

Heal your life, your loves and your losses with the practical power of shamanism. Mary Stoffel, shamanic practitioner and teacher, de-mystifies the ancient wisdom of shamanism, showing how you can use the practical technique of the shamanic journey to regain control of your life. This step-by-step guide helps you solve problems in finances, health and relationships by accessing information and guidance from the spiritual realm. Sample exercises help you define your goals and track your progress.

The Practical Power of Shamanism: Heal Your Life, Loves and Losses

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4975.html?s=pdf>

THE PRACTICAL POWER OF SHAMANISM

Heal your life, loves and losses



DRUMMING
CD IS
AVAILABLE WITH
PURCHASE OF
THIS BOOK

by Mary L Stoffel

The Practical Power of Shamanism

Heal Your Life, Loves and Losses

Mary L. Stoffel

Innovative Order, Inc.

Innovative Order, Inc.
Isanti, MN 55040

©2010 Mary Stoffel

www.humanimal.com

www.practicalshamanism.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book or CD may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission from the author and publisher.

All rights reserved. No part of this book or CD may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission from the author and publisher.

Published 2010

ISBN 978-0-9844800-1-2

Table of Contents

About the Book, About the Author	i
<i>Disclaimer.....</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>iii</i>
Chapter One: Shamanism	1
<i>Ancient wisdom promotes modern personal empowerment...</i>	
Chapter Two: Solving Problems.....	6
<i>Heal Your Life. Loves and Losses With Shamanic Journeying.....</i>	
Chapter Three: Direct Revelation	13
<i>Get Access to Hidden Information and Spiritual Guidance ..</i>	
Chapter Four: The Origins of Shamanism.....	18
<i>The Roots and Evolution of This Ancient Wisdom.....</i>	
Chapter Five: Cosmology of Shamanism	21
<i>Exploring the Three Worlds: Lower, Upper, Middle.....</i>	
Chapter Six: The Shamanic Journey	26
<i>Travel to the Spiritual Realm.....</i>	
Chapter Seven: Your Unique Way of Journeying	31
<i>How You Journey; How to Interpret Your Journeys</i>	
Chapter Eight: Helping Spirits.....	37
<i>Power Animals, Teachers and Nature Spirits.....</i>	

Chapter Nine: Power Animals 43
How Your Power Animal is Significant; Physical Characteristics and Spiritual Aspects.....

Chapter Ten: How to Journey 79
Go to the Lower World, the Upper World and the Middle World; Successful Journeying.....

Chapter Eleven: Questions About Shamanic Journeying..... 93
FAQs About Journeying and Empowerment.....

Chapter Twelve: My Shamanic Journal..... 100
Practical Exercises; Sample Journeys; Track Your Progress.....

Chapter Thirteen: Resources 197
Websites; Associations; Bibliography.....

Chapter One

Shamanism

Shamanism is an ancient method of obtaining information, guidance and healing for solving problems for the individual or community. It is the oldest spiritual practice known to mankind, practiced worldwide for the last 30,000 to 40,000 years. For many, the word “shaman” refers to a spiritual healer, medicine man or spirit doctor capable of accessing secret knowledge and healing powers. Throughout history, shamans have divined information for their community, and served as storytellers, spiritual leaders, counselors and healers. Those in the "shamanic state of consciousness" (SSC) are able to enter into and perceive "non-ordinary reality" (NOR), as defined by Michael Harner in *The Way of the Shaman*, by means of journeying. An important aspect of shamanism is that it provides a very practical means of solving everyday problems. Some define Shaman as “the wounded healer.” If you are experiencing or have experienced wounds in your life, you may be on the journey to be a Shaman for yourself and others!

Modern shamanic practice in our western culture co-exists peacefully with urban life, complex technology and mainstream religion. It is a way of connecting with the spirit in all things and honoring our ancient ties to each other and the environment. Basic techniques for seeing and journeying into the spirit world have been quickly learned and adopted by contemporary men and women seeking ways to reconnect with personal helping spirits in the form of animal or human teachers. These techniques illustrate that the core shamanic experience is really simple, timeless, and universal.

