but of God. They believe a soul comes into the world to learn about creation and to help redeem creation. Redemption plays an important role in the philosophy of Judaism. They believe the soul does not remember its divine nature and so, upon entering life, gains no benefit from its previous existence.

And what of Hell? Like many Spiritualists, I do not believe in Hell as formal religion teaches. It is beyond my ability to accept that an all-loving God, Perfect Creator and Patient Teacher would ever create a place where devils torment any soul for all eternity. Not that I haven't met people I have felt worthy of going there with a one-way ticket in hand. It is simply not for me to make this determination. This is all the better for I am, after all, like everyone else, human. I have my foibles, my judgments and resentments. I may have a better understanding of why things are the way they are but, that doesn't mean I blindly like everything I experience or see. It simply means I am on my own path just like you and just like that person whose actions I may find despicable. But, even that person is on a journey and how can anything be gained from that journey if after a lifetime there is nothing but eternal agony?

Does God really score any points this way? Does fear of this painful damnation make all the more sincere the good works people do? Is it not better to do good for goodness sake alone instead of to avoid a horrible punishment? I accept an all-loving, all embracing Creator. I am incapable of doing otherwise. Since inflicting everlasting agony is inconsistent with my concept of Creator, I reject the usual definition of Hell.

I said I reject the **usual** definition of Hell.

The human experience is a painful one. It is painful because our true selves are of the spiritual element. When we in human existence, we are out of our natural element and have much to master before we can contribute to the Creator's ongoing plan of replenishment of the Universe.

Buddhism accepts that "suffering exists." The thing we must learn to control is our pain, the things that cause us pain and our reaction to people that cause us pain because they too are on their own journey. This includes how the death of loved ones affect us. Sometimes their journey is brevity of life. We then suffer the pain of "untimely" mourning. Sometimes it is debilitating illness. If it is a loved one that suffers, how we can comfort them within our own pain for them? If we are poor, how do we maintain our private store of spiritual wealth and remember that as we have today, no matter how little, we will have again tomorrow? How do we not suffer low self esteem or resort to crime in order to survive? These are all very real types of pain. They are hells. Why, if there be Hell on earth, would there also be one so eternal and so horrible for someone who errs as a result of the pain of existence? It is like saying we are all born to be in Hell. It like saying we have been 'set up' to be in Hell over and over again. Period. Paragraph.

Since we have looked at how different belief systems all hold fast that there is something after life, let us look at what all these spirits can be.

Who Really Is Out There?

I have explained what I, as a spiritualist, believe. I also believe that there are many spiritual beings in the spirit realm. As a spiritualist I strive to allow them to help me and for me to help others as we all go through the sometimes battlefield called life. As brought forth by many famous psychics and mediums, our loved ones reside there. They may not stay on the other side for eternity. They may return to live another material experience here again. But for now, let us list our loved ones as the inhabitants of this other world reality. Sometimes (depending on their level of progress) they act as protections or guides. My daughter saw the aunt I had named her after when she was about nine years old one night in her room. The next morning she told me about this experience and said she didn't think anything of it because the woman she saw had red hair (as do I). For a few minutes, she thought it had been me checking on her. She then noticed that the lady's eyes were blue (my eyes are green) and that they were the bluest eyes she had ever seen on anyone in her life. This aunt had aqua, crystalline blue eyes that you could see a half a block away. She said she realized at that point that it wasn't me but that the lady was so nice, she felt very comfortable. One of her grandmothers, who was never one to discuss seeing spirits, saw her son (my daughter's father) shortly after his death. A friend of mine, who is Jewish sensed her mother in the delivery room with her when she delivered her first-born son. Another friend of mine, who is Chinese, felt a grandmother around her, playing with her hair. All

of these experiences were not upsetting. They were intriguing but comfortable.

Shortly before my first husband died, he told me that if there a way to get the message through to me that there is life after life, he would let me know. Even if he had to kick me in the a—. Well, don't you know, the night after his death as I lay in bed awake (who could sleep under these circumstances?) I was KICKED OUT OF BED AND LANDED ON MY BUTT! I could feel a foot mark right there on my butt, as if I had indeed been kicked in the a--.

As famous psychics and now reputable psychotherapists through regression hypnosis have determined, people travel in groups or clusters (as some people call them). This means that our families and friends tend to 'migrate together' so that we are all souls sharing living experiences sometimes many times over. My husband (now) and I were lovers during the Civil War and a fire took him from me at that time. When we met, we each felt a recognition of each other that was very profound and we each knew we would get married.

Are there animals there? Although many debate whether or not animals having souls, my own opinion and experience verify that they indeed do. When my childhood dog died, I would hear her and feel her going under my bed and hear her nails clicking on the linoleum when she walked just like they used to when she was alive. Visiting relatives have seen a beloved dog that had passed way recently on our sofa in the living late at night and they have no abilities to speak of at all. For, me the afterlife would be a sad place if there were no animals there. I hope to ride my horse on green pastures when we share the afterlife together!

Loving and familiar spirits know the challenges of life and understand pain and heartache and worry and sorrow and so, depending on their own level of spiritual development, they can be of comfort and help to us.

There are guides and protections that are with us from birth. They will project the image of the lifetime in which they had the strongest identity, were the most comfortable or that reflects their greatest strength. This is why guides are seen as Indians, gypsies, knights, or

ninja. They can also reflect the particular medicine that they may have mastered or that they practiced in their last life.

Other spirits are transient. I remember one spirit, a matronly woman, being with me for about a year. She had a distinct perfume and in my mind, I could see how she looked. She came to me at a time in my life when my own mother was extremely ill and I feared she would not make it through her illness. The circumstances of this period of time is shared in “Raphael and Me” (Chapter 8). My mother had been disabled since I was nine years old and so our roles were reversed for most of my life in that I became her caregiver at a very young age. With the fear of losing my mother, I came in touch with the fact that I had been her ‘mother’ rather than she being mine and I mourned losing her before I knew what it was like to have a mother in the way everyone else did. Well, this spirit, whom I called “Mother” would come to me when I felt sad or lost. I had many a conversation with her, heart-to-hearts that I had never had with my own mother. I talked to her about my fears, my love for my mother and my own dreams and I always felt better. When my mother’s health improved and she was out of crisis, “Mother” simply went away.

THERE ARE ANGELS. I will share my own experiences with an angel in an upcoming chapter, as I said. The important thing about angels is that they want to help but never having been human they do not know what it is to suffer, thirst, hunger or be ill. Because they cannot know what we want or what we need, we must ask as clearly as we can. Example: We should not say please take my worries away. If we know what the worry is, we should say it. For example, “I just got laid off from my job and can’t pay my bills without a job. Please help me find a job as quickly as possible.”

There are guardians of the continents, guardians of the elements and of every direction (north, east, west and south) that I commonly refer to as Gatekeepers. Among tribal people and modern people who practice the old ways, even plant spirits are asked permission before picking for use as a medicine or liniment or cleansing bath. Much like the raven, who will exchange one item for another, an offering is always made. Wiccans do this, Native Americans always

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share with the earth, and Buddhists make offerings of candles and incense or grain.

Remnants of these old ways can be observed in the use of lights on the Jewish holidays as well as in Catholic churches in the offerings of prayers for people and the lighting of candles.

The interesting thing about earth-bound creative entities is that some are not removed from the human condition and often have weaknesses as well as strengths. These weaknesses are jealousy, rage and competition. These are entities that are neither good nor bad but will act in ways you give them permission to act. This is one reason why fear can be problem working with spirits. (This is the reason for the protective circle so common in ritual). I know I do not need any more challenges than I have sometimes. I don't need anything extra because I did not focus properly. This is why asking the Creator to protect and bless the effort of your work and prayer is so very important. I always ask the Creator to look into my spirit and heart so that my intentions can be evaluated. I always ask for protection. If these intentions are as true in purpose as I believe them to be, I ask that I be granted what I ask as the Creator sees fit. I then seek permission of the reigning or primary guardians of the craft or medicine I am working with to assist me with my prayer, petition or work.

I remember spending the better part of my life wishing there were fairies, leprechauns and woodland guardians. You may be surprised to know that among spiritualists, Wiccans and shamans, it is a given that these beings, although known by different names, do indeed exist. When we are young, the thrill of the unknown is programmed out of us. The wish is replaced with the want. And, although wanting plays an important part in any work or spell, to me, the joy of the spiritual path is that all things we want to believe in, are very real to us. Perhaps, that is why a part of us remembers that favorite fairy tale and why we so enjoy reliving those moments with our own children. Perhaps it is that spirit side of us, that part of us that knows all the things adulthood reasons away, that reminds us of the magic all around us. The next time your son or daughter talks about the

“friend” that only they can see, do not be so quick to think that it is child’s play. If you listen to what they tell you, you may find that what they “see” is beyond the scope of their years or experience. Allow them to see. Allow yourself to experience majick through their eyes!

But, knowing the world of spirit is more than knowing about spirits, conjuring, spells and divination. It is a responsibility to live life with Majick in it! Majick is acknowledging the power of the Creator and importance of prayer or petition and the Spirit. Prayer is for the human condition as a whole, peace for the earth, for the dead, ill and for those who by reason of mental incapacitation cannot pray for themselves, including spirits. Prayers of thanksgiving are not to be overlooked either for even in difficult times things can always be worse than they are.

In my opinion, good intention is an important quality. It is not as easy as wishing someone a good trip. It is asking(or casting) for that which you want or need and, no matter how desperately you need, deciding you do not want it if even someone you do not know can be affected by your work. This ethic is not all that common with many practitioners who, for a price, will do a work for any purpose. You see, if we are sending energy ripples throughout the universe, we can never know whose life or choice may be affected by our will in order to bring about what we have asked for. True followers of the Old Ways know and respect this possibility.

There is a wonderful short story that demonstrates this perfectly. In it, a husband and wife find a talisman that grants three wishes. Being poor, the wife wishes for money. Shortly after the wish, she receives the news that they came into money as result of their only son’s death from an accident at work. Desperate in her grief, the mother grabs the talisman and wishes her son alive again. He is then heard walking up to the door. At this point, the father grabs the talisman from her and wishes him dead again because the son had been mangled by machinery in the accident and the wife had forgotten to ask that the son be brought back WHOLE. This is a favorite story of mine that keeps me mindful of what can reaped if good intent and

full awareness is not in tact.

My spiritual path is a way of serving for the good and working to better circumstances and must include knowing how to do this without repercussion. Understanding this concept of reincarnation and karma and is all Spiritualism. It is the realization of what CAN BE DONE as well as considering what COULD HAPPEN as a result. It is not just about spirits letting themselves be seen or known or having the ability to see and communicate with them. It is about being prepared and learning to develop the skills needed work successfully and harmlessly. It can be about reinventing our lives through change and enhancing our intuitiveness. My spiritual truth says all are part of the Spiritual Path. Spiritualism is also being able to address problems we can experience as a result of spirits that carry their private “Hell” around with them.

Recall for a moment my explanation of “Hell” (Chapter 4). There are many spirits that die and bring their “hell” with them. Having felt hopeless here, they are hopeless in spirit. Many attain ecstasy to discover the wonders of the next life but some are so locked into their misery when they die, they bring this misery and rage with them to ‘share ’ with the living. This absence of higher purpose and elevation as well as the continuation of earthbound suffering is their hell. It is a blindness to a whole new realm where love and comfort can bring such joy to the soul that all suffering might even seem worth it! These are souls that could never find something or someone to believe in; souls whose lives on earth had the path of rejection or abuse by family or mental illness. They were unable to find their own spirit and the Creator’s light to steady their course through that life. In short, they failed their own challenge.

Such tormented souls can have many different alternatives on the other side. Some are sent to a sleep-like state where the spirit can be replenished. Others are given pleasant and happy delusions to calm a troubled soul. Others resist and clinging to their anger, reject any and all assistance thus leading themselves on a retrograde spiritual path. In their darkness, they prey upon the living often attaching themselves to people with similar problems. These problems can be

anger management, alcoholism, violence and/or drug abuse. They can disrupt relationships, cause severe depression and nervousness which ultimately can become true medical conditions. They do this because since they know no other way to be, they enjoy continuing to be within the midst of these problems or, in the absence of them, they create them. They are but some of the negative forces that can invade a home or a person's mental state or health. An experienced Shaman or spiritualist or witch can be helpful in sending these spirits on their way and purging an environment of their influence through prayer, baths, incensing and other remedies.

If these spirits do not become educated, eventually, they will have the same life path again and again until they manage to find their own light and fight to remember who and what they really are: spirits on the road to majesty. Their Karma will be challenging to say the least and it is for these souls that spiritualists also work and pray. A spiritualist will pray that somewhere in their darkness there is a way for the light of all that is good, that comes from the Creator, to pierce that darkness and alleviate the loneliness and sorrow these souls endure.

All the major established religions believe in angels. Even people who belong to no organized religion believe in angels. New Age influences has brought angels back into the fore front as mankind, despairing and feeling a void that cannot be filled, seeks to believe once again in something. I am of the opinion that people need to believe in something (even if it is to regenerate by sitting atop a mountain.) Agnostics, I believe, are people hoping to find a reason to believe. That is why they only doubt. At least their mind is open. Atheists often say there cannot be a God because of all the evil and ailments of the world. It seems to me someone who becomes an atheist is someone whose childhood faith greatly disappointed him or her. The faith of my family sorely disappointed me, as I shared earlier. I can see disenchantment causing someone to disavow a belief in anything. In my case the unusual and adversity found their way onto my path over and over again to thump me on the head. But, oddly enough, it seems to me that atheists are strange bedfellows

with religious people because they look at the punishment and pain religion uses to believe in God and, being unable to accept this (like me), walk away from their God rather than walking away from the teachings. Who, in essence then, believes more—the person who believes the things God will do or the person who, not believing a God would this, abandons God?

The Bible will be quoted as the basis for belief in pain and punishment and granted one may choose to accept it as a literal depiction. I admit, I look at it in an allegorical manner since my beliefs are diverse, it seems to me the Bible is one of many excellent blueprints or general maintenance manuals printed by the manufacturer, if you will. Do psalms help? Indeed they do. They help because like any other prayer, they give us the words when we are too distressed or frazzled to find our own. Is there an ultimate Creator? I personally believe there is and that it is the head of a grand chain of command above us. I believe there are divisions and sub-divisions, angels, “workers” (who carry out the tasks given by the angels in specific ways), protections and guides (former human souls working their way up divinity’s ladder), guardians of every planet, universe, direction and element, lesser deities of each continent, the seas, mountains and islands. The United States is very unique because having a citizenry of various ethnic origins, spirits of the various countries (African, Ireland, England, China etc.) now also have a place here.

Many people forget however, that the continental United States was originally all Native American. I always remember this before embarking on another medicine especially since I am of a Native bloodline. I approach and respectfully ask to be allowed to do my work and for assistance, if necessary. I was recently involved in assisting a woman afflicted by African craft. After asking the protection of the Creator, I asked my Native protections to step in and assist if we ran into trouble because the bottom line was, we were on Native soil.

Because there are so many overlapping domains, I have an awareness of all areas of expertise each angel, spirit, or minor deity

has. If we have need of a lawyer, would we seek a doctor to come with us to court? Of course not. It is not that some assistance would be gained by asking a patron angel for something out of its jurisdiction, it's just that asking for help from a specialist can be quicker and more effective. There are so many avenues the Creator has provided for us to utilize in order to receive help, I cannot doubt the existence of a Creator nor of the spiritual "family" that is always with me to nurture, help and love me.

A word of caution. Do not 'dabble' in anything with which you not familiar. As a novice, depending on your gifts, which you may not even be aware of, you can attract any number of spirits to you too quickly. Even spirits eager to help can feed you too much information, flood you with confusing dreams or carry out a vengeful whim because they have not elevated to a more enlightened level. There are many spirits eager to deceive, eager to be heard and eager to learn how to become more helpful. They cannot always fashion themselves. Sometimes, they have to be fashioned by us. Based on how we guide them can also determine how they will spiritually elevate. Spirits that guide us on the other hand, are enlightened, service oriented beings. We cannot, as novices always tell the difference. This is why every practice has its ritual and its symbols. These are like a spiritual language complete with a dictionary and only the adept should modify a ritual, prayer, symbol or spell.

There are lost spirits eager to attach themselves to people that have the same or similar physical or addictive conditions they had. There are spirits so unenlightened, that they simply enjoy bringing misery to people who are doing okay. There are spirits so desperate to be listened to, they cling and appear even to people who do not believe in mysticism and may not even know they have gifts! Who knows how many nervous breakdowns began which such attempts at communication. This is why I will repeat that the arts are not for dabblers. Prayer or petition is the best and only place for a beginner to start. Prayers of thanksgiving, for the earth, for the suffering for the lost souls, for the community and for guidance prior to reading any spiritual material can help your heart and spirit find the truth

you are seeking for yourself.

Because there are so many spirits and so many traditions, let's take a minute and discuss how to acknowledge the spirits whose guidance you seek. Some offering to share what you have or that you have gained is always a practice of the Old Way. Keep in mind that spirits are not materialistic so that one's more expensive offering is not valued more highly than a poor devotee's seemingly meager one. Offerings, for the most part represent the intent of the heart. Which is of greater sacrifice: the expensive incense someone can afford easily or the offering of cornmeal that could actually be a breakfast meal for someone else? There is no guideline to decide because someone of comfort can provide more expensive or elaborate offerings. They should do this especially if their blessings are a result of devotion and a dissolution of their own individual suffering. In their case, it is fitting that they offering something more elaborate as a remembrance and in thanks. A poor devotee may still be struggling spiritually, suffering on an unfixed life path and yet, remains true to the truth that Majick, no matter how small, can be in everyday life.

Offerings from those undergoing hardship hold a special place as well. The thing that matters most is the intent of the heart when the offering is made. Truthfully, there are some spirits whose requirements for certain types of assistance and devotions are exact and specific and cannot be modified according to specific tradition and ritual. These spirits are in the specific domain of certain disciplines but even in these disciplines, there is room for smaller offerings and not so rigid rituals in many cases. Basically, anything can be offered. You can offer a fasting, candles, incense, food items to represent a share of your survival and/or prayer rituals. In my household, whenever there is a gathering or holiday, the spirits receive the food prepared before anyone else as an offering of thanks. Then the spiritual leader is served, then the elders, and finally the rest of the guests. This is the spiritual tradition of my truth which includes Native and other Pagan/Earth traditions.

As to who is really out there, everything is out there! From fairies to elves, from angels to imps, from loved ones to animals and above

all else and The Creator from whom only good things come.

They bring us our premonitions, protect us from danger, whisk us away in dream-time and instruct us,(which we may or may not remember). They help our flowers and plants grow. They help us find the right doctors, lawyers, friends and jobs!

They are just waiting to be asked and waiting for us to simply begin.

Who | Am

Before the introduction, I included my original poem, “Don’t.” I included it to make the point that even though my mother owns Puerto Rican descent and my father was Irish/English/American, I have connected with that part of my ethnic heritage which is descended from the Taino tribe on the island of Boriken (which is more commonly called Puerto Rico). Spiritually, I am of tribal, earth essence, which also includes other earth traditions, including Wicca. I included “Don’t” because I feel it accurately describes the me that is spiritual and not the me that appears European. As for this incarnation, I have been a freelance writer, accomplished equestrienne, former pleasure long distance swimmer, professional advocate, wife, mother and practicing shaman/spiritualist.

That is a mouth full, isn’t it? Many say that some people will believe anything because they want to or need to but my beginnings were very skeptical. Until my gifts fully developed within the last eight years, I thought of myself as an armchair metaphysicist/philosopher. My gifts came into their own during this time but my experiences date back to my youth when I would overhear hushed whispers in Spanish between my mother and my aunt which I could not understand because I did not know Spanish at the time. Somehow I knew they were talking spiritual stuff. I don’t know how I knew, I just did.

When I was a child, I would see things—in the trees and in the shadows but also being raised old Catholic, I was afraid of what I

saw because the Church would have called it evil. When I was about eighteen years old, my mother was going out one evening with her sister and I decided to go because as I told my mother, “You’re going to see a spiritualist and I want to know what this is about.” She asked me how did I know where she was going and I simply told I just did, which was the truth. I was expecting a half-hag, half-ogre looking woman, or a gypsy—like the ones that lurk in front of their storefronts and beckon you to come in. But she didn’t. She looked like anyone’s next door neighbor. And she knew things. All sorts of things but, I didn’t quite believe in spirits.

