

Frequently Asked Questions
Answered by Sandra Ingerman
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These are questions and answers that I have been answering in my courses for many years now. These questions and answers will provide much assistance for you.

Please note that I have shared a wealth of information on shamanic journeying in the 90-minute recording "Introduction to Shamanic Journeying".

I know in a modern-day culture we want to try and mentally understand the spiritual practice of shamanism. But the practice of shamanism cannot be mentally understood.

The key is to take some deep breaths and relax into your journeys. Let your experience be your guide. Perform some journeys where you just relax and get to know your helping spirits. Lie on the earth in the invisible realms and connect with the heartbeat of the earth. Also connect with the heartbeat of our circle.

In the practice of shamanism there is a fine line between trying too hard and not trying at all.

Shamanism is a practice of direct revelation, and you can ask your own helping spirits all the questions that are on your mind.

And stay open to the surprise element in your journeys. You might meet helping spirits you never thought you would meet. And you might receive a healing while you were in a journey that you did not expect.

Remember shamanism is a life long practice!! Be persistent!
Many ask where you can purchase a drum. There are so many amazing drummers in the world. On www.sandraingerman.com I list just a few resources for drums and rattles.

Some of you might be dealing with issues where you need the healing work performed in your behalf from an experienced shamanic practitioner. I have trained brilliant shamanic practitioners you can work with. You can see the list of practitioners and teachers I trained by visiting www.shamanicteachers.com. Please remember shamanism works on the spiritual aspect of illness. You might need to combine your shamanic work with getting medical treatment or psychotherapeutic help. This need varies from person to person.

Question: I work with unity consciousness and have a hard time working with helping spirits as intermediaries and also embracing the dark and the light? Can you address this?

Answer: I work with both. And we will work with both in our time together. On an egoic and personality level I experience myself as separate from the divine, and I receive comfort in working with helping/compassionate spirits. In the transcendent realms and the world of spirit there is only unity, no separation, light, and love. There is no concept of evil or even illness. And also, we humans are spirit and are always in our divine perfection and light. This is all a paradox we learn to dance in our lifetime. As an ego we were born to evolve and grow during our life in "earth school." We are part of nature and

actually are nature. And as part of nature there is the light and the dark. There are shadow states that help us to grow and evolve. When we experience ourselves as spirit there is only oneness and divine light and perfection. We must dance the paradox and embrace all.

Question: When you said "human" I found a live human teacher, as well as spirit beings. Now I'm wondering if that is all right.

Answer: Typically the Teachers we meet in the Upper World are deceased. But there are some people who meet a Teacher who is still alive. Usually this person has a spiritual life and is available in the different worlds.

Question: You keep encouraging us to ask our helping spirits our questions instead of you. What are the benefits to this:

Answer: To get the most out of your practice of shamanic journeying it is important for you to learn how to present your questions and issues to your helping spirits.

When I learned the practice of shamanic journeying my ordinary reality teacher would not answer one question I asked. By having to learn how to journey and bring my questions to my own helping spirits sculpted me into the shamanic practitioner, healer, and teacher I am today.

When you keep asking people to help answer your questions and help you interpret your journeys you end up getting distracted from going to the depth that the practice of shamanism has to offer you.

Question: I am frustrated. I am still having issues journeying.

Answer: Please review all the instructional and supplemental material that I shared. I give suggestions of things you can try to help you find your doorway into the invisible realms.

When I shared that I never met a person who could not journey that is true. But I have met plenty of people who it took months before they found their own way. But they did and are all so happy they kept with it.

Shamanic journeying is not a passive practice.

Make sure you explore drumming, rattling, dancing, and singing when you journey. This helps so many enter into the non-ordinary realms.

Be persistent! Relax! Don't try so hard! Shamanism is a life path. You will find your own doorway in with time and patience.

Question: My helping spirit continues to morph and change forms. Can you explain this?

Answer: In reality your helping spirits are formless beings. They take on different forms to provide comfort for you and also to share teachings with you. It is common for the spirits to morph forms in one journey or even over time.

Question: Sometimes my journeys are so clear and vivid. And there are times I journey where everything seems fuzzy or I cannot find any of my helping spirits. Can you explain?