Shamanic practitioners address the spiritual aspects of illness on our behalf by working with compassionate, helping spirits to restore balance, harmony, and life-essence vitality. It is their responsibility to alter their state of consciousness and perceive successfully what others do not. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the shamanic practitioner is the ability to move back and forth at will between ordinary reality (OR) and non-ordinary reality (NOR) with discipline and purpose in order to heal and help others. The shaman does a diagnostic journey to consult with the spirits to determine what type of healing is appropriate for the client. It may be a soul retrieval, a soul remembering, a power animal retrieval, shamanic counseling or general spiritual healing. The shaman also travels to non-ordinary reality to obtain information and guidance for problem-solving for individuals and communities.

Ordinary reality is the world we live in day-to-day. We work, we eat and we sleep in ordinary reality and we receive information through the use of our senses of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. We also receive intangible information through our intuition, our sense of knowing something not relayed through the five senses. The physical laws of the universe apply in ordinary reality. Objects fall to the ground due to the law of gravity and machines are powered by hydraulic pressure or electricity. We are familiar with the energy of this reality and we have expectations that certain things are true.

Non-ordinary reality is the spirit world separated from ordinary reality by a veil or boundary. It is populated by spirits that can take familiar forms like animal and human teachers, and by nature spirits, elementals and entities that present their own forms to us. The physical laws we are familiar with do not apply in non-ordinary reality. Animals can talk and fly, landscapes may be surrealistic or ethereal, and information may be conveyed in ways outside of the five senses. The shamanic journey provides a way to travel across the boundary separating ordinary reality from non-ordinary reality to gain access to information not available through

our five senses. It provides an opportunity to consult with friendly, helping spirits in their world and bring the guidance and problem-solving advice through into our world. The energy of that world is distinctly different from our own and that distinction becomes apparent to the person who practices journeying. The two worlds do not merge or blend together. When you journey you are either here or there and the discipline of journeying helps you recognize where you are.

Shamanic work is very similar to other spiritual methodologies in that intention is everything. You have control of the process of journeying so you determine the spirits that you will be working with. You can make things happen in the journey without ‘making it up’. By setting the intention of the journey and asking for specific information or guidance you direct the flow and the energy of the process. The spirits direct how the information is conveyed and what metaphors or symbols are used to tailor the advice specifically for you. Only you can interpret your journey because only you know the meaning of the metaphors or symbols used.

As you gain experience in journeying you will naturally begin to work with a few spirits known as power animals and teachers. You meet these helping spirits by journeying to non-ordinary reality with the intention of finding those spirits that can give you the answers and the healing you seek. You know that these spirits are your power animals and teachers by asking them for signs and information that proves to be correct. As you continue to work with them a relationship of trust is established and you know that you can rely on the information they give you.

Personal Empowerment

We all have many aspects to us that combine to form the whole person that we present to the world. We are familiar with the physical, mental and emotional parts of our being, but may not be so aware of the spiritual and energetic aspects that complete our persona. When any of these is out of balance or harmony it can affect our lives in unforeseen distressing ways.

Many people in our culture experience varying degrees of chronic depression and illness, addiction, dissociation, post-traumatic stress syndrome, or just plain chronic bad luck. However, few of us would attribute these symptoms to spiritual imbalance or disharmony caused by traumatic or painful events. Left unresolved, this wounding of our life-force or spirit may lead to mental, emotional, and/or physical illness. I know this from personal experience as my introduction to shamanic healing was literally a life-changing event. As my wounded spirit became whole and vibrant my life reflected a sense of increased harmony and general well-being. Life became worth living again – even better, it became fun and fulfilling, with a renewed sense of purpose and direction.

The wounded spirit can feel overwhelmed by life in general and problems can seem insurmountable. The underlying condition can be a feeling of powerlessness and lack of control. This is reinforced by the seeming inability to change our circumstances, that we cannot influence the events or people that affect our lives.

In ordinary reality, to empower someone is to give them the authority to do something. In shamanic terms, the concept of empowerment is giving an individual the means to access their own spiritual guidance with the aid of compassionate, helping spirits. Whatever it is you seek, whether information, healing, guidance or the development of your own spirituality, the practice of shamanism gives you the power to fulfill that need for yourself. You no longer require an intermediary to tell you what to do or

how to interpret the answers you receive. When you are consistent in your shamanic practice and you have established a relationship with your power animal or teacher, you can rely on the guidance you are given. Empowerment also implies the responsibility to act on the information and guidance you are given from the spirits. They are here to help but only you can effect change in your life by taking back your power and applying it. See Exercise #15.