As a rebellious act against a church that terrified me into faith, I had decided that if a church needed to scare people into remaining faithful, how powerful was it’s god? That naturally led me to question if there was a god at all.

My childhood had been anything but blissful. I lived a life that was ravaged by an alcoholic father and a mother that became severely disabled due to a massive stroke. Most of my life was struggling through drunken tirades, more strokes and heart attacks that threatened my mother’s life with very few joyful memories in between. We lived in a poor, multi-ethnic neighborhood so although everyone was struggling, everyone else seemed to have surprise birthday parties and sleepovers while I didn’t dare because I never knew when my father would come home drunk and in a rage. Although I eventually came to understand that he was a soul in pain, when I was growing up my prayers for his sobriety and for my mother’s health seemed to fall on a deaf god’s ears. I wondered why god had given me this life, this family instead of a “Life with Father” family.

Although I found this spiritualist an amazing person, I rationalized her gift as a special phenomenon of having a more highly developed brain that was unaffected by filters and distractions. After all, I was a college student and spiritual stuff was just the mumbo-jumbo of the ignorant and superstitious. In college I made some interesting friends. We dabbled in tarot cards and palm readings and of us all, I surpassed everyone. I had one very unique friend at the time with

whom I used to play mind games or telepathic communications. We were so in tune it was as if I were the receiver and he, the transmitter. He would hold a card and project a symbolic image into the pupils of my eyes until I would pick up pictures and images that I would translate into the suit of the card he held. This was all an exercise of the power of the brain, mind you.

When he would call, I would know it was him. When I was in class I would get the mental message to meet him in front of the statue of the college plaza at a certain time and sure enough, he would be there. He used to travel astrally so I would see him in my room at night. This became so frequent I would wake up and say, "Oh, go away" then turn over and go back to sleep. As far as I was concerned, I was working on eliminating my penchant for distraction in order for the fuller potential of the brain to be realized. This was scientific play and had nothing to do with spirits.

Well, this friend was interested in grave yards and zombies and was always trying to get me to go to a cemetery for a midnight ritual but, I was never so inclined because, quite frankly, it scared me. As I struggled with my fear of spirits. I was trying to approach intuitiveness and ESP in a non-spiritual manner. I would tell myself that if there were no God, that there would also be no ghosts, right? I guess I wasn't that good of an atheist. Was I? (Isn't it curious that we will dismiss the existence of a Creator, yet still cling to our fears of evil?)

Being a sociology major I found ancient civilizations and their religions fascinating. I would imagine living in a time when the gods, being so much like us, were more understandable and more approachable. People such as oracles were equally intriguing. At this time witches to me were synonymous with Satanists and I feared them as much as anything else. In fact, I was afraid of many things but I would go to 'reunions' (as the Spanish called them) where spiritualists would channel guides and spirits and deities. They would cleanse people of their spiritual problems, heal and advise. It was at one of these reunions that I saw a tiny woman, supposedly influenced by a bad spirit recoil, scream and fight six big, grown men in order

to avoid the spiritualist to whom she had been brought. She writhed from their hold like a snake and pulled away from them with superhuman strength. Then, snakelike, she slithered along the floor! It was explained to me that the spirit that was bothering her knew it was going to be expelled and that was why it enabled the woman to fight so fiercely.

Still, I had an explanation. I knew there are many psychiatric disorders that endow someone with superhuman strength. I knew of the effects of sudden rushes of adrenaline as documented by women able to lift cars off their children. The fact is I was not easy sell.

I used to Ouija with friends on Friday nights, we would read cards for each other, and some of us did spells. I remember one friend who was having problems with her boyfriend. He was going through a nasty phase and aggravating her a great deal. (Hey, we were all young and young women often put up with aggravating boyfriends until we know better). Anyway, a friend of mine told her to do a certain ritual to make him apologize to her. It involved a coconut within which was a floating candle and her written message. There was a prayer to be said. Since these friends were roommates, the one friend put the coconut with the floating light in the washing machine for safety, which my other friend did not know. She then started a load of wash and it was not until they heard the banging in the machine that my friend remembered she had put the coconut in the machine for safe keeping. We all laughed at this incident and did not think anything else of it because whatever had been attempted had been ruined or so we thought. The next day my friend told me that her boyfriend had stopped by to see her and happened to mention that he had a horrible night's sleep. He said it kept feeling like elephants were trampling on his head and he had awakened with a headache! We all just knew his nightmare and headache had something to do with that coconut riding around in the wash cycle.

Around this time, I began to realize that there was something to this spiritualism stuff but it still scared me. I did not like the idea that spirits were around anymore than I felt comfortable about working with them and asking them to do things or seeing them. This is why

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

for many years I was “on again then off again” but I was always interested, even as an observer and something always happened that drew me back. My real journey, as I call it, really began with that house on the block.

“That House on the Block”

I should have known better. But, I was twenty-one, out of college, and was getting the greatest apartment down the block from my best friend and her young son.

It was in a two-family house on a tree-lined street in Brooklyn, New York. It was springtime and the trees waved lush, green branches in the breeze. I had a small balcony off the kitchen and a bay window overlooking the street. The rent was unbelievably cheap! This was a feat fantastic in New York City.

When I told my friend I'd gotten the apartment, her five-year-old son, Eric piped, “Oh, no! That's the haunted house! Don't go there!” I laughed it off as the product of a bright child's imagination fed by ghost story rumors. I should have known better, but, I was a well-educated twenty-one year old who had studied the great minds of psychology, philosophy, sociology and of course, history and knew it all. I was also fashionably agnostic.

My neighbors downstairs were a family of four. There was the mother, father and two daughters. They had only recently moved in as well and we all shared a friendly-neighbor relationship. For the first few weeks, I was wrapped up in painting and decorating. When things had settled down, I began to be awakened by loud arguments and things being thrown about. Eventually, this happened nightly and always very late at night. Within six weeks of my moving in, my neighbors had suddenly and quietly simply moved out. The downstairs apartment remained empty for quite some time and I went

about living my own life and I got married. My husband and I got pets (cats), went out to dinner, and enjoyed being young. Life was as it should have been then suddenly things went wrong. I had a freaky accident leaving me unable to work for six months and my husband suddenly fell seriously ill of an illness that would take years to diagnose. It was life at its harshest and it happened all of a sudden.

Illness can hit anyone, at any time but then “things” began happening. Things like banging in the basement as if someone were trying to break in or out. We would check all locks and eventually barricaded all doors and windows with two-by-fours every night. But each night, the banging would begin again as if there were no barricades in place. Every night it sounded as if the bars were being thrown off but they never were. One day my cat just disappeared in a one second there and next gone event. I tore the house apart, emptying every closet, pulling out every draw until my house was a mess. All the while I would hear his faint, muffled “meow!” echo nearby. As I stood perplexed by all this, staring at the floor, I suddenly saw him begin to appear. First his head, then a leg, then the next, then his body until he was suddenly all there. It was as if he were stepping out from behind a curtain that was not there. I know this would have been enough for anyone to move. But, by this time, my husband and I were desperately poor and since we were unable to work, moving was out of the question. We would reason things out with “This must have been a dream...” , “Our medications are causing delusions,” and “People get psychotic when they are in pain and cannot sleep...” An attempt at finding a reason for shared auditory hallucinations was simply avoided.

Now, as I said, I was twenty-one and agnostic. So I did what anyone unsure of God’s existence would do. I dug out my Bible. I treasured this Bible as it was very old and had been in my family for many years. It was the type of family bible that weighed fifty pounds and had onion skinned pages, trimmed in gold leaf. I opened it to Psalm 91, a prayer for protection. I would walk by and read this Psalm many times a day when I was nervous (which was quite often) and left the Bible opened to this psalm at all times. One day when I

came home from the store, I noticed the fine page began to tear. I assumed the cats might have walked on it damaging the fragile pages. The next time I went to the store, I closed the Bible as I left. Upon my return, this heavy Bible had been opened to Psalm 91, as if it had never been closed!

I must say, however, the event that killed the skeptics within my husband and me was one particular night. For about four nights, the night noises had intensified. We heard the usual rattling of the windows and the two-by-fours being flung about. New sounds had now begun in addition to these. The front door sounded as if it were being slammed. We would then hear pounding footsteps running up the stairs, past our apartment and up toward the attic where a heavily padlocked door barred entry to the top room. Then, it sounded as if this padlocked door was instantaneously opened and slammed shut. The house would rattle. The first night, we sat too terrified to move. The second, my husband dashed out with a bat only to hear the slamming of the padlocked door upstairs. The third night, this “noisemaker” was once again too fast. On the fourth night, we stayed at our folks. On the fifth night, we decided we were both sharing a frightening auditory hallucination and would prove it to ourselves by putting flour on the floors in front of the door downstairs, the staircase up to attic and the landing that passed our apartment. That night we sanded down our plan with flour. Truly hoping we would prove ourselves crazy, we sat up and waited.

Like clockwork, at about 2 a.m. there was the slam-bang-stomping clamor up the stairs and past us to the attic where of course, the padlocked door opened and slammed. We smiled. There would be nothing to discover, we decided other than our own madness. (Frankly, I think we needed to believe we were mad.)

We opened our door to our apartment and looked down to find footprints in the flour! Terrified, we crept downstairs to trace the beginning of these steps. They started at the front door and went up the stairs, past our apartment, and up to the attic. When we got to the last step, there on our side of the padlocked door was the heel print of a man’s shoe (presumably, the other half was on the other side of

the door). The padlock was in place and in fact still rusty as it had not been opened for years.

Needless to say, short of stealing, we begged and borrowed and managed to move out. They say every haunted house has its history. In time I learned the story of this house. In about the 1950's, the owner at the time was a man who committed suicide by hanging himself in the attic. Anyone who ever lived there suffered great tragedy such as illness, accident, divorce, insanity or death. The family downstairs? Well, the father, who had never drank in his life suddenly became a vicious alcoholic within weeks of moving into the house. Other true facts: One woman was driven to insanity and had to be committed and another man committed suicide in the downstairs apartment. Fact: After my husband and I moved out, the owners of the houses on either side of this house moved away and sold their homes because of the strange lights and noises that would emanate from this house every night beginning at 2 a.m.

I looked back many times on this period in my life and know if it had not happened to me, I would chuck the whole thing off as a good Halloween story. It doesn't matter because after this, I was intelligent enough to know I didn't know anything. But I was no longer agnostic.

Raphael and Me

I have no doubt there are angels, higher beings than protections, guides, earth deities and animal spirits. The highest of the angelic orders is the archangel. The most familiar of them are Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. The difference in working with angels is that, never having had human experiences, they truly do not know what it is to feel pain, be ill, and mourn or to be human in any aspect. What they are is pure, total conditional love. They are there to help, protect and guide us and all we have to do is ask. I never thought much about angels because there was a long period in my life in which I felt abandoned by any god or loving presence. I was floundering in despair one loss after another, one confusion after another and one illness or hardship after another. The greatest turning point spiritually for me began to happen about eleven years ago. I want to tell you my story about Raphael and me.

Although there are many hardships I could share, the following experiences happened at a time in my life when I finally believed all the hardship was ending and I felt I could begin to rebuild my life. After many years as a widow, I met someone and I remarried. We relocated out of the city, in upstate New York to fulfill lifelong dreams. EVERYTHING WENT WRONG. Although I had spent a lifetime searching for something spiritual to believe in, the security of faith and trust had eluded me. It always seemed out of reach. I scoffed at those who were ‘religious’ because it seemed they gave credit to the celestials for the most minor thing. After all, the minor

material matters were within our own control. I had never, through my hardest times, found any comfort from whoever God was. It seemed I wasn't listened to so I just stopped asking. It never dawned on me that I simply never learned how to ask. Humility was not in my makeup. I was not going to ask for "more" like the waif Oliver when more of nothing would have amounted to that- more of nothing. For this was how much of my life had been—one loss after another, one hardship after another and bankruptcy.

My husband Ralph's old job injuries suddenly escalated into incapacitation and his inability to work. I got injured on my job and could not work. Since I had just started the job, I had no sick time with which I could sustain us and was let go because the position was an essential one working with wheelchair bound people who had to have full staffing. Unable to pay our rent, utilities or buy food, we ultimately, by court order, faced imminent homelessness. If all this weren't enough, my mother was hospitalized with what had been her ninth stroke. She now required twenty-four hour skilled nursing care which my husband and I simply could not provide, much less the cost of the medication needed. She required a nursing home setting. Residence in a nursing home would guarantee all her medical needs would be fully provided and paid for. The care in the hospital as she waited for placement was less than optimum. Because hospitals deal strictly with medical problems, the nursing staff was ill prepared to deal with a geriatric patient. Since she was out of medical danger, the hospital was pushing to discharge her either home or to a nursing care facility and tried to send her to the first place that had an opening regardless of convenience or quality. At the same time, we had three weeks to leave or be evicted and lose everything we owned. The hospital continued threatening to move my mother to a facility not on our selection list. After three months in the hospital, loss of appetite and depression (for she knew could never live at home again) I feared for her life. I feared she would die before one of the quality nursing homes in our area could accept her. All of this was going on and hopelessness too.

It was on a day of a too early winter that I sat in a freezing house.

The electric had been shut off because of non-payment. I sat thinking about how we had come to all of this. We started out all hopes and happiness and here we were jobless, soon to be homeless and not doing well in the optimism department, either.

Although my husband's injuries were related to a previous job accident, his compensation paperwork had been lost making it impossible to even begin to reopen his case in a timely manner. We were faced with the harsh fact that there was not going to be even a little assistance for sometime from compensation. We applied for Public Assistance to pay our rent so we would not be homeless, and pay utilities, food and my husband's much needed doctor and medication expenses. After-all, we had NO MONEY! People fortunate enough to have never fallen upon this type of hardship frankly have no idea how "systems" really work. First, we were told we had mismanaged money on medication and doctor's visits, which are optional expenses. We were told that our income tax return showed we made \$500.00 too much in the previous year to get assistance now. The \$500.00 "extra" was no where to be found. It had been two months since we'd had any income at all which was not a consideration in the least. In short, Social Services had refused our application for food stamps, emergency rent, fuel and electric. I decided two things. First, people who work for social services seem to enjoy giving people bad news and second, we should just get ready to live in the forest (We lived in a rural area). My husband had also, per his doctor's recommendation, applied for disability but most people also do not know that Social Security applications take at least six months for even a response (He was denied but won later on appeal).

It was on this day that I found an old prayer book of my mother's. I never understood prayer, praise or giving thanks during hardships because, as I said, it seemed to me that if one gave thanks when life was hard well, then that was just what you would continue to get. Never having found comfort in 'prayer' it was something I rarely did. But, on this day of dark (we had no electricity), cold (no heat) and abject hopelessness I happened to find an old prayer book of my

mother's. For the lack of anything else to be done, I flipped through it. As if I turned to the page myself, this book opened to a prayer to Raphael, the Archangel with the advice to ask whatever you needed, whether you believed or not for you had the right to ask the assistance of this angelic being. As I read the meditation and made my supplication, sorrow and despair welled up inside me for I was truly desperate yet, at the same time I began to feel as if I were talking to a beloved parent or older sibling who not only knew what I was going through but, who would solve my problems for me. By the time I had finished this prayer I felt such relief, such comfort as I had never felt before that it all did not seem real. The prayer did not seem real, nor did my problems.

My husband and I were facing homelessness. As I mentioned before we had three weeks before we had to leave and we had no place to go. My mother, on the other hand, lay weak and ill desperately needing the rehabilitative and recreational programs only the nursing homes of OUR choice could offer. I prayed that her needs be met.

The day after I began these meditations I received a call from the hospital's attorney offering to assist with my mother's placement free of charge! We met with him and he immediately began work removing the obstacles preventing her placement. The following week, my mother was in the very nursing home we wanted her to be in.

During that week, there were other "miracles" for there is no other way to describe the following course of events. After seeing the hospital attorney and knowing my mother's matters were being attended to, I then asked that somehow, we find a place within two weeks. The following night, an acquaintance called us to say they knew people who might rent their summer cottage to us but just for the winter. We called them and, without meeting us (as they had already gone back to their winter home) they agreed to rent this cottage at an amount we could afford from month to month. To be sure, it was a cold winter but we managed on kerosene heaters and gratitude for as a result of this, I finally learned what a blessing is. The week before we had to move as we could not pay all the back

rent at that time, I got a phone call from a job I had applied for some months back. This was a job I could handle, as it did not require the physical aspects I could no longer do due to my injury. My mother was moved to the nursing home of our choice that same day I began my new job! Since we only had a week to be out completely now I got up at 5am, packed, moved then took a cold shower before leaving for work because we still had no heat. I would then come back and continue packing and moving with my husband until 3am the next morning. And so it went until we moved into our temporary setting.

When our landlords were ready to return that following spring, we worried again for although I had been working, we had only been able to pay back electric and some of the rent from our eviction. We did not have the money for more rent plus the deposit and security most landlords required. Our lack of money hindered our search for our next place. During this time, I continued my meditations to Raphael. I would ask him to sustain my faith and to grant me faith when it was failing. I thanked The Creator for the blessings of our shelter and what meager food we had. I asked for guidance to help me through each day. I asked for anything, everything, whatever I needed! And I was always granted some measure of what I needed. When you consider everything we had been through, truly our needs were being met. It was a time during which I discovered something incredibly unique: something to believe in.

Within a couple of weeks, my husband received his first real workmen's compensation payment which went back years to the date of the injury that ultimately disabled him. With this, we were able to find yet another meager place that again was just offered to us by people we hardly knew! We were able to try to adjust to our losses and began doing so slowly but with optimism. I continued to thank our Creator each and everyday and now learned how to ask for hope when I felt I lacked it, to ask for faith to ensure that I never lose it, and to always be grateful. Then, I realized when my faith was in doubt, I did not trust. So I asked for trust. When I had moments of sadness for all we'd been through, I asked for joy of heart. When I worried about bills, I asked for peace of mind. I soon realized miracles

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are all those little things we cannot always do by ourselves such as having endless stamina, faith and trust. I also learned that one must permit miracles to happen.

We lived here for about a year and a half when everything went wrong with the house we were renting. It became uninhabitable. No running water, snails that flowed into the tub through the hose attached to the pump we had put in the well. Just to flush the toilet we had to pour in pails of water.

We had to shower in bathing suits from a camp shower bag in a horse trailer! We had to hang that camp shower bag in the sun all day long in order to have warm water. Our only consolation was that it was summertime but, the crispness of autumn would soon be upon us and our landlords were simply refusing to repair these problems. I could not understand why it was so hard to just be in one place! I was angry and I was afraid. "Not again, not another move!" Was all I could think. So we stopped paying rent and pursued legal action—and lost! We got evicted again and had to look for another place to live.

One day as I was packing, my husband came in with a booklet from a real estate company. "Look at this," he said. "I'm tired of all the moving. It's time we bought our own place." I looked at him as if he were crazy. We had been bankrupted, had no credit cards, had a history of utilities being cut off and being evicted twice. We only had weeks to move and he was talking about buying a house! "I don't how we'd get our own place hon, who would give us a mortgage?" He said simply. "With the help of Raphael. We will get our own place. Just leave it to him." I found myself saying.

There was a part of me that felt intimidated to ask. This was a tall order and I was afraid Raphael would finally say no. But, desperation brings desperate action and ask I did. Within one week, we found the ideal place for us and had enough money to purchase the "binder." A couple of months after that, my husband got an increase in his compensation based on the severity of his injury (again retroactive to the date of the accident) which enabled us to go into contract. As yet, we did not have a mortgage but we were going on faith so we

refused to believe we would not have our house.

Months later the closing neared and we had two problems. We did not have the money for the down payment and we still did not have a mortgage. Then the owner offered to finance the down payment as a second mortgage and the right after that, the representative working with us on a mortgage actually gave us the news that we were finally approved! Then, one more glitch became known. The closing costs would be \$8,000.00. Money we again did not have. During this time, my husband had a disability hearing through the Social Security Administration. It had been a three-year battle. He'd been awarded disability by the judge but we were waiting for the money to actually arrive. The week of the closing, this back money came in the mail and we closed!

As of this writing, it has been four years since we bought our own home against unbelievable odds. But, looking back, we now know we had help all along the way. I wish we hadn't had all the hardships but then again didn't I say I had always wanted something to believe in? All those hard times brought me to this juncture: Having wanted to believe in something, I was given it. I was also given everything ever needed once I believed.