Answer: Your journeywork will go through different “seasons”. There are times when your journeys will be clear and rich. Then there will be times when the helping spirits want you to enter into a period of reflection and silence as new “seeds” and growth germinate within. You will learn how to flow with and accept the changing cycles and seasons of your journeys.

Question: Sometimes when I read about everyone's experience they all seem so happy and blissful. I am in a dark place right now.

Answer: We are part of nature. The sun goes up and the sun goes down. Summer comes and then cycles into new seasons leading to Winter - the time of darkness. The bliss takes us to the heights of consciousness and the shadow and dark times take us to the depths of consciousness. The light and the dark are who we are. To deny the dark is to deny life. We came here as humans to experience the range of experiences from joy to despair. We came here to grow. Life that stops growing dies.

Question: I feel very emotional or agitated after I journey. Can you explain this?

Answer: If you feel spacy, very emotional, or agitated it is a sign you have not returned fully from your journey. Repeat your return. You can listen to return beat again. Or you can take 2 sticks and click them together in a return beat. Slowly retrace your steps. This works every time.

Question: I was taught in other workshops that you should only ask one question per journey? You suggest you can ask more than one question in a journey. I am confused.

Answer: In native shamanic cultures shamans do not work with such rigid rules. You really want to remember that shamanism is a practice of direct revelation, and you need to explore what works for you in your own journeys. There are no outside authorities in shamanism.

Once you have developed a relationship with your helping spirits you will find yourself engaging with them in multiple ways in your journeys. Sometimes you will find that stating one intention in a journey is all you want to do. But there will be some journeys where you can ask more than one question.

There are times when I journey when I bring a list of questions to my power animal, and I can get them all answered. I perform a lot of long-distance healing for people, and due to the number of clients I have I do perform more than one healing per journey.

Do not limit what you can do within a journey. But you will discover how much you can do over time. And you might journey and present a list of questions to a helping spirit and find that one question is so deep and involved that you can only stick to that one issue or question for the journey to get the depth of the guidance and assistance needed.

Question: Why do we always use the words “helping spirits” and “compassionate spirits” when we do our preparation work to welcome the helping spirits and then state our intention for our journey? Why can't we call in any spirits?

Answer: When we die, and everything goes “right” our soul transcends back to a transcendent reality

and back to Source and a state of oneness. In the practice of shamanism, the transcendent realities are in the Upper World and Lower Worlds.

We live here in the Middle World. The Middle World is our earthly realm where we came from spirit and take on a body to experience the joys of being in a body and all that life has to offer. We grow and evolve here. It is "Earth School".

Sometimes (not always) when a person suffers a traumatic death such as murder, war, suicide, being in an accident, a drug overdose, a terrorist attack, and so on the soul gets stuck in the Middle World. The soul might not know he or she is deceased. Sometimes when a shamanic practitioner journeys to meet the souls of the deceased who died in an accident years prior the souls are still milling around waiting for the police and ambulances to come. They do not know they died. Sometimes a soul does not want to cross over from the Middle World into the transcendent realms because they are attached to loved ones or to their life here.

These souls become stuck and end up roaming the land or possessing another person.

Shamans heal both the living and the deceased. How they heal the deceased is by performing psychopomp work. Training in this way of working is required. The shaman acts as a leader for souls and meets up with a soul or souls stuck here in the Middle World and helps them to cross over into the transcendent realms.

When you begin journeying you might not know if you are meeting a soul that is "stuck" here or a helping spirit if you are journeying in the Middle World. To avoid meeting a soul that needs healing set your intention that you want to meet and work with a helping spirit/ a compassionate spirit. This is just good discipline to stick with when you journey into any world in the invisible realms.

When a person practices shamanism and calls in any spirits before journeying or performing a ceremony any spirits might come. This includes stuck souls who might need help in leaving this earth plane. When you unintentionally call in any spirits you might end up possessed by a roaming spirit who needs to be guided back to Source.

And of course once you have a helping spirit such as a power animal, guardian spirit, or Teacher you can always call them to you in a journey if you have any questions about another spirit you have met up with to identify if this spirit needs help or is a transcendent spirit.

