

Sage Advice, Healing Energy and the Archetypal Shaman

I came at this reflection from different angles, and wanted to get a good overview of what a shaman is and any other close archetypal relationships with it. As soon as I sat down to think about a shaman, the mystic, the sage, the saint, the hermit, and the ascetic all came to mind and I wondered about how they related. They all seemed to point to the Mystic archetype, I would say the Mystic could be the big bucket that holds all of these other sub-archetypes.

Then as I dug deeper into the shaman I thought about today's shamans after scouring information about the past and its characteristics. Then it naturally switched to current time. What did I know about today's culture and the mystical archetype.

So let's start with the historical information about the Shaman:

What is a shaman or shamanism?

The mission of the shaman is to heal—both individually and collectively—the state of possession by unconscious psychic forces of the members of their community, as well as the community as a whole.

In the ideal sense the position of shaman need not be monopolized by or restricted to one person; a shaman is a role that any and everyone can pick up as we become more creative and fluid within ourselves. In a genuinely healthy community, roles are very fluid, which is to say—in

a form of “collective shamanism” — the role of the shaman can potentially be played out at various times by each of its members.

It is an ancient term that may be the oldest mystical tradition for a healer a person male or female of medicine, who is thought to heal the sick and communicate with the spirit world. Shamans understand that the material world is an expression of a subtler energetic realm, and are able to interact with both realms at all times.

A shaman may also summon a spirit to enter his body, and the spirit may speak through the shaman’s mouth. On such occasions the shaman controls both himself and the spirit that lodges in and manifests itself through his body. In other cases a shaman absorbs this helping spirit, gaining its faculties, capacities.

A shaman is a person who has mastered three specific things:

- 1) altered states of consciousness,
- 2) acting as a medium between the needs of the spirit world and those of the physical world in a way that's useful to the community, and
- 3) the ability to meet the needs of the community in ways that other practitioners (like doctors, psychiatrists and religious leaders) can't.

Another prevalent archetype The Wounded Healer, is for a shamanic trial and journey. This process is important to young shamans. They

undergo a type of sickness that pushes them to the brink of death. This is said to happen for two reasons:

- 1) The shaman crosses over to the underworld. This happens so the shaman can venture to its depths to bring back vital information for the sick and the tribe.
- 2) The shaman must become sick to understand sickness. When the shaman overcomes their own sickness, they believe that they will hold the cure to heal all that suffer.

Shamans learned how to dream their world into being within this energetic realm, so they could participate in the creation and stewardship of reality. They are a storyteller, a keeper of a sacred history to which only they and others like them are privileged to have access.

They believe strongly in the importance of dreams in providing an insight into the workings of the mind and often practice the 'reading' of dreams as part of their healing process.

The term shaman originated from the Tungus tribe in Siberia which was formed from sa-man the verb ša, which means "to know," so the term "shaman" literally translates to "one who knows."

It is also has origins related to the Sanskrit and Pali words for an Indian ascetic of the 5th and 6th centuries BC, a shramana or samana. The word derives from shram, meaning “to heat.”

Shamanic ideological techniques have also been identified in all parts of the world: Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Siberia, Vietnam, India and Nepal, Africa, Canada and America. This has led to the hypothesis that shamanism is the original prehistoric spirituality of humanity.

China's Hmong shamanism has a 5,000 year history, and they continue to maintain and practice its shamanism known as Ua Neeb. Their vocation is to bring harmony to an individual, their family, community and environment by performing rituals usually through trance.

Sanskrit word śramaṇa, designating a wandering monastic or holy figure.

While there are spiritual and mystical connotations to the term "shaman" it is in no way tied to a specific religion or creed. Lots of people believe that shamanism is a religion. While a number of religions may have evolved from shamanic tradition — and many shamans around the world may also identify as members of organized religions but shamanism is a spiritual practice.

In some cultures that may mean a shaman dispenses wisdom or leads ceremonies in areas including meditation and energy work, but again, the specifics of the practices will vary according to the culture.

One of the best examples of this in some key aspects is Jesus Christ who fits the shaman archetype, with his use of religious experiences to heal other people and restore body, soul and mind. He was also clearly a gifted storyteller who could command and inspire an audience, with a focus on healthy and clean living, all of which fit the archetype.

When the Buddha achieved the experience of enlightenment, he remained in a deep trance state for an entire week. The Buddha's original purpose was to discover the cure for the primary ill of humanity, dukkha or existential suffering. Similarly, the shaman brings back cures to heal the sickness of the people.

The Buddha taught his disciples a wide variety of mental techniques for altering consciousness. These included the cultivation of the mental body, a psychic projection of the physical body.

Shamans heal illness at the soul level. They gain knowledge and insight from working with the spirits of nature such as rocks and trees, the land, and they gain knowledge from working with spirits of animals and humans such as their ancestors. For the shaman, everything is alive and carries information. You can call this information spirit, energy, or consciousness.

This description would lead one to think the Native Americans were shamans. However Native Americans in the United States do not call their traditional spiritual ways "shamanism". According to Richard L. Allen, research and policy analyst for the Cherokee Nation, says they are regularly overwhelmed with inquiries by and about fraudulent shamans, also known as plastic medicine people.

Although many Native American cultures have traditional healers, singers, mystics, lore-keepers and medicine people, none of them ever used, or use, the term "shaman" to describe these religious leaders. Rather, like other Indigenous cultures the world over, their spiritual functionaries are described by words in their own language.

Current day people who are psychologists, therapists, and any other profession who feel drawn to help heal mental, emotional, or physical maladies that have no known origin that modern medicine can seem to heal, may just be our mystics and shamans.