On Being a Spiritualist

Every culture has its “medicine” or practice. I recently participated in freeing a woman of spirits plaguing her as a result of voodoo, which is African medicine. Under the protection and “insurance” of Chief WhiteEagle’s presence, my circle, comprised of four women (including myself), assisted him in ridding her of these entities. She has been unable to hold down a job for three years and her family had brought her from place to place at the cost of thousands of dollars in an attempt to help her and nothing had. Since the work done had been of African origin only African work could undo what had been done. The result of the intervention is that she is now fine, has returned to work is now married. This was an interesting experience because it was the first time I personally utilized African medicine, to which I was very new.

I learned another aspect of spiritualistic intervention which I will explain this way: were I to go to visit Italy, speaking French wouldn’t do me much good, would it? The same is true of spiritualism. Although other medicines can be used for cleansing and balancing and weakening the hold of a negative spirit force over time, it is more effective and expedient if you know how to fight a spiritual opponent. Know this—the moment you are called upon to help someone in this kind of situation, the force around them becomes your enemy. It knows you are coming and it will do everything in its power to prevent you from interfering or to make you believe you are not able enough to take it on. It will do everything to frighten

you into retreating. People who claim envisioning a white light protects them from all evil have NEVER had a malevolent entity angry with them!

This happened to me. When the appointment was made, I was suddenly under ‘attack’. I would see evil beings in my woods, waiting to jump at me to harm not me, but my dogs. I had nightmares from which I could not awaken but when I finally did, I saw the four spirits that were the culprits. The purpose of this was to prevent me and my circle from going to help the woman. I became afraid of the dark, I became afraid of the day, I became afraid to sleep and became afraid to walk my dogs because in the forest, behind my house I would see spirit monsters and hear their threats of violence to my family, my animals and me. In short, I was getting psychic threats. A psychic assault plays with the mind, for the mind is where all focus and power begins.

Some people are suddenly ‘cursed’ only because someone SAID they were going to do something. I have known people who became terrified because someone they knew who did spiritual work just told them they had done a spell and that they would only have bad luck. For the untrained and innocent mind verbal threats are as powerful as any other threat for the mind can then create the very reality the person fears just by expecting it to happen. Fear all by itself can send out enough energy to cast a spell of misfortune without anyone doing anything!

Many of my clients fall into this category. They pick up a negative force along the way or become an easy prey for the bad wishes of others. Sometimes it is nothing more than a self induced hex that gets out of hand and picks up extra momentum up as a bonus. You see, once someone feels like something is wrong, the churning and worrisome energies can take off. It is like a generator revving up power and increasing the power to run the house, freezer or whatever you need it to do. This energy generator causes ripples in space and time, like a pebble being thrown into a still lake. But, instead of keeping the house going, the generator begins to short out and causes problems. Before you know it, there is a whole new set of

circumstances being created and a path is changed.

As a spiritualist, I know that once a shift in the thought process can be made another or new path can be planned and recreated once more. Clients come to me and sometimes the only thing they have wrong is the way they are thinking! By the time I see them, they have created a condition and a mental rat race they cannot stop. The problem is when someone is so distracted, they draw more negativity to themselves, soaking it up like a sponge. So, although the problem may have begun originally as a thinking problem, it has become a problem fed further by the mischievous/backward spirits the powerful thoughts a fretful state of mind has attracted. The spiritualist has learned to know the different causes for different problems and, if truthful in the Old Way, will address the cause appropriately.

Are spiritualists ever bothered the way their clients are? Of course they are. The difference is a spiritualist is always working to know when to say, "Stop, what is going on here?" They can USUALLY tell when they need a cleansing. If they are ineffective on themselves, they turn to their teachers or peers for further assistance.

Spiritualists are sponges and since they tend to work with people that have problems, spiritualists can be assailed before they even begin to help. They can take on the symptoms of the person they are trying to help and can feel quite ill physically or mentally after successfully cleansing someone. This has often happened to me. Things happen because I deliberately draw negativity into myself from someone and then push it through myself then out into the earth. But, many times, there are lingering effects as a result of this work. I can feel someone's old injuries acting up, get that headache or feel the sorrow. New clients are often surprised at the pains and ailments I identify. This is part of cleansing someone of blockages to their own healing energy. Nervous people often feel calmer, especially after they do a spiritual bath I have prepared or instructed them to prepare for themselves.

As an eclectic, I know my limitations and do not profess to be an adept at all I study. But I do know what kind of spell has been done when I encounter it and this requires familiarity with all systems.

What I do acquire from my knowledge of all the crafts is basically a personal thing. Since each system focuses on a different approach to life, I can meditate in a Buddhist fashion when I am frustrated or am worried about something. Buddhism helps me remember what the important things are such as gratitude for what I have in the present in order to release worry (attachment). If I know I must confront/persuade people on important community issues, I often reflect on Native Medicine where dedication to the tribe (or community) is the highest priority. Sometimes I ask for animal spirits to assist me because they can help to persuade by not creating an energy field around you that feels aggressive to other people. Wicca is helpful in the area of personal gain such as finding a job, or getting that raise you were promised or finding a new place to live.

Sometimes life is just too hard for focusing which is why I never forget the Creator who will always help me as will legions of angels, guides and protections who are ready to roll up their sleeves and give a hand. I believe we are here to connect with what our souls 'know' in order to master our life experiences.

I enjoy thanking the Creator everyday for the things I have and welcome every day as another day of possibilities. I make it known I am receptive to the gifts that may come for only good things come from that Divine Source (I do not believe anything bad can come from the Creator). I ask for my faith and trust to be renewed so that I do not falter. I immediately feel the Creator's strength and protection with which I will be guided through that day. At the end of the day, I give thanks for what work I have completed, what blessings I received and for the beautiful things I have witnessed. I try to recount them all! Whatever gives me joy, I thank the Creator for receiving. I ask for angelic guidance and protection, especially from Raphael (of whom I have written) for I never doubt his presence in my life.

Raphael, as I pointed out earlier, is the patron of my family. A while back, my daughter was in a car accident caused by a speeding jerk whizzing around a blind turn in the wrong lane! Thankfully, she suffered only minor injuries. It took a few days before this was conclusive but I just felt she would be okay.

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When we knew she was really all right and she was back home again, my husband and I went to see the car. When I saw the car, I knew her life was saved by angelic interference! The car was an accordion! I knew Raphael had protected her that day. It was the only way she could have survived!

By now you may have noticed how awareness and shifting awareness plays a great part in mysticism. Part of this awareness comes from taking time to thank benevolent beings for guiding you, protecting you or helping you. In our earlier discussion of offerings, if nothing else, thankfulness is always appropriate. You can offer a prayer, fasting, a candle, fruit, corn or tobacco. Offering a portion of your food gifts and meals from time to time is a sharing of your survival. With faith and trust you will be provided for, even meagerly. It is a great accomplishment to be able to trust that what you sacrifice (offer) today will be replenished tomorrow.

Lives just become so much enriched when you give as part of the Spiritual Way. When you give, despite what you have, whether to help another person or to make an offering to your guides and protections, gratitude and joy somehow begins to permeate your being. Some of the most grateful and joyful spiritual people I have ever met have also been the poorest. This is putting material desire in its perspective and appreciating blessings when received. Many people confuse wanting something with needing something. Learning to distinguish between the two can create an opportunity for living day to day majick! This is a majick that enables us to see the trees as that much more majestic and the skies more mysterious. When this happens, the coldness of science is replaced with the knowledge that all those fantastical things abandoned along the way in traveling from childhood to adulthood really do exist, after-all. But, more than anything, we discover the gift of hope!

Basic Majick: Thought

Most of us have heard the old adage of how some people see the cup half full and others, half-empty. I have taken it a step further: some of us have to make our own cup. You see there is a way to look at life or rather how life treats you. One person can be an optimist-life has treated them well or at least fairly. There are others (pessimists) that life seems to have passed by or worse yet, dumped on. There are some people who, other than the grief from the inevitable loss of a loved one, live uncompromised lives. Yet, we all know people who, no matter how hard they try, they have a rough ride just getting through life with their heads held high. For these, life is difficult indeed.

Some people seem to gain opportunity just by being in the right place at the right time. Others must work hard, plan strategic moves and learn to know when to take that leap, leave the familiar and expand into a new area. I think most of us have the latter scenario as our journey. The problem is, we often fall short somewhere between planning and knowing when to take that 'leap.' Most of us prefer the comfortable. The comfortable does not have to be pleasant. It is what is known and familiar. Why else is it so hard for people to decide to move or relocate for a job? It is because change is difficult and frightening.

It is when life holds nothing exciting or enchanting, when we are in a rut we cannot climb out of that it becomes time to make a new cup. Making a new cup is not easy. We only know the cup we had

and what was in it. If we truly do not like the old cup or what we were drinking from it, we have to look at ourselves and see how did we brew that drink that made it so bitter? We need to think about what kind cup do we want now? What kind of new drink could we possibly make and how the heck do we start making a cup? Do we pour out the old drink altogether, do we throw out the cup? They both had their purpose for a long time. Do we want to really part with them?

These may all seem like rhetorical questions but they are not. To bring about change takes conscious effort. After all, we lived in our rut, with our rut and perpetuated (re-created) our rut probably for a long time. We probably had all the reason in world to be in our rut to begin with. Our life path may have been extremely difficult or deprived, giving us every reason in the world to feel justified in having the fears we have and remaining with the familiar, even if uncomfortable. But, you know what? Changing is even more uncomfortable, especially if you begin from the standing point of no faith or trust. If you are starting at this standing point, you have to decided whether or not you are going to take a “leap” of the faith you do not yet have. You’re not sure what you believe in anymore, you just hope there is something to believe in because you surely do not believe in yourself. You reflect on your life and decide you really cannot stand another day, week or year of the same old routine so, you decide to work on changing. The beauty of this first decision, is that you do not have to change anything about your environment. You don’t have to quit your job, you don’t have to relocate. You simply have to begin with your own package. You are the cup that is to be. You are going to fashion it and decide the stuff that will go into this new vessel.

Congratulations! When you decided to work on change, you embarked on the majickal journey of thought transformation. The beauty of majickal thought is that you do not have to be a Wiccan or witch. You do not have to be a shaman or priest. You can use the thought principles that go into casting spells or doing ‘work’ and apply them to yourself on a very personal level. The key to right

thinking (or contemplation) is to be sure no one is harmed by your goal, that you improve yourself at the cost of no one else (do not demean someone in order to feel more powerful) and to be very, **VERY FOCUSED**.

As you think, see what it is you want, taste what it is you want and wait. Some people sit quietly and imagine **VIVIDLY** their desire, some people will write it down. By the way, writing something down then burning it, seals the idea completely. Anonymous groups use this exercise very successfully to purge anger, rage or sorrow. Another thing you could do is take a dried twig you have found and, as you think of what it is you want to change about yourself, strip the bark off, pouring the energy of your desired outcome into every movement. Always keep the picture and feeling in your mind and body. This is not easy to do but with practice, it can be done. I was in a nowhere job once for far too long. I was highly skilled but grossly underpaid in the social services field. I needed a better paying job but how could one command a higher paying job when your current salary was so **LOW**? I was not naive. No matter what one knew, in order to demand a high salary you at least had to be making a salary that demonstrated your worth. I was just beginning to discover my spiritual path and so, I cast a simple spell using a twig, some cotton thread and a few pebbles. I had a small daughter to support and I was not making it financially. I had not yet met my second husband, so I was on my own completely. Despite my fears and desperation, I reached a state of mind in which I could see and taste a new position with more money. I worked feverishly to complete my work before I lost the concentration.

When I completed it, I went to a nearby park, flung the twig with the rocks attached to it by the thread high up into a tree. I left cornmeal at the base of the tree and thanked it for its assistance. Within three months, a friend of mine told me about a totally new position with her agency. I called, made an appointment to interview and although the competition was rather stiff, I got the position and had a \$25,000 jump in salary! I have helped others find jobs, collect money due them from people, obtain benefits they were rightly entitled to and

meet a soul mate. Now, by meeting a soul mate I mean the right person for them, ahead of a timetable, someone they would have met eventually. This is different from targeting a particular person and deciding he or she is the one for you and doing something to make them desire you. This is wrong! I am talking about a ‘generic’ request to meet a soul mate if that person is destined to meet you in this lifetime. You must, of course, accept the possibility that you are not supposed to meet in this lifetime. This is where acceptance is so important. We must all be willing to accept those karmic areas that may be fixed. We just can’t always know what they are. In thinking properly, and depending on our skill, it is possible to push a timetable up quite a bit. This is why I do not believe in things being fixed. Since we do not know, for the most part, what is and is not fixed, why should we sit on the sidelines deciding this is karma and that is karma? Too many people use karma as an excuse to give up, sit around and feel sorry for themselves. The end-result will be reliving similar-lifetimes until they “get it.”

Remember, Jewish people believe each life is a blank slate, that no soul has a recollection of it’s previous knowledge. I say, if we allow ourselves to be touched by our own spirit power that is programmed to get us going rather than rationalizing effort away, we can gain or regain previous knowledge. We must be open minded enough to watch, listen and feel!

Keep in mind that what we wish to accomplish after mastering rethinking is the bringing about of change in our lives with the creation of “ripples” in space and time. How quickly something is achieved depends not just on our focusing skills but also on how many years we contributed to the circumstance we wish to change. How many times and for how long did we tell ourselves it could not be done, hence closing ourselves off to opportunities by not just being blind to them but actually preventing them from coming our way?

Let’s look at an example of attracting that which you want. Go to a party and look around. Invariably the person having the most fun will be the person who is dressed neatly, appears to have made an

effort in the area of grooming, smiles easily and in general emits an openness to meeting people. Now look for the ‘wallflower’. Wallflowers are not born. They are made. The wallflower will stand to the side and appear as if, not expecting to have a good time, no effort was made into appearance. This goes for men or women. Does a wallflower seem approachable? Probably not. Insecurity is projected as loudly as a scream. So wallflowers in actuality, bring about their own anticipated outcome.

Do an experiment like the one I did. I went to a club, neatly dressed but deliberately slouched in a remote area of the club. Who would have known I am an excellent dancer? No one. I deliberately did not project that I was. A week later, I went back. I deliberately dressed more casually (jeans and sneakers) and positioned myself close to the dance floor. I wore very little make up but, projected that I was light on my feet. I did not miss a dance the whole evening! People saw what I wanted them to see.

So, not only does how we think affect how we see ourselves but how others see us as well. If this is true than it can also be said that as we think we are, we are. But, we can also become that which we see ourselves becoming.

Call it a Eureka moment. Call it a point in time in which you say “enough is enough” or you bow down on your knees and beg your God to have mercy and help you. You have become in touch with something greater than you and your circumstances. You have found your spirit power! Whether you seize it for your self or the Creator says “Here. I was wondering how long you were going to take”- you have now created a “ripple” in your destiny. You have created a possibility for something that wasn’t there before.

Change.

Be Determined To Be Determined

I used to swim long distance for pleasure, for the satisfaction of knowing that I, a resident of Brooklyn, New York could get away from the crowds on the city beach and go so far out in the ocean, my only companions were the occasional lifeguards who would row by just to see if I was okay. I remember swimming six to eight hours nonstop everyday during the summer break from high school. I didn't become capable of doing this overnight. I actually taught myself to swim. I began by going to the neighborhood pool and learning to stroke at first with my fingers being able to feel the bottom of the pool for security. I began in two feet of water. That first summer, I did not dare the ocean until the last week before school would start again. I felt secure as long as I could touch the sand under the water with my fingertips. I did not even attempt deep water until the following year. The following year, I went back to the pool for a week and everyday I would stroke out a little more and little more until I was in the depth in which I could not feel the bottom, but, I could stand up if I wanted to. By the end of that week, I went into the deep pool because if I could swim so well in shallow water, I should be able to do the same in the deep water. But, I was afraid. I did it anyway, but I was afraid.

Why? Because it was all in my mind! In my mind, I could not readily accept that skill was skill and with swimming, it should not matter how deep the water is. By the second week, I was out in the ocean. I did the same thing. I swam only as far out as I could as long

as I could still stand up until one afternoon, the tide turned and I could not feel the bottom! I felt scared. I had to talk myself through my fear. After all, I really knew how to swim and I didn't want to embarrass myself by needlessly calling for help. That was when I really did learn to swim without fear and from there, I built up my distance to further and further away from the shore. When I finally did this, it was the grandest feeling of success I had ever felt. I did not need to win a race because I had won the competition with myself and with my fear.

I know you are all following me with this because all of this rings real and true. No one expects anyone to jump in a pool and suddenly be able to swim, much less mega distances. It makes sense to work at something a little at a time, step by step. It can be a long process to excellence, right? Yet, when we are at a turning point in our lives, when we know we need to make changes because we are just not feeling contented with the "place" our heads and hearts have taken residence, we expect a rapid metamorphosis! We grow impatient. Don't we? We grow impatient because we are so desperate for change we cling to this desired change like a life raft as if our lives depend on it. They really do. For how can life be defined if not by its greater, nobler and higher aspects? Who wants to describe life as sorrowful, depressing, frustrating and empty. Yet, we all have felt this way sometime in our lives, haven't we? When we have felt this way, what did we think the solution was? "I have to find a way to relax and have fun again!", "There's got to be more to life than trudging along!", "If I could get that novel written!" "I need to find my soul mate!"

You're probably expecting me to say something like, "Those are all external things. True happiness comes from within..." Whereas I admire someone who has truly accomplished this, the truth is a lot of satisfaction from within DOES happen as a result of feeling contented with our (external) circumstances! Whereas many can find joy and peace of spirit despite hardship, I know of no one who would willingly want hardship nor am I of the opinion that being unhappy is our 'cross to bear.' I have difficulty accepting mindless bliss as

reward for getting through a life of hardship. I never want to feel that my goal in life is to essentially become a contented sheep grazing on the grass of the next life as my reward for a life lived harshly. I believe the next life is more enriched by what we learn to achieve spiritually in this life. I believe there is a whole new realm of existence with each passing day that is awesome and amazing. Spirituality can awe and amaze us too but, with ourselves! Spiritual achievement can and does yield material satisfaction. We just haven't gotten it, yet. We also have not learned that sometimes the trip is more fascinating than the destination. As a result, people grow impatient. They grow impatient when it takes time to lose weight on a diet, become frustrated with studying a language in school, decide that they cannot write or that they are not smart enough to learn something new or that they are too clumsy to learn how to dance. Guess what? With that mind set, they will not lose weight, never learn that language or something new or how to dance. The reason is simple.

They decided not to. They did not decide they cannot do these things; they decided not to. There's a difference, many would argue. I would hold fast that there is not a difference. Once an excuse is made, it is in essence a decision and a choice. Usually, we grow weary with the effort and then throw in the towel. I would not have been able to swim long distances if I had let myself get give up because I wasn't swimming well enough, far enough, fast enough.

As impatient as people are with themselves, they are more impatient when things do not change quickly enough. If I had to read a passage, say in Spanish, in front of the class I would do much better if I had practiced with a mind set that I would learn to do this. If I doubted my own ability to learn, never practiced and was called upon to recite of course I would do horribly.

All of these feelings are perfectly human. The problem is, the more we use our humanity as the reason for not using that part of us that is spiritual, power can never reach us and show us what we can REALLY do! People think spirituality is passive. There are some schools that are, no doubt. But, I am talking about a spirituality that DECIDES NO MATTER WHAT, everything is possible, a spirituality

that can become so DETERMINED it taps into a personal sense of power that is so secure, there is no need to boast, brag or show anyone up because it understands, accepts and holds onto its own true, individual course. Each of us wants something different for ourselves. There is no 'preferred' goal. But it would be helpful if we knew what OUR goal was and didn't think twice about someone else's.

If you remember, Raphael helped my husband and me get the house we wanted. All along, we were settling because we were struggling and did not dare to aim for more. The truth is, most people, especially our circle of city family and friends, did not think we would obtain our dream and with this dream, so much property. Our desires were rooted in our determination to connect spiritually with land. We were given a gift that came from the deepest desire within our souls despite our consciously thinking we would not be able to have it. We were determined not to give up our dream. I would like to think that all the mental effort that went into remembering our blessings, even when we faced homelessness was pivotal to obtaining our dream. Cause and effect. Remember? I believe that when I asked for help from my heart and was clear in what we needed, there was enough focus for that ripple to be made and our perseverance and trust to be noticed. Keep in mind, the story about Raphael from beginning to end spanned three years! During those times, my human side wanted to throw in the towel but something was happening within my spirit. When all seemed beyond recovery something inside of me rose to the surface and refused to yield any ground. My friends always told me that when I dug in my heels, nothing could move me. So, as bad as it was, I simply would not believe how bad things were. My father would have called this being "stubborn Irish."