To avoid any issues always state your invocations and intentions by thanking the helping and compassionate spirits who are joining with you in partnership. By doing this you will only have spirits showing up who are from the transcendent realms.

There are helping and compassionate spirits who live in the Middle World. And in this course, we will be working with elements and nature spirits who have a lot to teach us about living a life of honor and respect as we walk on this earth.

In indigenous cultures shamans work with a wealth of helping spirits in the Lower, Middle, and Upper Worlds.

Question: What are some examples of the helping/compassionate spirits that shamans work with:

Answer: Shamans can work with a variety of helping spirits such as power animals, the elements-earth, air, water, fire, other nature beings such as birds, sea mammals, invertebrates, reptiles, insects, trees, plants, plankton, moss, algae, rocks, crystals, microorganisms, fairies, elves, forest guardians, angels, the spirit of the mountain, ancestors, descendants, Teachers in human form, and the list goes on.

Question: Do I need to protect myself while journeying? And I am a person who takes on the energies of others while seeing clients? How do I protect myself from taking on unwanted energies?

Answer: Please understand that we live in a culture that plants seeds of fear throughout our culture conditioning. We are trained to fear things that cannot be explained. So often people step into the practice of shamanic journeying wondering what danger lurks.

The key principle to remember about shamanic journeying is it is a discipline. Nothing happens in a journey that is out of your control. So you always want to start your work by setting an intention that you are only calling in helping and compassionate spirits. And then remember you always have a choice to go up, down, move left, move right, explore a place you are in, talk with a spirit who shows up or move away from it. You can call your power animal, guardian spirit, Teacher to you in a journey. When journeying in the Lower and Upper Worlds you are in a transcendent reality where only love exists.

And in ordinary reality if you feel you have a hard time creating boundaries where your work requires you to work with the public you can imagine yourself in a translucent egg that protects your field of energy so that you do not take on unwanted energies from others. And also, the classic shamanic way is to ask your power animal, guardian spirit, or Teacher to fill you with power so there are no "openings" in your energetic field. In this way you do not have to take on unwanted feelings or energies of others. This is true for people who are psychotherapists, doctors, lawyers, nurses, massage therapists, waiters and waitresses, and so on.

You can experience your own spiritual light flowing through you which is the highest form of protection.

In my shamanic healing practice, I have seen a lot of very ill clients who are in service professions. They never learned how to set a boundary so that they do not take others' emotions and energies being sent. And they never learned how to stop others from pulling on their energy and vitality. This is the cause of many types of illness and also "burn out".

Please note: This next question was asked by some experienced practitioners of shamanism who are part of our group.. If you are just starting the practice of shamanic journeying this is not information you need at this time.

Question: What is the difference between shamanic journeying and mediumship?

Answer: Throughout Asia, Africa, and a number of other locations in the world shamans are mediums. There are different levels of mediumship.

When most of us journey we visit our helping spirit and we communicate them. Some people when they journey, they become their helping spirit and can actually see through the eyes of their helping spirit.

With some shamans and shamanic practitioners they call their helping and compassionate into the Middle World and merge with them. This means the helping spirit enters the body of the practitioner and speaks and heals through them. This is a very basic definition of mediumship. I have to keep this simple as the topic of mediumship is beyond the scope of this course.

I can merge with my Upper World Teacher Isis and bring her through to help others. In some workshops I teach I ask her to speak through me and answer questions posed by participants in the circle. I am not a full medium. This means I am very aware of myself, and I am listening to everything Isis is sharing with the group. And I have a full memory of the experience after it is over, and I have disengaged from her.

In full mediumship the helping spirit moves into the shaman's body and the consciousness of the shaman "goes away" for a bit of time. The helping spirit uses the body of the practitioner to talk to clients or a group or heal members of the community. With full mediumship the shaman is not aware of what is happening during this process and has no memory of this after. Shamans who are mediums work with an assistant who drums for them and helps them in any way they need during or after the experience when they have fully disengaged from the helping spirit.