Sage - one who is wise through reflection and experience such as a profound philosopher, a mature person of sound judgment characterized by wisdom and good judgment. This type of character is typically represented as a kind and wise, who uses personal knowledge of people and the world to help tell stories and offer guidance that, in a mystical way, may impress upon his audience a sense of who they are and who they might become, thereby acting as a mentor.

Mystic - a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain unity with or absorption into the absolute, or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths that are beyond the intellect. And can also be defined as a person who has a direct experience of the sacred, unmediated by conventional religious rituals or intermediaries.

Achieving that sacred, or divine, experience requires "transcending established belief systems, bypassing the intellect, and dissolving identification with the 'ego' self,"

Ascetic - practicing strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline such as an ascetic monk. Buddha was an ascetic.

Now that I have given you a historical and definition of shaman and others similar to it, I change course and take to the universal shaman within us that we all possess. Whether that be conscious or unconscious, we travel our lives in search of healing from our generational, cultural and family/tribal wounds. Yes - we can be our own mystics and shamans to heal the wounds of our soul whether that be in this life or of the past carried as psychic DNA. We have been assigned to our sacred contract even before when we were born. We possess an unconscious wisdom of archetypes of our subconscious mind and recruit archetypes to help us survive. Those archetypes as I have said are subconscious to the point that unfortunately we come to use the shadow side of an archetype to stay "safe".

I feel that we all can be our own shamans, that we can seek beyond what our 5 senses give us and "see" our patterns and pathologies and embrace the knowledge it provides.

Then we must ask ourselves: Are today's Empaths, Intuitives, Psychics and Mediums shamans as well?

First let's start with Intuitives or intuition:

Intuition is a right brain process that we all possess that taps into subconscious information in order to provide guidance about everyday life. Intuitive means that you tap into subconscious information in order to receive guidance about your every day life. Intuition can be used to receive guidance about your own life (personal intuition) or to help other people (professional intuition). People who are intuitive are not necessarily psychic. Being intuitive is about receiving guidance to make better choices in your life, and helping guide others in theirs.

Empath:

Empath means that you feel other people's emotions as your own. For example, if someone around you is very angry you might start to feel angry yourself, even though there is no direct reason for you to feel this way. A definition of empath is "Observing another person's emotional state activates parts of the neuronal network involved in processing that same state, whether it is disgust, touch, or pain". Empaths have the ability to scan another's energy for thoughts, feelings and possibly for past, present, and future life occurrences as well as sense of archetypes and emotional traumas.

Psychic:

Being psychic, also known as being clairvoyant, means that you can perceive information that cannot be perceived through the normal senses (also called Extra Sensory Perception — ESP). That can include predicting the future, talking to non-physical beings (dead people, spirits) and being able to sense missing objects or people. Being psychic is about sensing information that other people can't usually access.

Medium:

A medium is a psychic who has fine-tuned their extrasensory perception and can interface with the spirits in another dimension. They are able to feel and/or hear thoughts, voices or mental impressions from the spirit world. A medium is able to become completely receptive to the higher frequency or energies on which spirit people vibrate. Some choose to undergo possession, acting as a vessel for those spirits needing a human form to communicate with this world. Many mediums are also empathic, and thus are presumably able to share the experiences of those on both sides of the veil which separates the physical and the spiritual world.

Each one of these can have access to the 4 Clairs:

Claircognition or psychic knowing is having an intense gut feeling and using that information to guide you.

Clairvoyance is psychic seeing which can be different but very often comes across as a sort of screen that pops up before them that provides messages in the form of pictures and symbols.

Clairaudience or psychic hearing which will sound like a thought but louder and more pronounced during a "channeling session"

Clairsentience or a tactile psychic feeling which could be chills down your spine when you describe something, or shaking hands with someone sparks a sense of comfort in you like you have known them your entire life. These are known as psychic sensory experiences.

From these current day descriptions, it seems as though they encapsulate the history of what a shaman is and has been. I find that "current day" shamans don't necessarily go into the trance like state to retrieve the information, as it seems to be just a thought away.

Some mediums you may have heard of from TV are John Edward, and the young new comer Tyler Henry. The Long Island Medium who is Clairvoyant gets her information as well as the other two mentioned from symbols and people stepping forward. From her website, Theresa Caputo says "it's hard to put into words because I see, hear, and feel things differently than we do in the physical world. Spirit mostly speaks to me through a sixth sense— a kind of feeling and knowing. When I get information, it feels like very strong intuition, or recall. Spirit also uses a vocabulary of signs and symbols that they show me during a reading; over time, I assigned words, phrases, and meanings to certain

images I was shown, and then through trial and error, Spirit helped me add new ones until we created an entire vocabulary for us to work with. I translate my signs and what I feel as best I can and then deliver the messages, but it's the client's job to interpret how the meaning is significant. It's like piecing together a puzzle and can sometimes sound like guesswork, but Spirit speaks "another language," at another speed, and in another dimension.

Today, The National Library of medicine does acknowledge the evidence regarding the influence of the mind on the body is abundant. Several mind-body healing procedures are currently being used, among them hypnosis, biofeedback, meditation, visualizations, management of emotions and prayer. This interaction would let individuals to communicate with the minds and bodies of others. The field of parapsychological research has provided a lot of information about significant events, including apparitions, communications with the dead, near-death experiences and out of the body experiences. It looks apparently evident, that consciousness can persist in the absence of brain function. According to the model that assumes that it is consciousness and not matter, the base of everything that exists, what survives after death is the spirit.

And to leave you with this shamanic wisdom: Dying is merely moving one world to another like a physical move here on earth. Remember, the dearly departed are always very much involved in your life every day. They visit us in our dreams, hear us as we talk to them out loud or when we send a conscious thought to them.