I hesitated to share my story of all the hardship we went through because who would believe anyone could go through so much in a short period of time and survive? Who wants to hear about these things? But, I decided to share it because if I went through all this, there are others going through similar problems and it is for them that I shared the sorrows and the victory (Thank you, Creator!) of these experiences. What do I believe? I believe the last thing to do,

ever, is to give up! For us, this was the beginning. I believe I had to sit out all my fears and despair and ride out the situations that were being perpetuated as I worked on my replacement plans. I believe that trust was the paper and the pencil was the hard work of holding in focus my needs that were being met each and every day.

I know that having realized that my needs indeed were being met each day meant they would be also met the next. It was not easy but I was determined that sooner or later the ‘replacement plans’ would become my reality. Under the circumstances, did I have a choice? Yes, I could have given up and never known what the touch of the Creator spurring my own spirit power into being could be like!

Looking back now, I know that refusing to believe how bad things were actually made the possible happen because I controlled the ‘ripples’ with this disbelief. I had not yet identified ‘determination’ as a trait at this time because I was just too busy surviving to feel anything other than sheer terror. Those were difficult times but, looking back, I can see how they made me that much more aware of how important it is to choose what you will and will not believe. My refusal to believe the hardship my husband and I were going through actually became the exercise for our spirit muscle that defeated despair and contributed to those ‘ripples’ that helped create our current situation.

In other words, we were not people miracles were being wasted on. We were doing our share of hard work every second of every painful day to not cancel out or delay the timing of the good to come.

Timing. As I mentioned earlier, timing is an important factor in my own spiritual “tutelage.” If you followed the Raphael story, you should have noticed how we were always helped out at the last minute. Waiting while your future appears the bleakest is utter torment as you are left waiting day after day to have the basic needs of food, shelter and dignity met.

Yet, this last minute feature has continued to follow me, apparently the signature of the spiritual beings around me. I look at this now as a reminder to me not to revert to the old me or to forget my trust. If there is a particular circumstance you are beginning to notice about

things you are receiving, stop and consider that it could be a spiritual signature of significance just for you also.

In hindsight, I could let myself feel very foolish for allowing so much of life to just happen to me instead of me making it happen. But, as I said, life has a habit of getting in the way of itself and us. It is only the one who is unwilling to open up and learn how things CAN BE that will never understand the power of the Creator and determination.

One of my truths is I was one such person.

The Lost Art of “Being”

Everybody has mixed feelings about something or somethings. This is called ambivalence. There is a part of us that requires security and calm, which can be easily disrupted by fluxes in opinion and emotions. This is why ambivalence is a very uncomfortable thing.

To be sophomoric (which can help us look at this topic from a lighter viewpoint), let us consider the woman who has a special event to attend. As a woman, I can tell you a lot of planning goes into preparing for such an event. Nails have to be done, a hairstyle has to be selected, make up combinations, jewelry, and shoes and of course, the outfit. If you are a woman, what I am going to say will not be surprising. If you are a man, you may marvel at how a woman can pull together any outfit at all from within the boggle that is created by just going to one event.

First of all, make up, jewelry, shoes and hairstyle are all contingent on the outfit. The outfit will tailor the mood and style and the color of the evening. If one is wearing a red dress, purple hues in eye shadows and make up will clash. Depending on your skin tones, green will make you look very ill. Depending on the cut of the dress and the length, you can look ‘fat’ and of course, the style and height of shoes come into play. Then you have to decide if can you really stand on your feet or dance in those stilettos all night or is the purpose to sit poised and perfectly all evening long? Is this an event where you can ‘play’ or is it an event where professional contacts and appearance must be taken into consideration?

The average woman may begin with three or four dress options lain out. They may be similar but of different colors or similar colors with different styles. It becomes more difficult if, for some reason or the other, you have not been about town for a while. It is as if the success of the evening depends on that ‘debut’ entrance. We won’t even go into who will there. But a woman might think about what personal or professional rival might be there, will an ‘ex’ be there and with whom and of course has there been a weight gain or loss or have long hours created the horror of a tired, haggard look?

Although this is an amusing exercise, let us examine what it does to the body, mind and spirit. In a situation like this, the stomach can knot up, delays in decision making speed up the pulse and breathing rate. The mind becomes more confused the more it tries to sort out the problem of what to wear. There is a fifty-fifty chance that the outcome will not have been worth all the effort because sometimes, in the end, a haphazard choice is made anyway.

In the forward, the ongoing values of older systems of belief was briefly compared to traditional Western counterparts. Let’s look at some examples of ambivalence. You can have a church full of people, all of various social and economical backgrounds. A sermon can be delivered on loving one’s neighbor and having compassion for the less fortunate. Yet, the same people will have the day to day philosophy of ‘charity begins at home’ to the exclusion of all others who are judged to be less ambitious or somehow to blame for their misfortune. (Even if this is the case, can any one of us know with certainty anyone’s ambition, lack of it, or what part they played in their misfortune? What ever happened to “Judge not lest ye be judged”?)

Yet, in Native American culture, the greatest honor is in giving and it is in giving not what is convenient to give but hard to give. As Ceremonial Chief WhiteEagle so beautifully describes in his introduction, the measure of greatness was not what you had, but what you were willing to give away as compared to the status of how much property one possessed.

Many who make generous donations to their house of worship

would not buy a cup of coffee and a bagel for a homeless person on a winter's day. Think about doing for the sake of doing because it is the right thing to do. This takes non-judgment and the development of a sense of a higher purpose that transcends convention.

My husband and I, over the years, have housed and fed virtual strangers who were in need. Was it easy for us to do? Absolutely not. These needy people invariably came into our lives when our own lives were the least secure and when we ourselves had the least food to give. But, that was not the point. There was a way of being that we were obligated to follow. It was hard but we survived. We were hungry and we did not starve. We lost our home. We never became homeless. And, we never let that happen to anyone else, if we could help it. Underlying these duties (and they are duties) was the truth that we were provided for, even if moment to moment. We always have been and we always are provided for.

I am not talking about allowing oneself to be used by manipulators avoiding their own responsibility to themselves. The truth is, every single person we helped at the time are all now doing fine. There are times people just need a hand. I believe if one walks in their own truth, they will not be misled (at least greatly so) and if one is, there is a lesson to be learned or something in those circumstances that reflects something about ourselves we need to look at. The question is, when will we? Sooner or later we will have to look within on our journey.

How is this all “being”? It's rather simple, really. In all scenarios, “being” only requires you know what your truth is at all times. A woman going to an elaborate function can simplify her preparation experience by remembering what the purpose is. If it is a wedding, the bride should not be outdone, anyway. It is poor taste and manners to do anything to outshine the bride. If it is a business function, surely you can focus on the professional things to be gained and not vanity. If it is a purely social, fun event, remember it is the company you will be with. Many know you already and will think you're great regardless of what you are wearing. Stop. Think about all the lost regard and the lost DAY and time that was invested into a frivolous

act of vanity. What was not done because of the dalliance? What might have been done that could have had more meaning? What could you have done in terms of relaxing? Could you have returned that call from a friend you hadn't spoken to for a long time, quietly meditated for the afternoon, taken a walk or read a book? What about stopping for a moment and being grateful that there is an event you will be experiencing and because these do not occur every day, it is a gift.

Instead of focusing on how you will look, how about a kind word to someone whose self esteem is evidently under assault, or a prayer for the unfortunate, or a prayer of thanks from yourself to your Creator? Did you feed the birds, put out a hummingbird feeder, recycle or tell a loved one that they are loved? When did you last have the opportunity to demonstrate humanity and actually do it? When that moth flew into your house, did you kill it or did you take the time to get it back outdoors? When was the last time you did this not as a thought, a must or should but as a way of being with no hesitancy? When was the last time you felt it was all right to ask for what you needed and not guiltily praying because you know you only approach the Almighty in time of need and not in time of joy? When was the last time you did something for someone else because it was just the right thing to do? When was the last time you did not hesitate in knowing what you believe?

People presume so many things about spiritualists, witches, medicine people and the chanters in robes, they cannot see beyond the mist of incense, the hum of the chant or the fear of the pentacle. There is a way of being that such people ASPIRE to. No one ever succeeds completely. Many fail abysmally for after all, we are all human. Many suffer setbacks, just like anyone else when life experience gets around to hardship, death, mourning and illness. Many work the darker side of the spiritual disciplines, which is different altogether for they have decided on immediate gratification in return for karmic debt at another point in eternity. They are of another school and discipline altogether to which I do not ascribe.

Part of being in your truth is also saying your truth. To know

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what you are saying, you must know your own innermost intentions so that if you say you must help the unfortunate, then you are bound to do so by sharing what you have, helping someone find the right doctor, a job or helping someone to fill out a form that can better his or her situation. If you speak another language, help someone by translating for them. Listen to a friend or family member in pain. Let people you love **KNOW THAT YOU LOVE THEM** not just by word but by deed also. It is so important that the mind, word, action and spirit be of one essence! Then there is no decision making, no stress headache, no rapid pulse or difficulty of breathing. You are free to be and act your truth providing you have found it. There are many truths. There are many disciplines to discovering truth. People say “there’s my truth, your truth and the truth that really is” and “That truth is relative.” Whereas there is the **ONE TRUTH WE ALL HOPE TO DISCOVER** in this life or the next, the fact remains that each person’s ‘living’ truth is subjective. One person’s ‘truth’ and sanctuary is found in a church. Mine is found in the forest. But these are practices of our truths. Our truths must stand for a greater good that is never compromised even as we pursue own dreams (and yes, they can be material). Our dreams must never rely on the injury or deliberate efforts to succeed at the expense of another, especially through mystical rites.

If we can walk on our Spiritual paths with consistent values in thought, word, deed and spirit the following things will happen. We will acquire a tranquility that comes with not being hypocritical. If we are on a spiritual path we will discover the little joys of majick within ourselves, as well as the majickal strength and fragility of the Monarch Butterfly, aerial skills of the humming bird and force of a thunderstorm if we ask to know them.

How to ‘be’ has become a lost art. The times we live in have made us forget how majestic life is and how wondrous we, of the Creator’s making, can be.

Speech

How simple life would be if all we had to do was discover that spirit power is capable of enhancing our lives and giving us a powerful graciousness with which we can experience whatever comes. Surprise! It can be. By walking with the truth of the Creator, whoever you believe it is, you know how to ask properly for the better wisdom and understanding of the Spiritual Way. The Creator wants what is best for us and there would be great pride in us if we learned to use all the gifts around us to be happier and more productive.

If we are studying a particular craft or discipline, with the Creator's assistance, all our 'work' will be that much effective because we have learned to focus and master ourselves in all areas of our lives—including speech! Being in a dither like the woman preparing for her special event will never get us closer to clearer thought or effective speech. Most of us reach a point where we enjoy the dither-mayhem and lose track of a very effective tool for change, which is knowing specifically what we need and how to exactly express it. This is important in prayer. We have all heard the saying to be careful what you ask for because you might get it. Old timers have told me their mothers taught them to be careful of what they said because an angel could be passing over and give it. Remember the section on asking an angel? We looked at the speed of the outcome compared to the clarity of the request. Being exact in speech is important in spell casting also. Let us not forget the story of the talisman earlier in this

book. So the more exact the chant or “spell” is the more accurate those “ripples” will be when they are sent out to re-create.

We need to remember careless, thoughtless speech can create havoc for us as much as any anyone’s direct effort to do so. If nothing else, not speaking truth can be confusing when we try to remember who we told what. If I, as a practitioner who knows of the power of energy transformation, keeps saying something like “It figures, things like this always happen to me” (and the list is all negative), don’t you think those things will just keep happening (especially if I mastered some degree of being an adept)? We could not begin to imagine how many times we caused our own problems by the number of times we “hexed” ourselves with thoughtless speech. Think of ‘energy conversion’ when we think of all those times we added the force of our anger and upset to whatever we were saying! Negative speech, especially when we belittle ourselves, also reinforces whatever poor esteem and attitude issues we may each be fighting. Working on change is difficult as it is but would any one us have thought change would begin with the “mouth”?

So the first tool before all others is to begin to think and speak the same truth. This means no lies, not even to yourself. But, let’s look at the little ways in which we evade our own truth. As long as we are evading our truth, we can never think it, speak it or even know it. Before we go any further we need to look at this.

How many times have we called out ‘sick’ because for whatever the reason, we did not want to go to work? We weren’t sick though, were we? If you work for a large company, the use of your accrued time is a given unless you call out a lot and your performance suffers. We all know this. But, that is not the point. Would we really tell our boss “I’m not coming in today because I don’t want to?” It is easier to call out sick. We can also avoid the confrontation with the truth that we do not want to experience the disappointment and anger of our boss. Our work ethic would be challenged and from that point on, we know we would never be believed if we ever called out sick again, even if legitimately. So, in order to avoid the truth of criticism and discomfort, we call out sick instead.

Someone who likes to talk on and on calls us at a time when we don't feel like being on the phone for hours. We all know someone like this. This is the type of person that won't even get off the phone no matter how many clues you drop. You tell the person that something's burning on the stove and you will call them back but you know you won't. You lie to get the person so you can get off the phone so you won't have to listen to them. You tell this lie because the truth is you just can't find the way to tell them that you don't have the time to talk or don't feel like talking and that you will call them in a couple of days when things settle down. Truthfully, it took me a while to be comfortable doing this. I too would drop hints and HOPE the other person would understand. The truth is a lot of people don't get the hint. Is it their fault that we do not make them understand (nicely, of course)? Another truth is maybe we do not want to be labeled rude. What do all of these 'truths' we avoid add up to? We are afraid of what people will think of us and we are not creative enough to find truthful solutions to our dilemmas. My truth is we think as we speak and speak as we think. From this perspective we can begin to see how important it is to make our thoughts and speech reflect the other. That requires knowing what our truth really is.

Let's look at the example of the job. If there are personal days in addition to sick days, you might speak with your boss and let him or her know that there are things that need attending to and that you need a personal day. Then ask your boss to help you schedule it in for a time when you can spare. So many of us automatically look at a boss as an ogre instead of a human who also feels overwhelmed from time to time. Some companies actually have mental health days in recognition of the toll stress can take on workers from time to time. You will have been an honest, considerate employee and you don't always have to give every detail of your life. We are adults, after all and should not have to give a reason for every request we make once in a while. Many of us do feel however, that we must explain everything. People would be very surprised at how unimportant reasons are when you ask for time off in relation to when you ask for time off and how you go about it. Sometimes we

think we're under a bigger microscope than we really are and when that happens, we lose our power over our selves and emotions.

There have been times when I would need to 'shut down.' Times when I just needed the tranquility of not speaking to anyone. I would plan it. I would contact those people closest to me (including the needy talker) and let them know that I would be "going under" and that I would contact them when I decided to come out "from under." Once I made sure anyone who would worry knew I was simply incommunicado, I didn't care who else called and simply would not answer the phone (an answering machine can still let us know of emergencies). An exercise like this helped me control my time when I was stressed and allowed my personal power to regenerate, so to speak.

There are so many times people just need to fill empty air space. If we stop long enough to listen, there is a lot of prattle going on. Life is not a radio show where dead air space is lethal to the business. If you were to say nothing more than was necessary in a conversation, you would see how quickly the 'air space' would be filled. People get edgy around quietness and begin to feel that space is an indicator of boredom. Here is another truth to consider: Are you afraid to be considered boring? Being thoughtful brings about a lot of conclusions. In the quietness of thoughtfulness, some people may think you are inattentive, bored or distracted. That is their conclusion but is it a truth? It is only their truth and we must let go of someone else's truth to be comfortable in our own.

We've all told someone how nice a particular outfit looked even if it were not true. Yet, is there really anything wrong with saying the outfit is nice but when you wear this color or that length dress you **REALLY STAND OUT** or that when you wear brown, your eyes look really greener? Being truthful doesn't mean tactless.

Sometimes people will ask opinions on decisions they made or are thinking of making. If it's really an important personal decision, many times they do not want to know that the odds are against the married man they are in love with getting a divorce. Before I give my opinion on matters such as this, for example, I will always say,

“If you ask my opinion, I will it give truthfully.” I do this because I will not fabricate and also it gives that person a chance to decide if they are ready to hear something other than what they want to hear.

You may be wondering where all of this is going. All of this ties into living the Spiritual Way. I am talking about “being” it 24/7. “Being” it all the time with no doubts, hesitation or questions or lies. For how can we find our truth if we, for whatever the reason, deceive others or ourselves? To think for a moment that we must give every detail of why we need a personal day in three weeks to our boss is to aggrandize who we are when all we are people that need extra time to take care of matters from time to time.

Knowing our truth is knowing what matters to us and enables us to prioritize. Prioritizing is never an easy matter. Sometimes we just manage to schedule that special treat for ourselves, which is important, but something comes up that by necessity shifts the priority from something desired to something that must be done. We could either be resentful or accept the truth that sometimes we must be flexible. For example, some years back, I was in desperate need of relaxation. I had been working and going to school and being a mom and a caregiver to my mother. I had to plan three months in advance for an outing with a friend. This was scheduled right after my semester had finished. I had taken a few days off and all but these few hours had been devoted to catching up with housework and doing things with my daughter.

Well, a couple of hours before I was going to leave, my mother took ill and my “treat” was quickly converted into being in the emergency with my mother all night until the crisis had passed. Now the obvious necessary shift in priority is clear but what was my truth? How did I feel? I internalized the “Woe is me” emotion because I so desperately wanted those few days to be according to my wishes. When I had to shift, I was understandably upset. What truth was shown to me with this situation? I realized that my dislike for change could cause me distress.

I further realized that because my schedule had become so tight and I had to be a perfect scheduler for so long, I had no room for

flexibility. Whereas I had to become the perfect scheduler in order to be mother, daughter, student, worker and housekeeper, I had become enslaved to it. It was a rigidity I struggled with for many years. I have often wondered if this rigidity was a throw back to another life and a life choice I made that resulted in the upheavals I have had. So, I worked to rid myself of my rigidity and you know what? Being scheduled is not the most important thing in the world (or so I remind myself all the time). Stopping to learn when to stop is more important.

If we think about it, a childhood day is flexible. A child doesn't care when he bathes and as far as a child is concerned playtime should never end. Yet, as we get older, we look at play as an activity for the immature and call adult play a hobby. That has a more grown up ring to it. Who hasn't been embarrassed by the honest statement of a child and how quickly is that child taught 'manners.' Or rather, how to deceive. There must be room for compassion and tact but, as we grow up, honesty is trained out of us. We are told to tell the truth yet, our parents will call out sick when they just want a day off.

That is when we begin to lose our childhood awe for life and the truth that creates majick. As we become adults we don't even know enough to stop long enough to at least mourn the loss of childhood. We are too busy growing up. But childhood is day to day majick and wonder. The older we get, "wonder" begins to disappear and then it is gone. Majick is lost.

As we strive for acceptance under the cover of emotional safety, speech has become more and more shallow reflecting no truth or thoughtfulness. In this hurried era, priorities have shifted to what is fastest, convenient and acceptable. Sadder still is that a lot of people do not consider themselves powerful enough to ever be more than they are. If we listen to some people speak, we can feel their silent despair, tiredness and resignation. Speech has become something to say not saying something meaningful. And then there is that empty air.

Finding our truth is the hardest thing in the world to do and is complicated by our not knowing what to say. Arguments happen

over things people say as often as by things people do. If people did what they said and kept their word we would all know each other more truthfully and have fewer disappointments. Firstly, however, having looked at all of this, the truth is we must begin with ourselves. If we become our truth, like attracts like and we will attract truthful people. If we speak truthfully, people will have the permission to speak truthfully to us. If we speak accurately, our thinking will become focused and in turn will help us communicate more clearly. The benefits of these skills in the family, on the job, with friends and at work are obvious. Let us think now about our speech as it relates to the re-creation or reinvention we are looking for in ourselves.

In any prayer or chant or spell it is helpful to be able to gather your thoughts and put it into accurate words! The thoughtfulness we acquire by our exercises in quietness will help us remember to pray for the helpless, sick and hopeless. We will remember to thank The Creator for our blessings and for guidance. We will remember our ethics. All of this will become a natural way of 'being'. Such is the power of speech.

Speech is a strong tool in the crafting and casting process. When we were spirits, before this lifetime, there was no need for words. We were pure spirit power. How easy all of this would be if only we could readily remember how powerful we were BEFORE we WERE!

If we can "walk our talk" as Native tradition teaches, figuring out what to say or how to say it becomes easier because our own truth, as long as we are true to it, will never leave and cause us disappointment.