So as you use this workbook the step by step process will help you feel comfortable traveling on your own journeys to promote healing, seek guidance and figure out how to solve your problems. The power of working with your helping spirits will give you more self-awareness and confidence that you have the ability to make the changes required to control the pace and direction of your life. Feel liberated from self-doubt and insecurity as you control not only the technique but the process in mending your spirit and healing your wounds. Experience the renewed sense of peace and harmony in your life as you discover your purpose and explore your spiritual path. This feeling of vibrant well-being will manifest in all areas of your life as you grow to fulfill your destiny. You control the power of the shamanic journey as you search for the answers to your deepest questions about life, love and the pursuit of happiness.

Chapter Two

Solving Problems

We are living in challenging times; perhaps the most challenging in thousands of years. We can feel overwhelmed by life in general and problems can seem insurmountable. Many are seeking answers through exploration into various spiritual practices that traditionally have offered knowledge and healing from the realms of non-ordinary reality. This spirit realm can provide information not available through purely logical means.

Shamanism has been practiced for thousands of years, and it can be used now to address the practical problems we all face in our daily lives. Problems like not having enough money to pay our bills, much less save for college or retirement. Problems like career decisions, moving or relocating, and personal relationship issues. Major life changes of marriage, starting a family, and dissolving a relationship can cause anyone to question their judgment and feel powerless. And then there are health conditions that can be challenging or incapacitating. These are the types of situations that all of us deal with constantly. With shamanism, we can know that we are not alone; that help and advice are available for the asking and that we can regain the confidence and the power to control our fortunes and our destinies.

Many of us are also confused about our purpose for being here at all. We feel that we are supposed to be doing something but don't have a clue what that is. We may have questions about our spiritual path and can't tell if we are on the right track. How do we know our mission? And how can this ancient spiritual practice really help us find our way?

Let me be clear: shamanism does not take the place of professional help. In fact, it often works best when used in conjunction with modern accepted therapies such as psychotherapy, counseling, hypnotherapy, and medical practice, to name a few. Shamanism adds the spiritual dimension of healing, restoring balance, harmony and a feeling of empowerment. It provides insight and guidance when making decisions or planning a course of action. It helps us see how we are connected and dispels our feelings of isolation.

Here are just a few life situations and issues that can be resolved using the shamanic journeying techniques described in this book:

- **Relationships**

- **Example:** I always seem to attract a certain kind of person into my life that is more negative than positive. How can I figure out this pattern and how can I change it? You can journey to ask for signs that the pattern is starting to repeat again so you can catch it sooner. You can ask how the pattern started in the first place and how to stop it. See Exercises #16, #17.
- **Example:** A new person has come into my life. How do I know if this relationship is one I want to pursue? You can journey to ask what you need to know about this relationship. Is there anything you need to be aware of? How can you proceed safely and confidently? See Exercise #18.
- **Example:** I am getting divorced after several years with the same partner. How can I cope with feelings of fear and insecurity? You can journey to ask a helping spirit such as a power animal or teacher to come to support you and guide you through the process. See Exercise #19.
- **Example:** I have found my soul mate and it's wonderful but his/her family or relatives do not approve of me or the relationship. How can I change the energy around this situation? You cannot change others so you

need to approach this as your issue. You can journey to ask what you need to do or change to diffuse the conflict and promote understanding and acceptance. See Exercise #20.

- **Example:** I'm moving to a different state where I don't know anyone. I'm also starting a new job or making a career change. I feel very alone and isolated. How can I quickly start to make new friends and feel more comfortable? You can journey to your power animal or teacher and ask for support during this time. You can also ask for ideas for making connections in the community. See Exercise #21.
- **Example:** I have been in the same relationship for a long time. It feels very comfortable but I don't want to get complacent and start taking things for granted. How can I spice things up a little? You can journey to ask what you need to do or change to inject more excitement into your relationship or to address any long-standing issues between you and your partner. See Exercise #22.
- **Example:** I have recently dissolved a relationship/marriage and bear the emotional scars to prove it. I feel that I am ready to move on now but I cannot let go of the feelings of anger/bitterness/hate/regret, etc. Your helping spirits can help you heal and restore your sense of peace and serenity. See Exercise #23.
- **Example:** I have recently remarried and my partner has children from his/her first marriage. How can I fit into their family and be a GREAT step-parent? You first need to ask your helping spirits for lots of support. Then ask their help in dealing with situations as they arise. See Exercise #24.
- **Example:** I have a physically, emotionally or mentally challenged child. I'm doing the best I can but keep feeling that I could do more. How can I find more