There are many people who are not trained who "dabble" in mediumship work and were not trained how to work with discipline to only call in helping and compassionate spirits. Sometimes these practitioners end up calling in spirits in the Middle World who need help transcending simply because they were experimenting and did not learn a discipline.

I am sharing this in this section as some of the participants in our circle also are trained in mediumship work. Those of you who are doing some mediumship work make sure you are disciplined and only work with helping and compassionate spirits. This is done completely through intention. If you call in a helping and compassionate that is the spirit who appears to you. But again, teaching more on this topic is beyond the scope of this course.

Question: I find the drumming too fast and feel too rushed when I listen to the track. Is there any other way to work with journeying to an instrument besides the drum?

Answer: I know some people have a hard time with the drum because it feels too intense. And for some people many of the shamanic drumming CDs available provide drumming that is too fast. Listening to Native American flute music will help. I recorded a CD "Soul Journeys: Music for Shamanic Practice" where there are tracks with different shamanic instruments besides the drum. And there is a beautiful journey track with Tibetan bowls and fairy bells. You can even journey to Pachelbel in D Canon which brings people into the theta state. There are other classical music pieces that will do this. And you can record your own drumming track on a digital recorder with a very slow drumbeat. Many people prefer to journey to the rattle instead of the drum.

Question: What is the shamanic viewpoint on sharing the identity of your helping spirits and even your spirit's name?

Answer: In some shamanic cultures it is taught never to share the identity of your helping spirits or spirit name as you give away your power when you do this. In some shamanic cultures by sharing your power animal and spirit name your community can honor the strength and gift that your spiritual connection brings to the entire community. So there is no agreement in shamanic cultures about whether to share or not share. I advise people to consult with their own helping spirits on this issue. My spiritual teacher

Isis is happy for me to share her identity. But my own guardian spirit/power animal that I have worked with for over 35 years has asked me not to share his identity with others. In shamanism there is also a difference between "bragging" and sharing. It is known in shamanism when we "brag" about our power we lose it. So we always need to share from a place of place of humility.

Question: How do you personally use shamanic journeying as a spiritual practice for yourself versus other practices where you simply trust your inner knowing moment to moment.

Answer: I use it all. I journey and consult with my helping spirits, I get intuitive messages from the depth of my soul while I write, take walks in nature, wash the dishes, and even when I shower. I trust answers that come through my intuitive knowing whenever I need to made a decision or deal with an issue during my daily activities. I have a wealth of ways that my helping spirits communicate with me and then I also combine that guidance with what comes up from the depth of my own inner knowing. I love to take walks in nature and also write as I bring through so much information through these activities.

Question: I do not feel I am having success with entering into a journey or meeting a helping spirit.

Answer: Please listen to and read my suggestions that I have shared in the resources on the homepage. You might be too focused on trying to see visual images instead of opening up the wealth of your other senses. If nothing works I suggest "faking it until you make it". Just start by "making up" a journey using your imagination. At some point your brain waves will shift, and you will find yourself deep into a beautiful and unexpected journey.

Question: I can't stop my mind chatter to even begin to enter into the non-ordinary realms.

Answer: Do the preparation work as I have suggested in the resources on the homepage. You cannot expect to jump deeply into the non-ordinary realms until you disengage from your ordinary activities, thoughts, and concerns. If your mind comes into a journey and you hear yourself saying to yourself that you are making this all up, and you are crazy for engaging in this practice just agree with your mind. Don't fight your mind. Think about how old you are now and how long you have been conditioned by society that has taught you that the non-ordinary realms do not exist. Be persistent!! Don't give up!!

Question: When I tried to journey to the Lower World, I ended up going to the Upper World.

Answer: I find that some people are more naturally drawn to journeying in the Lower World and some to the Upper World. Follow your experience versus trying to follow my directions. As you continue your practice you will travel to the different worlds with ease.

Question: Is it helpful to journal after performing a journey.

Answer: It is important to write down your experiences. They do tend to drift away after you journey. So, taking notes after you journey will be helpful to keep a record on your experiences. Also, by reviewing your notes that you wrote and reflecting on your experience you might get deeper understanding into the metaphors shared during the journey. But please note you do need to take action and change your life based on the guidance you get. Just don't take notes – do something with the guidance you receive. If you do not agree with advice a helping spirit gives you or you are not ready to make a change, they advise create a boundary and follow what feels right for you. The helping spirits

leave the ultimate choice in your hands.