Now What?

Knowing how to how to hold a thought, image and feel is essential to reinventing our lives. After we begin to get the idea of living a life that is “being,” and start relearning how to think, and learn how to focus long enough to think, we see clearly this is not easy to do. Ask anyone who lives a hectic pace, especially if he or she lives in the city. First, there is the noise. When you first try to stop long enough to begin learning how to meditate, you become aware of each and every sound. I lived in an apartment building when I started. I heard every footstep, every door closing, any child running on the block and every station my daughter would play on her television or radio. I heard them all the more BECAUSE I was stopping for a while in an attempt to still my mind and quiet my body. I found it frustrating because all of these distractions were not making it easy for me to silence my own inner ramblings.

But if you stop and think about it, city people do indeed handle noise very well. I remember when I was a child we lived just a few feet away from an elevated train station. I never had any trouble going to sleep. I got used to the noise and eventually, the rhythm of the trains pulling into the station and out became a lullaby. I remember when I first went away upstate with friends when I was in my late teens everyone (except me) could not sleep because it was too QUIET and the crickets “made a racket all night.” As I began meditating, I eventually realized that noise was not the reason I could not lay still or still my mind. I learned I was making my own racket. Environments

often cannot always be orchestrated to suit one's preferences. Unless you go on a retreat, you will never encounter the perfect setting and then again, if it is too quiet, the noises of silence can prevent you from focusing. It was at that point that I decided learning to focus, to meditate amidst the noise is an important tool for any work toward any goal.

Remember how your parents would always say "How can you study with the record player on (or the TV or radio)?" We did though, didn't we? What happened when you tried to study in silence? I know I had great difficulty without background sound. The point is, we already know how to do this thing called concentrating and focusing, don't we? Once we get in touch with this ability once more, it's amazing how much 'quiet' we can create within the ourselves that is the mind. Middle Eastern and Asian disciplines are especially adept at this, especially in controlling pain.

The mind can and does control the body which is physical therefore, the mind controls the physical. There is no difference between the physical that is the body and all of its neurons of pleasure and pain and the physical world of energy. Let's look at how to begin.

I remember very clearly my first attempt at quieting my mind and silencing my inner screams. I had lost my husband at a young age and was raising my daughter. Shortly after, my father died and since my mother was disabled and unable to manage on her own, I had her come live with me. I was also working and I was going to school. My plate was full. I look back and see that I never had to opportunity to grieve and because I was so committed to doing everything correctly, I functioned for about ten years on four to six hours of sleep a night. My daughter was prone to ear infections and high fevers so there were regular runs to the emergency room when her fevers spiked. My mother was a stroke and heart attack victim so there were doctors appointments and emergency room runs when she had chest pains and there were times she had to be hospitalized. I became a wizard at organization, medical coordination, student, employee and especially mother. I was also quite FRIED! I was running on empty.

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When I first tried to focus, the beating of my own heart pounded through my brain. Stress severely interferes with proper breathing so naturally, I was breathing in a very shallow manner. My mind was darting from one thing to another such as my schedule for the next day, the reading I had to do for class the next night, how to get home on time Thursday to get my daughter to the allergist for her appointment, my laundry, dropping it off in the morning to be dried and folded and so on and so on and so on.

My first attempt was a total failure. All I had managed to do was barely five minutes. There was too much going on inside of me to feel like I had gotten anywhere. But, I had stopped my crazy pace for one day for almost five minutes. So I continued on this every night. My goal initially was to reach five minutes of calm, restful laying down. It took me over a month to achieve that first five minutes!

But, this is what I was able to accomplish in those five minutes. I would not take a call. My daughter or mother would take messages. I would not allow myself to be interrupted. I finally was able to block out all the apartment noises and the sounds from the sidewalk. During this first month, I let my mind dart about from thought to thought. I just worked on controlling my emotional response to the thoughts that would run through my head. If I felt stressed out thinking about an up and coming test that week, I would mentally talk myself into slowing my breathing and detach my mind from this stressful thought by allowing the thought to remain and affect me until I controlled my stressful response. Then that particular thought would go away. I would handle each thought, problem or concern in the same manner. I had reached a point where I would see animals in my mind and just watch them until they went away (refer to Chapter 2, Native Medicine).

Once I learned to control my stressful responses, I began to “play.” I would just fantasize about a beach, or a lake or riding a horse until I could smell the salty air, feel the chill of the lake water or hear the rubbing of leather on the saddle. This detached me from where I was and into another realm where I was in control of my mental and emotional responses. If nothing more is ever accomplished than

learning how to rethink, this skill alone is a worthwhile skill to acquire. I would use this exercise to calm myself before exams especially if I thought I had not prepared enough. I knew my fear would interfere with the recalling of information I would need for an exam. I realized that since I read all the material, the knowledge was already somewhere in my brain, I just had to learn how to summon it up. By picturing myself taking the exam and successfully answering questions, I carried this meditative experience into examination with me. Since I had already taken the test in my mind, I was never nervous on my exams anymore and actually did very well as a result. By preparing and rehearsing, I caused a change in my stress level and changed the energy being generated around a particular event. In other words (and though I did not think of it in this way at the time) I had begun casting rudimentary spells (turning concerns into desired outcomes).

Learn to breathe! There is a way to breathe. Athletes know how to do it, dancers know how to do it, runners do it and swimmers do it. In order to have the body do what you are asking it to do, you must be able to keep a regularly timed flow of oxygen going through the body. Many people gasp when they attempt to work out because learning to breathe is an art in and of itself. Here is a breathing exercise that anyone can start. Keep in mind it will require a constant awareness that you are breathing and *HOW* you are breathing. This will be difficult in the beginning because breathing is an automatic response, an unconscious reflex. Once we *TRY TO BREATHE* it will be awkward and hard to keep a rhythm. It can also feel uncomfortable because most of us, as a rule, do not breathe properly to begin with. With proper breathing, we may feel light-headed at the beginning because we are drawing in the maximum oxygen we can with each breath drawn in. With beginners, this maximum varies. However, even just a fuller amount of oxygen regardless of how much, will play on the senses. As you begin this exercise, try not to think of anything else except the cadence of your breathing. Since we usually breathe from the chest (wrong!), we have to work on drawing air in by letting the diaphragm pull air down. In other words,

when we breathe properly, our chests should not expand as much as they usually do when we breathe incorrectly.

Breathing will be accomplished by inhaling SLOWLY (AS SLOWLY AS YOU CAN) through the nose then, when you have drawn in the fullest capacity you can, SLOWLY breathing out through the mouth. Do this for four counts. Do not pause between inhaling and exhaling. Try to this is a continuous but relaxed “loop” motion. You might feel as though you have to stop and gulp down a big breath but try not to. The goal is control. You will probably feel as if you did a lot of work and automatically go back to your old breathing. If you can, try not to do this but rather, at a comfortable pace, keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth until you feel ready to do the exercise again. If you really need to catch your breath, by all means do so and be comfortable before you continue. Keep in mind that the long term goal is to breathe more rhythmically in this manner ALL THE TIME, just like dancers, reserving the deepest breathing for meditation and prayer work. Once you feel the benefits of skillful breathing, you will probably make it a routine practice every waking hour.

What is gained by this? Firstly, the higher level of oxygen will reach every blood cell and every cell of your body, ridding them of toxins. Your body will relax more and your mind will become more alert yet less distracted. From a Spiritual point of view, you are causing different ripples in the energies around you. These ripples are calmer, more focused and, when doing ‘work’ or prayer, connects you with the forces around you to bring about the desired result. Witches do incantations, Native Americans chant, sing and use the drum which represents the heart beat of Mother Earth, life itself. All of these rituals seek to become in harmony with the forces of creation itself. The words and rhythms increase in loudness and pitch and speed hence invigorating the force field that will begin to convert the energies into the mechanism that will create that which is desired.

In our beginning stages, when we are still buying into the martyrdom philosophy, the last thing we tend to think of is ourselves. Most of us lose touch with whatever it is that would give us glee and

joyfulness of spirit. Most of us might even feel guilty about such elation which is why the next thing to do is something that is purely for yourself. I happen to love blowing bubbles. When I was a child watching the bubbles was very relaxing and I enjoyed watching all the colors in bubbles. So, I take time to just blow my bubbles because I like doing it and I want to!

By nurturing the self, we develop a better sense of worth and of deserving those things that are important to us such as the things we are working on achieving. It is very important that we feel we deserve that which we want or the work will not go through properly. By doing things for ourselves, we are enhancing our sense of worth. This enables us to enjoy feeling entitled to better circumstances which, in turn, enables us to get in touch with and “taste” what we want. We have all heard the saying “he wanted that job so much, he could taste it!” We need to work on ‘tasting’ what we want. We have to see it as being so real in our mind and spirit that for those moments, nothing else exists. Tasting it means, we have finally reached a focus point from which we can begin to cause that ripple in time and space that we looked at earlier.

The next thing to do is the opposite of nurturing ourselves. It is doing something that requires self-discipline. Even if it is as simple as switching that morning donut for a bagel, getting off the bus two stops before you have to in order to walk a little bit before work, or doing one chore every day that you would rather put off until tomorrow just for the self discipline. Discipline in any form or shape will hone the mind and make it better equipped to focus because the need and time for focus is not always convenient. Ironically, the need for focus is when things are the most hectic like when the baby is crying or the food is burning or you lost your job, failed that final or had to use the last of your vacation time when you had the flu. In short, the need to focus becomes most apparent and more important when everything is going WRONG.

It is an unfortunate reality that the ABILITY TO FOCUS becomes the most pivotal in times of greatest stress and chaos. Yet, because the strongest need for change is always the result of chaos, needing

to recreate a more pleasant reality for ourselves does arise from the most difficult of times. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the best way for us to develop the self-discipline of focus in thought is during those practice runs during our daily hectic pace. Since I have personally learned that, if we don't choose to change, sometimes change will be foisted upon us anyway, learning the skill of focus is a necessary skill indeed.

But even if we choose to change, we will be uncomfortable because change requires work and focus. If we decide we need to lose weight we need to change the way we eat. Will it be easy? Probably not. If we decide we need to change jobs, we have to go through the awkward and time consuming process of applying then interviewing then waiting. Is this a pleasant process? No, not at all. But, we did decide we needed a change, didn't we? The best motivation for change is discomfort and discomfort is, ironically, the best gauge of change.

That is simply how change operates.

The Ethics

Now is a good time to review the rules or ethics of spirituality. You have been challenged to rethink how you think, what you think and to evaluate how thinking affects karma, the body and the mind. Your views on life after life, reincarnation and destiny have also been challenged. The hardest thing in the world to do is to take everything you have learned and put it aside to consider something different. If you go no further than to just enjoy and appreciate the perspectives presented here, you have taken a huge spiritual step. I think you will find the ethics as I practice in my truth interesting as well.

I do my best to live the Eightfold Path. These principles will prevent anyone from participating in anything hurtful to themselves or others. I am not on a mission to convert anyone to my truth or to confront anyone whose truth is different. I am willing to learn from another's truth. When aggressively confronted, I follow the advice that Jesus gave his disciples when he told them to shake the sand off their sandals and leave those people and places where they would not be welcomed in peace. I will not sacrifice any living thing. My sacrifices are foods, candles, incenses—things that represent my personal bounty and blessings as thanks. I will offer 'preferred' items depending on the discipline I am following at the time. I will do no work to harm or force anyone to do anything against their will. Can this be accomplished? Absolutely. Will I? No. Some people have come for consultations and asked me if I would make a boyfriend

marry them or make a wife quit her job. I refuse each and every time. Some people do not want to hear what they need to know and try to come back until the reading becomes what they want. I turn these clients away and tell them that when they are ready to learn what they need to learn, I will gladly see them.

I strive to teach clients that growth requires examination of the spirit as well as the self. Many people have experience only with practitioners who will do any work for the right amount of money including telling people what they want to hear. It is not the client's fault that they have come to the conclusion that everyone works the same. There **are** disciplines that actually allow works such as these. Under the guidelines and ethics of these disciplines, bringing certain changes about is acceptable for certain fees. I do not judge these disciplines. I am familiar with them but do not practice these arts in this manner.

Many charlatans use terror tactics to bring people back claiming it is the only way keep an evil spirit away or to keep a protection spell going. My clients have often asked "Okay, when do I come back?" and have been shocked when I have told them that it was up to them because if they do as my spirits recommended, their life will improve for the better. I strive to teach people how to take care of themselves. I also encourage them to realize that although there are some Karmic debts that are to be paid in this life, since we do not know exactly what they are, we are to aim for change and improvement. Even 'debts' that are evident may be transformable so there is no need to frighten people that they must be under spiritual treatment all the time.

Usually, people reach snags in their path that need some unraveling or have picked up negativity or impish spirits one way or another. My regular clients usually see me about twice a year for readings to determine how they are doing on their journey or what they need to learn to do to gain more benefits. I believe in empowering people to be able to help themselves and in a later chapter I provide simple techniques that will enhance positive energies. These will include spiritual baths, "smoking" the house (it is not how it sounds),

‘smudging’ the aura and changing furniture around (Feng Shui). None of these techniques will conjure or attract energies or entities that will confuse a fledgling. It is very important that novices not dabble in attempting to conjure! Fear and even uncertainty can give certain entities permission to **be** as your perceive. This is especially true of the Kaballah, which should only be studied with Rabbis and other qualified master mages and Santeria where proper offerings are a necessity or the deities invoked will show their displeasure!

I will work to help but, only with the permission and consent of the person who needs the help. I will tell a mother, for example, if her son wants to find work he must contribute the energy of sincerity by contacting me, meeting me and consenting to have the work done. This does not mean I will have someone lose their job to give it to another. Helping someone find a job means creating an environment in which the timing is conducive for that person to be in the right place or the right time. Perhaps, they get nervous on interviews and because of this, interview poorly. I can help them by having a prospective employer see qualifications rather than lack of poise.

I will cleanse a person’s aura and help balance the energies around them that may be in opposition to his or her greater good. I practice and endorse the school of Feng Shui in which all clutter is removed and furniture is arranged in a specific manner to allow energies in a house to nourish the ‘chi’ (spirit energy), and to keep positive energies moving for the benefit of the client. I will always refer people to medical professionals for physical complaints. It is important to separate the physical from the spiritual because a genuine physical problem can impair spirituality and impaired spirituality can impair timely healing from traditional medicine.

I have a spiritual teacher, my teacher has his and so on and so forth. If there is a problem out of my realm of expertise, I will not hesitate to refer the client to someone I know that can be of greater assistance.

I will not compromise the greater good for personal gain.

In casting work, if my gain will the result in a consequence (good or bad) to someone else, I cannot cast it unless it is qualified that no

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one is to be affected in the acquisition of the goal of the spell. Novices need to learn to do this properly. Impatience and failure to qualify the conditions of a casting can result in the outcome being at the expense of even someone you do not know somewhere in the spiral of 'ripples' you have created.

I respect other people's truths. We are each on our individual life path. Whereas I may be more evolved than one person, someone will naturally be more evolved than me. Since we never know where our lessons may come from, I must respect the lowest person in society as well as the highest. I must be aware of my reactions to people and situations for therein lay further clues on how I can better know my real self and what I need to work on.

I will help someone in need even if it is to my own disadvantage. Such is the walk of trust. If I know I am being provided for, it can't matter to me that I gave almost all of my own food to someone with a family and children to feed, can it?

My Ethics

I live the Eightfold Path to the best of my ability.

I am not on a mission of conversion.

I will harm no one in order to help another.

I will not sacrifice any living things.

I will do no work to harm anyone.

I will not frighten or cajole people into coming back for further consultations.

I respect and will refer other disciplines and belief systems as necessary when identified.

I will recommend physical check ups to allow for healing to be total and complete.

I will refer clients to my teacher or someone more skilled in certain problems than I may be.

I will not compromise the greater good for personal gain.

I will assist all that ask provided there is no conflict with my ethics.

In addition to these ethics, I give thanks everyday. In each day is the gift of all possibilities. At the end of the day, I give thanks for what I accomplished and for the food on my table and the shelter over my head, regardless of how meager they may be. I must never forget the despairing and ill. I always ask that the light of the Creator reach them no matter how dark their place.

The hardest thing for me to do is leave someone to their own devices floundering on their own path. But I can only assist as much as I am allowed. There are some people who are unable to commit themselves to the work they must do. Sometimes a person's truth and destiny can only be the result of their hardship. Someone like this is remembered in my prayers for there are times that this is most that can be done.

Tools

The main and most important tool of all is simply prayer or meditation. Ask the Creator to bless you, your family, the unfortunate, those who cannot for any reason ask for themselves and for the earth. You may then ask the Creator's blessing on the request you are about to make or the need you have. Learning to be connected with the Creator, whatever Creator is to you, is very important. I am a firm believer that we must all accept, realize and experience the presence of the Creator. Until we have experienced the Creator, it will be difficult to have faith and trust in anything we do. The Creator is our primary tool without which we are powerless. It is through the Creator's force in all things, including ourselves, that we are empowered. Doesn't it make sense to acknowledge the gifts provided all around us?

One mistake many churches have made, in my opinion, is eliminating the lighting of real candles. Many churches now use electric candles. I have enjoyed going to many different churches and experiencing the power of real, lit candles. Recently, I was in a church where the candles were electric and it did not feel right. Something was missing. It was the power of the candle. You see, fire is a majickal element. It has a power very unique to itself. The striking of a match is more forceful than the pouring of water. This does not take away from the power of water. It has its own properties, such as healing, which are not to be taken lightly. But fire power is very intense and because it is intense, it is a perfect conduit for the energies

we can send out in prayer, majickal work or meditation.

So, in conjunction with prayer I would recommend the use of this very simple tool: a real candle that you have to light yourself! Sit and watch the flame. If you sit long enough and wait, you will feel the power of the lit candle. A couple of years ago, I was in despair and fearful that we would have to move yet again. This was before we bought the house I mentioned in the chapter about “Raphael and Me.” As we waited for the money due us to come in so we could close, I became fearful and doubtful to the point of thinking I would go mad. There are few things worse than not knowing if you will ever have a place called home and that is where I was. I felt as if I were on the brink of madness so I decided to light candles. Not just a few but almost seventy! I put all my animals (cats and dogs) away in other rooms, moved knickknacks, television, radio and whatever I had to make room for these candles. I put them in candleholders. When I ran out of candleholders, I used saucers and when I ran out them, small pots, big pots, whatever I had and then I lit them. All of them. I sat tearfully asking for my faith and trust to be replenished for although I knew what miracles could be, I was afraid I had run out of my fair share. Suddenly, I felt POWER. I FELT A POWERFUL SWIRL AROUND THE ROOM AND AROUND ME! The hair on my arms began to rise and goose bumps began to rise all over my skin. I felt a warm healing power embrace me and almost immediately all my despair and fear had left me. I felt totally unlike the terrified lost soul that had been prompted to go to such extremes as to light seventy candles. It didn’t matter. The power was there. I asked for the Creator to help me and helped myself by drawing in the energy of the element of fire. Fire- A gift of the spirit.

There is a word of caution about fire. Aside from the obvious, it is a strong energy to work with and the mind has to be trained not to put within the power of fire any misdirected anger, pettiness or bitterness. Fire works quickly and will “pick up” such thoughts and bring about speedy results. By the time we mentally correct ourselves, the careless thought could already be in motion. I have used fire when I was angry or upset but, only to use the ENERGY ANGER

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CAN CREATE to empower a PETITION that would benefit someone who had been wronged, or injured or gravely ill. It takes a lot a lot of mental strength and discipline to be able to do any work, much less working with fire when you are justifiably upset about someone's misfortune. Matters of justice should always be placed in the hand of the Creator. Active work to manipulate what we feel justice should be is not correct. Petition is different than spell casting and I cannot emphasize enough how crucial it is to be able to know the difference and when to work and when to petition. I have learned this along the way for I have made my mistakes as everyone does. This is why so much time has been spent on ethics and thought. Gifts of spirit are all around us but we have the responsibility to use them responsibly.

As I have said before the Creator has given us only good and endowed us with a world filled with beauty, wonder and the majick, if we learn how to find it. The Creator has given us all we need to begin to reinvent our circumstances. All categories of spirits are all around us to help. There are angels, protections, and guides, Gatekeepers of the directions, Guardians of the elements, earth spirits, deities of geographic locations and the spirits of animals, plants, insects and even rocks! Since we already discussed angels and the other types of spirits most identify with, we are going to look at the tools of the earth.