resources and time to help my child thrive? In addition to working with conventional means to help your child, through shamanic journeying you also have access to the power and support of the spirit world. See Exercise #25.

- **Example:** My child is experiencing behavioral issues in school and is having trouble with peer relationships. What can I do? I feel so helpless. The power of shamanic journeying can show you ways to help both your child and yourself. See Exercise #26.
- **Example:** I have aging parents and I'm trying to do what's best for them, even when they resist my efforts. How can I respect their wishes, work within the social system, keep them safe and secure, and keep myself sane in the process? Your helping spirits are eager to support and guide you in every way. All you have to do is ask! See Exercise #27.

- **Finances**

- **Example:** I have lost my job and have been unable to find work. I've tried the traditional methods for getting a job but nothing is happening. Where do I go from here? You can journey to find a helping spirit, either a power animal or teacher, who will give you insights on new ways to market yourself. You can even keep journeying to ask "OK, now what is my next step?" See Exercise #28.
- **Example:** I have steady income at this time but it just doesn't go far enough. How can I pay my bills, save for retirement or college, AND still manage to have a life? The spirits can help with resource allocation or by helping you find new sources of income. Journey to ask for information to determine what fits your situation the best. See Exercise #29.
- **Example:** I have been offered a job that would be a new and exciting promotion, but it would require relocation. How can I make an informed decision about

whether or not to accept it? In addition to researching the company and location through conventional means, you can journey to ask if this is a good fit for you and your family. Keep journeying on different aspects of the move, the community, the company and the job until you are satisfied that you are making the right decision. See Exercise #30.

- **Example:** My finances are in dire straits. There are many agencies, companies, and organizations that help people get out of debt and back on track. How do I know which is the best for me and my circumstances? How can I make the best decision on how to proceed? It is important to research each option through conventional means, but there is also an emotional/spiritual aspect to consider. Work with your helping spirits continually to ensure that you are on the right track. See Exercise #31.
- **Example:** I have lost the job I held for many years and that career path is now out-of-date. I must go back to school or get further training to be competitive in the job market. How do I know where to go and what new career to pursue? In addition to using the resources provided for unemployment career counseling, you can journey to your helping spirits to discover what work would make you feel happy, fulfilled and valued. See Exercise #32.
- **Example:** I am thinking of starting my own business. I've done a lot of research but still have fears and reservations about going out on my own. How do I know if this is the right thing to do? Journey, journey, and journey some more to ask for support, help and guidance. See Exercise #33.

- **Health**

- **Example:** I have had a health condition for years that never seems to get any better, no matter what protocol I follow. There may be an emotional or spiritual

imbalance affecting this condition that needs to be addressed or brought into harmony. Journey to your helping spirits to ask what issue, memory, belief system or incident is affecting your ability to heal and how you need to resolve it. See Exercise #34.

- **Example:** I suffer from anxiety attacks and depression and have been on medication for both. I feel that I'm missing out on life and would like to find a way to happiness and fulfillment. Can this method help me? The power of shamanic journeying works with and enhances professional therapies, helping you define and cope with the underlying issues. You can ask your helping spirits for support in this difficult time and for practical actions you can do to take back control of your life. See Exercise #35.
- **Example:** I am carrying excess weight, which is affecting my health and self-esteem. I've tried many diets and eating programs but always seem to sabotage any progress I've made. What is causing this and what can I do about it? You can journey to your power animal or teacher to ask what the underlying cause is for the extra weight. What are the practical steps you can take to change your approach to reaching your health goals? See Exercise #36.
- **Example:** I am a healthcare provider and I am very dedicated to giving the best care I can to my patients/clients. But I get tired and burned-out, emotionally drained and spiritually bankrupt. How can I stay in harmony and balance, giving and receiving physically, emotionally and spiritually? In the helping professions you need lots of spiritual support and you can get that through the power of shamanic journeying. The spirits will help you keep your commitment to providing excellent care and show you how to take care of yourself in the process. See Exercise #37.