Question: What is the difference meditation and shamanic journeying?

In the practice of meditation, you are coming to a place of stillness. You can also practice being still in your journeys. But shamanic journeying tends to be an active process.

Question: What happens if I didn't get a response from my power animal or helping spirit?

Answer: Be persistent. You will find you need to take multiple journeys to get answers to your questions.

Question: If I have multiple helping spirits who do I ask my questions I am on journeying on?

Answer: We all have a wealth of helping spirits. Over time and with your practice you will learn which helping spirit is best at addressing certain issues. You will also find that when you pose a question or state your intention one helping spirit will step forward to answer and offer assistance. You can also ask a few of your helping spirits a question and get different perspectives as they all share different aspects of an answer. Then you can compare the different answers you were given and put it all together to help guide you.

Question: I pop in and out of journeys throughout the day. I don't know where I am or what I am doing. Is this shamanic journeying?

Answer: No. Shamans journey with discipline. Shamanic journeying is a ceremony that has a beginning phase of preparation, the middle which is the journeywork, and an end which is a closing. Just popping in and out of trance states is not shamanic journeying.

Question: I felt some nausea while I was journeying and performing our virtual ceremony.

Answer: In the practice of shamanism nausea is a sign of power in your body that is stuck and not moving. This is not uncommon. Move the energy by putting your hands on the earth or sing and dance. When a client I am working on tells me they are feeling nauseas I have them put their hands on me and perform a healing on me. Spiritual power coming through us is a gift and should be shared and used.

Question: I twitch while I journey.

Answer: This is the sign of the power coming through you. It is common to see shamans shake and twitch while they journey.

Question: A wonderful issue someone raised is the power of going into a journey with no intention to simply see what the helping spirits have to share.

Answer: This is a very powerful way to work as the helping spirits often see changes we need to make in our lives or want to give us spontaneous healings that we have not asked for. My teacher Isis often comes into a journey and tells me what I am not attending to in my life. I did not ask her to provide this information. She just gives me direction that I need.

At the same time for many people if they go with an open ended intention they tend to float aimlessly in non-ordinary or their journeys are too disjointed. Stating a clear intention can help people have a more focused journey.

There is a balance of letting the spirits guide us in ways we have not asked for and stating clear intentions that help to focus our experience.

Question: How do I honor my power animals and is this important?

Answer: Your power animals and guardian spirits are there for you and volunteer their help. Expressing your gratitude is simply good manners in journeying.

Thanking the spirits by acknowledging them before you journey is a way of showing gratitude. Letting them know that your spiritual work is over is simply courtesy. You would not walk out of a meeting with friends without saying good-bye.

And then you can leave offerings for them in nature. I like to bring a picnic basket to my main guardian spirit, and we sit around and talk and have fun without me asking him for information or for healing help.

When I taught my first workshop for children the first question, they asked their power animal was how they could thank them for all their help. That was so beautiful for me to witness.

In traditional cultures dances are done to honor the spirit of the animals the community works with.

Question: What is the difference between petition and decree in calling in helping spirits.

Answer: There are two different ways shamans invoke their helping spirits. Some use petition. In a petition a shaman would say, "Please come and help me. I am powerless in this situation. Please come and help."

Then there is decree. This is how I work. With decree you acknowledge that the helping spirits are always here. You do not need to ask them for help. For they are always with you. In my invocations I state something like, "Thank you for presence and your help."

Both ways are valid methods for invoking the helping spirits. I feel decree keeps us in touch with our power and acknowledges that the help of our compassionate spirits is already here- we do not ask for it.

But yes, there are certainly times in my life when I am on the floor begging for help using every petition I know.

Question: In the healing part of the Upper World, I was everywhere. I have journeyed a lot, and this has not happened before. Plus, it was black everywhere. That has not happened before either.

Answer: Sounds like you journeyed into the void. This is one of my favorite places to journey. It is the place before form. It is empty yet full. It is filled with unpotentiated energy. I do all my dreaming work to manifest good dreams for myself and all on Earth in this place. And I will share more about this in a future session.