It was perhaps about ten years ago after exploring animal medicine for a while that I first felt the power of the Creator. I can never forget that encounter and the Creator chose a mountain to give me that truth!

I had managed to get away for weekend to a mountain retreat for myself. My job had become extremely stressful and before I went away, I had already decided to hand in my resignation because the reasons for the stress were simply a conflict in my truth. I could not work my ethics in my work environment because the agency had itself lost sight of its compassion. I was in human services, dedicated to providing assistance to the needy but the agency I worked for became extremely focused on money and asked me to write documentation that was misleading. My role was to help people

honestly and although the matter of business cannot be ignored, I was being asked to work a truth that was not my own.

I stayed in a cute cabin off a lake and every morning I would get up bright and early and do power walking around the lake for about two hours. I used to do a lot of cross country “scrambling” or dashing up steep inclines, challenging myself to work harder and get the heart pumping. It would be so invigorating I would release a lot of stress.

This particular morning, I decided to do some scrambling up the mountain. Now mind you, I was by myself. I was going to scramble up a mountain and I didn’t tell anybody. I didn’t stop to think that I could fall or be unable to get down or that someone should know my plan. I just went for it. From where I began, the mountain did not look that steep or high. I figured it would be a half-hour jaunt and then I would be back, shower and get breakfast. I began scrambling.

The more I climbed up steeper inclines, the more energized I became. I became a scrambling machine. Although it reached a point of becoming rock climbing, I simply could not get tired! It was a while before I realized the top of the mountain was no where in sight and I became determined to reach the top. I continued upward and although I was sweaty, I was not tired! I finally reached the top and sat down on the ledge. There was a silence that comes only from the absence of people. I could hear the rustle of little critters scampering up the trees, the chirp of birds and the leaves crackle with the once in a while breeze that rose. I sat enjoying the serenity and tranquility and beauty when all of a sudden I could hear a subtle, “rrrrrr.” It was barely audible. If you have ever had a large dog and rested your head on its flanks, you know how the flanks rise and gently fall as the dog breathes. That is what I felt sitting on top of that mountain only it felt like a breathing vibration. I sat absolutely amazed for I could feel the spirit of the mountain pulsing through me. For the first time in my life, I felt the presence of the Creator. The pulse of life was all around me and THROUGH me! I have been to every church imaginable and I never felt the knowledge that “God” existed. I had never felt touched by love, joy, power or anything else until this

mountain. By the time I finished feeling exhilarated, I finally decided to go back. This required looking down, where I expected to see the lake where I had began. I saw nothing. I realized that this mountain had been a lot bigger than I had imagined and felt from deep within me that I was called to this mountain peak for a reason—to feel the power of the Creator.

Then I was struck with the dilemma of getting down for where I was at almost a straight drop down! I wondered how I even got up! It was soooo steep, I didn't even dare to turn around to climb backwards. So I slid down the whole way on my butt, clutching at rock tips when I could, sliding down yards at a time and grabbing roots along the way to control my speed. How did I get down? Why, the Creator got me down. From that day forward, even through hardship, I always remembered that mountain that connected me with the Creator.

This energy is in everything, and it within us. The reason I have spent so much time discussing thought, rethinking, values, “being” and ethics is because it is through these means that we develop our second tool: us. For if a mountain has spirit, then so do we and if a mountain can ‘tell’ me about the Creator, then I can tell the universe what I wish and how I wish it. Energy Conversion, remember? All of this will come together in the chapter on charging in which we will go through techniques and feelings to assist in telling items such as herbs and stone what we are asking of them.

We will begin with the tools of the earth—flowers, plants, trees and rocks. Since they all have spirit, they help us focus our own energy toward the work we want to do.

In Native teaching, you never pick the first flower or plant because it could be the last of its kind. The same is true for any earth-based religion. Before collecting items, a spiritualist will declare to a forest the work that needs to be done and ask for those spirits willing to assist to let themselves be known. Then it is a matter of walking around. If we have honed our senses and spirit, we can begin to feel the different energies around us. A good exercise is to simply walk in a forest or park and just feel the vibrations around you. Feel the energy of a tree. Ask that a rock offer itself for you to learn how to

feel it's spirit. The rock that draws your attention for whatever the reason, is the rock spirit willing to teach you. Hold that rock and feel any vibrations that you can. Once you begin to feel any energy, thank the rock and put it back where you got it.

Ask the same of the plants. Then bend over and hold the plant that draws your attention in your hand. Let your mind go blank, close your eyes and wait for its energy to be revealed. This is an exercise in sensing, so you will not be taking the plant, just getting to know it. I had an Uncle in Boriken (Puerto Rico) that asked permission of every plant he took for his work. It is a good practice to begin doing this from the beginning. It demonstrates appreciation for the spirit of all things with which we are truly connected.

Environmentally minded people have been jokingly called tree huggers. The truth is, trees have incredible powers of healing and calming. Hugging a tree can be a surprising experience. First of all, its roots go down deeply into the earth and the earth (as any mother) is strong, nurturing and protecting. A tree can actually draw tension from our body and pull it out and down into the earth who will dissipate it for us.

Of course, always ask for a "volunteer tree," thank it and leave something for the tree and the earth in form of corn, nuts, anything that is edible. If you have worries, you can walk about and ask for a leaf to help you. I prefer leaves that have ready fallen. I will then pick it up, ask it to help me calm down and pour my worry into it. I do my breathing, I focus on what the problem is and what I want my situation to be. I focus until energy goes coursing through me. I am very sensitive to energies so a lot of times, my body will just shake. It takes a lot of control and concentration for me to maintain my focus and breathing when I work like this. When the surges stop, I toss the leaf in the air and leave seeds as an offering and walk away. By the time I am finished, I already feel calmer. The reason I prefer a leaf that has already fallen is that this particular spell will result in the problem being resolved as the leaf dries up disintegrates and blown away. As this process begins to happen, so does the problem begin to be more manageable until it too is gone.

Learning to focus, breathe and feel is very important in the collection of items for work. There are spiritual baths that are made from the natural gifts of the earth. After we discuss charging, which is the combination of focusing, breathing and feeling, you will learn how to charge your herbs for a spiritual bath and how to charge the bath itself. Spiritual baths are wonderful in also dispelling negative energies and entities. Sometimes more than one spiritual bath is required. In this case, you will learn how to make a larger quantity. Rocks are very handy in grounding positive energies for particular purposes. As a tool, rocks are handy to “round” out corners in rooms in order to keep energies swirling around in a circular motion. There is an Asian discipline called Feng Shui that maintains the proper flow of energy by rounding out corners through furniture arrangement and furniture placement. Remember, even rocks must be asked to participate. In time, you will be able to feel the different vibrations rocks give off. This will help you know which ones to use. Other natural tools are plants and herbs. If you are collecting them in the forest or from your garden, remember to ask permission. Rosemary, thyme and sage are excellent bases, as is salt (for cleansing) and fern. I like fern because there are two types. There is a darker, blunter edged leaf which is good for resolving money matters and the lighter, pointed-leaf fern which I use for baths and prayers for health.

With the right spiritualist, another tool is healing. People often think spiritual healers are ‘quacks’ promising spontaneous results for work that replaces traditional medicine. Though healing is itself a tool, it depends on the spiritualist’s ability to draw from the toolbox that is the universe. If someone is very negative, fearful and pessimistic, this will naturally slow down healing and can cancel it out. I usually prepare a “bath” or instruct my client how to make a bath (if they are capable) in order to alleviate the negativity that will hinder any work being done. Even resistive cases eventually benefit from the bath and healing, especially if the area of healing is self-esteem, fear or loneliness.

A person with a medical or psychological condition needs to seek sound professional judgment and make informed decisions on their

treatment. No healing, spiritual or medical is complete without cooperative participation. Today, many doctors acknowledge that healing is a medical process that is best holistically or totally. In other words, physical healing is enhanced by the strengthening of the spirit and elimination of the stresses that contribute to the symptoms. With the mind less agitated and more tranquil, the ability to focus on being well develops. While the body is healing there is the benefit of the mind willing wellness into being.

Many years ago, because of stress and hereditary factors, I had a bleeding ulcer that left me writhing in pain, anemic with migraines and an inability to even eat because it was too painful for me have anything in my stomach and yet, in order to heal I had to have something in my stomach to absorb the acid that was debilitating me. It was a long, painful recovery. During that period of time I evaluated the stress that made this illness happen and decided that would not allow anything to do this to me again. Did I participate in my medical treatment? Of course I did. I went three times a week for six months for my liver and B12 shots, I took medication as directed, I rested and mostly I thought. I thought and decided that I would NEVER have a bleeding ulcer again. My father had had a bleeding ulcer when he had been a young man too and for the rest of his life, his stomach always bothered him, often keeping him up moaning all night long. When I got an ulcer, I was afraid that this would be my future too. Well, after six months of painful illness something in me said "Enough" with such power that even I did not know or understand. I never got a bleeding ulcer again. That was over twenty-five years ago!

Spiritual healing can better empower the mind. In the bibliography you will note some suggested readings. Some of these cover the area of the power of the mind as both a healing factor and killing factor. A spiritual healing balances the flow of energies that can become locked up and stagnant because of illness and worry. It's like washing dirt off your hands. If all you get from your faucet is an occasional drip, you will not be able to cleanse properly. Such is the case with a spiritual work including healing of anxiety, stress or tension. The

spiritualist draws positive energy down into the client to send ripples of energy through the body. Clients often feel heat or vibrating air. Some become so tranquil they fall asleep. They almost all feel refreshed and somewhat rested. They also feel calmer. All of this helps the mind and body become calmer. Being clam is an important factor to healing. Can the client learn this technique for him or herself. Sure they can. But, learning it takes a lot of discipline and practice and most people would rather go 'there' than do the work to "get" there themselves. That is okay. I would rather go see the doctor when I am ill than go to medical school to learn how to treat myself. Spiritual healing can be compared to the 'Chi' energy (healing energy of Asian tradition) that is unblocked through acupuncture or acupressure. These disciplines are now recognized and practiced by many doctors who specialize in pain management.

I am one of those who can draw down positive energies to facilitate calm and healing but, I am also guided by my spirits to prepare individual liniments from plants and herbs. These liniments are good for muscle and arthritis pain and are individually made for the person for whom the liniment is intended. I once made a liniment for my mother's arthritic knee. She felt great warmth and slept well that night. A few weeks later, I had pulled a muscle and decided to use the liniment I made for my mother. Well, the liniment became uncomfortably cold and irritating. I had to make a liniment intended for myself which worked very nicely.

We can use and combine the gifts of the earth to make a number of useful tools.

We can make caches that if placed under the pillow can soothe us into sleep with their tranquilizing aromas. (There is a whole practice utilizing this principle called Aromatherapy.) We have already touched upon baths and liniments. We can dry plants and herbs to burn like incense for cleansing our homes and our ourselves with the smoke created. (Be especially careful when using dried plants, herbs or roots as incense, some of them are TOXIC such as dragon's blood and the needles and bark of pine trees. Be sure you know your plants are safe for burning when dried!) Cleansing a home in this

manner I call smoking. Cleansing a person or yourself is often called 'smudging.'

Certain plants can be used to 'sweep' negativity from your home. Jerusalem Oak is a plant that is often found dry in Spanish spiritual stores called *botanicas* and is called "pasote." The actual plant itself is used to literally beat the floors and walls of a house to absorb and chase negativity away. A new broom with straw bristles can be used for this purpose as well and is especially good when used in this manner before moving into a new home. After the walls and floors have been "beaten" on a path that leads out of the door, throw the broom away. Certain baths can be made to add to your floor washing bucket or to sprinkle your house.

Dried herbs purchased at a store can be used as can purchased incense. With knowledge and skill, they also be effective in attracting loving and positive forces. There are some herbs and plants that are completely harmless to use. They are rosemary, thyme, basil, cinnamon, garlic and onion skins and sage, especially white sage. These herbs, in a bath with salt and perfume can be soothing in any number of ways. You can charge them to relax you, rid you of nightmares, help you sleep, help you manage money (add the dark green fern, basil and cinnamon). They can also be charged and used to wash down walls and to mop your floors as part of a routine spiritual cleansing of your house. You can boil them and walk around the house allowing the vapor to cleanse as well. But now, before we go any further, we need to look at the skill of "charging."

Charging

This where everything we have looked at begins to come together. In charging or commanding a certain outcome be brought forth, focus or clear majickal thinking, accurate speech and clarity of purpose (minus malice of intent) now become integral to creating the change you desire.

Once the disciplines above, that are themselves the factors of charging, are mastered, charging becomes the primary factor in creating or recreating your circumstances. Perhaps the best illustration will be a walk through of some simple procedures to make a spiritual bath. Let's say you have been having problems sleeping. You feel restless, agitated, tired but around the time you're ready to go to bed, all of a sudden, you click into a gear that you know will keep you up rather late.

If you live in the city, you can go to any of the many supermarkets and select fresh or dried herbs. Country living provides the opportunity for growing your own herbs. This can make collecting your herbs to do a bath more spontaneous but, not essential. This particular bath is excellent for tranquility and improved sleep whether you live in the city or country. This is one my "general recipes" that can work for anyone. Because you are charging it yourself, it becomes just for you. Pick or purchase fresh sage, thyme, rosemary and eucalyptus. While you are at it, buy a container of cornmeal. This is your offering. (Get in the habit of keeping "offerings" on hand) Purchase a seven-day white candle that is tall and encased in glass.

Select a time when you will not be disturbed so you can do this process uninterrupted.

At the right time, take an old soup pot. It is wise to use the same items when you work. Every time you use them, you infuse them with more and more of your own personal energy. Over time, you will begin to feel the energy within these items and the speed with which you connect with them increase when you work. So, take a pot you will not use for anything else except for making baths and incensing. You may want to get a clay or other type of incense burner in the future but, for now, begin with one big pot. I want to mention that the pot should only be washed with water. Never use soap. If you wish to scrub it, scrub it down with salt. Always use NATURAL INGREDIENTS.

Ask for the Creator's blessing on your work and for protection. Invite the Creator and your guides and protections to examine your heart for proper integrity of purpose. In your mind, remember you will accept the Creator's decision for you not to be helped. Even though sleep is a wonderful thing, sometimes we go through certain experiences for a reason. If you are a doctor, this type of experience may develop better empathy for a patient who is an insomniac, for example. For the most part, however, I have found the Creator never begrudges sleep. Begin by filling the pot $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water and light your burner anywhere from medium to high, depending on how high the flames rise on your stove.

As you are putting the water in the pot, begin to FOCUS ON YOUR NEED for sleep. See yourself going to bed, falling asleep within minutes and sleeping peacefully through the night. This is the thought you will hold throughout the whole process. Pick up the Rosemary and put the bunch in the hand you write with. You may close your eyes or keep them open. Whatever you feel will work for you, is fine. Remember, most of this type of work is intuitive. There should come a time when it will not matter what herb you use for you can command any herb and ultimately the energy around you by majickally creating your items in spirit. But, for now, I have given you these tried and proven effective herbs to work with.

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With the rosemary in your hand, focus on your mental image. Hold that image and begin to breathe, in as slowly as you can through your nose and out as slowly as you can through your mouth as we discussed in the chapter on breathing. If you begin to feel energy surges, which some people do right away, it is this type of skilled breathing that will ground this energy into you, down your arm, through your hand and into the herb or item you are using. Hold it, breathe, focus and form the words aloud that will become your spell for you to get sleep. You may or may not feel anything at first but, if you are slow to feel any vibrations, give this at least fifteen minutes. If you feel the energies, allow them to build up within you until you know they have flowed through you and into the herb.

For me, I reach levels of sweating as if in a sauna when I charge or cleanse items. Others feel goose pumps, the hair on their neck or arms standing up and some people get headaches. In time you will know when you are pulling in creative energy. Once you feel the energy has gotten into the herb, put it in the water. If the water is not hot yet, put that hand into the water and pour the same energy into the water. If the water is hot, use a large spoon (preferably silver) to stir the water and charge the water through the spoon. (Old silver spoons can be purchased very cheaply in thrift stores and flea markets. It would be helpful to get one.) If you do not have one handy, use a wooden spoon that you will use only for this type of work.

Pick up the thyme and do the same ritual, then the sage and then the eucalyptus. A good handful of each is fine. Each time you add the herb to the water, stir it as above, remain focused, speak your words and breathe! To this mixture you will now add a cup of salt. In the New Testament, in addition to water, Jesus used salt to expel demons. My father, who was Irish, believed in keeping salt in the house all the time because it kept the devil away from the home. Salt in this bath will expel negative energies from you. Every time you are about to put the herb into the water, say something like “as no harm be done, this work will be done.” In addition to putting salt in the bath, pour a small vial of lavender or patchouli oil. These are not only soothing but spirits do in deed enjoy aromatic scents. In this

aspect it is like putting an offering in the bath.

Once everything is in the water, you can relax. When the water reaches a full boil, simmer it on a low flame for twenty-thirty minutes. Enjoy the aroma that will fill the air.

After this is completed, cover the pot and walk through the house, opening the lid so that the vapors escape a little into each room. Then, let it sit until it is cool enough to handle. When the bath has cooled, strain the water. Put the herbs aside and pour the spiritual bath water into convenient bottles or jugs. Ideally, you should take at least three baths. You may dilute the mixture so that you have three baths that you will slowly pour over yourself from head to toe AFTER YOUR REGULAR SHOWER OR BATH. This is not to be rinsed off until the next day! Blot yourself dry with a towel and now you can work with the candle.

Before working with any candle, you must spiritually cleanse it. Think of all the people that candle has come in contact with through manufacturing, general handling and packaging and just by people picking it up deciding whether or not they are going to buy it. Many of these people have stress, sorrow, problems or illness. All these different types of energies have come in contact with your candle. Do you want all of these energies to intertwine with the energies your will be putting into this candle as part of your petition? This is why a candle must be cleansed. You clean a candle by taking water and blessing it in the Creator's name. I usually say "I cleanse this candle of all negativity in manufacturing, processing and handling and I dedicate it to the Power of Great Spirit through whom only good things come." I then verbalize what I want it to do. In this exercise, I would simply say something like "Cleanse me of any negative or disruptive forces that prevent me from sleeping and replace them with the gentle, loving restful energies." Take salt and rub it around the candle, sprinkling a few grains around the wick as well.

Tie a red ribbon or thread around the candle. It does not have to be in a bow. Tie it as you wish. Take a match and focus on your desired goal, see yourself free of anything that will disrupt your sleep.

Verbalize your petition and breathe. Draw in the energy around you and when you feel the energy reach its highest “pitch” hold onto it by continuing to breathe until you feel you are ready to release it. I can feel when energy is ready to be released but it does take time and a sensitivity to the energy surrounding you. Before allowing it to release, hold onto it by breathing, remaining focused, commanding that this work harm no one then strike the match and light the candle so all of your efforts and energy ripples are now transferred into the candle. I like to re-light new candles for another two weeks for a work like this. As a rule, you will have lit three seven-day candles.

I think you will find the reason for the red ribbon very interesting. If you have negativity around you that is causing you to lose sleep, black soot might form on the inside of the glass candle holder as the candle burns down. This is an excellent way to divine negativity anytime you feel out of sorts. You may not expect this to change but you will discover that as you light subsequent candles, eventually one will burn clear. This is how you will know that you have cleared your own energy field of negative forces or energies. If the second candle burns “black,” continue to light a seven-day candle until it burns clear and then light another one more time to ensure that your field remains cleansed. You will burn as many candles as it takes, plus an additional one until you have two candles that burned without soot forming. This is the exception to the three-week rule.

With regard to the herbs you strained from the bath, take a small amount and find a park or forest where you can ask the earth to disperse the negativity around you. It is here that you will leave an offering of cornmeal on the ground itself. Place the rest of the herbs in a sunny spot where they will dry. These herbs can then be used as incense, not for the property of smell, but because they are effective in “smoking” your house and cleansing it of negativity. In smoking, you get quick lighting charcoal. Do not get the ones for barbecues. They will smell like lighter fluid. Get the charcoal that is specifically for burning incense. Light the charcoal. If weather permits, open your windows. As the incense burns, “fan” the smoke out as you go through your rooms. Make sure you get the corners and even your

closets (A couple of seconds will not harm your clothing or other items.) If you have birds, smoke quickly in their vicinity or move them to another room. Do not smoke heavily in their area. They can be returned to their spot when you are ready to do the room you put them in. I have a bird and simply fan past him very quickly and there has never been a problem.