- **Example:** I (or my spouse) have been diagnosed with a life threatening disease (i.e. Alzheimer's, cancer, heart disease, auto-immune disorder, etc.). How can I learn how to cope physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually? All of these aspects of the situation can be addressed by journeying and asking the spirits for support and guidance through this difficult time. See Exercise #38.
- **Life Mission**
 - **Example:** I have a good family life, adequate income, and work that I enjoy, but something is missing and I don't know what it is. I feel that I'm supposed to be doing something more, contributing in some way, but have no clue how to figure it out. You can journey to your helping spirits to ask for signs that you are on the right path. You can also ask that opportunities to learn about spirituality be made available to you. See Exercise #39.

These are just a few examples of how using the guiding and healing techniques of shamanism can restore balance and harmony to our lives, with peace, serenity and confidence. It re-affirms that we can determine what is best for us and helps us achieve it.

Remember, when you tap into the realm of non-ordinary reality, all answers are available to you when you practice consistently and learn the language of that reality.

Chapter Three

Direct Revelation

When we struggle with a dilemma or have a problem that needs to be solved, the first thing most of us do is seek information or advice. We look for objective guidance from people that we trust, people that we know we can count on for support. And we gather data that will help us make an informed decision to the best of our ability. When we have done all we can to weigh the facts and the pros and cons, we resort to going with our intuition, our gut feeling. This assumes that we can make a decision at all. Sometimes we are paralyzed by fear or simply cannot see a solution. We feel unable to move forward, at the mercy of forces beyond our control.

When I was incapacitated by my own emotional situation, I tried all of the self-improvement and consciousness raising tools I had studied over many years. I had married my soul mate and moved to a hobby farm in the middle of hunting territory. As an animal communicator and empath, I struggled with emotional turmoil during hunting season, trying to come to terms with a culture that I understood intellectually but could not condone emotionally. My eleven year old stepson passionately wanted to hunt, I was an emotional wreck, and my husband, who had grown up in the woods, was caught in the middle. It became imperative that I find a solution to this issue before it tore our new family apart.

As I worked my way through prayer, meditation, hypnotherapy, counseling and journaling, nothing gave me any insight into the issues involved much less how to address the problem. It wasn't until I found the power of shamanism that I received information I could use and experienced a healing that helped me restore balance

and harmony to my life. The shamanic healing technique used was a soul retrieval, performed for me by a professional shamanic practitioner. Soul loss occurs when a person experiences some form of trauma, which can include a near-death experience, loss of a loved one, a severe illness or abuse of any kind. When this happens we lose crucial parts of our life force and vitality, leaving us vulnerable and unable to cope with stressful situations. The soul retrieval healing process finds this lost soul essence in non-ordinary reality and restores it to the person making them whole again. This healing journey restored to me parts of my life force or spiritual essence that I had lost through a prior traumatic experience. This process also restored my strength and resiliency, making me whole again and better able to cope with distressing situations. It took me six months to assimilate and integrate this energy healing, and it helped my overall health and well-being tremendously. But there was still an emotional part of the puzzle that had not been resolved. It wasn't until I learned to journey for myself, to ask my own questions, that I was able to get at the root of the problem.

My power animal is the deer, so it was truly fitting that my questions prompted me to journey to the Lower World so I could ask deer what I needed to know about the situation. Deer spoke to me one-on-one, explaining the ageless agreements around hunting from the prey's point of view, so that I could understand that this was not just exploitation, but a way to preserve the habitat the deer needed to survive. Through direct revelation from the prey animal involved, I had discovered a system that gave me the information and the healing I needed to resolve the issue. It allowed me to chart my own way to peace and serenity at my own pace. It not only helped me solve the initial problem, it brought renewed vigor and hope to my life. If it could make such a difference in my life I knew I could bring this same healing to others. That was the beginning of my life-long shamanic spiritual practice.