Question: I have been dealing with a physical illness and asked my power animal when I was going to die. It gave me an answer. Is the time frame accurate?

Answer: This is such an important question you are asking. I know so many people who ask the helping spirits if they are going to die when diagnosed with an illness. Often the helping spirit says "yes". Well, here is the thing when you heal from any illness you have to die in order to heal. For you have to change your life and die to the life you have. For some the next step in the healing process is death and for some it is life. But you die one way or another. I have never met a psychic, astrologer, or helping spirit who has been able to predict when a person will die. I cannot tell you how many "famous" psychics and astrologers as well as my own helping spirits who predicted my parents' death and they both ended up living 15 years beyond the prediction. It is just part of the mystery of the universe. Your journeys are outside of time. Please stay away from "when" questions and stick to questions such as what is the next step for me to take to heal.

Question: I work with autistic children. I have no permission to work shamanically in their behalf. But I would like to. Please advise.

Answer: The journey I do in these situations is to ask my power animal what is the ethical action for me to take in this situation? Radiating love and light like a star in the night sky to them is always a good action to take. A star in the night sky does not try to shine or does not send its light particular people or places. A star just radiates brilliant light that creates light throughout the world.

Question: Do shamans only use one rhythm for journeying?

Answer: Shamans in traditional cultures have different rhythms that they journey to. I am using one beat as there are so many people in the circle it is impossible to find one rhythm that everyone likes.

But this is something that you can explore on your own. You can try tapping out different rhythms and see what rhythms help you journey.

Question: Is it okay to journey daily?

Answer: It is fine to journey every day. But at some point you might get so much information that you cannot use it all and then you might want to journey when you need more guidance or help.

Question: Is it okay to journey for someone you are seeing in psychotherapy or if you are a doctor?

Answer: If you are a psychotherapist then you have permission to journey for your patient. The same is true for a doctor. For they are coming to you for help, and they are trusting that you are doing everything to help them.

But if it is a friend or someone you know it is best to ask for permission.

Question: I feel a lot of heat when journeying and during the journeys and ceremonies where we are working with healing energies. Can you speak to this?

Answer: Heat in shamanism is a sign of power. It is common for shamanic practitioners to feel as they if they are burning up while doing healing work. And clients can feel a tremendous amount of heat too. It is a good sign showing how much power is being shared with the work.

Here is a summary of steps you can take if you feel nauseas, get headaches, or feel spacey or overly emotional after you perform spiritual work:

There are some people who experience nausea after they journey or perform ceremonial work. This is very common. In shamanism nausea is a sign of stuck power. Power is meant to be used for healing. If you feel nauseas after doing spiritual work here are things to try:

- Go out and put your hands on the earth and run the energy through sharing healing with the earth.
- Sing or dance and get your energy moving.
- Put your hands on someone who needs healing. It is common for my clients to get nauseas after I perform a healing for them. If they are with me in my office, I ask them to put their hands someplace on my body where I have pain.
- You might need to ground more. Really feel yourself rooted into your body and the earth. Journey on ways to ground instead of listening to methods that others share. The best guidance you will get for your own personal needs is through your own journeying.

Some people experience headaches after their journeys. Headaches commonly occur for people who are simply trying too hard to make a journey happen. Try to find ways to relax before journeying. I sing my power song for about 20 minutes before I work. After this time, I feel I have stepped away from my mind and ordinary thoughts and concerns and drop deeply into the work. Also journeying does make people dehydrated. And drinking more water is a simple solution to this issue.

If you feel spacey, very emotional, or simply not grounded after your journey do another return beat. Find something you can tap on like a book or tissue box to drum on. Or use rattles. You can find two sticks and click them together like click sticks are used in Australia. Tap out another return beat and experience yourself retracing your steps very slowly. Many people crash land after they journey, and this causes a feeling of being unsettled and emotional. Doing the return beat and slowly retracing your steps again always helps with this.

You can work in this same way if someone or a noise shocks you out of a journey and you feel disoriented after. Go back into the journey and slowly retrace your steps.



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