It is good practice to light a candle to divine negativity and to smoke your house from time to time. Likewise taking a spiritual bath on occasion does help maintain spiritual well being. You will be able to eventually feel when energies are not beneficial as a result of maintaining energy balance on a regular basis.

If you live in the country, as I do, you can grow your own herbs or pick from the forest those plants that will offer themselves for our work. I have been doing this for many years but I too will purchase what is not around me, if it is needed.

Smudging is using incense or dried herbs to cleanse the aura of someone or yourself. You do this by using your hand to fan yourself with the smoke downwards towards the feet then up toward the head. You can then position the incense holder at waist length then wave the smoke under the arm and armpit then towards the hand and fingers. To smudge the other side, hold the incense in the opposite hand and repeat as above. To do the legs and back, I add extra incense or herbs to create more smoke and stand over the incense, legs apart and then slightly in front of it to have the incense waft up my back. Again, the incense or herbs are charged for the purpose for which they will be used. I usually say a prayer or incantation that I feel helps me focus while at the same time brings closer to me those protective forces that will assist me in purging negativity.

A personal preference I have is dried fresh sage, especially those used by Native Americans. It is usually tied in thick bunches and requires no charcoal to burn it. Other herbs for smoking or purging are in your closet or pantry right now: onion and garlic skins, salt, rosemary, and thyme. In a pinch, you can simply use poultry seasoning as it contains, among a few other herbs sage, thyme and rosemary. You may use one herb or a combination of herbs. The more used, the

most potent so I suggest combinations be used when cleansing the home or body for the first time. Routine cleansings should be done and, if done with enough frequency, they usually do not require a lot of herb combinations. I like to combine herbs because I simply enjoy the ritual of collecting, charging, reflecting and petitioning. It forces me to schedule time for my spirituality and helps me generate the intensity of energy I like to create when I work. Since I have a preference for the number three or multiples of three, I will use a minimum of three herbs and multiples of three when the sum is an odd number such as fifteen or twenty-one. When working with my African guides, I use multiples of seven as the number seven recognizes the Seven African Powers of African tradition.

In chapter 18, I will offer you “recipes” as a guide for you to see how simple it is to keep your own area and aura free of negative energies. Try them. I think you will enjoy both the participation it requires of you and the results.

Recípes

First let's look at how we can tell whether or not we have negativity around us. Earlier we looked at how a large, seven-day candle can make the determination as to whether or not there is negativity around us. We can also use water. Place a large clear glass of cold water in every room. If a lot of bubbles form, you have negativity as a houseguest. If you discover this, first put some salt in the water before you pour it down the toilet. The salt neutralizes any negativity and further protects you and your home should any of the water spill. This is not to be poured down a sink but into a toilet. This is a divining tool of Hispanic tradition. The glass can be scrubbed with salt and refilled everyday until the water remains free of bubbles. Yes, eventually, depending on how much negativity you have in your environment, the water will become free of bubbles.

Thereafter, put a glass of water in a corner in every room and change it about once a week. Once a week, check the water. If bubbles begin to form, you can repeat the ritual from the beginning. Another use of water is to put an ice cold glass of water by your bedside on your night stand. Water used this way helps encourage better sleep and cleanses your rest area while you are most vulnerable—when you are asleep. It is also helpful as a deterrent to nightmares. When water is used for spiritual purposes, such as this, it is important that this water not be ingested. Dreamcatchers are quite popular now as decorations. But, dreamcatchers are of Navajo Indian origin and were handmade to hang above sleeping children. They were used to 'catch'

nightmares thus allowing the children to sleep restfully. If you are artistic, learning to make a dreamcatcher is a handy tool for a good night's sleep, especially if you implement the majickal skills discussed in this book. A true dreamcatcher will rotate or change position when it is suspended from a high place, like a ceiling. Even with no breeze, you will be pleased to note this activity as it divines the direction from which negativity may be coming.

Another simple and plentiful item is ice. Negativity is purged by cold. You can cleanse your home by mopping the floors with cold water, ice cubes and some salt (optional). This is also of the Hispanic tradition and when used tank or caged animals are covered and dogs and cats are put outside or in a room other than the one being cleansed. Adding an ice cube to that glass of water by your bed will also make the spiritual purpose that much more potent.

One thing I caution clients about is that sometimes, when such cleansings are begun for the first time, those spirits that will be sent on their way are not happy about it at all. Sometimes, as a "final stand," more stress and chaos is created by them in an effort to discourage a client from continuing with what they need to do. At these times, it is most important for the client to persist. I have had clients begin to experience so much chaos and interference that they did not complete their "homework" only to come back and ask for more help as things worsened.

When they became determined and fulfilled the recommended assignments things did indeed change. I recently received a call from a client I had not seen for months. She called to tell me that she had finally completed everything as instructed and that now, things were much, much better. When I first met her, she was living in a hotel as part of Public Assistance, unable to see herself ever having real home for herself and her children again. When I spoke with her, she had moved into a beautiful, big sunny apartment which, she said, was exactly as I described. I told her I had no recollection of what I told her because my spirits do the talking and I usually remember very little of a reading. This is why I have people write down notes during a reading. This is for their reference and later validation.

She is not the only person who was nice enough to let me know how much better life had become for her as a result of a consultation. As I tell everyone “I got the answer from my spirits for you but, you had to do the work.” In other words, they had to do the spiritual bath, cleansing, prayer and offerings on the time table given. They had to put in the energy of DOING. Although most of my clients know nothing of charging, the energy they put into the ripples of change was due to following instruction to the letter. As I said before, my goal is for people to learn how to take of themselves spiritually and not need me. Many of my clients have now reached a point where their own spiritual awareness has opened new insights never experienced before. This is simply because they worked to find their own truth through prayer, meditation and action.

Here is recipe for a muscle liniment. In a large jar, pour one bottle of alcohol. Add about a heaping handful of bay leaves, two red eucalyptus branches (leaves and stems broken into pieces. Then add a handful of sage, thyme and rosemary and allow these ingredients to steep for about a week. I make known my intention for this liniment, ask the Creator’s blessing and charge every item as we discussed earlier. Snake is the animal spirit of transformation, usually personal but transformation can take place in the areas of health as well. Since my daughter has a snake, she gives me the skin she sheds for use in my shamanistic work. I would not dream of purchasing anything that depended on the killing or butchering of an animal for my work. By my using the snake skin, I am calling upon transformation power of snake medicine from the spirit realm where this energy is as abundant as I can create. I add this skin to the alcohol mix. After about a week, I will add one bottle of pure virgin olive oil and one-quarter cup of salt. The salt will draw out heat and also neutralizes any spiritual cause for the ache or pain.

As I mentioned before, salt was the only ingredient, aside from water that Jesus used. Salt added to any bath will always disperse negativity but, it can also be used simply as an added protection against negativity in the home. Straight from the container, pour small amounts in your hand and dash it all around the house. You can

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sprinkle it on the floors, onto the walls (it will fall to the floor), and especially in the corners of every room. After a while, just sweep or vacuum. Take a little of salt and make a line in front of any doorways then simply put your welcome mat over it so no one notices. This will help keep negativity outside your home. Replace it about once a week.

To improve prosperity, here a bath you can make and take about once a week.

Use your “pot” and fill it $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water. (Don’t forget to charge and pray that your work be acceptable) To the water add the following ingredients which you will charge before they are added to the water: A bunch of fresh sage or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried sage from your spice rack, one cup of sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of basil and about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of coriander seeds. Remember to order that no one be affected or harmed to obtain what you need. Initially take a bath three days in a row then once a week for three weeks and stop worrying. Remember however, if you have years of debt that has accumulated, the ripples created need to catch up until they overtake your money management problems. What is interesting with a bath like this or any work to improve finances is that often times, the amount of money doesn’t increase it just eventually seems to stretch further until money resources find their way to you. If one is observant, the gradual connection of cause and effect can be seen in any improvement. Money problems are no different they are just incredibly stressful and challenging to our truth.

To alleviate tension and nervousness, place a glass of water by your bedside. Sprinkle salt around your bed. Light a blue candle, which you have cleansed under which you place a white handkerchief or cloth in a safe spot. If you can muster up the discipline, do your breathing exercise. Let your mind go blank and allow images to drift in and out of your mind without allowing any emotional response to occur. Do reflective or inspirational reading or psalms. This reading is to awaken that part of your spirit that has become frazzled so it leads you back to your true state of being which is to be spiritual and at peace.

Every morning, salt the water and pour it down the toilet. Do this every night until you feel calm. The benefits are usually quite quick. Not too long ago, a trickster spirit was taking advantage of me during my dreamtime and assaulted me not once, but twice! I not only sprinkled around the bed but on the sheets themselves to offset this nasty attack. It was a little scratchy, but, it really didn't bother me and I slept like a baby afterward. The next morning, my husband asked why the sheets were so scratchy (he had been sleeping when this happened). When I explained what happened, he helped me shake off the sheets and put them in the laundry. Ralph has come to know that things are done for a reason and it is truly wonderful to have the understanding of a mate when you live the path I do.

Here is a simple recipe for releasing worry about a situation or condition. The anonymous groups use this practice quite effectively but do not call it witchcraft. You will need a leaf that has fallen and is dried enough to burn (or a piece of white paper), your majick pot (or cauldron) and a dried twig you have found. The reason you will be using a dried twig is that this will become your majickal writing instrument. You see, majick works better if you use as little that is manufactured as possible. You will always use this majick implement for any spell that requires images or writing. Like all of your majickal tools, each time you use it, it becomes more infused with your own personal energy hence, making it increasingly effective with each use. Invoke the Creator's blessing and verbalize your distress and the solution that you will feel will resolve the problem. This is what you speak. On the paper, write down your needs (energy through a physical act) on the leaf or paper by burning the tip of the twig and when the end is burning, gently blow out the flame. The blackened tip is charcoal. This is your ink. Some people use the black from inside a candle glass but, since I use the soot from a burning candle as a divination tool for negativity, I prefer not to use "ink black" as some call it.

Now you will focus and prepare to send your spell with force of thought into the universe. Remember your breathing and allow yourself to FEEL the energies that will empower your spell. Steady

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your breathing and allow the energies to build up in intensity or focus, breathe and verbalize for at least fifteen minutes. When either is achieved, strike your match at the moment just before you release this energy from your aura. Breath out slowly to release your own connection with this energy, light the leaf or paper and place it in your magic pot until it burns to ashes. Take the ashes to a spot where you can sprinkle it on the earth and ask the earth to remove your obstacles. Leave an offering of cornmeal or seeds. Mother will appreciate her bird children being fed also. Maybe there really is something to it. What do you think?

Color and Uncluttering

When we get up and get dressed we usually ask ourselves, “What color do I want to wear?” We all have a favorite color. A particular color becomes a favorite because we look well in that color or it makes us feel good, perky, energetic or attractive. Aside from making a fashion statement, through the ages, colors have been used for their mystical qualities. In the introduction, Ceremonial Chief WhiteEagle, talked about wearing any combination of color and all colors of the rainbow because these are the colors endowed by the Creator.

In the Kaballah of Jewish mysticism, every day, planet and angel have an assigned color to be worn in unison to either help absorb desired benefits or as an outward sign of dedication. This is done for matters of health, business and family.

Of all the colors, the color black probably holds the most interest and undeserved infamy. A dislike for the color black is rooted in two places, in my opinion. The first one is in the definition of good being white and evil being black. The second is the uses the black is associated with: death, Satanism, witchcraft, the night, shadows, the bad guy and all those other things we fear within our minds. In our society, we forget this is a Western perception. In science, black is the absence of light and hence color. In art, black is the result of ALL colors of the light spectrum being blended.

In ritual, witches and Wiccans often use black because it draws energy in (all colors of the light spectrum) and makes it available to

the adept for charging and sending out energy ripples. In candle work, black and white candles are used together so that black draws in and white sends out energy in a focused manner. In order to work with the color black we must not have any predisposed feelings that black is negative or the energy drawn in will be sent out tainted with the fear of our own thoughts. I personally worked very hard to neutralize any conditioning I had about the color black because otherwise, I would be deprived of the power this color transmits. I did not work with black until I successfully eliminated my own fears and bias in relation to this color. This having been said, let's see how black can work in conjunction with other colors.

Green is associated with health and growth, blue with healing and the element of water, red with courage, yellow with intuition or judgment, pink with protection and purple with healing of critical illnesses. If I am having a nagging episode of a disorder, such as a headache, after cleaning and dedicating a blue candle, I can draw in those healing energies more effectively if I wear black. The color black is being used as conduit tool that facilitates my work. With the white candle, I can focus on sending the situation (stress for example) out and away from myself. If I use water with this work, I might put my hand into the water and charge it with the energy I have absorbed from the blue candle and then rub my head with the water. If I am using water as a purge, I can put my hand in the water, draw from the blue candle and imagine its healing properties coursing through me and cleansing me. I can then focus on pushing that healing energy, now containing that which caused my headache, into the water. When finished, I put salt into the water (to neutralize negativity) and flush it down the toilet. We can use the same items in two different ways toward the same end. For the beginner, keep the process simple until you feel you have mastered it.

The significance of color and its properties can be used very subtly when we need energetic support. Wearing the color can help us bring about a desired effect on a given day, especially if we charge the clothes we are wearing to that meeting or to that final exam. Wearing a color associated with a totem animal spirit can also help us tap into

the wisdom and attributes of that spirit as we need it.

Color is an interesting topic. Western European countries use white for a wedding dress yet, in China, brides wear red. I have had Chinese American friends where one color is worn for the marriage ceremony and the other to the reception. Most of the Chinese families I have known, paint their walls white as a deterrent to misfortune and bad luck.

The most important thing about working with color, just like plants or herbs is to aim for not losing effectiveness in your work simply because you do not have a specific item. Using tried and true items do make for success. If you are a novice, it is easier to draw in the desired energies if you use standard “equipment” but, to the adept, whatever is at hand is suitable. The adept works with spirit energy as much as associated energy and if necessary, can create items that although they are invisible to the eye, do indeed exist on a spirit level. So, while we may begin with the discipline of using herbs, colors and such in their standard manner, majick ultimately frees us from even this convention if necessary.

I have a junk drawer (who doesn’t?) and although there are many times I would like to let things go and not bother with my daily cleaning routine, my house has to be in order. Not only do I dislike clutter, my work requires that my environment be neat and as orderly as much as possible. Don’t get me wrong, I have bad days when the dishes pile up and my worst vice is leaving coffee cups around the house. The important thing is I do get to it and I do straighten up. When I work majick, preparing is imperative.

For me, cleaning under these circumstances is not just dusting and mopping and vacuuming or getting my laundry done, folded and put away. It is doing my cats’ litter box area, cleaning my outside porch and spiritually cleansing my house. It can be an all-day or even two-day routine, depending on the work I have to do. It is especially important when clients come that my routine be done exactly. First, clients come with different energies and entities attached to them. This neutralizes any effect that may occur as a result of these uninvited guests. Many of my clients come because

they are stressed, worried or overwhelmed. Just about all them comment as soon as they come in on how tranquil and peaceful they feel in my home, especially in my spirit room. Second, I owe it to my spirits to provide them with an environment in which they will want to come in and work.

The Spanish believe piles of dirty clothes and general uncleanliness are inviting to mischievous spirits. This may be a cultural variation of “cleanliness is next to Godliness” but the next time you thoroughly clean your house, stop a moment and become aware of how different your environment FEELS. You may be surprised to notice that the air feels lighter, you feel more relaxed and suddenly at peace. Sometimes severe clutter actually divines the presence of negative forces that cause such confusion it becomes almost impossible to reclaim a home. Usually it is not just the house that is a mess; a client’s life is also cluttered with strife and problems.

I have worked with people who, before they could unclutter their home, actually had to be smudged, take spiritual baths and have their homes spiritually cleansed. This had to be done to remove the disrupter so that the client would no longer be immobilized in reclaiming their environment and lives. With the disrupter gone, they became able to take control of their lives again. Keep in mind, a really cluttered house can never be cleansed materially or spiritually. It is important that a home be uncluttered to maintain an airy, welcoming environment for positive forces and to be able to do proper house cleansings from time to time, if needed. This is where the trained mind can spiritually reach all those places that cannot be reached and purge those areas with by pulling in and then pushing out cleansing energy. So by combining spiritual and material tools, the task of purging a home of a disruptive spirit begins with the adept doing the spiritual cleansing after which the client will take prescribed spiritual baths and do other necessary spiritual work for further improvement.

In Feng Shui, the Asian discipline of arranging your house in a manner that obtains optimum benefits from positive energy (Chi’), uncluttering and color play a major role.

Certain things can interfere with the Chi' energy in a home that can result in money problems, sleeping disorders and tension. For example, in Feng Shui, bedrooms should be some shade of blue because blue encourages a quiet Chi' that aides in sleep. We Americans often store things in boxes under the bed. In Feng Shui, this interferes with the healing benefits of sleep itself. In order to keep good Chi' whirling about the home in a circular manner, Feng Shui recommends rounded out the corners in every room. This can be done by arranging furniture caddy-cornered, placing or hanging plants in corners or even placing baskets of rocks in corners. In Feng Shui, living by a cemetery, having a road run in front of your home and buildings nearby can all interfere with Chi' needed to balance one's life harmoniously. The use of mirrors and curtains when placed in the proper manner can insure that chi' energy be maintained. Feng Shui can be a fun and effective way to redecorate your home that promotes well being and spirituality. I highly recommend learning more about it.

Gifts of the Spirit

Gifts of the spirit are primarily in two categories: the gifts around us provided by the Creator and the gifts we receive or obtain as a result of choosing a spiritual path or discipline.

Of the gifts provided, we have the elements of air, earth, water and fire. These elements are each associated with a direction- east, west, north or south. The directions, are also gifts we can use to enhance change, healing (of mind, body and spirit), facilitate new beginnings or ventures and to accelerate a result. These characteristics of the directions are gifts available for us to use. In a majickal meditation or work, each element is placed in the direction with which it is related. This combination helps intensify the energy we require for our work. Different disciplines attribute difference characteristics to the directions and elements but whichever discipline you choose I suggest working with one element at a time and I think the following story will help you understand why.

If you recall the chapter on my hardships, you will recall it was an early winter, we had no heat or electricity and we were going to be evicted. The day our electricity was shut off was one of many extremely, despairing experiences. My mother was not doing well in the hospital, I had lost my job and well, you know the rest (but believe me, not all). In a rage of desperation, I decided to cast my first spell. I had just recently begun exploring earth religion but had never done a ritual. This day I simply had to do SOMETHING, anything that might make me less powerless so I set up the elements

in their respective directions (according to Wicca) and began my spell. I recall feeling energies swirling around me and if nothing else, I felt better and somehow comforted.

Well, shortly after doing this spell a tornado hit a nearby town. Our area is not known for tornadoes and the few that have occurred did not occur at this time of year. The irony is the tornado hit only two places: a town where it blew down an old, dead tree and one of our electric company's power plants some distance away! Coincidence or...? I felt badly for those people who were going to be inconvenienced but it was this experience that taught me my primary lessons. I would only work one direction at a time for a long, long, LONG time and I developed an awareness of the consequences that can result from imprecise and frankly, sloppy work. Such is the power of the elements in their proper places infused with intense energy of the mind. And the power that could create this can also recreate. This formulated power is a gift that the contemplative and trained mind can use to better conditions, situations, health or spirit.

We have the rocks, animals, plants and insect spirits that are all around for us to learn from and to guide us. One summer had been a very interesting one for us. We had our house sprayed all summer long by skunks, seen coyote (thought to be extinct in our area), had a bat fly in our house twice in one week. A grasshopper also found its way into our house! Most people would not make much of this other than considering this to be the nuisance of country life but, here is what I see.

Skunks represent attracting and repelling people. I have had some friendships that have taken odd turns and each in directions away from me. Skunk also represents being respected. I have been embroiled in a human rights for the elderly dispute with our county for the better part of the year and if not liked, I have earned some concerned respect from those parties.

The grasshopper represents leaps forward being offered. This can be spiritual as well as career wise. This year has provided me with more of a sense of purpose and creative opportunity at a more rapid

pace than before as well as the most spiritual growth in a short period of time to date.