Direct revelation refers to the way we get information during the shamanic journey. The journey is a combination of your intention,

what you are seeking, and the answers or information conveyed to you by the spirits. This process takes place in their realm, in non-ordinary reality, so they control how the information is relayed to you. With your intention you ask for the answers you need and you go ‘face-to-face’ or ‘one-on-one’ with a helping spirit you have worked with and that you trust. The information is given to you directly by that spirit at that time in the journey, a one-on-one exchange. There’s no one else there who must intercede for you, no one is channeling the information to you, and no one else can interpret the answer but you. This is the principle of direct revelation. You go directly to the source where the information can be found and you find it in a form only you can understand.

Spirits often convey information in unorthodox ways, using metaphors, symbols and examples. They seldom present the answers in a yes/no black and white straightforward way. Instead, you are expected to figure out the true meaning of the information. In fact, if you only accept the information at face value (literally) and don’t look for the deeper connotations, you are missing an opportunity to gain innovative insights into the issue. If you get something you don’t understand, you simply go back again and ask for more examples or for clarification. Or you can ask the question in a different way or journey to a different spirit to get another viewpoint. As you work with your helping spirits you get to know how they choose to interact with you and it becomes easier to decipher what they are telling you.

A very powerful way to develop your comfort with understanding the messages you are given is to create a journal and record every journey, your interpretation of it, and then track in your external life how the messages were validated. You are learning what some call The Language of Your Personal Universe. It is an exciting process and builds upon itself. Journaling and studying what your messages might mean will build your confidence in this information and also help you develop your own abilities to interpret what you learn in non-ordinary reality. As the evidence mounts that this process really works, your confidence and self-

empowerment also increases. You know that you can trust the information and guidance given to you by your helping spirits.

Some of the ways the spirits give us information are:

- Teachers and power animals may speak directly. You may actually hear them in the journey. Or you may hear them telepathically in your mind.
- Your helping spirit may accompany you as you travel to the place you are asking about and show you a scene or event taking place. It is up to you to figure out what this scenario has to do with your question.
- Your helping spirit may take you to the void and show you what you are manifesting.
- You may arrive in non-ordinary reality in a landscape that has something to do with your question or intention. The details of the landscape are a part of the answer.
- You may see nothing at all, only darkness, but just ‘know’ what the answer is.
- You may see colors, hear music, or feel emotions that evoke reactions in you. For example: black smoke, shining crystals, pastoral scenes, pleasant breeze, violent storm, etc. These would have meaning for you that would help you interpret the journey.

I know a fellow shamanic practitioner, a young man, who never saw his power animal or teacher. In fact, it didn’t matter which world he journeyed to, he just saw blackness, like the void. So at first he assumed that he wasn’t doing it right. Yet when he asked a question in the journey, he always got the information he needed. As he continued to practice and learned to accept what he was getting from all of his senses, he realized that he was receiving an abundance of information and knowledge he could not have accessed on his own.

A student in one of my Introduction to Shamanic Journeying workshops was a graphic artist so she expected to see wondrous things on her journeys. Imagine her dismay when she was met with total blackness in her first journey to the Lower World. She saw no landscape at all. Of course, she was certain that she must be doing it wrong. It wasn't until I stressed the fact that she must pay attention to EVERY sense that she began to recognize the feelings and the sense of 'knowing' that she had experienced. Her power animal was helping her develop her range of interpretation by denying her access to her comfortable way of doing things. By the end of the day, when she had really focused on what she was getting with all of her senses, her power animal finally allowed her to 'see' a landscape through a tiny pinhole.

These are just a few of the ways you might get information. Everything you experience in the journey is important, so you must pay attention. Equally important is that you record immediately what you experienced because you may forget important details. It is important to remember that journeying is a very individual process. I cannot tell you how you should feel in the journey because there is no right way or wrong way to do it. Similarly, I cannot tell you that you will get information in a certain way because everyone does it differently. It makes no sense to compare your journeys with anyone else, because even if we all journey on the same question no two journeys are the same. We may get similar answers in very different ways. What matters is that you get the answers you are seeking. See Exercise #4.