Bats represent death in order to be reborn, usually in a spiritual sense but, this has also been a year in which I have suffered seven personal losses that forced me to determine do I really believe what I say I do? Of course, my belief and truth never wavered but the sorrow made my own spiritual path difficult to practice (I still walked my path). With each loss a part of who I am died because each of those that died shared my history that is my past that made me who I am today. So, in essence their death made me refocus on who I really am and in redefining myself, I went through a rebirth. The bats were reminders of that which is perennial which is death and rebirth. Bats also signify what you fear as your greatest enemy as well as the darkest part of ourselves. During my sorrow, grief and rage I repeatedly had to examine my fear of losing people I love as well as realizing the darkest part of myself is my rage. But Bat spirit also teaches that we must embrace our own darkness to see how bright our light can truly be. That year was very dark for me in this respect. It has been interesting learning about the subsequent light.

Coyote is the trickster or the equivalent of Murphy's Law in Animal Medicine. I have felt dogged by coyote on many an occasion (pardon the pun) and in this regard, according to Native tradition, coyote is my shadow totem or all that I fear but have not learned to master in order to stop this repetitive theme. Coyote is a hard teacher for the mastering of coyote requires learning how to laugh at how things can play out, even in the circumstances of hardship. I'm sure you will agree that in my hardest of times, I was hard pressed to find anything to laugh about.

The other day, my husband and I were in the barn and he was shoveling wet shavings that had fallen under the floorboards of one of our horse's stalls. There are rocks under the floor boards as well because we live in the mountains and rocks are everywhere. As he attempted to push a small rock, he lightly tapped it with the shovel and it suddenly split lengthwise in half. That rock absorbed whatever negativity was around us. As a result, it shattered. The stone hematite

works in a similar way. My daughter has had numerous hematite rings. They have all just slipped off her finger and shattered. They were doing their job. Did you ever have a glass just suddenly break in your hand and you did nothing to make it break? That is negativity being neutralized. And glass, made from sand is the diviner.

Think how quickly and suddenly fire can be ignited. How quickly it can ravage. The gift of fire is its intense speed and this gift is excellent for speeding up matters that are urgent to a desired conclusion. Because fire is so quick and powerful, the ultimate in focus of thought is important. For as quickly as we may think so will that energy be sent out with the strike of a match. Traditionally, the gift of water reflects healing and cleansing which is why it is the main base ingredient for spiritual baths and cleansings of an environment. Air, usually represented by incense signifies new beginnings and is effective to use when we are feeling stagnant in our lives. Anything of the earth (dirt and rock) represent change. If you think of the seasons and the cyclical changes of the earth, use of this element can assist us in being able to accept and create change. We have the gift of the power of Creator, his angels and all of our guides and protections that are all available to empower our own spirit, which of itself is a gift.

Do you have a favorite flower that lifts your spirit? Is it a bunch of roses, lilacs or daisies in your home that makes it feel brighter? The spirit of a flower transcends its appearance. There is power in its color as well as its scent. Think about some of the reasons your favorite flower makes a difference when you have it in your home. Recall the chapter on color and consider how you might begin to view color from a different point of view.

Think about weather. Everyone loves a cloudless blue sky with the sun shining and I do too but, I am also sensitive to stormy types of weather and enjoy it! My favorite days on a beach included going during a storm and watching the surge of the surf break. Seeing a beach so gray as to look silver under the darkening clouds of a storm is very exhilarating and a real thunderstorm is simply glorious to me. I love the feel of the wind and at night, how suddenly there is a

glimpse of day all by the flick of mighty lightning! I am not frightened by it nor am I frightened by thunder. The louder, the better.

When my daughter was a little girl, she would sometimes be frightened by the crash of thunder. I always used to tell her that the thunder was the Creator clapping hands because someone had done something good that was pleasing. She was no longer afraid of storms. A part of me still sees thunder as the Mighty's round of applause. For those who dare, there is a mighty gift of power at times such as these. I recall that recently, I had a gathering to honor Hecate, the Moon Mother. We were outdoors and were putting our offerings on the altar when it suddenly began to thunder and rain. The odd thing was it rained on everything except us and then it thundered. It thundered all throughout our petitions. As soon as we were finished, the rain and thunder stopped. As soon as we got back to my house to feast, it down poured and thundered all night. This experience was a gift of acknowledgement of our dedication and the weather was the communicator!

I want to pause here for a moment and look again at tools that can gift us with insight. There are runes, stones with druid markings that are read like cards. There are all varieties of tarot cards, crystals and crystal balls, water and flame. For many, learning the meanings of these tools helps them to eventually obtain broader and specific information. I have never memorized the meanings of any of the four decks use when I read cards. To me, they are the dial to a cosmic telephone. I think when I was younger and new to all this, it became important to me to be able to shut things out. I have had some scary experiences and have seen some things that were terrifying and so, in an attempt to filter out the unwanted, I made cards the way in which I could open and close sessions.

As I have shared with you, as you advance, as I have, you can just forget the concept of total filtering because as you become more adept you will see more, even if you do not want to. I don't work well with crystals, crystal balls or water as divining tools. That is not my "gift," but I work well with fire and water not as divining tools but as purges and to produce a speedy result. Like so many

starting to explore the mystical, I used to use a Ouija Board. The disc would move around the board without my directly touching it. But, experience has taught me that this is a dangerous devise because any unknown entity with any type of agenda has an open invitation to just come on in. What would you do if it were malevolent? Again, the untrained should not do anything like this and honestly, adept people generally just do not bother with a Ouija board. For the most part, however, the other instruments or tools can do much to expand the spiritual gifts we each have within us and historically have been used by shamans, witches and spiritualists since whenever the beginning was. So, they all have their function and purpose.

There is another gift one might receive as a result of learning these arts. With me, it was unexpected and not really welcomed. It is astral travel. Astral travel is when your spirit actually leaves the body and wanders in the spirit realm or in the material realm. My first experiences were extremely disconcerting because I just didn't like the experience and would resist it. I would find myself in a tunnel in which there were multicolored lights glowing all around me. I felt as if I were moving with incredible speed, like on a roller coaster. It would feel PHYSICAL. Keep in mind it felt physical because as a novice, I could not disassociate myself from the tactile senses of the body. I would fight and try to mentally tell myself it was a dream or that I could control it. Eventually, I would and then, like free falling without a parachute, I would crash land into my body on the bed and jolt awake shaking as if I had physically fallen. I would finally get back to sleep and it would happen again, over and over all night long.

In time, I realized this was a gift I was supposed to be willing to receive and worked hard on venturing astrally. Most times, I would just leave and wander. I would go to streets and places and then just come back. Sometimes I would remember or sometimes I would not but, I did learn how to know when I traveled astrally. Even though I would never wake up, when I woke up I always felt as if I had been up all night (which I had). Astral travel when unexpected can get you into trouble. You can lose your way out there so I have learned

to ask my Creator to provide me with protection should I travel and I then instruct my protections to watch over my body if I roam. I then program myself to wake up instantly if any threat to my person (by person or spirit) is to occur or if I am going to be disturbed. Once, when traveling I landed inside a cemetery not far from my old house in Brooklyn, New York. I looked around and thought to myself, "I overshot my landing." Suddenly, I was assaulted by a dark looking spirit. I willed myself back home and woke up but when I went back to sleep, I was attacked again.

This went on for weeks. I would wake up and two things would happen. One of my protections would stand in front of me and keep the entity at bay and the other was my husband Ralph (before we were married) who would astrally appear as well. I consulted with a friend who was an adept at Santeria. He told me I had gone to the realm of the Baron of the Cemetery without invitation and this was how he was showing his displeasure at my disrespect. He gave me a ritual to do at midnight on a night when he would work to help me convey my apologies. That night, although awake, I was unable to move. My bedroom was FILLED with spirits arguing on my behalf and those condemning my actions. My advocates won and I went to sleep. I was never bothered again by the Baron.

As time passed, I learned how to travel. Now, I travel to 'school' where I receive instruction that consciously, I rarely remember but it doesn't matter because my spirit has all the information for future reference. I have seen my beloved dead, I have visited realms of blue water so beautiful they cannot be described, I have flown over my area and walked around my house unnoticed by my family.

This astral body is a major aspect of Hawaiian mysticism especially in healing. The kahunas believe the astral body is attached to the physical one by a spiritual umbilical. They also believe the astral body and physical one are mirror reflections of each other. If someone is sick and is brought to a kahuna, they will not focus on the physical body. They heal the astral body and since one reflects the other, the physical body heals. So there are spiritual gifts and energies that are around us to be used as well as material gifts.

But I think it is more important to sometimes look not so much at what is around for us to use. We also need to contemplate the things (or gifts) we gain just by pursuing a spiritual path.

We feel more connected to our Creator. I never felt this growing up but I can tell you now, it is great feeling to know you have big guns looking out for you. You are entitled to feel this way. It is our right and destiny to be close to Creator. You develop relationships that will never leave you in the company of your angels, protections and guides. I personally think life is a void without joy, hope and gratitude. (Been there. Done that.) Life has no purpose if we give up on it. Through my hardship, I truly learned gratitude. Just waking up and having a roof over my head on any given day, taught me to give thanks for the blessings of the day. I have been able to find to find awe because the place I am now is so different than during those dark days. It was painful but, I learned trust. It is a wonderful thing to be able to trust in something. You learn not to worry for you will be provided with what you need (although not always what you want).

There was a time I missed so many blue skies and autumn leaves because I was blinded by fear, sorrow and rage. I could not see past my pain and was so blinded by bitterness I missed out the gifts of sight—sunsets, sunrises, flowers blooming and the potential that was within myself. So, there is a return to childlike awe and awe is like the best of presents which we know usually come in huge packages or very small ones. How we view a day can be the same. Great events may happen or very small ones but, if we look, there is awe to be found in all of them. What do we do when sorrow takes those we love away? We grieve, we mourn and remember what we believe for that is what will keep us on the path that leads to seeing them again.

Some people discover their gifts in comfortable circumstances, some find them as a result of overwhelming situations and others merely have them foisted upon them.

I have shared with you my truth because years ago I was given the goal of writing a book that would tie all disciplines together. At the time, I was just beginning to explore spirituality and simply could not see myself as ever being able to do a project like this. Since that

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time, I have had a life filled with careers, creativity, family life and spiritual growth. This book, is the evolution of a life path and was truly given to me late one night. All of a sudden, the words came and this book was a gift from my spirits to my spirit and to yours.

Above all else, let us not overlook the greatest gift of all given to each of us by the Creator: The power and gift of our own spirit.

Merry meet and Merry Leave but most all,
BLESSED BE!

Daily Vesper

By Cate Cavanagh, ©2000

I ask you-the almighty-the creator of us all
to help me appreciate those of great deeds and of small.
I thank you for the evening hours, it is then that I can rest
and thank you for my labors- for helping me do my best.

I thank you for my blessings-for the sky, the moon and sun
for the trees that rustle in the breeze, the animals-everyone.
I thank you for the whispers that you send my way,
help me to understand what you are trying to say.

I thank you for my riches-for food and life and love
that I receive and that I feel for family, friends-everyone.
Help me to be content with whatever I achieve
for in the end I am not alone, you always meet my needs.

I thank you for the seasons-the green-the flames and snow,
I thank you for what they teach me-patience, hard work and love.
I ask that you always walk with me so I will not be afraid
and that you touch the weary so they may feel the same.

This simple prayer I make to you is but a humble try
to say thank you for being there all those trying times.
Although I know you know it, I still need to say
I now see how the world is when you guide my way.

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So for today and everyday, here is my little prayer
for myself and those I love and those suffering everywhere.
Grant us peace and grant us calm to be able to carry on,
grant us health, faith and trust as we trudge along.

Grant me but these few things and the bird and cricket song
so I may touch you amidst the noise. Please help me to be strong.
Keep well alive within me gratitude for everything you do;
help me to remember to take a moment and give my thanks to you.

Well, I have to go now-you keep me busy, you do.
Each day is an adventure-I don't know what you'll teach me to do.
So, I'm on my mission- whatever I must do
and dedicate this day, my work as service unto you.

Epilogue

Gifts of the Spirit was an effort to present an overview of non-traditional belief systems. This effort, I hope, has provided a kind of road map for further inquiry. It is the result of my years of research, experience and adopted practices. Its purpose was to make it easier for the interested reader to sample the subject matter. The various systems I have only summarized offered me renewed and unique insight and actual change in my life, outlook and circumstances.

But to be spiritual is to often be in isolation because the majority of people simply do not understand mysticism and spiritualism. Educators have debunked the Old Ways as mythology, superstition and primitive in favor of contemporary science. Yet, in the last thirty years, people so educated have seen for themselves the havoc that “progress” has created in ecosystems, ethics and political institutions. As a backlash to religions that focus on Heaven as the end to all of the means, even educated people such as doctors, teachers, writers and lawyers secretly sought a more meaningful way to handle day to day living with peace, dignity and graciousness.

Native American prophecy predicts that in the last days, Great Spirit will offer to ALL nations a calling to reconnect with Mother Earth. The truth is, mankind’s survival may depend on shifting current values to older, wiser ways in order to offset the despair that is so rampant in the world.

I was ‘educated’ in debunking learning institutions. But, something within me kept telling me that my learned professors had

it all wrong. Having experienced some unusual things in youth, I began to observe more, read more and THINK more. Eventually, I could not avoid the fact that there was something to my college games with friends and the more I researched, the more I learned the values of older, non-Western religion and thought. There is a type of day-to-day morality that pervades these belief systems. Not that Western European religion does not have moral principles but older belief systems incorporated them into waking, sleeping, doing day to day into mystic systems. There is an order to things without which there can be confusion and ineffectiveness. Cultural differences withstanding, it is this order that requires discipline be practiced by the various systems. Whether in and of the mind alone or with the aid of tools, these disciplines are ritual.

There comes a time when one's spiritual journey must become a discreet one especially since the majority of people are skeptical and critical. As I realized the power of mind, I had to acknowledge power in others' minds as well so I shared my insights and changing perspectives with only a trusted few along the way because the age of witch hunts are not over. People still fear what they do not understand. Today, people can be put away for far less then seeing the things that are really do "bump in the night."

My spiritual journey was a solitary one until some years ago. One day, after about a year after my husband and I had begun saying to each other that we needed to meet other spiritually inclined people did we began to meet those few who, here and there, have also discovered and lived their spiritual truths.

I was no longer alone.

Thanks be to the Creator of us all through whom only good things come and Blessed Be!!!

I have included a list of recommended books and resources so that anyone who simply would like to know where and how to learn more can begin.

Glossary

Agnostic- One who doubts the existence of God

Animal medicine- Native belief system that involves animism and divination in the interpretation of messages animals and animal spirits bring.

Animism- System of belief that hold all things, animals and non-animals, have souls.

Atheist- One who does not believe God exists.

Aromatherapy- Use of the healing powers of different floral, woody and other earth scents in soaps, candles and incense to produce effects of tranquility and enhanced sense of well being within the mood and spirit.

Bath (spiritual)- A combination of herbs, flowers and plants prepared in a water -based solution to cleanse a person of negative forces and to promote mental, emotional and spiritual well being.

Bordo- Place between this life and the next in which deities of deception taunt and test a transitioning spirit in order to determine that person's existence in the next life.

Boriqua- Taino Tribal name for the original island now called Puerto Rico.

Buddhism- A belief system founded on the principle of its founder, Buddha who had abandoned his princehood and all of his princely possessions to seek truth.

Casting-Producing a work based on mystical premises toward a desired effect.

Charging- Pouring focused energy into herbs, talismans and other tools as part of a work or spell in casting.

Chi’- The natural healing and balanced energy of the body that maintains health according to Asian tradition.

Christian tradition- Belief system that accepts Jesus Christ as the Messiah (as prophesized in the Old Testament) and that entrance into Heaven can only be attained by accepting Him as Messiah and Son of God as well as his teachings.

Creator- Great Spirit, God.

Directions- North, South, East and West.

Dharma- the result of making a positive outcome result from a negative or upsetting circumstance(Karma).

Earth based religion- Any belief system that not based on Judeo-Christian teaching and involves observance of the earth’s cycles and/or animals.

Elf- A forest spirit that lives in woods and caves.

ESP- Extra Sensory Perception, “Sixth” Sense, precognition.

Eightfold Path- In Buddhism it is the fourth of the Four Noble Truths. The path is comprised of Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation.

Faery- (Fairy, Faerie) Small forest spirit in miniature human form.

Feng Shui- Asian practice utilizing colors, furniture arrangement and directions to health, relationships and money situations.

Four Noble Truths- (of Buddhism) are Suffering exists, suffering is the result of our attachment to desires, suffering stops when our attachment to desires cease and freedom from suffering is found within the Eightfold path.

Gatekeeper – spirit guardians or ‘keys’ of the directions of North, South, East and West (Native Tradition)

Gnome- Misshapen earth spirit said to guard hidden treasures.

Hell- That place of eternal suffering as punishment for sins and non-acceptance of Jesus’ teachings according to the Christian system of belief.

Hinduism- Middle Eastern religion most commonly known for reincarnation and caste system based on social status which, it is believed, is a result of past lives (reward or punishment).

Judaism- Adheres to the Old Testament and the belief that the Messiah has yet to come.

Kabbalah- Jewish mysticism that works with colors, astronomy, angels and ritual.

Kahuna- Hawaiian shaman or medicine person.

Karma- Predestined event based on past actions and actions in past lives.

Limbo- In Catholic teaching, Limbo is a pleasant place where unbaptized babies go to live eternally without the presence of God.

Majick – Mystical belief system of living in balance with the earth, observing its cycles, and casting spells to better conditions as opposed to the theatrical connotation of “magic.”

Metamorphosis-Transformation, transition, change.

Metaphysics-Study of unusual, non-scientific and difficult to explain events that are often mystical in nature.

Native-Pertaining to indigenous people of the Americans. Can also be used to refer other original cultures i.e. “Celts”, Africans etc.

Negative arrows- (in Feng Shui) Deteriorating energies that are counter productive to health, wealth and well being that are created by certain physical interferences in the natural flow of energy in an environment.

Ouija board- A flat board of letters and “Yes” and “No” words in which answers to questions can be divined by a disk that moves to or spells out the answer.

Prophet Mohammed –Author of Qu’ran (Koran)

Qu’ran- Muslim holy text

Reincarnation- System of thought that ascribes to the belief that souls live many lifetimes in order to pay karmic debt and to obtain

the opportunity to elevate in spirit power and level of the spiritual hierarchy.

Satanism- The worship of Satan. There are often sacrifices.

Shaman- A person who uses herbs, directions and items provided by the earth to promote healing of the subject in mind, body and spirit.

Smoking- burning of dried plants and/or incense in order to cleanse an environment with the smoke created by fanning it in every room, closet and corner.

Smudging- As in smoking, items are burned but instead of the environment, a person is fanned with the smoke to remove any negativity that may be hovering around the person.

Specism- Philosophy in which animals and certain categories of animals are deemed substandard to humans.

Spell- A majickal work toward a goal or desired outcome.

Spirit power- The power of the soul to know the wisdom of ages that is present as a result of previous lives or contained within the memory banks of our own DNA.

Spiritualism- Practice in which any mystical discipline may be included in addition to channeling/hearing and working with spirits.

Talisman- An item prepared for the purpose of protection, health or luck.

Taino Tribe- Original people of Boriken (Puerto Rico).

Tirrukkal- One of numerous Hindu inspirational texts.

Wicca- witchcraft, an earth religion with a female Creator as its primary deity.

Yoga- Discipline of meditative exercise emphasizing focus on the moment to alleviate external stresses and challenges, including health, often based on the movements of animals.

Voodoo/Santeria- Practice based on African belief system. Deities are often blended with Catholic saints; Focus is on seven major deities and their different aspects and offspring.

Eclectic Resources

Celebrate the Earth, Laurie Cabot, Llewellyn

Earth Power, Richard Cunningham, Llewellyn

God is Red, A Native View of Religion, Vine DeLoria, Jr., Fulcrum Publishing, 1994

The Greatest Miracle in the World, Og Mandino, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing, 1977

The Medicine Wheel, Earth Astrology by Sun Bear and Wabun, Prentice Hall Press, 1986

Psychocybernetics, Creative Living for Today, Maxwell Matlz, Pocket Books, 1970

Quantum Healing, Deepok Chopra, Bantam Books, 1989

Soul Mates, Thomas Moore, Harper Perennial, 1940

The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success, Deepok Chopra, Amber-Allen Publishing, 1995

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The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Translated by Robert A. Thurman,
Bantam Books, 1998

Your Word is Your Wand, Florence Scovel Shin, Simon and Schuster,
1989

The Secret Silence Behind Miracles, Max Freedom Long, Kosmon
Press, 1948

Feng Shui and Aromatherapy by Paula N. Quick,
www.thearomaconcierge.com

Gifts of the Spirit website: http://dragonhame.com/Cate_Cavanagh