Chapter Four

The Origins of Shamanism

The ancient wisdom of shamanism traces its roots back to the Stone Age (technically known as the Paleolithic Age), but is still vibrant and relevant today. Traditional indigenous healers use it around the globe, from Siberia to Australia, from Southeast Asia to North America. The ancient methods have also been put to contemporary, everyday personal use for self-help and self-healing. Shamanism is adaptable, able to remain practical and relevant, as communities have changed from nomadic or agricultural to the modern global societies of today.

Traditionally, healing or spiritual practitioners, called shamans, contacted spirits to work to heal a patient or to obtain wisdom and advice. The shaman entered an altered state of consciousness, the Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC), where he/she could see deeper truths and gain insights for understanding and healing. After completing the work, the shaman returned to the Ordinary State of Consciousness (OSC). Depending on the culture, the shaman might be an ordinary individual chosen by the spirits to be a healing or spiritual leader, or he/she might be raised as a holy person or priest who is part of a religious system. In many cases the shaman was also the storyteller, the historian and the spiritual teacher of the tribe. The shaman consulted with the spirits to obtain information that the tribe needed to survive, such as the best place to find water, or where the hunters should go to find game. In many cultures shamans would specialize in certain healing or divination practices, some doing only soul retrievals and others helping the deceased to cross to the afterlife. Also depending on the culture, the shaman might use hallucinogenic substances to achieve an altered state of consciousness.

There are many cultural traditions used by shamans to effect healing, incorporating dance, chanting, drumming and rattling, working with sacred symbolic objects, and the use of herbs and medicines. But the essence of shamanism remains the same, namely the ability to enter the world of non-ordinary reality and enlist the aid of compassionate, helping spirits.

Modern shamanism does not conflict with religious beliefs or doctrines. It enhances religious faiths and traditions, which often over the years were integrated with shamanic rituals and ceremonies. Shamanism is more a way of living in an awareness of our connection with all things. It honors life and strives to bring everything into balance and harmony. This is particularly important now with globalization affecting every aspect of life on this planet. We are all learning that change in one area causes change on the other side of the world. We are all connected.

Modern practitioners using shamanic techniques usually don't call themselves shamans. Normally the honorific name of shaman is reserved for traditional practitioners or modern shamans engaged in traditional practices. Recently, a type of modern shamanism has emerged, where individuals use the traditional techniques of drumming, dancing and chanting to enter the Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC) for healing and personal growth. This is an altered state of consciousness that allows the person to travel or journey to non-ordinary reality to commune with the spirits for help with self-empowerment and self-healing. You, too, can use the power of the shamanic journey to obtain information and guidance to re-gain control of your life.

Core Shamanism

In the beginning, shamanism was practiced by tribal communities who tended to stay in specific geographic areas. These communities were very in tune with their environments, dependent on the animals and plants of the area for survival. Their beliefs, rituals and ceremonies reflected this intimate knowledge and developed into what we call cultural-specific shamanism. Even though the underlying essence of shamanism was the same, it was expressed in culturally specific ways. The shamans of Siberia did essentially the same healings and divinations as the shamans of the Amazonian rain forest, but they did them in different ways because their environments were so different.

Michael Harner, anthropologist at the University of California, Berkeley, and founder of the non-profit Foundation for Shamanic Studies, was the first to define the concept of core shamanism. Harner found in his studies of shamanism as it was practiced world-wide, that all of the indigenous shamans were doing basically the same things, just in culturally specific ways. Starting in the 1970's, Harner was the first to train contemporary Westerners in the practice of the classic ways of shamanic healing, in the form of what he called 'core shamanism', meaning that he taught just the basic techniques without using or 'borrowing' cultural rituals or ceremonies.

Trained by the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, many modern shamanic practitioners in North America and Europe apply these basic techniques of shamanism for their own personal development and self-healing, help clients who come to them for healing, and teach self-empowerment and self-healing to others.

Heal your life, your loves and your losses with the practical power of shamanism. Mary Stoffel, shamanic practitioner and teacher, de-mystifies the ancient wisdom of shamanism, showing how you can use the practical technique of the shamanic journey to regain control of your life. This step-by-step guide helps you solve problems in finances, health and relationships by accessing information and guidance from the spiritual realm. Sample exercises help you define your goals and track your progress.

The Practical Power of Shamanism: Heal Your Life, Loves and Losses

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4975.html?s=pdf>